

New Mothers' Support Group Newsletter



MITA (P) No. 60/02/98

January & February 2009

Our Next Meetings

Monday 9th February at 10am

Location: Tudor Room, The British Club

Cost: \$10 (cash only please)

Topic: MISP (Massage in Schools Program)

Speaker: Deborah Nelson, Certified MISP & Certified Infant Massage Instructor

Deborah, a certified CIMI (Certified Infant Massage Instructor), will show how mums can introduce massage to their new babies and the cues that baby will give mums in response. Deborah is a mum of four children, ranging in age from 18 to 2 years old.

MISP is an international program created for children between the ages of 4-12. It is based on an ethos of care and respect and recognised as an effective anti-bullying strategy. MISP is an effective tool for improving children's mental health. It is also an innovative program providing teachers with a tool to bring LIFE into the school curriculum in a way that respects the nature of children.

Please register your intention to attend by e-mailing info@nmsg-singapore.com, subject 'February Talk' by Friday 6th February.

Monday 9th March at 10am

Location: Tudor Room, The British Club

Cost: \$10 (cash only please)

Topic: Osteopathy - Start them young

Speakers: Adrian Lalani - B.A.(Hons), B.Sc.(Hons), UK Registered Osteopath and Virginia Tang - B.App.Sc.(Clin.Sc.), B.Ost.Sc.(RMIT), Australian Registered Osteopath

Newborns and infants can suffer from problems, discomfort and pain associated with: traumatic childbirth, flattened or mis-shaped heads, reflux/colic, constipation, inability to latch on to the breast, breathing difficulties, sinusitis/excessive production of mucus, chest infections and ear infections and other issues.

Such issues can be treated with very gentle Osteopathic treatment. Adrian and Virginia from Osteopathic Health Care will explain how and why it may be important to "start them young".

Please register your intention to attend by e-mailing info@nmsg-singapore.com, subject 'March Talk' by Friday 6th March.

Walking in the Botanic Gardens

Time: Tuesday 3rd February, 9.30am

Location: Visitors Centre, Cluny Court side

Bring your children (and their prams) for a sociable 30 minute walk followed by a drink and a chat at Cafe Les Amis. Bring water, insect repellent and wear comfortable shoes. It's a great way to meet other mums and for the toddlers to let off some steam.



2009 Social Dates for Your Diary!

Friday 30th January

Friday 27th March

Friday 27th February

Friday 24th April

Time: 3 – 4.30pm

Cost: \$5 (Cash only please)

Venue: Gymboree, #03-21 Tanglin Mall

The socials offer a great opportunity to meet other parents in a similar situation to you and for the babies/toddlers to interact with others.

Dr Mark Loh, Paediatric specialist with International Medical Clinic (IMC), attends the socials (subject to his patient appointments finishing on time at the IMC) to answer your questions. A digital baby scale will be there for your use and is a handy way to keep track of how much your baby is growing!

Gymboree is a great place to play and socialise so bring your children along for a fun afternoon. Please note no food or drinks are permitted at Gymboree but there are benches just outside where you can sit and feed children.

Adults are required to wear socks. Places are limited and it is on a 'first come first served basis' for entry.

Gymboree staff have asked NMSG members not to arrive earlier than 3pm for the socials as they need time to clean the room.

**Available at the TALKS:
digital baby scales, toys, tea & coffee
and NMSG library**

Group News

Kerensa Heywood

2009 starts with a rather bigger committee than we've had in a while which is good news! We have four new committee members to welcome. Jenny Watts and Louise Boulos will be helping Hilary with the Friday socials. Norah Salazar has taken over playgroups from Rebecca. Majella McIntosh will be organising the monthly walks in the Botanic Gardens – see page 7 for further details. A warm welcome to all four. Look out for their profiles in the March newsletter edition. Of course we would still like more people to join the committee as many hands make light work! In particular, we no longer have anyone on the committee in a general role so if you're interested in doing something, please contact us.

Unfortunately due to work commitments, Rebecca Anderson has had to stand down after only a few months looking after playgroups. She has done a terrific job and everything is in good order to handover to her replacement. A big thank you to Rebecca for all the hard work. Siobhan Spillane has also decided to stand down after several years on the committee. Siobhan has been a wonderful committee member, always willing to help out and will be sorely missed.

Another change to the committee is that I am standing down as Chair but will stay on to help with the talks. As organising talks and speakers is quite a lot of work, we have decided to split the role with one (or more) person organising the talks – room booking,

registrations, etc. – and one person (Ana Gavin) organising the speakers.

Congratulations to Hilary Rabey and her husband John on the safe arrival of their son Jude. He was due on 18th December and Hilary was convinced he'd be a week late and arrive on Christmas Day - she was spot on as Jude arrived on Christmas morning!

We'd like to thank Toy Rental Club, International Medical Clinic & Amanda Osbourne, Pharmaplus, Blu Lily and Baby-U photography for supporting our Christmas party.

We would like members' feedback about the party so please see page 4 for details. Also a huge thank you to the committee for arranging the party. Considerable background work was involved in putting it all together and whilst not all of the committee could be there on the day, everyone contributed to the success of the event. And the final thank you is to Nick, Katrina's husband, who was kind enough to take an afternoon off work to be our Santa.

We look forward to seeing you at NMSG events this year. If you have any suggestions, comments or constructive criticism please let us know. We'd love to hear from you. If you have energy/enthusiasm to spare (and share!) then please consider joining the NMSG Committee.

NMSG Committee Contacts

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the respective writers and do not necessarily state or reflect the views and opinions of the New Mothers Support Group (NMSG). You are strongly advised to check the qualifications and credentials of any healthcare services or any other persons or services mentioned in this newsletter.

