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Increase Activity and Improve Posture

The 2012 school year has begun. Current statistics show that one in four school age children are overweight or obese. This is associated with numerous physical and psychosocial problems, including decreased bone mineral density, flat feet, diabetes, low self esteem and depression. Research also shows that the most popular after school activity is watching TV, playing video games or spending hours on social media websites. Prolonged sitting can lead to poor posture and back problems. This in turn can create a barrier to regular physical activity.

Lead by example. Be a role model – take your child with you when you take the dog for a walk, use the stairs instead of the escalator or lift and provide equipment for your child to play with (e.g. ball, skipping rope, Frisbee). If possible, walk your child to school. Encourage your child to take part in school sport. Not everyone enjoys participating in team sports. There are many outdoor physically active hobbies such as skateboarding, Frisbee, cycling or gardening. Encourage outdoor activities. Be mindful of a sensible balance between sun exposure and protection. It has been shown that insufficient exposure to melatonin (too little exposure to sunlight) can enhance anxiety in teenagers and furthermore result in disturbed sleep patterns. We have many great beaches in Sydney, as well as many designated bush walks. Take advantage of these and plan regular outings, including walks.

Not all exercise has to be outdoors. A Wii is a good option if TV games are on the wish list. There are many options for joining dance classes (classical ballet, jazz, hip hop, Zumba, to name a few). There are numerous gyms offering a variety of cardiovascular exercise options within the Upper North Shore area.

Ensure that your child has an ergonomically designed chair to sit on when working at the computer. Encourage good posture and make sure that they take regular breaks to avoid prolonged periods at their desks.

Physiotherapists are trained to perform musculoskeletal assessments which are similar to a physical medical screening. The assessment determines flexibility, strength and co-ordination of muscles, joint range and a variety of functional tasks. It can be done as a pre-season sports screening, or during the season to identify areas of weakness so that you can work on improving skill sets.

If you have any concerns with regard to your child's posture or would like to find out more about musculoskeletal screening for your school aged child, contact St Ives Physiotherapy & Sports Therapy Centre on 9144 1118, to schedule an appointment (located in the loft at The

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Hidden Danger Surrounding Kid's Feet

The choice of appropriate footwear for your child dramatically reduces the risk of long term pain that can plague them throughout their life. Do you have a problem with your feet, knees or lower back? The chances are that your problems began with inappropriate footwear when you were younger.

The most important factor to consider in reducing risk is suitable, properly fitted footwear. Kids spend over 1,500 hours in their school shoes every year, jumping, kicking, and running around on hard flat surfaces. Considering the amount of activity our kids get up to, and their still developing physical structure, they need good footwear more than we adults. Their feet grow at a speedy one full size per year from the age of 5 until mid-teens, and their bones, muscles and tendons are undergoing tremendous change.

A correctly fitted, well cushioned, supportive shoe that matches your child's foot type and foot shape is essential in helping to prevent the onset of long term problems, as well as sprains and shin splints. Podiatrist Peter Lumb comments that most school shoes commonly available in general shoe stores are lacking in necessary cushioning and support. Your child should be fitted with a shoe that is very supportive around the heel with a firm heel counter, and have sufficient arch support, and cannot be bent in the middle. Additional cushioning and support features required in the shop depend on your child's foot type (the extent to which their foot rolls inwards).

Highly trained Fit Technicians at The Athlete's Foot St Ives are able to identify your child's foot type with the computerised Fitprint[®] system, fit your child's growing feet (both of them), and they guarantee their fitting service and the quality of the shoes that they fit. They also keep a very comprehensive range of sport shoes including running, cross trainers, netball and football as well as other sports.

The Athlete's Foot St Ives have a full range of Ascent formal school shoes designed with sporting shoe technology, providing the essential comfort and support for their growing feet. Independent podiatry tests show Ascent to be the leading school shoe product on the market. Many Ascent school shoe models also come with a 6 month outsole guarantee for peace and mind. Different width options and half sizes are always stocked all year round in The Athlete's Foot St Ives.

**The Athletes Foot is located at Shop 41, Lower Level,
Phone 9440 5614.**

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Restore your Hearing

Many people think they have perfect hearing even though they are missing out on high pitched sounds or S, F or TH sounds. Caused by noise, age and some medications, this is called high-pitched hearing loss and may be difficult for people to identify as a problem. Signs people may be suffering this type of hearing loss include: thinking people are mumbling and only being able to hear a man's voice clearly.

With a quick hearing assessment, the right support and some ongoing care, many people will be able to restore their hearing.

While many people feel hearing devices may not be for them, or believe they are not effective, technology has evolved the humble hearing aid over the past 15 years.

New technology used in the devices can now read the person's environment and adjust the volume automatically, with adaptive directional microphones that detect unwanted background noise, such as wind on the golf course, and reduce it.

