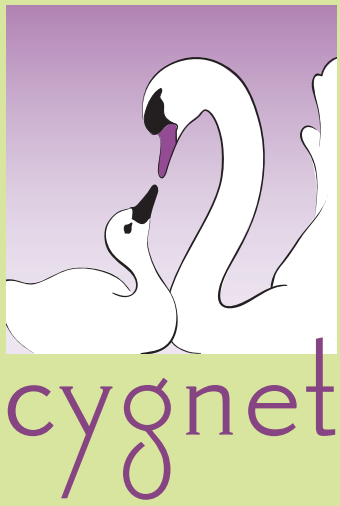


CYGNET Taking Flight

Cohort Study of Young Girls' Nutrition, Environment, and Transitions

SUMMER/FALL 2007



Greetings from the CYGNET Study

By Lawrence H. Kushi, Sc.D.

As you know, the CYGNET Study is one of three studies being conducted cooperatively across the United States. We are pleased that CYGNET and the other two sites in New York City and Cincinnati collectively have over 1200 girls participating in the study.

The populations in the other two sites are somewhat different from CYGNET. Even though we all enrolled girls who were 6, 7 or 8 years old at the time of their first visit, the racial and ethnic background of the girls differs at each of the three sites. In New York, the girls were recruited mostly from community clinics in East (Spanish) Harlem, and the girls are primarily Latina (70%) and African American (30%). In Cincinnati, the girls were recruited through elementary schools and are primarily White (63%) and African American (33%). The CYGNET community is the most diverse with girls being White (42%), Latina (25%), African American (17%), and Asian (6%).

In the coming months, the researchers from the three sites will be writing and publishing a series of scientific papers that describe these studies and how they are being conducted. By this time next year, we expect to have published at least 10 papers besides the paper, "Pilot Study of Urinary Biomarkers of Phytoestrogens, Phthalates, and Phenols in Girls," we published in January 2007 in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*. This article discusses phthalates, phenols and phytoestrogens measured among 90 girls from the three sites. You can find a free copy of the article at: <http://www.ehponline.org/members/2006/9488/9488.pdf>.

To give you a preview of the type of information that we will be writing about, as you know, during the clinic visit, we measure the heights and weights of our CYGNET participants. We also calculate the girls' BMI, or body mass index. We plot their BMI on an age-specific growth chart to determine their BMI-for-age

percentile. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides standardized (expected) distributions of BMI that are age-specific for girls. We will compare the BMI distribution of the CYGNET Study girls with this expected distribution. The CDC defines children who are at or above the 85th percentile of BMI – that is, greater than 85% of the expected population – as being "at risk" for becoming overweight as an adult. If the BMI is above the 95th percentile, then the child would be at risk of becoming obese. Thus, in an "expected" population of girls, you would expect that about 10% would be at risk of overweight, and 5% at risk of obesity.

Based on data from the first year visits, we have found that about 15% of the CYGNETs are at risk of overweight, and about 15% are at risk of obesity – that is almost 30% of the girls have a BMI that is greater than the 85th percentile for their age. This doesn't mean that these girls are unhealthy. But we will be interested to know if girls who are at risk of being overweight or obese are more likely to mature more rapidly, to have different exercise or eating habits, or to have different levels of exposure to chemical compounds. We are also interested to see if the BMI-for-age percentile levels change up or down as the girls grow older and mature. These are some examples of information we will be writing about as we see the girls in the CYGNET community in future visits.

Thus, as always, I would like to emphasize how important your continued participation is to the study. We are extremely appreciative of your and your daughter's involvement, and we hope that you will continue to support the study with your participation. We look forward to seeing all the CYGNETs at their annual visit.

Lawrence H. Kushi, Sc.D., Associate Director, Division of Research, Kaiser Permanente, is the Principal Investigator of the CYGNET Study.

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The Mother-Daughter Relationship: An Echo Through Time

Written by CYGNET COTC

Thirty-seven years after becoming a mother, I found myself watching my daughter doing the same activities with my seven-year old granddaughter. There she was. Leaning over the kitchen counter. Laughing, baking cookies, and listening to stories. A mother—daughter relationship is a unique and special relationship that echoes through time.

As a daughter approaches her preteen years, Karen Fingerman, a professor of sociology at Purdue University who has studied the relationships between mothers and daughters, shares that it is an intense and wonderful relationship that requires a connectedness as well as a separation for the relationship to grow.

