

# healthy living

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*'Electronic media are not only an inferior means for young children to experience and learn about their world, they can be toxic.'*



Photos by Liz Dufour/The Enquirer

Dr. John Hutton, owner of the blue manatee bookstore in Oakley, talks to children at Story Time last week before reading from his own "Baby Unplugged" book series.

## Unplug the kids

By John S. Hutton  
Special to The Enquirer

This article is excerpted from a talk John S. Hutton delivered last month at the Cincinnati Nature Center.

In a single generation, as through a massive software upgrade, childhood has been transformed.

This upheaval is unprecedented, eclipsing our own evolution and leaving us fumbling for a user's guide: cable TV in the 1970s, video games in the 1980s, Internet in the 1990s, smart phones, social media, ebooks, apps and broadband convergence of all of these in the 2000s.

We – and more alarmingly our kids – cannot escape technology anymore, despite fundamental human needs and stages that are not always compatible.

Most grownups recall relatively low-tech childhoods: books, backyards, even times when there was literally nothing on TV. Boredom was not considered life-threatening; imagination was a reliable remedy. In the 1960s, the average age kids started watching TV was 2.8 years. It is now 9 months and decreasing.

A 2009 Kaiser Foundation survey found that kids 8-18 watch screen-based media on average 7½ hours per day, 11 hours per day if device "multitasking" is factored in.



### About John S. Hutton

John S. Hutton is a Cincinnati-based pediatrician and owner of blue manatee children's bookstore in Oakley.

A recent initiative at the store is blue manatee boxes, eco-friendly gift giving for kids 3 and under designed to promote shared reading and creative play. Hutton is also the creator of the Baby Unplugged series of board books. Its first three titles are "Pets," "Yard," and "Blanket" (above).

He lives in Cincinnati with his wife and daughters. Contact him via email at [contact@bluemanateebooks.com](mailto:contact@bluemanateebooks.com).

A recent study from Common Sense Media showed kids under 2 watch more than 3 hours per day, three to nine times more time than they spend being read to. About 70 percent of American kids have at least one video screen in their bedroom, and more

than 30 percent of kids under 2 have one. The only activities that rival screen-based media come at school, where computers are ubiquitous, and sleep, which is increasingly challenged by it.

This screen time explosion represents a triumph of marketing over public health. Despite advocacy by pediatric and parenting groups, e-media for young children have grown into a multi-billion dollar industry, enchanting grown-ups and kids alike. It has cast an invisibility cloak over evidence-based guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics, in effect since 1999.

Notable among them are: discourage any screen time for kids under 2, viewing for older kids limited to one-two hours of quality programming, and no video screens in children's bedrooms.

According to a recent survey, however, less than 10 percent of parents were familiar with these, and only 15 percent had discussed them with their doctor.

While "electronic babysitting" is a common explanation for heavy use, by far the top reason parents purchase screen-based products for their kids is a single word: education. Stricken by unrealistic expectations and fears of falling behind in the Internet Age, parents believe that screen-based media are not only benign, but necessary for learning.

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Hutton reads to kids at Story Time. He urges families to stay "screen-free until 3."

## Get your nutrients from good foods, not supplements

By Nanci Hellmich  
USA Today

If you want to eat a healthier diet and avoid taking vitamin or mineral supplements, you may want to consider following the government's Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

They are designed to help people reach a healthy weight and reduce their risk of diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.

Among the key recommendations:

- Choose foods that provide more potassium, dietary fiber, calcium and vitamin D, which are nutrients of concern in American diets. These foods include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, milk and milk products.

- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Choose a variety of vegetables, especially dark-green, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas.
- Consume at least half of all grains as whole grains. Increase whole-grain intake by replacing refined grains with whole grains.
- Increase the amounts of fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, such as milk, yogurt, cheese and fortified soy beverages.
- Choose a variety of protein foods, which include seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds.
- Increase the amount and variety of seafood consumed.
- Use oils to replace solid



Gannett/Brian Albert Broom

Fruits and vegetables are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber that most Americans don't get enough of in their diets.

fats where possible.

- Reduce daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams for many people. Reduce intake to 1,500 milligrams for people who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African-American or have hypertension, diabetes or chronic kid-

ney disease. Currently, people consume about 3,400 milligrams of sodium a day, or about 1½ teaspoons.

- Consume less than 300 milligrams a day of dietary cholesterol.

- Consume fewer calories from solid fats and added sugars.

## Act early to ease nagging heel pain

By William Porter  
The Denver Post

Reach a certain age, and it sometimes seems the world is full of Latin-rooted maladies just waiting to waylay you and flog your spirit into submission.

Plantar fasciitis is one of them, and it's sadly familiar to millions of people, from elite athletes to "Hey, why me?" homebodies.

The painful syndrome is an inflammation of the plantar ligament, which originates in the sole of the heel and extends toward the toes. Caused by micro-tears in the ligament, it is felt most acutely upon waking, making even a simple walk from bed to bathroom excruciating.

Perhaps you are reading this and thinking, "Oh, come on. Just how painful could plantar fasciitis be?"

Doubter, try this test. Raid your kid's toy box and filch a

standard-size marble, if they still make such things. If not, find a small rock. Tape said object to your heel, then spend the day walking around with your full weight on it.

In 30 minutes your heel will become the center of your universe. Come evening, you will find yourself whimpering about how 40 is the new 80.

That's the effect. Fortunately, relief can be found, sometimes through a few simple exercises. And the sooner you jump on the problem, the faster and easier relief will come.

"If someone with plantar fasciitis can get after it in the first phase, between the first day and second week, they have a high chance of immediate recovery," said Brett Purdom, a physical therapist and sports-medicine specialist.

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