Connect Hearing specialises in hearing devices and new technology. To book your FREE hearing test, call Connect Hearing today on 9394 8855. Located at Shop 127B, Upper Level.

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[Make Sure Your Child's Eyes Are Classroom-Ready](#)

Topping the list as the quickest and most painless exam of the year, a simple eye test will guarantee students more success during the academic year than any trip to the stationery store or uniform shop. With 80% of a student's learning being visual, eyes are the most critical asset when in the class room. Yet, many parents and students simply don't think about poor vision being a significant barrier to learning. Simple tasks such as reading the whiteboard, a text book or long hours spent staring at a computer screen make studying harder when headaches, squinting or blurry words get in the way.

"Having frequent eye tests will ensure that students are able to perform at their best and reach their full potential whether they're at home or in the classroom," said Grant Fisher, National Eyecare Director at OPSM.

"Proactive eye exams allow problems to be detected and addressed before they hamper performance at school. Medicare even covers an eye test every two years."

If an eye exam indicates that your child does require glasses, OPSM's range of optical glasses will suit every age and need. For the under 12's it's best to go for glasses fitted with 'active lens'; this ensures that the lens are super strong, thin, lightweight, scratch proof and UV resistant. In other words they've been designed to withstand all kinds of child-play.

For high schoolers and beyond, OPSM recommends choosing glasses from the adult range. Your teenager can choose from a wide range of world-leading brands, such as Ray-Ban, Burberry, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada, Ralph Lauren, and many more.

OPSM is located at Shop 69, Lower Level, Phone 9449 1066.

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[Coping with a Can of Worms](#)

By John Bell for O'Loughlin's Medical Pharmacy

According to the Australian Museum, there are about 6000 species of earthworms grouped into 20 families, eight of which exist in Australia. They occur in soil, leaf litter, under stones and logs, and even in trees. Overall, earthworms are useful chaps; they act as decomposers. That is: they assist in breaking down animal and plant refuse by munching through organic material to replenish the soil with nutrients.

But worms which inhabit our insides are altogether a different kettle of fish – or should that be: a different can of worms? They come in all sizes and shapes, usually quite clearly described by their names; hook, round, tape and so on. However, far and away, the most common parasites that live in our intestines are threadworms.

Threadworm infections are found worldwide and can affect anyone and everyone regardless of age, sex or socioeconomic group. Nevertheless, threadworm infections more commonly occur in children (the parents of infected children can also be at risk) - almost certainly because of the way the infestation is transmitted.

Threadworms (they're also called pinworms), unlike some of the other worms we host from time to time, only inhabit humans. They have no

desire to become acquainted with any other animal.

Initial infestation is usually by oral ingestion; and the female worm moves to the anus where she deposits her eggs – held together by an irritating mucus (irritating to us that is; the eggs find it quite comfortable). If the eggs are scratched beneath the fingernails they can be transferred to the mouth and re-infect the host. They can also be transmitted to someone else by direct contact or indirectly via clothing, bedding, towels or toys where the eggs can survive for up to three weeks.

As well as the itch and irritation, symptoms of threadworm infestation can include fatigue, disturbed sleep and decreased appetite; but all of these symptoms can be indicative of other conditions, too. (They include haemorrhoids, and candida, fungal and thrush infections.) And sometimes there are no symptoms. So, diagnosis can be tricky.

Stickiness is what's used to overcome the trickiness. The process involves pressing a piece of sticky tape over the anus in the morning before a bath or shower; and asking the doctor to examine the tape under a microscope.

Of the available treatments, mebendazole (Vermox) and pyrantel (Combantrin) are both available without prescription.

Mebendazole is taken as a single dose regardless of age or weight; although it is not generally recommended for children under the age of two years, nor during the first trimester of pregnancy. The recommended dose of pyrantel is based on body weight and can be given to adults and children of any age.

Threadworm infestation is easily spread amongst family members; so if infestation is confirmed or highly likely, the whole family should be treated; and as re-infestation is common, re-treatment may be necessary for complete eradication.

Effective treatment and prevention of threadworm infestation requires attention to personal hygiene as well as routine measures to clean bedding, towels and the house generally to remove threadworm eggs.

Fingernails should be kept short and clean. Children should be urged to stop nail biting, finger sucking or bottom scratching. For everyone in the family the advice should be to wash the hands thoroughly with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet, after changing nappies and before preparing food.

For more details about treatment and prevention strategies, come in and see one of our friendly pharmacists at O'Loughlin's Medical Pharmacy, located upstairs next to the medical centre. We are open extended hours from 8.30-8pm Monday – Friday, until 9pm on Thursday and 8.30-6pm on weekends. Advice line: 9440 0030.

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