While activities at school, new interests, and an increasingly active social life begin to become more important to your growing daughter your relationship may change. As difficult as it may be to see all these changes, it is a time you will begin to loosen the ties and allow some growing room.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

Small, simple things can reinforce your connection. Make room in your schedule for special times, take advantage of the routines you already share, and show that you care.

- ✓ **Family Meals:** A shared family meal provides valuable together time.
- ✓ **Bedtime and Goodnight:** Maintain a consistent bedtime routine.
- ✓ **Share Ordinary Time:** Find little things that let you just hang out together.
- ✓ **Create Special Time:** Make a tradition out of celebrating her special milestones.
- ✓ **Show Affection:** Don't underestimate the value of saying and showing how much you love your daughter.
- ✓ **Stay Involved and Interested:** Stay involved, interested and curious about your daughter's expanding activities, ideas, feelings, and experiences. Listen to what she is saying. Respond in a nonjudgmental way so she will be more likely to come to you anytime—especially when tough issues arise.

Adapted from: "Connecting with Your Preteen," *Kids Health for Parents*, Nemours Foundation.

Speaking to Your Daughter about Puberty: It's Never Too Early to Talk

By Louise Greenspan, M.D.

The idea of talking to your daughter about puberty can be very scary for most parents. While it is never too early to teach our daughters about their bodies, we do want to make sure we do this in an age-appropriate manner. Ideally, as a parent, you've already started talking to your child about the changes their bodies go through as they grow.

As you may be aware, girls are probably starting puberty earlier than when you were growing up – it's not unusual now to have third and fourth graders needing bras. So now is a good time to start letting your daughter know that her body may start to change in the next few years.

Finding the time and place may feel awkward, but you can use the CYGNET Study clinic visits as an excuse to bring it up so that the conversation feels more natural. Some people like having these discussions in the car as there are fewer other distractions, you have the privacy, and the kids feel like they have some 'space'.



With young girls, I start with asking if they know what puberty is. Depending on their answer, I explain that puberty is the ways boys become men and girls become women. We discuss that teenagers often get acne and grow fast. We talk about how the grown-up men in their lives have beards, deep voices, and hair on their bodies. And that women change by developing breasts and pubic hair.

I usually don't get into menstruation too much as this usually doesn't start until they are at least 10 years old, so we have some time. If they do ask about periods, by all means answer their questions (a main confusion is about how losing blood doesn't hurt).

The most important gift we can give our girls is the knowledge that their bodies are healthy and normal and that these changes are a natural part of getting older and growing up.

Louise Greenspan, MD is a pediatric endocrinologist and clinician who practices at Kaiser Permanente San Francisco Medical Center. She is one of the CYGNET Study co-investigators.

FALL BLOOM

WORD SCRAMBLER

See how many words you can unscramble!

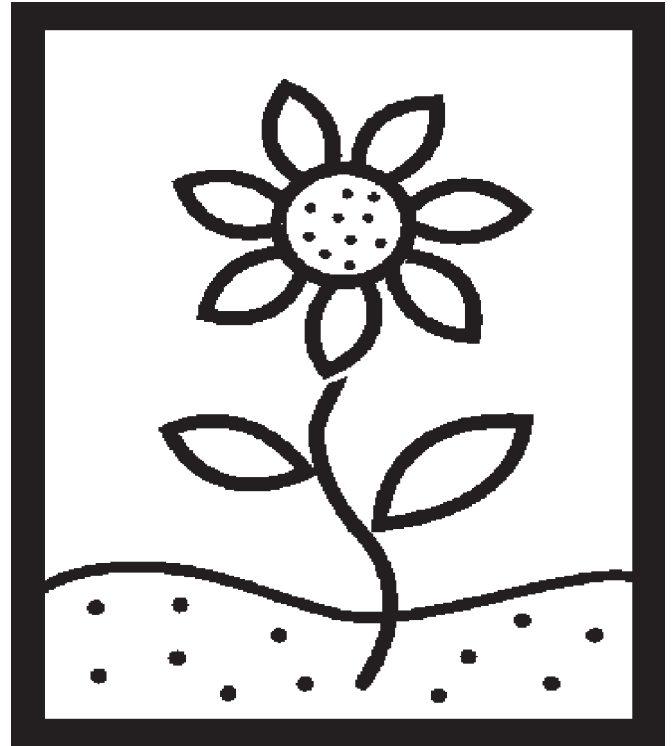
1. WNGGORI PU _____

2. TUREAM _____

3. ERWOLF _____

4. ECNIFDCNOE _____

*Then, color the beautiful flower with your favorite colors!
(Find the answers on the back of this page)*



Happy Gardening!

