



— Beyond Stranger Danger —

What ever happened to the days when our children could play around the neighborhood, ride their bikes to a friend's house, walk to school and feel safe? Times have changed as we are faced with unprecedented acts of violence, bullying, child abuse, abductions and the list goes on and on. Although the reality is that these dangers have always been around, we are more aware of them in modern society. How do we teach our children to be safe without overprotecting them and instilling fear of everyone? How do we protect our children without feeling like we have to keep them in a bubble?

Growing up many of us probably learned about "stranger danger". Many children are taught not to talk to strangers putting emphasis on the possibility of being taken away or being hurt by a stranger. The reality is, children need to be cautious not only of strangers. Be aware that "stranger danger" isn't enough. In fact, most childhood sexual abuse is committed by an adult known to the child.

What's important is teaching children how to trust their own judgement and feelings and what to do when something doesn't "feel right". They need to learn to recognize and trust their intuition. How do we teach this to children without causing them anxiety and/or fear of everyone? How do they know who is a stranger, who is a threat? Below are a few safety basics to teach children:

- Beware of people who may want to "trick" you. Someone may ask you to keep a secret from your parents. If it makes you uncomfortable or something doesn't feel right, it's better to tell your parents right away.
- Never get into someone's car or home, even

if it's someone you know, unless your parents approve first and let you know it's ok.

- Have your child practice by talking to strangers when you are present. Have them order their food at a restaurant or ask someone the name of their pet while at the park. Teach them what to look for and what to be cautious of rather than telling them they can't talk to strangers at all. Give them confidence in being able to figure out who they can trust.
- Give your child examples of specific scenarios to be aware of. i.e. Someone may offer you candy or ask you to go with them to help them find their puppy. Let them know that although most people are good, some may not want to keep them safe and can do things that could hurt them.
- Teach your child that if he/she ever gets separated from you, to first search for an employee (if at a store), a policeman, or for another mom with children if in public.
- Children need to practice saying "no" and telling an adult when someone touches them in an inappropriate manner. They need to understand that they control who can and cannot touch their bodies, and they can leave when a situation feels wrong.
- Teach children that offenders can look like anyone including other children, women, etc.

The safety of our children is a major concern for many of us. It is up to us to help them understand how to protect themselves when we are not around. Remember to teach your child ren to trust their instinct! Build a strong and confident relationship and let them know that they can always come to you if anything ever makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

- Mey-ling Cortinas

News & Events

- **JumpStreet Special Needs Hours**
First Saturday of every month from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. The first hour (9:00am-10:00am) is exclusive to children with special needs and their families only, the second hour is open to the public. To find a location near you click link below: www.gotjump.com/
- **Rays of Light Night Lights**
Giving parents of special needs children 4 parent night out hours. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Friday of every month - 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church, at White Rock United Methodist on the 1st Friday, and at Christ Foundry United Methodist Mission on the 3rd Friday for Spanish - speaking families. www.raysoflightdallas.org/programs
- **AMC Sensory Friendly Nights**
Sensory Friendly Film program is available on the second and fourth Saturday (family-friendly) and Tuesday evenings (mature audiences) of every month. Please check your local theatre listings for specific show-times. www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films

Resources

• **VIVA Pediatrics Resources**

In an effort to help our families, we constantly strive to provide them with relevant and helpful resources and information. Visit our resources page online at: www.vivaped.com/resources

For current events visit us on Facebook. www.facebook.com/VIVAPeds

• **Care Starter App**

The Connections App is a complete resource guide for families of kids, teens and adults with special needs. Their goal is to help you find providers, organizations and other resources in your community to help you along your path of care. Download the CareStarter App now! www.carestarter.co/connectionsapp



• **The Parker Lee Project**

The Parker Lee Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families of children with medical needs obtain the necessary supplies & equipment, education, and support they need. While most supplies are covered by insurance, some are not, or not enough supplies are provided. If you have a need for medical supplies or have supplies to donate, please visit their website at www.theparkerleeproject.org

• **Texas Star Kids**

The Texas' Star Kids mandate threatens the lives of our weakest and most vulnerable little citizens. Join us in standing up for those who have no voice. Click this link to sign up: www.facebook.com/ProtectTXFragileKids
For more info visit: www.protecttxfragilekids.org

• **Thrive Magazine**

Need Resources for your child with special needs? Thrive Magazine shares resources and stories of other families in the DFW area who are living and thriving with special needs. www.dfwchild.com/thrive/directory

• **Recognize a VIVA Star**

Viva Pediatrics has an Employee Rewards and Recognition Program to thank and recognize employees that go "above and beyond". Both employees and patient families are welcome to recognize a VIVA employee! Call one of our offices and let us know if a VIVA employee has gone above and beyond!



Get Healthy with Giggles

Health Benefits of Owning a Pet

Can having a pet actually improve your child's health? Our furry, four-legged friends no doubt bring us companionship and joy, but studies have shown that their benefits do not end there, particularly for children.

Believe it or not, having a pet early in life may lower the risk of allergies and obesity. Research from the University of Alberta found that children that were exposed to cats, dogs, and other furry pets before birth and up to 3 months after experienced significant increase in beneficial gut bacteria, Ruminococcus and Oscillospira. Previous studies have linked Ruminococcus to a reduced risk of childhood allergies, and Oscillospira has been associated with a decreased risk in obesity. Other studies have shown that dog exposure in the first year of a child's life may reduce the risk of developing asthma later in childhood by up to 13%.

If you are on the fence about adopting a pet, perhaps this information may help you decide.

- Kristine Dodge

Food for Thought



Fast and Easy Meatloaf

Ingredients

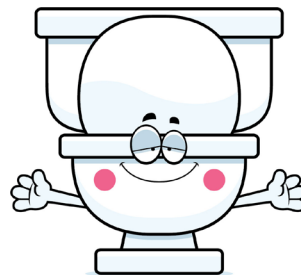
- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 egg
- 1 onion, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons yellow mustard
- 1/3 cup ketchup
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup dried bread crumbs

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F
- In a large bowl, combine the beef, egg, onion, milk and bread OR cracker crumbs. Season with salt and pepper to taste and place in a lightly greased 5x9 inch loaf pan, OR form into a loaf and place in a lightly greased 9x13 inch baking dish.
- In a separate small bowl, combine the brown sugar, mustard and ketchup. Mix well and pour over the meatloaf.
- Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 1 hour.

Enjoy!

What did one toilet say to the other?



You look flushed.

Just for Giggles!

