

Sleep expert seems to be editing his words



JOHN ROSEMOND
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

a range of outcomes (from potentially beneficial to dangerous and risky) depending on the overall circumstances within which the co-sleeping takes place.”

In a response at Cosleeping.nd.edu, McKenna says he firmly believes co-sleeping is beneficial, as supported by his and others’ refereed published scientific research. He has even written a blog titled Cosleeping and Biological Imperatives: Why Human Babies Do Not and Should Not Sleep Alone, also available at the above Web site.

McKenna lists a number of benefits to co-sleeping, including breast-feeding advantages, superior cognitive ability at age 6 and greater problem-solving independence

during toddlerhood. He also claims to have found that young adults who bed-shared as infants and young children were more satisfied with their bodies and had more secure gender identities.

Nonetheless, a 2002 study by researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, and published in the Journal of Developmental and Behavior Pediatrics found that by age 18, children who had slept with their parents as youngsters showed no advantage over children who had slept alone. The factors looked at included social skills, drug and alcohol use, antisocial behavior, and overall psychological well-being.

Since the late 1970s, I’ve been advising through this column that parents use what

is now known as “graduated extinction.” This involves periodically calming the crying child and increasing the comforting interval over successive nights. Although the research doesn’t affirm the superiority of this method, I think most parents prefer it over letting children “cry it out.”

When one looks at the total body of research into infant and child sleep, the contention that co-sleeping or bed-sharing is superior to solo sleep seems impossible to defend objectively.

Family psychologist John Rosemond answers parents’ questions on his Web site, Rosemond.com.

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SWEETENERS

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“I drink diet soda. I don’t need the calories. My favorite is Fresca, and actually I don’t know what’s in it.”

Part of Williams’ confidence about safety is that the artificial sweeteners are much more intensely sweet than sugar, so people consume very little of them. Most of the white stuff in the packets is filler, not sweetener. Safety tests in animals looked at doses that were hundreds or thousands of times higher.

But critics — particularly of aspartame, sold as Equal or NutraSweet — say health problems like headaches, neurological disorders and cancers are occurring but that regulators are ignoring them.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest, a health advocacy group, slaps an “avoid” label on saccharin and aspartame, but deems sucralose and neotame — a newer, more intense sweetener that is chemically similar to

aspartame — to be safe. The center also warns against acesulfame potassium, a less common sweetener that is rarely found in tabletop packets but is combined with other sweeteners in soda and baked goods for a more sugarlike taste. Williams’ favorite soda, Fresca, for example, is sweetened with acesulfame potassium and aspartame, as are Halls sugar-free cough drops.

For those who turn to stevia, a sweetener derived from a plant, the center gives it a “caution” because cancer studies were conducted in only one species of lab animals. (“Just because a substance is natural does not mean that it is safe,” the center’s Web site warns.)

Dr. Walter Willett, chairman of the nutrition department at the Harvard School of Public Health, says people can make rational decisions, taking into account risks and uncertainty. “What is most important,” he said, “is to avoid risks that are large and clear, like smoking, obesity and regular consumption of full-strength soda.”

SUBSTITUTE

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Even though artificial sweeteners are estimated to be a \$1.5-billion-a-year business, not many companies are searching for new ones. The path to the supermarket can be long, winding and littered with regulatory and commercial obstacles.

Scientist and engineer Gilbert V. Levin, who developed the experiment that reported life on Mars, also discovered a substitute that tastes like sugar and is mostly devoid of calories. The sweetener, tagatose, is in fact a sugar that occurs naturally, in minute quantities, in milk and beets. Clinical studies indicate that it even works as a drug to treat adult diabetes. But Levin was never able to get it manufactured in quantity at a viable cost, and efforts to have it approved as a diabetes drug also have foundered.

Another approach is not to replace sugar but to look for other molecules

that magnify its sweetness. It takes a lot of sugar to activate a sweetnessreceptor, and Senomyx, a company in San Diego, thinks it can find compounds that would reduce the amount needed. PepsiCo is one of the companies with which Senomyx is working.

Ordinary table sugar is sucrose, which consists of two smaller sugars, fructose and glucose. (High-fructose corn syrup is also a combination of fructose and glucose, in almost the same proportions.)

Sweetness enhancers could prove important if it turns out that the fructose portion of sugar is the core cause of ills like diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Because fructose has to be broken down in the liver, the surge of sugar might be overworking the liver. With soda, “you’re just pouring fructose into your liver,” Breslin said.

Glucose is broken down by many cells in the body and by itself would not put as much strain on the liver. But glucose alone is not nearly as sweet.

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POOL

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said. And, it makes other places that serve food to kids consider increasing the nutritional value of what they offer.

“Every step that we takes makes it easier for the next person,” she said.

This Friday, the coalition, in conjunction with the Good Foods Coop, is offering Veggin’ Out at the Pool dinner. Featuring a Kentucky Proud menu, the dinner includes burgers, brats, veggie burgers, side dishes, and dessert.

“Veggin’ Out at the Pool is summer at its best — swimming and a delicious, locally grown dinner at an affordable price,” Courtney said.

Last year, Lexington Parks and Recreation and the coalition created a Better Bites Menu at Southland and Woodland pools. This year, Courtney said, the healthier menu is being offered at the pools at Castlewood and Shillito also.

In addition to normal pool fare, the menu gives swimmers the option to buy grapes, apples, bananas, strawberries, yogurt, and

chicken salad on whole wheat bread at the concession stands.

“Because pool concession stands are like kids’ refrigerators and pantries in the summer, stocking them with healthy food can affect their eating habits. Given that Kentucky has the third highest rate of childhood obesity in the country, it’s important that we make healthy food the norm for our kids everywhere possible,” said Courtney.

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DAVIS

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of recommendation from a school official, wrote an essay and have no less than a 2.0 GPA. Coles said inner city youth were targeted because of their need.

The youth work and learn Wednesdays and Thursdays at Locust Trace AgriScience Farm, an 82-acre working farm and public school off Leestown Road. Classroom subjects include plant and land management, and veterinary science for small animals.

On Fridays, the group goes to Berries on Bryan Station, an organic family farm, to learn about organic farming. And then, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays, they sell their produce at the East End market.

“They get paid for three days of work and they keep their net profits from what they earn on Saturday,” Coles said.

The youth also are accepting donations of bumper crops from farmers to sell at the market.

Although the youth have been working since June 5, the program will have its celebratory launch Thursday, with free food and a concert. The young people will be

there selling their produce as well.

Critical analytical thinking, math, science, budgeting, entrepreneurship and conducting business with the public are just some of the skills the youth are earning, Coles said.

And it doesn’t hurt to have 15 youth gainfully employed during the summer.

There is more. Some of them gained an appreciation for sugar snap peas. “They are learning to eat healthier,” Coles said. “They are learning the benefits of healthier eating habits.”

The experience is another way to get fresh fruits and

vegetables on the dinner tables of families living in the East End, which has been called a food desert.

It is amazing to watch how engaged the youth are in the process and how interested they are in where things come from, Coles said.

“It has sparked in them the understanding they can grow things and sell them in the marketplace,” he said.

It’s a concept most country folk already have learned.

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