What's On/Where to go/What to do in January and February 2009

Katrina Downer

Things to watch / do

- 2 – 3 Jan **Father, Son and Ox visit the market and other stories** Join Father and Son as they take Ox on a long journey to the market on a hot, hot day. Come play with Tick, Tack and Tock as they share delightful songs and stories. Welcome the Year of the Ox dressed in your best Chinese New Year clothes! Audience seated on the floor, recommended for children aged 2 to 4 years old. *Esplanade Recital Studio | Fri & Sat, 11:00AM, 02:00PM & 04:00PM | \$35 - \$180 per ticket | www.sistic.com.sg*
- 2 – 22 Jan **Cinderella** Rodgers & Hammerstein's Starring internationally-acclaimed Tony Award winner Lea Salonga and an international Broadway cast. It will be a glitzy and lavish production with amazing costumes and set designs. *Esplanade Theatre | 3pm Sat/Sun Matinee, 8pm | \$35 - \$180 per ticket | www.sistic.com.sg*
- 8 Jan Box office opens for **ACT3! Childrens Festival** (March), 20% discount on tickets purchased before 18 Jan. Visit www.sistic.com.sg
- 7 – 18 Jan **M1 Singapore Fringe Festival** www.singaporefringe.com
- 25 Jan – 1 Feb **Sentosa Flowers 2009** Celebrate the season of Spring with a myriad of colourful blooms at the annual floral extravaganza, Sentosa Flowers 2009. *Imbiah Lookout, Sentosa | 25 Jan: 6pm - 2am, 26 Jan - 1 Feb: 9am - 10pm daily | free event admission | www.sentosa.com.sg/sentosafowers*
- 30 and 31Jan **Chingay Parade – Asia's grandest streets and floats parade** Annual street parade, showcasing local and foreign cultural performing groups. Be immersed in the swirl of music, dance and the myriad colours of Singapore 's unique cultural traditions. *City Hall to Raffles Avenue | 8pm | www.chingay.org.sg*
- 4 Feb **The Journey West – White Bone Fiend** (Mandarin with English subtitles)
A parable about trust, friendship and compassion comes alive in the hands of puppet ensemble, Paper Monkey. Young audiences take part in the battle between good and evil by assisting to determine the fate of the demoness in this classic tale with a twist! There will also be a hands-on demonstration on how to manipulate the puppets after the performance. *Esplanade Recital Studio | \$20 | for children 6years + | 7.30pm |www.sistic.com.sg*
- 8 Feb **Thaipusam** (not for the squeamish) Thaipusam celebrates the birthday of the Hindu deity Subramaniam. On this occasion, Hindus show the sincerity of their faith. To do this, a devotee would pierce his cheeks, tongue, face or other suitable body parts with sharp objects. Next his friends or relatives load a kavadi on his shoulders. Finally, in a trance-like manner, he goes on a 4km journey of faith. | *All day, Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple on Serangoon Road.*
- 5 Mar – 11 Apr **Bear and Chicken go camping** One night, best friends Chicken and Bear go on a camping adventure in the Great Outdoors. They find the perfect spot under a beautiful starry sky and throughout the night, they make lots of amazing discoveries about the world around us. Have you ever wondered where the sun goes at night? Or how crickets can make such loud noises? *SRT's The Little Company (for children) | DBS Arts Centre - Home of SRT | 20 Merbau Road | www.srt.com.sg*
- 7 – 17 Mar **Children First Festival** The hugely popular international festival returns with a range of performances such as story telling, music, puppetry, theatre and circus. www.sistic.com.sg
- Sports**
- 3 – 18 Jan **Volvo Ocean Race** *Various venues Marina Bay, Sentosa, off East Coast Park | www.volvoceanracesingapore.com/*
- 22 Feb **OCBC Cycle Singapore 2009** Singapore's first mass participation cycling event on fully closed public roads. www.ocbc.cyclesingapore.com.sg

NMSG Christmas function - your feedback welcomed!

Kerensa Heywood

The NMSG is a non-profit organisation and any profit (minimal) supports events such as the Christmas function. The Christmas party has always been a low cost function, replacing the November and December socials. As with all other NMSG events it is open to anyone wishing to attend with non-members being able to join on the day.

In the past, the venue was a condo function room with capacity for about 40 people plus room for overspill onto the balcony area.

In 2007, within a couple of days of advertising the party, 80 people had replied to say they would attend. Quite a few more tried to register and were disappointed when we had to turn them away.

With similarly high membership numbers in 2008, the committee realised the need for a larger venue to cater for the anticipated demand. We looked at venues that could accommodate over a 100 people and were frustrated at the options available within our limited budget. Therefore, we were delighted when the International Medial Clinic offered us the function room at Camden Medical Centre. The function room capacity is 150 people standing and with toys/buggies we estimated the room could cope with 130 people.

The response to this year's Christmas party invitation was overwhelming and we had to turn people away. A few registered and then didn't turn up. A few others were kind enough to let us know they couldn't make it and we could advise people on the waiting list.

We're sorry, and disappointed, that we couldn't accommodate everyone who wanted to attend. The committee has reviewed the event, what worked well and what didn't. One thing decided is that next year only current members will receive a party invitation.

The limiting factor for the party is the budget. In 2008 we were lucky enough to have the venue and toy hire donated to the NMSG, which meant that we could keep the entrance fee low – only \$5 per family. Presents from Santa were an additional \$5 per child. Without such support the cost per family would have been much higher.

We have received positive feedback about the Christmas social. However, we would like to hear your views to assist us in improving our future Christmas events. Send an e-mail to info@nmsg-singapore.com with a subject line of 'Christmas Party Feedback'.

Some questions you might consider:

- How would you rate the event – good, average, excellent?
- Should we charge for every adult attending?
- Would you be prepared to pay a higher entry fee?
- Do you want snacks and drinks provided?
- What is the priority: a present from Santa or the photo opportunity or both?
- Was the event long enough, too long, too short?

