

HOW TO
Arrange
a Room

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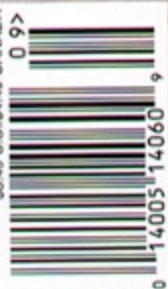
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A Caring Connection

A free Web site helps family and friends stay informed during times of need.

a soldier injured in battle, a child undergoing treatment for a disease, an elderly parent's hip replacement. These sorts of trials separate us from our family and friends at a time we most need them. And staying connected can be difficult. "It drains people answering the same questions over and over—reliving the pain each time. Families just run out of time and energy," says Jim Lardear, director of public relations at Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Delaware.

That is why he champions the nonprofit Web site *CaringBridge.org*, which allows friends and family to stay in touch. Visitors read updates and post messages of care and concern; the patient and family add treatment news and photos and read

the messages of love and encouragement they receive at their leisure.

"I think the biggest benefit is that instead of returning dozens of phone calls a day, the family can enter the information one time on the Web site and that information is instantly available so the parents can focus on their child," Lardear says.

Anyone with Internet access easily can create a CaringBridge site. At duPont Hospital for Children, for example, nearly 180 patients have active sites. The family controls who knows the address, and passwords are available for added security. "It was important to us that the site protects our patient's privacy," Lardear says. "Lots of the entries are intimate, raw emotion—a parent typing away on the keyboard in the middle of night." —MARIA DURYEE

HOW TO CHOOSE A THERMOMETER

When you throw out the old-fashioned mercury-filled thermometer, what replaces it?

"They all have pros and cons," says Dr. David Greenes, clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and author of studies on the accuracy of thermometers. In fact, he recommends putting two in the medicine chest.

All thermometers now on the market are digital, he says, but they take temperatures differently. You need one that will take a rectal temperature for children younger than 1. Rectal temperature is the "gold standard," says Greenes. Not surprisingly, it comes the closest to accurately measuring the body's core temperature.

For anyone older than 1, he recommends using a temporal artery (TA) thermometer, which uses infrared technology to measure temperature from the temporal artery in the forehead. With just a swipe across the brow, he says, it gives a reading closer to the rectal temperature, detects fever reliably, and—best of all—kids like it better. To ensure accuracy with the TA, he always lifts a child's hair off his or her brow for 20–30 seconds before using (this allows trapped body heat to dissipate), takes three readings, and goes with the highest temp.

Ear thermometers are popular and easy to use, but, unfortunately, there's room for error with them: small ear canals, misuse, and wax buildup, to name a few.

You can find any style of thermometer at any large pharmacy and many large retailers.

—MARIA DURYEE

