



## May is National Asthma & Allergies Awareness Month

As spring approaches, many kids and their parents are forced to spend their days indoors due to the misery of allergy symptoms. In fact, 60 million children will be affected by allergies this year, resulting in more than 14 million missed school days. Their parents will miss more than 3 million workdays.

### *The following are red flags to determine if a child needs testing:*

- History of asthma (allergy of the lung)
- Middle ear infections
- Rashes related to food allergy
- Hyperplasia of tonsils and adenoids
- Loud snoring, disturbed sleep, restless sleep

If a child has any of the above symptoms, allergy “blood testing” is the next proactive step a parent can take. The benefits include:

- Possible prevention of asthma, which 40% of children develop by age four due to undiagnosed allergies. Asthma in children can account for 11 deaths daily, or over 4,000 deaths each year.
- Blood testing is used to detect potentially lethal allergies—such as insect venoms and food allergies—as well as non-lethal allergies.
- Most blood tests are available nationwide.
- Blood tests can be given to children as young as three months old.



“The idea is to intervene as early as possible to stop what’s called the allergy march,” said Dr. Monet Sayegh, an immunologist in Simi Valley. “Early intervention certainly has benefits in stopping asthma in children and adults.”

*\*Source: Siemens Medical Solutions Diagnostics. Local consultant: Dr. Monet Sayegh; mona.sayegh@siemens.com.*

## Poor Vision in Children



Sight may be the most precious of the senses. A child’s visual system develops in the first five years of life. Many problems can be remedied if they are found early. When an infant is born, only part of the connections are complete between the eye and the brain. The maturation of these pathways continues for the next several years and is complete sometime around the fifth birthday.

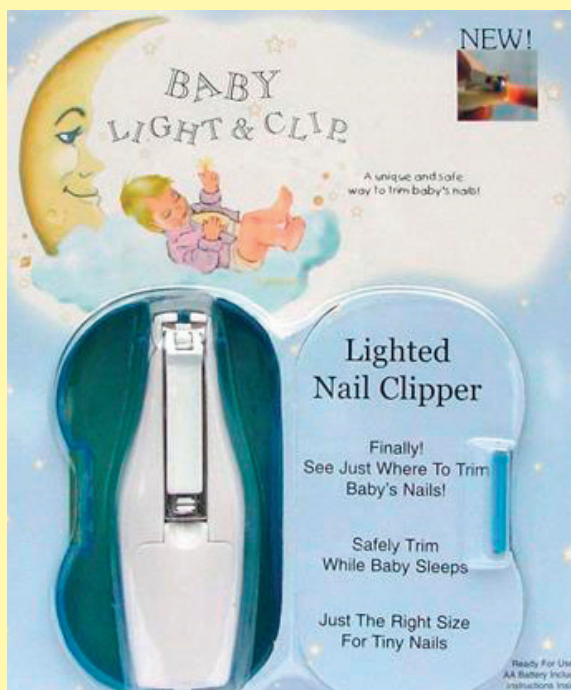
If a child has an inherent weakness in one eye, the brain can sense this and decide to not waste valuable energy completing all the neural connections to the “weak eye.” Unfortunately, if this is not discovered during the age of plasticity (0 to 5 years), then no amount of therapy later will cause new pathways to form. This kind of residual weakness is called “amblyopia” and can cause permanent poor vision in one eye that is completely unresponsive to treatment.

On the other hand, if a weak eye is found before the age of five, then eyeglasses combined with patching of the stronger eye can stimulate the brain to make all the connections. This early detection can bring the eye back to 20/20 vision.

It is very important for every child to have a complete and dilated exam by an ophthalmologist (M.D.) well before the age of five years. Luckily, virtually all insurance plans cover such visits.

*\*Source: Ventura Eye Institute, Camarillo, CA. Information: (805) 388-1211.*

## Enabling & Enlightening



It seems that necessity was the mother of a “new mother’s” invention recently. Calling herself a “mom inventor,” Laurie Gadbois created “Baby Light & Clip”® to tackle that terrible task of trimming the tiniest nails of humankind. In this “fully loaded” package, nail clippers and the light are just the beginning. It comes in a travel case, with a tray for clippings, safety guards and a “comfort control handle.”

The inception of Gadbois’ new product began when her son, Tor, was born. When she encountered the common problems clipping a newborn’s nails, she turned to the internet for answers. “In every article it said, ‘It is best to trim a baby’s nails while they are sleeping,’” she noted. “It was hard enough to see his tiny nails in the daylight, much less in a dark or dimly lit room.” It sells for \$14.99 and can be ordered by calling (800) 701-8210.