Untried and untested - NMSG Committee members

Baby goods to your holiday destination

Kerensa Heywood

Baby Holidays is an online service (UK based) where you can order baby goods for delivery to your holiday destination. They sell nappies, food, lotions, medicine – all the things you might need when travelling with a baby or toddler. It sounds like a good idea and could save heaps of space in your luggage for other essentials. They will deliver pretty much anywhere, subject to customs. Check it out at www.baby-holidays.com

Locally made organic clothing and spa discounts

Katrina Downer

Belle and Dean organic clothes - simple, well made, imaginative and stylish bodysuits, t-shirts and tank tops for babies, toddlers and women (not the body suits!) in organic cotton. Produced here in Singapore the soft organic clothing has a subtle environmental message with printed images of endangered or threatened animals and plants. The prints are unique and printed using water based inks and hand printed silk screening. Prices range from \$30 – 50 per item and there is free delivery within Singapore. www.belleanddean.com

Spa discounts - with an incredible number of spas and beauty treatment options available in Singapore it can be time consuming and stressful to find one that suits you and has the best offers and packages.

Totallyspa.com is an online database that provides information on all the latest promotions available. You can search for spas using parameters such as name, location, price and type. Select the one you want from the promotions available, print the voucher and redeem it at the spa you choose.

November talk notes: A Guide To Childhood & Travel Vaccinations

Dr Ting-Yean W. Sullivan, International Medical Clinic

No vaccine is 100% safe or 100% effective BUT there are many benefits and few risks.

Common childhood vaccines and diseases

BCG: targets tuberculosis; offered at birth in Singapore; offers 50% protection.

Hepatitis B: offered at birth in Singapore; administered in a series of 3 doses; 95% success rate.

Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough)(DTaP): primary series of 3 injections, with boosters at 15-18months and 4-6 years. Tetanus booster at 11 years and then 10 year intervals.

Haemophilus Influenzae B: HIB vaccine given in infancy as 3 repeated doses with DTaP, with booster recommended at 12-18 months.

Polio: Trivalent polio vaccine (injection), require 3 priming doses, and at least one booster after 12 months, one of the safest vaccines in use today.

Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR): single dose results in protection of 80%-100%, 73% of children given 1 dose of MMR still have protective antibodies after 10 years.

Dr. Sullivan noted that some parents start to suspect that their child is autistic around the age of 18-20 months. This is the time that children start to socialize. Parents may associate a link with their child's behaviour and MMR, due to the fact that the MMR was the last major vaccine administered.

WHO Statement: no evidence to confirm allegations of an association of MMR vaccination with the occurrence of autism.

Meningococcal C Meningitis: Men C causes 30% of all meningitis cases. Men B causes majority of cases in developing world and Men A in Africa, given in UK at 2, 3 & 4 months with catch-up booster after 1 year. Given in Australia as a single dose after 12 months. >90% protection.

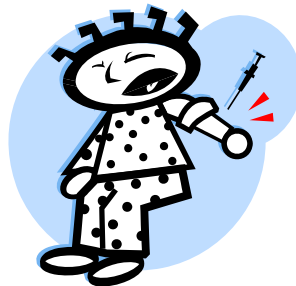
Pneumococcal (Prevenar vaccine): can prevent >85% of pneumonia, meningitis, blood infections in children < 5 years, recommended for children < 2 years.

Chickenpox (Varicella vaccine): single dose in children aged 12-18 months, 95% protection rate, immunity at least 10 years.

Rotavirus: commonest cause of gastroenteritis and dehydration, oral vaccine in 2 doses, from 6 weeks on, not for infants > 6 months. Dr. Sullivan noted that the possible side effects of this vaccine may outweigh its benefits.

Examples of Childhood Vaccination Schedule

Time	Vaccines
Birth	BCG HEPB#1
2months	DTaP, HIB, IPV, HEPB#2, Rota, PCV
4months	DTaP, HIB, IPV, Rota, PCV
6months	DTap, HIB, IPV, HEPB#3, PCV
12months	MenC, PCV
15months	Varicella, MMR
18months	DTaP, Hib, IPV
4-5years	DTaP, IPV, MMR
12years	TB



When should my child not be vaccinated?

True Contraindications:

- History of severe allergic reactions after prior dose of vaccine.
- Live vaccines in severely immuno-compromised.

Precautions with DTaP vaccines:

- Very high fever, inconsolable crying, collapsed state or seizures after previous dose.

Mild cold, diarrhoea, fever, moderate local reactions or family history of seizures are NOT contraindications.

BCG Vaccine

- Target disease = tuberculosis (TB)
- Offered at birth in Singapore
- TB prevalent in some areas of South East Asia
- TB is spread through airborne transmission (e.g. coughing)
- BCG vaccine offers 50% protection

November talk notes: A Guide To Childhood & Travel Vaccinations cont.

Dr Ting-Yean W. Sullivan, International Medical Clinic

Recommended Travel Vaccines

Hepatitis A (Havrix)

- Endemic in countries with poor sanitation in SE Asia.
- Excreted in faeces and transmitted via contaminated food or water supply.
- Causes fever, jaundice, nausea and vomiting.
- Given in 2 doses (6-12 months apart)
- >90% protection 4 weeks after 1st dose.
- Can be given in combination with Hepatitis B (if not vaccinated as a baby) as Twinrix.
- Adverse effects: local soreness, headache, fatigue.

Typhoid Fever

- Caused by salmonella typhi through contaminated food or drink.
- Leads to fever, abdominal pain, diarrhoea.
- Highly endemic in Indonesia and India.
- Vaccine given as a single muscular injection in children >2years, followed by 3 yearly boosters.
- Recommended for frequent travellers to endemic countries.
- Adverse effects: usually mild and transient, injection site pain/swelling (10-20%), fever or tiredness.

Influenza

- Can cause high fevers and complication like acute bronchitis, croup, pneumonia, inflammation or Reye's syndrome in children.
- Minor or major epidemics in winter.
- 2 doses given 1 month apart for 1st flu vaccination in children <9years, then given yearly.
- Not recommended in infants <6 months.
- Contraindicated in children with hypersensitivity to eggs/egg white.
- Children with fever >38.5C should not be vaccinated until symptoms have abated.
- This vaccine is especially recommended if you frequently travel across hemispheres.