At your CYGNET clinic visit this year, you'll be able to pick out seeds, and decorate your own container to then plant in. Choose from flowers, herbs, fruits and vegetables.



What you will need:

- ✓ Your bio-degradable CYGNET pot, or try recycling old pots or plastic yoghurt containers with added drainage holes.
- ✓ Seeds
- ✓ Soil (that needs to be kept moist)
- ✓ A south-or-west-facing windowsill is ideal

Tips:

- ✓ Avoid adding chemicals to plants in your windowsill herb garden, and you'll be growing ORGANIC herbs.
- ✓ Plant the seeds with your mother, and together watch the seeds grow into a beautiful plant.

Don't Have a Lot of Time? Don't Have a Lot of Space? Don't Worry!

You just need a windowsill and some water to grow flowers, herbs, and other plants! It's fun and easy to do!

During the fall and winter, it's cold outside and there are less hours of daylight. This can make it hard to grow plants in the ground. So, try growing a **windowsill garden**. All you need is a sunny spot and a container of soil to get you started.

Herbs (edible plants that are savory, aromatic, and/or medicinal) are an excellent choice for windowsills and are easy to grow – it's so much fun to cut off a few leaves for dinner and eat them with your meal!



Girl's Corner

CYGNET "Sisters" Theme Song

Did you know there are over 400 CYGNETs in the Bay Area and over 1,000 "sisters" across the United States? You might not have met them all yet, but you do have a lot in common. At one of our Tea Talks, a group of CYGNETs who came to the event created the CYGNET Theme Song.

They also sang it in front of their parents and researchers before getting their participation awards and gifts. It was such a fun night! And the theme song is AWESOME. Check it out!



CYGNET
"Sisters" Theme Song
(taken from The Cheetah Girls "Cheetah Sisters")

We're CYGNET sisters.
We stand together.
We make up one big family,
but we don't look the same.
Our feathers are different, different colors.
We make up one big family,
but we don't look the same.
That's why we're cygnets - real cygnets!



Where Does Your Garden Grow?

By Don-Neva E. Johnson

*Did you know you can grow
a garden just about anywhere?
Well, you can!!*

You can grow a garden on a windowsill.



You can grow a garden in a sun box above
your grandma's kitchen sink.

You can grow a row of orchids along
the steps leading up to your house.

You can even grow a garden in a fish tank,
but then it would be called an aquaponic garden.

Some vegetables, flowers and plants grow best in small spaces.

For instance tomatoes grow well in a front yard patio.

Roses grow well in a planter box along a chain link fence.

And even a bamboo plant can grow in the
bathroom next to the medicine cabinet.



I'll bet if you think really hard you can find a unique space to make your garden grow!!

Don-Neva E. Johnson is our CYGNET phlebotomist-the person who collects your blood.

Answers to Word Scrambler (page 3): 1. Growing up 2. Mature 3. Flower 4. Confidence

CYGNET Tea Talks rotate Bay Area locations bi-annually to bring information to participants and their families on a wide range of scientific areas with a focus on the CYGNET Study.

Recapping the Spring 2007 East Bay TEA TALK

The highly successful East Bay Tea Talk on March 9th, *Measuring Environmental Exposures and Research on their Health Effects*, made health into a hands-on experience for CYGNET families! The children explored the Hall of Health Museum and interactively learned about science. Meanwhile, the parents heard from Gayle Windham, a scientist from the California Department of Health Services and a CYGNET Study co-investigator, on environmental exposures and their possible health effects.

Through Dr. Windham's presentation, the audience learned that they are what they eat, breathe, scrub, lather and spray! The personal products which with we come into contact expose us to many different ingredients, some natural and other that may be harmful chemicals.

A chemical's effects on your body is influenced by the harmfulness of the chemical, amount used or exposed to, and length or timing of exposure. That's where scientific research, like the CYGNET Study, comes in, measuring traces of chemicals in participants, also called bio-monitoring. But just finding a chemical doesn't mean there's a negative health effect.

