

YOU & YOUR CHILD

Pains in Her Tummy

Gail, our 7-year-old, complains a lot about tummy pains. Her doctor says it's psychological and that she will grow out of it. He says we should try to ignore it. What should we do?

Recurrent abdominal pain is one of the most common childhood problems. Up to one in five experience it. And most of the time it's psychological. Usually, the child adopts a tummy pain to avoid something he or she considers unpleasant, such as going to school.

If you give Gail too much attention when



she complains, you may be teaching her that tummy pain gets results.

On the other hand, such psychosomatic symptoms can be a warning sign of a chronic stress reaction. If Gail's symptoms get worse or persist for more than six months in spite of your new "ignore it" approach, you might consider a second opinion with a child psychiatrist.

Family of Fatties

Our Brian, 8, is overweight. So are his father and me. The doctor says all three of us should diet if we expect our son to lose weight. What do you think?

Your doctor is correct. The parents' influence on childhood obesity is powerful. Studies have shown that a chubby child with two slim parents has a 20 per cent chance of growing into an obese adult. But a chubby child with two overweight parents has a 50 per cent chance.

Researchers have found that the only kids who maintain weight loss after a diet and exercise programme are those whose parents had also lost weight and kept it off. A family regime could add life to your years and years to your life.

Reporting Problems

When school reports arrive home my husband and I always end up having a row with the children, aged 14, 10½ and 8. Any suggestions on how we can avoid the conflict?

Try these guidelines.

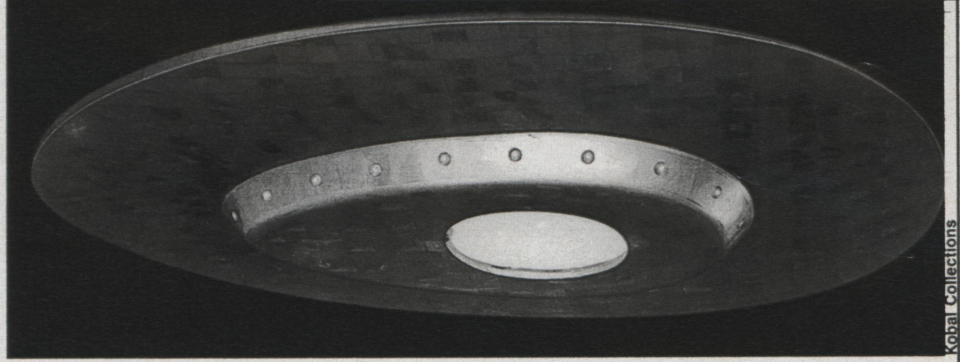
1. Know your child's potential. Be realistic. Don't expect too much or too little. Talk to teachers and be honest with yourselves about your child's abilities.
2. Listen. Let your children do the talking. Ask them to explain their report and the teacher's comments.
3. Stress the positive. Start by praising the highest marks. Don't concentrate on the poor aspects.
4. Examine the bad news. But whatever you do, don't fly off the handle. Be honest but reasonable. "You don't seem to have done as well as last time in history" is much better than "You silly boy, why have you failed in history?"
5. Action plan. Help your children devise a plan, in writing, for improving aspects of their performance or behaviour for next time.
6. No cash rewards. Pride in a job well done and praise should be reward enough.

How Jenny Randles saw the lights...

She was an ordinary housewife — now UFO spotter Jenny is boldly going where no woman has gone before



Jennifer Beeston



Kobal Collections



Totham

Investigations of the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA). She first felt the call of the unknown while on holiday with her grandparents in Blackpool. It was 1963 and some hotel residents claimed to have seen a UFO above the hotel.

Boyfriends, exams and career in teaching got in the way, although she did join the BUFORA in 1969.

It was while teaching in Crewe that Jenny understood her true destiny. A wave of sightings were reported. "I gave a talk about what unidentified lights in the sky might be. Afterwards a lot of kids came up to me rather sheepishly with stories about what they had seen. They were scared to talk because of the reactions they'd get."

Soon after, she decided to devote her life to finding proof that UFO spotters are not off their heads.

time on windswept hilltops looking for UFOs. In fact, I'm far more interested in putting together all the puzzles of other peoples' sightings all over the world." Much of the time she's an agony aunt. "When people see UFOs they often find it highly disturbing. They have no one they can tell."

She continues: "Like the woman I found at my door looking distraught. I spent three hours reassuring her. She'd been walking by a clump of bushes when suddenly a large disc-shaped object rose up and disappeared. She thought that UFOs come back to burn you or kidnap you. When I saw her again a few weeks later she was looking much happier."

Inevitably there are disappointments. "I had a report of an alien being seen wandering around Shipley. People said that it was small and hairy." She pauses. "It turned out to be a dog taught to stand on its hind legs."

Jenny admits that 99 per cent of sightings can be explained.

It's the mystery one per cent that thrill her. "I haven't seen ball lightning because it's such a rarity. It's when a sphere of light appears mid-air and then explodes. It's an unidentified atmospheric phenomena and they make up some nine per cent of sightings. Things we read about as science fiction 20 years ago are reality now." Her quest for knowledge takes her all over the world. She's written 10 books on the subject.

For a couple of years she was involved in a committee looking into the ethics of UFO reports. She explains: "A burglar wrote to me from prison telling me about a UFO. He insisted on remaining anonymous as he'd seen it while doing a job for which

he hadn't been caught."

UFO enthusiasts have to be keen. Nobody pays them any wages. Despite this, in the UK 25 researchers look to the skies along with 400 members of BUFORA who fund their own passion.

But Jenny has paid a price for her devotion: her marriage broke up two years ago. "My husband put up with it for a long time. We'd been going out since 1977 but he got cheesed off in the end."

She now lives with her mother in Stockport. Outer space has more attraction than wedded bliss for the time being. "And it's not the yearning to see little green men from Mars running around. It's the challenge of the unknown."

Hopefully ET will one day call her home to some far-off planet. She would enjoy such a fate. "UFOs sort of grew on me. I can't really look at them objectively." She chuckles. "It's even been suggested that aliens got hold of me and that I'm some sort of alien ambassador." So what is that strange green light in her eyes?

UFO-spotters can contact Jenny Randles at 37 Heathbank Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK3 0UP.

Has there been a dramatic turning point in your life? We invite you to share that experience with our readers and will pay you £100 if we publish your story. We require real names and permission to take photographs for publication. Write: Turning Point, Bella, 25 Camden Road, London NW1 9LL. Please enclose an SAE if you wish your story to be returned.

NEXT WEEK: Carol sounds a farm alarm

Katie Neville

As dusk was falling late one September evening, Jenny Randles experienced an encounter of the third kind. She saw what appeared to be a UFO.

To this day, seven years on, she vividly recalls the scene on the deserted Wiltshire road. "I saw a triangular pattern of three bright lights hovering over a field. At the first junction I turned off and went back down a side road," she pauses, re-living the excitement of the moment. "It was still there!" Jenny walked over to the field. "The lights got brighter and then dimmer, then gradually vanished. I knew it wasn't an aeroplane or a trick of the light. It was something out of this world." And it changed her life. She was to give up her job and eventually her marriage.

She discovered the lights



Call of the unknown: Jenny Randles, top UFO expert

had been hovering over the ancient Avebury stone circle. Mystery indeed – and still unexplained.

But then the mystery of UFOs dominates 35-year-old Jenny's life, for she is now Director of Field

During 1978 she gave up her teaching career to wait for aliens full-time and was awarded the top UFO spotters job in 1981.

As she says in all seriousness: "People seem to think I spend all my