Other Travel Specific Vaccines:

Indications based on country and length of stay:

Rabies: children >1 year staying in endemic areas (Indonesia, Cambodia, East Timor) for prolonged periods (avoid contact with animals).

Japanese Encephalitis: children > 1 year living in endemic areas (East Timor, Vietnam, rural China) >6 months or travelling to rural areas >1 month.

Meningococcal (ACYW): Children >2 years travelling to sub-Saharan Africa or Middle-East.

Questions asked at the talk:

Q: *Influenza shots for kids... at what age should they start having them?*

A: The many strains of the influenza virus mutate rapidly, therefore, there are new vaccines yearly. The flu vaccine given 2007 will give no protection for the 2008 flu season. The U.S. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccinating young children 6 months and older.

Q: *Rotavirus - how does you if your child has it?*

A: We can confirm rotavirus in a stool test

Q: *What shots should mums, dads and any helpers in your house be sure to be up to date with - when caring for little children and babies?*

A: The minimum for adults around kids is the DTP (done every 10 years after the childhood series is completed). For staying in Singapore, we also discuss adult polio vaccination and Hepatitis A/B coverage when we counsel our IMC patients.

Q: *Should one have Chicken Pox vaccinations?*

A: The varicella vaccine is part of the U.S. and Australian vaccine schedules. It is not part of the compulsory schedule for Singapore or many other countries. Do I recommend it? Let's just say all my kids have received the vaccination.

Dr Ting-Yean W. Sullivan is an MD from the Medical College of Georgia USA, and Certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. Dr. Sullivan completed her Family Medicine training in Michigan and California and her interests include childhood asthma, food allergies, and women's health. She has also been on medical missions to Ecuador and Zimbabwe.

Dr. Sullivan has relocated back home to Singapore after 20 years in the USA, with her husband Dr. Troy Sullivan, a Specialist Internist with Johns Hopkins, and is the proud mother of 4 children, 2 of whom are adopted.

International Medical Clinic, Camden Medical Centre #14-06 | Tel: 6733 4440 and Jelita Shopping Centre #02- 08 | Tel: 6465 4440 | www.imc-healthcare.com

Kids playing in the kitchen

Katrina Downer

Involving toddlers and children in the kitchen can be fun for everyone (and perhaps a little messy!). Encouraging children to enjoy cooking can help nurture a lifelong love of good food and eating well, tempting even fussy eaters to try different foods. The cooking recipes in this month's newsletter on page 8 are fun ones to try with your toddler/children.

Below are some cooking and baking classes available that your child or toddler might enjoy.....

Bakerzin – Makers of exquisite deserts Bakerzin recently launched cooking classes for children from age 4 to 12 years of age. There are over 10 classes to choose from. As part of the 1.5 hour cooking class the children take home a baking uniform, certificate, recipe and a photo of themselves cooking. Repeat attendees receive a discount when they come back with their Bakerzin Kids uniform. www.bakerzin.com

The boutique bakery **Patissier's Kitchen** offers fun times with Missy Chef Joey for children aged 7 to 10 in a two day workshop (4.5 hours per day). Children can learn how to make animals out of icing dough,

decorate gingerbread persons and cupcakes in one workshop and brownies in the other. www.thepatissierskitchen.com

Cooking workshops are available at child friendly restaurant **Globetrotters** for children aged 4+ all year for a group booking or as a birthday party activity and during the school holidays. Children can learn how to bake pizza, muffins, cookies, or unleash their creativity in decorating beautiful cupcakes. You can join alongside your child for a fun afternoon. Information on the various workshops and prices is available at www.globetrotters.com.sg

Genius R Us is an enrichment school that runs over 25 baking and cooking courses for children aged 4 – 12 years covering everything from chocolate cream puffs and éclairs, to mooncakes, to Japanese cotton cheese cake, muffins, ice cream and a lot more. For children aged 2.5 – 3.5 years they offer pizza and ice cream making. It also has a Little Entrepreneurs Camp in the school holidays where children learn to set up a real life café. www.geniusrus.com

2009 Year of the Ox

Katrina Downer



In 2009 the Chinese New Year will be celebrated in Singapore with public holidays on 26th and 27th January and will be the Year of the Ox.

The 26th of January will mark the beginning of the 15-day festivities, which continue till 9th February, 2009.

The *Year of the Ox* has special significance for people born in 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997 and of course 2009. The basic characteristic of an Ox is methodical and a calm, hardworking, dependable and patient, materialistic and an ambitious character.

Babies who will be born in the Chinese New Year of Ox, 2009 could have the following traits: Dependable with leadership qualities, patient, strong and responsible, and they will be great in organizing. They are also honest, reliable and logical, that is why people go to them for advice (when they are older!).

Walking at the Botanical Gardens

Elizabeth Scott

You would think that trying to get some fresh air in Singapore shouldn't be hard, but by the time we get our little munchkins ready to head out, it would be too hot to stroll around in the great outdoors. So, it's bye-bye fresh air, hello air-conditioned mall. It's a shame, being outside is definitely good for the kids and of course, we all could use a bit of a stroll with some adult company. If that's not enough reason to join us at the Botanical Gardens for a walk with other NMSG mums, we don't know what is.

Call us crazy but we've taken our monthly walks to the next level and organized a separate running group for mums – either with prams or without. If you are interested in joining us for a refreshing jog, send us an email. If the thought of running is a little out of your league at this point, no worries. We've still got the walks to help burn those calories.

For more information on the walks/runs, feel free to contact us at info@nmsg-singapore.com

Talk reminder: 19th January - Making the most of Singapore with kids

Singapore might be small but there is certainly no shortage of child-friendly things to do and places to see. Trish Van Putten, one of the past contributors to the NMSG 'Living in Singapore' guide will share some of her experiences and personal favourites for different age groups. This includes places to go, to eat or to shop, which are baby/child friendly. 10am, Tudor Room, The British Club.