From the information gathered, CYGNET Study investigators can look at whether chemicals affect age at onset of puberty, whether they interact with each other, and/or how the chemicals are handled (or metabolized) in the body. Information from this research can help set priorities for public health agencies and regulatory follow-up.

CYGNET Study participants will receive information about the study results as they are published, and may obtain individual results when available. Currently, the chemicals we are studying do not have safety standards, except for lead, so we won't know what an individual's level means in terms of health, but they can be compared to other girls in the study.

Common Chemical Exposure Resources

Safe Cosmetics:

www.safecosmetics.org

Seafood Consumption:

www.seafoodwatch.org;

www.epa.gov/ost/fish

Organic Foods and Farmer's Markets:

www.pcfma.com

www.beyondpesticides.org

Alternative Cleaning/Household Products:

www.greenguide.org

www.checnet.org

Technical Information about

Various Products:

<http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/>

SAVE THE DATE! Fall 2007 North Bay TEA TALK

Speaking to Your Daughter about Puberty: It's Never Too Early to Talk

Featured Speaker: Louise Greenspan, M.D.

Saturday, October 13, 2007

9:30 am - 11:30 am

San Francisco Bay Model Visitor Center
2100 Bridgeway
Sausalito, California

**Kids will explore the
Bay-Delta Model at 10:00 am.**

<http://www.spn.usace.army.mil/bmvc/>

*The Bay Model is located a short distance north
of San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge
in the city of Sausalito.*

**Please RSVP by October 10, 2007
510-891-3884**

DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO SAUSALITO

Driving from Oakland, take the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, take **Highway 101 South**.

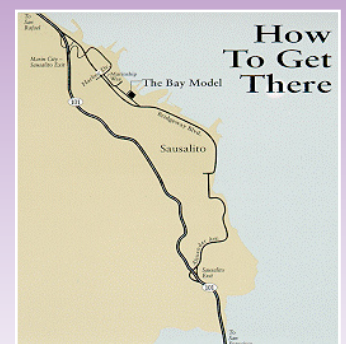
Driving South on Highway 101 take the Sausalito-Marin City exit and take a left at the stop light. Continue under the freeway overpass and take a right at the stop light on Bridgeway. There will be small brown and white Bay Model direction signs along the way. Turn left on Harbor, then almost immediately turn right on Marinship Way and follow the signs to the Bay Model.

Driving North on Highway 101 take the Sausalito-Marin City exit and continue straight at the stop light, you are on Bridgeway. There will be small brown and white Bay Model direction signs along the way. Turn left on Harbor, then almost immediately turn right on Marinship Way and follow the signs to the Bay Model.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO SAUSALITO

From Oakland take Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) train, Transit Bus or Ferry to **San Francisco**; **From San Francisco** take public transportation to Sausalito.

From San Francisco take a Golden Gate Transit Bus; or a Golden Gate Transit Ferry from the Ferry Building; or a Red and White Fleet Ferry from Fisherman Wharf, Pier 43 ½.



NEW !!

Look for the CYGNET Poster Board at your next clinic visit! View clinic news, educational handouts, newsletters, and upcoming events!

SAVE THESE DATES!

✓ **CYGNET Fall Tea Talk**
Saturday, October 13, 2007
9:30-11:30 am
San Francisco Bay Model
2100 Bridgeway
Sausalito, California
FREE

✓ **3rd Annual Bay Area Breast Cancer & the Environment Research Center**
TOWN HALL MEETING
Saturday, March 1, 2008
9:30—2:00 pm
Preservation Park
1233 Preservation Park Way
Oakland, California
FREE

Growth Trivia

Q: Who has more bones: an adult, a teenager, or a baby?

A: A baby has more bones. A baby's body has about 300 bones at birth. These eventually fuse (grow together) to form the 206 bones that adults have.

Q: In the month of September, which 10-year-old will grow faster, Lucy in the U.S. or Jane in Australia?

A: September is a spring month in Australia and a fall month in the U.S. Humans grow more during Spring months than Fall months.

Q: What is the smallest known flower in the world?

A: Water-meal, or *Wolffia globosa*. It is a light green free-floating, rootless plant. Its length and width is only but a millimeter, even smaller than the tip of a needle.



Wolffia globosa



Q: What is the largest known flower in the world?

A: The titan arum lily, or *Amorphophallus titanum* Becc. It grows in the tropical rainforest of Sumatra in Indonesia.

Amorphophallus titanum Becc