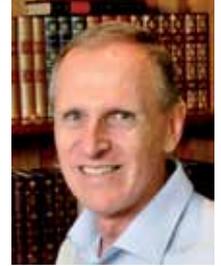


All things health

MY WORD with Rodney Martin



Here's to your good health!" "May you be healthy, wealthy and wise!" Throughout history, we have been concerned with each other's health – and no wonder. Without antibiotics, vaccines and the many other medications we have today, living was perilous. Everyday greetings were basically about people being whole, well and healthy.

Until recent times (1943 and the development of penicillin by a South Australian), health was not to be taken for granted, particularly in infancy. How times have changed since then. Now we expect doctors to fix any illness and we pop pills as common commodities.

"Mum! I've got a headache in my toe. I need some medicine."

"You need a placebo."

"What's that?"

"It's medicine you take when you're not taking medicine."

"Huh?"

Modern education is concerned with children's health on a number of levels. The physical wellbeing and safety of children is an obvious and immediate concern, and includes policies about foods served in school canteens. But there are also more subtle and complex aspects of health that teachers attend to.

Self-confidence is an important aspect of a child's emotional health. For example, if students struggle for too long in literacy – the gateway to other learning – they can lose confidence in themselves; a loss they may feel for life.

Teachers have strategies and materials for correcting such problems these days. It's important that you work with your child's teacher. Your local public library also has resources available online for members. The values you hold about education are a powerful influence on your child's sense of priorities at school.

Many parents see mobile phones and computers for

children as tools for security, communication and education. However, this technology also gives bullies new ways to reach their targets. Bullying can have a negative effect on your child's social health and well-being. Both the bully and the bullied can suffer long-term ill effects.

The modern sense of health includes physical, social and emotional well-being. It is holistic – another cousin of the word *health*, from the Greek *holos* meaning (you guessed it) 'whole'!

Rodney Martin is a children's author and educational publisher. His SA family business, Era Publications, creates interactive children's books used online in many homes, schools and public libraries around the world (see free samples at www.erapublications.com/south-kids).

Health

In 750, Old English *hal* or *hale* meant 'healthy, whole' (as in *hale* and *hearty*). By 1000 it was *halth* 'being whole, well', then *helthe* by 1200 and *health* by 1450. The brothers, sisters and cousins of *health* are *whole*, *wholesome*, *heal* 'to make whole', *hallow*, *holy* and *hail* (originally *hail* be thou 'healthy be you', later, just *Hail!* 'Greetings! Welcome!')