Please register your intention to attend by e-mailing info@nmsg-singapore.com, subject 'January Talk' by Friday 16th January 2009.



Quick 'n' easy recipes

Pasta bake

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

Macaroni pasta
Cheese sauce (from jar, packet or make your own)
Tinned tuna
Grated cheese (whatever you like)
Dried herbs (Oregano is good)

METHOD

Grease a baking dish. Preheat oven to 180°C.
Cook pasta in a large saucepan of boiling water, following packet directions, until just tender. Drain pasta, return to saucepan and stir in cheese sauce, and tuna.
Spoon mixture into baking dish and sprinkle the grated cheese and some dried herbs over the pasta. If the pasta and sauce are still hot you can simply place under a grill. Otherwise bake for about 25 minutes until golden and heated through.

Notes:

Great meal to prepare ahead, cover and refrigerate. Take out of the fridge 10 minutes before baking. Depending on your kids' vegetable intake, add some peas, creamed corn, chopped or tinned tomato, basil or parsley to the bake. Tuna could also be substituted with ham or chicken.

Very Quick Chocolate Cake

INGREDIENTS

110g margarine
110g soft brown sugar
110g golden syrup
110g plain flour
55g cocoa
1 egg
140ml milk
1½ level teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda

METHOD

Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease a cake tin (about 20cm x 20cm or two small sandwich tins) and line the bottom with parchment paper. Put the margarine, brown sugar and syrup in a saucepan and heat gently until the margarine and syrup have melted. Turn off the heat. Meanwhile sift together the flour, cocoa and bicarbonate of soda to remove any lumps. Beat the egg into the milk and pour into the saucepan, stirring quickly to combine. Next add the flour, cocoa and bicarbonate of soda and stir until it has all been combined - easiest with a balloon whisk.

Pour into the prepared tin (note batter is very runny) and bake for 20 - 25 minutes until cake is firm and springs back when you press it.

Sandwich or cover with butter cream or chocolate fudge icing. This recipe is also good for cup cakes.

Restaurant Review - Tambuah Mas (Paragon)

Elizabeth Scott

In a country like Singapore, we're certainly spoiled for choice when it comes to getting good Asian cuisine. Most hawker centers and food courts serve up pretty good local and regional dishes at a very low price. However, it can sometimes be quite difficult to enjoy your meal when you're sweating buckets at the stuffy hawker centers or struggling to be heard over the din in the claustrophobic food courts with their, let's just say, very good acoustics. And yet in these tough economic times, dining at restaurants could really burn a hole in your pocket. That's why Indonesian restaurant, Tambuah Mas is such a godsend. Located very conveniently at kid/parent-friendly Paragon shopping mall, Tambuah Mas offers high quality, authentic Indonesian cuisine at very reasonable prices.

Having been raised on my grandmother's expert home-cooked Indonesian cuisine, I can claim to be a judge with discerning taste and Tambuah Mas

certainly delivers. From the exotic tastes of their Sop Buntut (Makassar style spicy oxtail soup) and the rustic homey flavors of their Lontong Capgome (mixed vegetables and rice cakes in spiced coconut milk) to the all-time local favourite Beef Rendang, it is home-style Indonesian fare at its finest. Their Es Apokat (avocado puree with mocca syrup) and Gado Gado (mixed vegetables, tofu and emping crackers in peanut dressing) are fun and healthy dishes that will be a hit with kids.

The service is also great with friendly and accommodating waiting staff plus the décor of the restaurant is exotic and cozy. If you haven't sampled Indonesian cuisine yet, make Tambuah Mas your first stop. It won't break the bank and it's a great place to take the whole family.

290 Orchard Road, Paragon 2, #B1-47 (Basement 1), S 238859, Tel: 6733 2220 | 11am to 10pm daily

Notice Board

If you are looking to buy second hand items, have any items to sell, or would like to advertise a garage sale please click on Notice Board: www.nmsg-singapore.com.

LIS Booklet

The updated NMSG booklet "Living in Singapore with Kids" costs \$15 and is available at NMSG talks & socials, Pharmaplus in Camden Medical Centre and Mother & Child in Tanglin Mall. It is packed full of useful information and is great for newcomers to Singapore or new parents.

Committee Vacancies

If you can spare some time and would be interested in joining the committee please e-mail info@nmsg-singapore.com to find out about vacant positions. We'd love to hear from you!

Playgroups

To join a playgroup, or start up a new one, complete the playgroups form at www.nmsg-singapore.com.sg. Playgroups are updated and arranged once a month, and they usually arrange to meet once a week.

Tell us what you think!

Do you have an idea for a NMSG talk? Is there a product, place, event, book or thing that you'd like reviewed? The newsletter is to provide information and ideas that you might find useful, so email your thoughts to us at info@nmsg-singapore.com with 'newsletter contribution' in the subject header.

We'd also like to hear any thoughts you have about the New Mothers Support Group and the newsletter - what you like, what can be improved. We look forward to hearing from you!

New Mothers Support Group Member Discounts

NMSG members are entitled to claim a discount with the following companies on presentation of a current NMSG membership card. For internet orders, the companies may need to verify your membership by contacting the Membership Secretary before processing your order.

The Toy Rental Club: Hire buggies, car seats, cots and equipment, toys for all ages. 10% discount. www.toyrentalclub.com; Tel. 6276 7602.

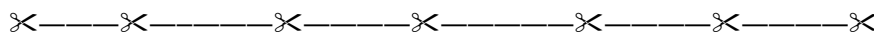
Sweet Vanilla: Sweet Vanilla is a fun and fresh Australian maternity brand specialising in funky maternity tops for the flourishing belly! 10% discount on maternity clothing. www.sweetvanilla.com.au

Canvas Art: Turn your photos and digital images into works of art to display in your home. All canvases are printed in vibrant, beautiful colour onto gallery-grade canvas and then stretched across a sturdy wooden frame. They are offering offering a 10% discount on all packages to NMSG on production of a current membership card. www.canvasart.com.sg

Pharmaplus: stocks pharmaceutical products, vitamins, health supplements and a wide range of products for mothers, babies and children. 10% discount and a \$5 voucher for initial purchases of \$50+. Located at Camden Medical Centre. www.pharmaplus.com.sg; Tel. 6887 3456.

