

PARENTING WITH LISA SALMON



Chores are part of family life

Psychologist & author Collett Smart explains what chores kids should do without payment, and stresses doing them will help them become better adults.

My 12-year-old son says he'll help around the house - if we pay him. How can I get him to do chores without payment or an argument?

Child and adolescent psychologist Collett Smart, author of They'll Be Okay (Piatkus, £14.99, available now), says: "Your son sounds like a very normal 12-year-old, who doesn't jump for joy at the thought of chores. No-one really likes chores - not even us adults. Expect some complaints, but expect him to get on with the chores anyway.

"I encourage parents to consider developing a parenting mantra - something that helps us consider why we have expectations for certain behaviours - e.g. 'Parent with your child's future adult in mind'. In the context of chores, this helps us think about the future adult we're raising, particularly because studies reveal that participation in doing chores is instrumental in predicting children's overall success into their mid-twenties. "Involvement in chores can lead to: acknowledging the importance of contributing to family, an ability to work well with others, developing a 'pitch-in' mindset, delayed gratification, self-discipline, enhanced motor skills, a sense of empathy as adults, and greater career success.

"Chores should simply be something the whole family does - just like brushing teeth, going to work or attending school, they're not optional. Chores should benefit the household and not be part of pocket money. When we tie money to chores children begin to expect to be paid for fulfilling basic responsibilities. Extra jobs, like washing the car, might be used for pocket money.

"It may be helpful to politely state, 'Today is your turn to unpack the dishwasher, so you can watch your show as soon as it's done.' If your son complains, avoid bribes, just calmly empathise and then repeat your statement, 'I don't enjoy it either but it's just what we all do as part of being in this family. Today is your turn to unpack the dishwasher, so you can watch your show as soon as it's done.' Then follow through. Afterwards, thank him for his team effort.

"At his age, he can do a selection of weekly tasks: clean kitchen surfaces, load the dishwasher, help prepare simple meals, make school lunches, unpack groceries, clean bathrooms, change his bedding, help with laundry, take out rubbish, feed pets. Don't expect perfection, but if it's done with little effort don't 'fix' it for him. Calmly call him back to finish it off. When you wonder if it's worth it, remind yourself that you're helping your son to be more successful later in life."

HOW BOOZING AFFECTS YOUR KIDS

HEALTH

With Dr Zak Uddin



BY now most of us are aware of the negative effects of drinking too much alcohol.

Indeed evidence shows an increased risk of certain cancers even in those consuming just one unit of alcohol per day.

However, the misconception still abounds that drinking too much only affects the individual themselves.

According to a recent survey, Britons are intoxicated more often than those in 35 other countries across the globe, and a third of children suffer in some way due to their parents' drinking habits.

Although problems may be greater with parents whose alcohol consumption is in the harmful range, or those dependent on alcohol, even seeing your parents occasionally tipsy or drunk can have long lasting negative effects on children.

A survey published in the journal "Alcohol and Alcoholism", in which children between the ages of ten-17 were interviewed, revealed concerns including receiving less attention than normal, irregular bedtime hours, more chance of an argument with a parent who drinks, and the obvious worry that a parent under the influence may have very unpredictable and indeed frightening behaviour.

While these may be short-term issues, with the parent often returning to an acceptable state once the effects of alcohol have worn off, children of those who drink heavily suffer a range of issues in the long term.

They may view heavy drinking as normal, and therefore struggle to



Even drinking moderate levels of alcohol by adults can affect their children, says Dr Zak

understand this as a poor and harmful way of coping.

If their experiences of alcohol include it being associated with verbal abuse or physical violence, they may avoid any situation with the potential for conflict, for fear of it escalating. In contrast to their parents' approach to life, children of heavy drinkers may become perfectionists or excessively responsible, such that they are unable to enjoy simple pleasures, viewing themselves in a very critical manner, despite often being very successful.

A great deal of confusion also abounds as to whether to introduce your children to alcohol at an earlier age, to avoid

it becoming a taboo, or to wait until later. However the website www.drinkaware.co.uk categorically states that you should delay giving your children any alcoholic beverage until they are at least 15 years old. Early consumption is linked to increased risk of harm from all forms. Children's bodies and minds are still developing into their late teens and they may be very susceptible to the ill effects of even small amounts of alcohol.

The UK Government's recommendations are that you consume no more than a maximum of 14 units most weeks, spread over the seven days, with several alcohol free days. Most drinks containers now carry the

number of units clearly labelled on the side. An alcohol diary is a good way of keeping an honest track of your actual consumption. Any reduction should hopefully result in immediate health benefits, however if you are drinking at very high levels it is not recommended that you stop altogether or "go cold turkey", for fear of life-threatening withdrawal symptoms including seizures.

Useful websites
drinkaware.co.uk
alcoholchange.org.uk
nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/

Read all about the menopause: top picks

BENJAMIN Franklin famously said that in life, nothing is certain but death and taxes. If you're a woman though, there's another natural part of the female life cycle we can all expect to encounter - the menopause.

Typically occurring between the ages of 45-55 (although for some it can kick in earlier), the menopause is a big part of the ageing process for women - yet it's so rarely a part of public conversation. It's often a gradual process over months or years, but is usually considered official when a woman has gone 12 months without a period.

Eight out of 10 women will experience symptoms along with the menopause - like hot flushes, night sweats and anxiety - and these can sometimes have a big impact. But with so much taboo around the topic it can be difficult to know what's normal and what's not, and whether these are just things you have to put up with, or something you can take steps to manage.

That's where arming yourself with knowledge becomes important. From hilariously relatable first-person accounts, to medical experts offering advice on coping with symptoms, here are some

helpful menopause resources to have on your phone and bookshelf...

1. Confessions Of A Menopausal Woman by Andrea McClean (Transworld, £9.99)
 2. The Hot Topic by Christa D'Souza (Short Books Ltd, £8.99)
 3. Flash Count Diary by Darcey Steinke (Canongate Books, £16.99)
 4. Wellness With Liz Earle (lizearlewelling.com)
- And check out this podcast too:
5. Menopodcast (available on Apple, Google Play and Spotify)
- Dubbed 'two friends chatting

about the change', pals Sarah Auerswald and Julia Frey chew the fat over the latest things they've heard, seen or learnt about the menopause. In the first four seasons, they chose a book about the subject and discussed a chapter per episode, rounding off the cast with a hilarious segment called 'How Hot Was Your Flash?'. In more recent episodes, they've taken the approach of deep diving into specific topics. All seven seasons are worth a listen, and the chatty half-hour episodes are perfect background noise for cooking or pottering around the house.