

Delta Gamma Well Aware

Encompasses eight dimensions: Social, Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, Vocational, Intellectual, Financial and Leadership Development

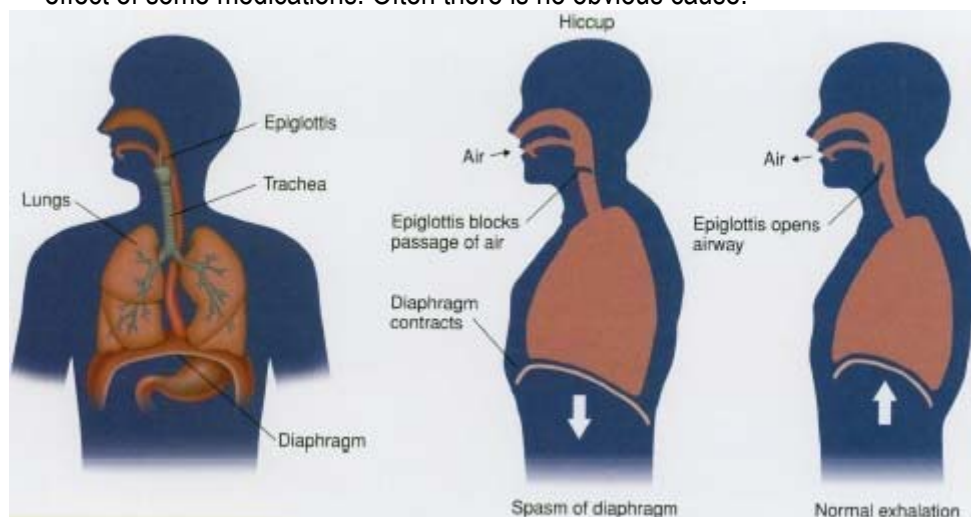
Hiccups, Sneezes and Yawns – Oh My!

Hiccups

- Medical term: singultus
- Generally last for no more than a few minutes
- Some hiccups can last for days or weeks but this is unusual and most likely a sign of another medical problem; seek medical attention if this is the case

Causes:

- Hiccups are caused by involuntary spasms of the dome-shaped muscle at the bottom of your chest called the diaphragm; this is the muscle used in breathing.
- The contraction in the diaphragm causes a sudden intake of air followed by an abrupt closing of the glottis (the space between the vocal cords), which results in a “hic” sound.
- Anything that irritates the nerves running from the abdomen to the brain may trigger hiccups, such as overeating or eating too fast, spicy or fatty foods, carbonated beverages, drinking a hot and then a cold beverage, or too much alcohol. Overexcitement or a sudden shock may be a factor and hiccups could also be a side effect of some medications. Often there is no obvious cause.



Courtesy of Google Images

- Hiccups serve no known function, but it has been proposed that fetuses hiccup to prepare their breathing muscles or to keep amniotic fluid out of their lungs, and that this primitive reflex persists in adulthood.
- Other theories say that hiccups help prevent choking if you eat too fast or too much, or force you to stop eating so you can begin to digest your food.

Home Remedies for Hiccups Include:

- Breathing in and out of a paper bag
- Holding your breath
- Drinking a glass of water slowly without pausing
- Bending over a cup and sipping from the far rim
- Biting on a lemon
- Putting sugar under your tongue
- Covering your ears while swallowing
- Looking up while drinking any beverage
- Tugging on your tongue
- Swallowing peanut butter
- Tickling the roof of your mouth with a cotton swab
- Having someone startle you

No home remedies are proven, but some may work by inhibiting the nerve impulses involved in the hiccup reflex. Some home remedies may seem to work simply because the hiccups stop on their own.

Sneezes

- Medical term: Sternutation
- Sneezing is a physiologic response to the irritation of the lining of the nose
- Sneezing can send tiny particles speeding out of your nose at up to 100 miles per hour!

Causes:

- When the inside of your nose becomes irritated or “tickled”, a message is sent to the brain, which then sends a message to all the muscles that create a sneeze.
- These muscles include the abdominal muscles, chest muscles, diaphragm, muscles that control your vocal cords and the muscles in the back of your throat.
- Your eyelid muscles are also involved...your eyes always close when you sneeze.
- The sneeze center in the brain makes these muscles work together, in just the right order, to send that irritation flying out of your nose.
- Anything that can irritate the inside of your nose can start a sneeze and some common things include dust, cold air or pepper.
- People with allergies sneeze when they are exposed to certain things, such as animal dander or pollen.

Interesting Info:

- About one out of every three people sneezes when exposed to bright light.
- These people are called photic sneezers (photic means light). If you are a photic sneezer, you got it from one of your parents because it is an inherited trait.
- Most people have some sensitivity to light that can trigger a sneeze.
- Have you ever had the feeling that you are about to sneeze, but it just gets stuck? Try looking toward a bright light briefly (but don't look right into the sun) to see if it releases the sneeze.

Yawning

- Medical Term: *Pandiculation* (the act of stretching and yawning)

- No one knows for sure why people and animals yawn, but there are many theories out there.

Causes:

- One is that when we are bored or tired and we do not breathe as deeply as we usually do. As this theory goes, our bodies take in less oxygen because our breathing has slowed and yawning helps us bring more oxygen into the blood and move more carbon dioxide out of the blood.
- If this theory is true, yawning would be an involuntary reflex to help control our oxygen and carbon dioxide levels.
- Studies, however, have shown that breathing more oxygen does not decrease yawning. Similarly, breathing more carbon dioxide does not increase yawning.
- Another theory is that yawning stretches the lungs and lung tissue. This may be a way to flex muscles and joints, increase heart rate and feel more awake.
- A different theory states that yawning is a protective reflex to redistribute the oil-like substance called surfactant that helps keep lungs lubricated inside and keeps them from collapsing. According to this theory, if we did not yawn, taking a deep breath would become progressively more difficult.
- Yet another theory is that yawning occurs to stabilize pressure on either side of the ear drums. The deep intake of air can sometimes cause a popping sound that only the yawner can hear and this is the pressure on the inner air stabilizing. This commonly occurs in lower-pressure environments, such as inside an airplane, which cause the eardrums to be bent instead of flat.

Interesting Info:

- The yawn reflex is often described as contagious; if one person yawns, this will cause another person to "sympathetically" yawn.
- The cause for contagious yawning may lie within neurons in the frontal cortex of the brain called mirror neurons. These neurons, upon being exposed to a stimulus, activate the same regions in the brain.
- The contagion of yawning is interspecific; for example, a human yawning in front of a pet dog can incite the dog to yawn as well. Oddly, sometimes sympathetic yawning may be caused by simply looking at a picture of a person or animal yawning, or even seeing the word yawn...

Wellness Resources

UC, Berkeley Wellness Letter, Volume 23, Issue 4, January 2007

Nemours Foundation, www.nemours.org

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