Baby U International: child friendly photography studio offering a 10% discount on all packages to NMSG on production of a current membership card. www.babyu.com.sg | Tel. 6405 5093

Furnstyles: a range of handcrafted organic wooden and educational toys. 10% discount off all items to NMSG members. www.mayaorganic.com | Tel. 9737 8593



2009 Public Holidays* and Festivals

New Years Day*	1 st January
Chinese New Year *	26 th and 27 th January
Thaipusam	8 th February
St Valentines Day	14 th February
Mothering Sunday	22 nd March (UK and Ireland)

Mums-on-a-mission

Dipa Swaminathan, NSMG member

Announcing a new play group in Singapore called Moms-on-a-Mission! This is a play group just like any other, but with the added feature of the moms getting together to discuss and work on projects with a view to making a meaningful contribution to society. The concept will appeal to moms out there who want to find good playmates and worthwhile activities for their children, while at the same time explore opportunities to make a difference. The playgroup was initially designed for children aged 12 to 36 months, but there is no strict age limit. Any member in the group is welcome to propose ideas and the group then votes on what project to pursue. For example, it may be something as simple, but valuable, as collecting used baby bottles for orphanages in Cambodia.

Anyone interested can check out www.meetup.com/Moms-on-a-Mission-Playgroup or contact Dipa on tel. 9018 3764.

Tips and Tricks in Raising Children

Ana Gavin

Sleep is golden - a nap a day allows your child/children's brain to organize the information received all morning (at this age children are constantly learning new things, everything is new to them) and allows the body to recover from all the excitement and energy burned in building up their muscles during play.

Great ideas, fabulous learning and development - follow your child's lead and he/she/they can take you on an exciting adventure. Along the way, with your support and especially your interest, they will develop very important skills such as:

- Language

- a) talk, talk, describe what you are doing and thinking, read them a story, this is great speech modelling from which your offspring will benefit extraordinarily and plus they will get to know the greatest people in the world much better: their Parents!
- b) listen, listen, listen and ask questions when your child is drawing, playing pretend, eating, or any other moment and you will be supporting his/her/their language development along with strengthening the bond between you and them.

- **Problem solving** - let them find out by themselves

how to do it, every time they ask you a question reply "what do you think" and show interest in finding out their answer, you will be amazed and dazzled by your own child.

Water, water, bring the bottle everyday - Singapore is a very hot country and your child/children spend the day at light speed, imagine how thirsty they get!

By having a water bottle they can easily take a sip every now and then without having to interrupt other more interesting things that they are doing: like running, drawing, reading, etc.

Drawings are a window to your child's thoughts - sit for 5 minutes (or more if you can) with your child when she/he/they want to make a drawing or paint and ask them open questions such as "would you like to tell me what is happening in your drawing?". You will be discovering a world of imagination and at the same time you will get information about how they think and perceive the world around them. By taking the time to sit with them and ask questions you will be promoting your child's attention span and making him/her/they feel valued, boosting their self-esteem.

A happy and self-confident child will easily learn, as he/she is more willing to take risks, and make friends.

NMSG Library News

The NMSG library has over 200 titles and is available to all members. How does it work? As a member you can borrow up to two books during our monthly Monday talk and keep them for up to two months. There is a fine of \$1 per book per month for late books. Before you can borrow a book, a cash deposit of \$20 is required which can be reclaimed once the books have been returned. Most people choose to leave a deposit with us for several years and continue to borrow books regularly. The deposit system was introduced a few years ago when it was found that too many books were disappearing, sometimes being packed into containers, only to resurface on another continent. Its easy enough to do.

It is very easy to return books. If you can't make it to one of the monthly talks, books can be returned at any time to the British Club reception. If you leave your books at reception, please attach your name as sometimes there is more than one copy of the same title out on loan. Please also then email the NMSG to confirm you have returned the book so we can ensure its retrieved from the British Club reception. If you can't make it to the British Club then you can return books at the Friday Social in Gymboree (dates on the website). Please note that Gymboree cannot except books on our behalf so they can only be returned there during a Friday Social.

Where funds allow, we try to add new titles to keep the library up to date. If you come across a new book which you think our members will enjoy, please let us know. New titles also come to the library through our members who kindly donate books to us.

Elizabeth Scott is currently taking stock of all our books to update our library list. We are looking to hold a book sale around March/April to reduce the number of multiple copies we have of some books and to generate funds to purchase new editions for the library. Make sure you keep an eye out for details of the sale in the next newsletter!

If you have any unwanted books that you'd like to contribute to the NMSG sale feel free to do so! Unwanted books for the sale can be left with NMSG Committee members at the January talk and social.



Chikungunya Fever in Singapore

Dr June Tan, International Medical Clinic

You may have heard or read about Chikungunya fever in the local news. As of 11th September 2008, a total of 200 cases of Chikungunya fever have been reported to the Ministry of Health in Singapore this year alone. In early August a single case of Chikungunya fever in Jalan Jelita, right next to our clinic at Jelita, was detected.

So what is Chikungunya fever?

Chikungunya fever is a viral disease transmitted to humans by the bite of infected mosquitoes. The Chikungunya virus was first isolated from a patient in Tanzania in 1953, and has since been identified repeatedly in west, central and southern Africa and many areas of Asia.

What type of illness does the Chikungunya virus cause?

The illness is characterized by fever, headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, muscle pain, rash and joint pain. The term Chikungunya is Swahili for 'that which bends up'.

The incubation period (time from infection to illness) is usually 3-7 days. The illness typically lasts a few days to a couple of weeks. The symptoms are very similar to that of dengue fever; however some patients with Chikungunya fever experience fatigue and severe joint pains that last for several weeks. Fortunately unlike dengue, no cases of haemorrhagic (bleeding) shock syndrome have been reported in Chikungunya fever. There have also not been any reported deaths related to Chikungunya fever, and there are no long-term complications of the illness.

Chikungunya infection is thought to confer life-long immunity. That means that a person who has previously been infected will be immune to the disease and not get re-infected in future.

How is Chikungunya fever treated?

There is currently no medication to treat the condition, or vaccine to prevent it. However like many viral illnesses, Chikungunya fever is a self-limiting condition, and treatment is directed at relieving symptoms. Rest, fluids, and medications like paracetamol (or acetaminophen) and ibuprofen will help relieve symptoms of fever and aching.

Infected persons should be protected from further mosquito exposure (stay indoors and under a mosquito net during the first few days of illness) so that they cannot contribute to the transmission cycle.

How can one prevent becoming infected with the Chikungunya virus?

The best way to avoid Chikungunya infection is to prevent mosquito bites. Prevention tips include:

- Getting rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths regularly. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when not in use.
- Using insect repellent containing DEET on exposed skin when outdoors, especially during the day.
- Wearing long sleeves and pants, ideally having treated clothes with permethrin or another repellent.
- Have secure screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

While there have been cases detected locally, half of them were imported, with infection having occurred outside of Singapore. There have been reports of Chikungunya outbreaks around the region such as India, Indonesia, and Malaysia (Johor, Malacca, Negri Sembilan and Perak). Persons travelling overseas are advised to remain vigilant and seek prompt medical treatment if they are unwell and have symptoms of Chikungunya fever.

Dr June Tan MBBS MMed (Family Medicine)

Dr Tan graduated from the National University of Singapore in 1997. Dr Tan is a family physician with special interests in chronic disease management, women's health, paediatrics, and musculoskeletal conditions. She earned her Masters degree in Family Medicine in 2002, and has served as a senior family physician in a local primary care institution.

Travel Review - Club Med Bintan

Kerensa Heywood

We made a last minute booking to go to Club Med during the term break in October. A few years ago, Club Med would not have appealed at all, but when you've got kids, it's advisable to go somewhere with things for them to do – if they have a good holiday then you'll have a good holiday!

The ferry trip to Bintan takes about an hour and the bus ride to the resort was just over 10 minutes. Staff are on hand to welcome you, give you a drink and information about the resort while your luggage is delivered to your room. We arrived at lunchtime so we were able to go straight to the dining room to feed our starving kids!

The food and drinks (including alcohol, cocktails, soft drinks, water, coffee, etc.) are all included in the price of the holiday. Food was generally very good and there was a huge choice everyday of both Western and Asian food at every meal. Not surprisingly, the Indonesian dishes were excellent. Chips, rice, pasta, pizza and fish or chicken nuggets were available every day - of course the struggle was to get the children to eat some vegetables as they always wanted pizza. Fruit and salad were always served as well as a wide selection of desserts. You can also have wine, beer or soft drinks with your meal.

For anyone travelling with babies, there is a steriliser and microwave in the main dining room, you can request for food to be cooked and pureed and they also provide jars of baby food. They can provide a cot and stroller – you probably have to request them when you book. The rooms have mini-bar fridges – I'm not sure they are cold enough to store milk for too long but it's probably OK for short periods. Members of staff are available for baby sitting and can be booked via reception. We had a sitter for a couple of hours one evening and she was one of the staff from Kids' Club. You have to pay them directly in local currency and it works out to about \$5 per hour.

Our children went to Kids Club and had a great time. You have to pay extra for two and three year olds but Kids Club for four and older is inclusive. There are

loads of activities, including trapeze (with trained staff and safety harness), tightrope (very close to the ground), archery, swimming, kite making, baking, fashion show and singing and dancing. The little ones (two and three year olds) have a two hour nap after lunch but we always collected our three year old as he no longer sleeps during the day. Someone does stay in the room with the kids who sleep.

For adults there are yoga classes three times a day, aqua aerobics, power-walking, golf, windsurfing, weights room, Pétanque and of course the spa! We didn't use the spa but I enjoyed the yoga and aqua aerobics. The beach is very nice and there are lots of fish close to the shore. We were disappointed that we couldn't borrow snorkel and fins but the children still enjoyed looking at the fish through their goggles.

We stayed in two rooms with a connecting door, both with their own en-suite bathroom. The rooms were fine and quite far away from the main building so it was quiet. They were the deluxe rooms with a sea view. The view was nice but we didn't spend a lot of time in the room during the day so would not have minded if we didn't have the view.

While we were there you could get free WiFi access in the bar near reception as well as the reception area and there were quite a few people catching up with work, including my husband! Apparently, they plan to provide access in the rooms as well, although I don't know if that will also be free of charge.

I'd definitely recommend Club Med if you fancy a few days away from Singapore but without a plane trip. And definitely pay the extra \$10 for the VIP lounge at the ferry terminal as this means someone will sort out your visa and your luggage when arriving in and departing from Bintan. Book your accommodation and ferry through Club Med in Singapore.

*Club Med, Tourism Court, Ground Floor Lobby, 1 Orchard Spring Lane, Singapore 247729
Toll-free hotline: 1800 CLUBMED (258 2633)
Fax: 6737 2853 www.clubmed.com.sg*

New Mothers' Support Group now on Facebook!

Elizabeth Scott

In our efforts to promote and increase awareness of the NMSG, as well as facilitate communications to and between our members, we have set up a Facebook group where members can interact online.

The Facebook page has open admission, so anyone is allowed to join regardless of whether they have a membership with NMSG.

It has everything! The NMSG Facebook site features

a discussion board, photo album, video album, a wall where members can leave comments and an area where members can post articles or websites they found interesting. These features are open for use to all members who join the group. We will also be posting announcements and updated information about our events.

Come and join us online via a quick URL link <http://tiny.cc/NMSG> See you soon in cyberspace!

Tried & Tested - NMSG Committee Members

The Kampong Playhouse

Alicia Hoopmann, NSMG member

Don't be fooled by the dark front of the Tanglin Shopping Centre. Inside, on level 3, a haven of colour, creativity and musical play awaits you and your child.

Every Thursday morning we're greeted at the door of the Kampong Playhouse by Miss Mok and Miss Pat, much to the delight of my nine month-old daughter, whose excitement builds as she starts her weekly musical play session.

After welcoming all the babies, we sing various rhymes and songs which incorporate rocking, bouncing, and swaying movements. The beauty of music at Kampong Playhouse is that it comprises folk songs, traditional children's songs & nursery rhymes from different countries and cultures.

This musical mix provides a diverse and enjoyable experience for both baby and parent. *Kookaburra* is followed with an Indonesian folk song, *Burung Kakak Tua*, an old-time favourite, *Lavender's Blue*, and we all dance to *Rig-a-jig-jig*.

The babies eagerly reach for the percussion instruments; egg shakers, maracas, wood blocks, cymbals and African and Thai drums, as they get a feel for rhythm, pitch and tempo through song and rhyme. The contrast between sound and silence is also explored and is an important lesson for our children to learn! After some creative movement and free-form dances, we all relax with quiet time and the 'singing' of a musical story, where props are accompanied with sound effects created with drums, cymbals and chimes, bringing the narrative to life.

These playful activities are devised to create a multi-sensory learning environment, enhancing all aspects of a baby's development. Most importantly, it provides a warm and creative environment for you and your child to interact and enjoy. I love it when the shrieks and giggles of the babies resonate above the music. It's with this feeling of joy that we come together for a good-bye song, already anticipating what next week's session will amaze us with once again.

The Kampong Playhouse provides music & movement and creative musical play sessions for babies and children up to 4 years old.

The Kampong Playhouse | #03-24, Tanglin Shopping Centre | (between St. Regis & Orchard Parade Hotel. If entering with a stroller, a ramp is located at the back of the building, from where you can then take the lift to level 3) | Tel: 6887 5123 | info@kampong-playhouse.com | www.kampong-playhouse.com

Forest Adventure

Kerensa Heywood

Forest Adventure was previously featured in the newsletter as a 'Neither Tried nor Tested' and I liked the sound of it. So I was pleased when my six year old daughter was invited to a birthday party there. It's an aerial course of bridges, swings, a tunnel and trapezes through the trees with a zip line at the end. The kids' course is 4 meters above the ground and is laid out in 2 loops of 7 activities each that start from a tree platform. To take part children must be at least 1.1m and no more than 1.45m in height.

Children wear a safety harness and helmet. They are clipped onto a continuous safety line at the start of the course and are only disconnected when they have reached the end. Instructors are able to help the kids through the trickier/scarier sections. There were a few tears (mostly on the trapeze section and only from the girls!) but everyone completed the course without mishap. And they were all so proud of themselves when they had finished!

The only drawback is that parents get neck ache looking up at their children! There is also an adult course if you fancy having a go yourself.

Forest Adventure Bedok Reservoir | Tel. 8100 7420 | www.forestadventure.com.sg

The Tanglin Tree

Katrina Downer

The Tanglin area has a new coffee shop - one with outside covered space for children to play in, plenty of toys and a terrific outside playhouse. 'The Tanglin Tree' is located opposite Tanglin Mall in the building with Friven & Co and the Post Office.

The coffee shop has just opened and is very child friendly with high chairs and kiddie cutlery. I had a relaxing time enjoying a coffee outside while my two year old toddler liked playing with the wide range of toys available (it was hard to pull him away) and the sand pit. I wasn't keen on him trying out the playhouse but it would be a lot of fun for older children (or for my toddler when I feel like climbing!).

We were back on the weekend to try the brunch (9am - 4pm) and the food was delicious and the toys still of great interest to the toddler. The children's menu has a good range to choose from as well.

The Tanglin Tree | 56 Tanglin Road (Friven building) | Tel: 6733 0992

Return Address:

To:

Have we got your correct address, including postcode? Please remember to tell us if you are moving so we can change our mailing list. The newsletter is published every two months and the next issue is due out in March 2009. Please forward your contributions, articles and notice board items, etc. by 12th February 2009 to: info@nmsg-singapore.com

The New Mothers' Support Group is part of ANZA (Australian and New Zealand Association)

You do not have to be an ANZA member to join us

If you would like to join the NMSG, please send S\$25 in cash (please DO NOT send cheques or money orders) to:

Please include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and birth dates of your children when you send the subscription fee. Alternatively you can pay at the next Monday Talk or Friday Social (see page 1 for details). This subscription will last from now until 31st December 2009.

Items for Hire - Toy Rental Club

You can hire all sorts of baby and nursing equipment, car seats, strollers, playground equipment and toys from the Toy Rental Club. NMSG members can enjoy a 10% discount on production of their current membership card.

The Toy Rental Club has an indoor playground with a slide, ball pit and a huge selection of toys. Admission fees for the playground include a cup of tea or coffee for the parents and there is a diaper change station and toilet for customers to use. You can hold playgroups there or even a child's birthday party.

Conveniently located just off West Coast Highway, the Toy Rental Club can be found at:

100E Pasir Panjang Road
Century Warehouse #06-04
Singapore 811121

Tel. 6276 7602 (Office) / 8183 5977 (Anita) / 8198 9040 (Rose)
E-mail enquiries@toyrentalclub.com www.toyrentalclub.com

And finally did you know??

- If you keep a Goldfish in a dark room, it will eventually turn white.
- Pears sink while apples float.
- The microwave was invented after a researcher walked by a radar tube and a chocolate bar melted in his pocket.
- The average adult falls asleep seven minutes after turning out the light.
- A baby bat is called a pup.
- Slugs have four noses.
- Tips for practicing to dress a small child - buy a live octopus and a string bag. Attempt to put the octopus into the string bag so that no arms hang out. You have 5 minutes. Good luck!