

## Small Doses

### GIFT OF BETTER HEALTH

"The Joslin Guide to Diabetes: A Program For Managing Your Treatment" is an indispensable resource for people with diabetes and their families. The new, completely updated version, published by Simon and Schuster, is available now for \$16.95 plus shipping and handling through Joslin's Online Store (<https://store.joslin.org/>) or by calling 1-800-344-4501.

### ENGINEERED ALLERGY



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scientists who created a genetically engineered green pea have bitten off more than they can chew, it seems, by inadvertently creating a food that tends to trigger allergic reactions. The research should serve as a warning flag for others making bioengineered foods, the scientists reported in the Nov. 16 issue of the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*.

Having identified a gene in the common bean plant that helps protect them against beetle damage, researchers transferred copies of that gene into pea plants that do not normally enjoy those protections.

The gene carries molecular instructions that allow bean plants — and the newly modified pea plants — to make a pest-repelling protein called alpha-amylase inhibitor-1. Studies had shown that the bean protein does not cause allergies in people or mice.

But when tests suggested that the protein was subtly different in the gene-altered peas than in its native bean, the researchers fed the peas to mice and subjected them to various tests. Surprisingly, the engineered food caused allergic reactions on rodents' skin and in the gut — even when the peas were cooked.

Further tests showed that although the protein itself is identical in both plants, enzymes inside pea plant cells had "decorated" that protein with simple sugars and other molecules in a way that increased the likelihood of an allergic reaction.

Fortunately, the peas never made it to market.

### HOW DRY EYE AM

Squinting, a common practice among computer users, can help bring on dry eye and the irritating symptoms that come with it.

Writing in a recent issue of *Optometry and Vision Science*, researchers said the irritation might occur because when people squint — to reduce glare, for example, or to try to bring type into better focus — they appear to blink less often, putting strain on the eye.

The strain can be brought on by other reading, as well. The researchers, led by Dr. James E. Sheedy of the Ohio State University College of Optometry, pointed to earlier work that found that people blinked 22 times a minute when relaxed, 10 times while reading a book and seven times while viewing text on a computer screen.

Computer users can reduce the harmful effects on their eyes, he said, by making sure their work stations are set up properly.

### FROM WIRE AND OTHER REPORTS

# A touch of calm

## Infant massage soothes babies and parents



KEVIN MINGORA PHOTOS/CAPE COD TIMES

Annamarie Raymond of Mashpee massages the tiny foot of her 3-month-old daughter Rhiannon using reflexology, at an infant massage class sponsored by Cape Cod Child Development in Hyannis.

By BETH A. HERMAN  
 CONTRIBUTING WRITER

**W**hen illness or a nightmare keeps 3-year-old Noah Haydon awake, mom Sharon performs the same small miracle for him she's done almost from the day he was born.

"I use massage to calm him, to help him sleep better, or to push things through the intestines," she says, noting her introduction to the power of infant massage came in December 2000, when her first child, Michael, now 5, was just a few months old.

Participating in Cape Cod Child Development's four-week infant massage class, Haydon, of Centerville, says she learned to calm Michael, who had colic, using a finger to draw the letters "I, L, Y" — for I love you — along his intestines to stimulate them. The clever tracing followed the direction in which food flows through the intestines, providing much-sought-after relief for baby and mom.

Laurie Crowley of Hyannis counts herself and son Jimmy, 6 months, among the class's most recent gradu-

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Jannell Brown, a certified massage therapist and owner of Sol Spa in Chatham, helps Maggie Langway of Harwich learn a massage technique for her daughter Emma, age 3 months.

### Tips for effective infant massage

■ **Don't watch the clock** while massaging your baby. Rather, go by what and how much your child indicates he or she wants. Arm movements going in and out from the chest indicate you should stop the massage.

■ **Some experts believe** you should start by massaging the

legs. This is the least intrusive way to begin, as the legs are constantly touched during diaper changes.

■ **Use long, firm strokes** (within reason). Light, feathery massage irritates infants, as it does many adults.

■ **Use pure, cold-pressed**

vegetable, nut, seed or fruit oil that is pesticide-free. These are absorbed easily by the skin, so no oily residue remains. Refrain from using olive oil for infant massage; it's too thick to be absorbed sufficiently.

■ **Massage is inappropriate** over an unhealed navel, undi-

agnosed lumps, burns (including sunburn), infected skin irritations or open and weeping wounds. Refrain from abdominal massage if the infant has hiccups or has just been fed.

Source: *Infant Massage Information Service* ([www.infantmassage-imis.com](http://www.infantmassage-imis.com))

## Quickfit

### An eye for fitness

If you're looking for a new workout challenge — or a great holiday gift idea — consider the *Sony EyeToy: Kinetic* for PlayStation 2.

■ **A small camera in this interactive video game puts you on the TV screen so you can watch yourself** during your exercise routine. A

virtual trainer helps provide variety through cardio, weight-training, yoga and kickboxing workouts. The game evaluates your form, tracks your progress and logs the number of calories you've burned along the way.

■ **The cost: \$49.99.** To order, for more information

or to find stores that offer the item, log on to [us.playstation.com](http://us.playstation.com).

Sources: *Fitness magazine*, *Sony PlayStation*.

*QuickFit is compiled by Victoria Martin, a member of the Cape Cod Times staff and a former personal trainer.*



# Massage: Therapy soothes babies and parents

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ates. Classes are held one to three times a year, dependent upon financing – Cape Cod Child Development is a grant-based program serving 900 families on the Cape – but Crowley already reports a more relaxed child among the benefits. “It’s a good form of communication,” she says. “Jimmy knows I’m doing something for him; he gets very alert in the beginning.”

Though its popularity in the United States has increased in the last decade, infant massage is nothing new to much of the world. It is rooted in ancient cultures. Credited with bringing the practice to this country in the 1970s, Vimala Schneider McClure, a former health worker who founded the International Association of Infant Massage in 1976, had observed the healing effects of massage on sick and orphaned babies in India. McClure, who has since written several books on the subject, recalls scores of mothers – exposed to a level of hunger and deprivation she had not seen in other parts of the world – kneeling in the dirt beside their shanties, joyfully massaging their infants and singing.

“Touch is a natural part of life ... you see it create trust even in the animal kingdom,” says Jannell Brown, certified massage therapist, owner of Chatham’s Sol Spa and infant massage instructor. Brown recalls a study conducted by the University of Miami School of Medicine’s Touch Research Institute more than a decade ago, in which premature babies were left in incubators without being handled. “They developed much more slowly than babies who were massaged through the incubators and taken out every so often and cuddled,” she says. “They put on body weight, and their organs developed more quickly. Their immune tolerance went way up.”

Brown, who is pregnant with her first child, also stresses the importance of bringing a sense of serenity to the environment, noting parents must take care of themselves first. “They must really focus on their own breathing techniques (when we are tense we tend to hold our breath, she explains),

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not bringing their anxieties or worries to the bodies of their babies.”

It’s important for parents to be grounded and secure about what they’re doing, she adds. “If you’re frenzied from your day, that’s not going to help your baby. It’s going to make matters worse.”

Brown is a proponent of infant massage using foot reflexology.

“Foot reflexology is based on the Eastern philosophy of Chinese medicine, which focuses on energy flowing through the body. This energy ends in the extremities,” she says. By massaging both feet clockwise, she says, you can relieve constipation, gas and colic, because the digestive system moves in a clockwise direction. By the same token, Brown says, it’s important to learn to massage the infant’s entire body.

Like adults, though, babies tend to have a preference and may react more favorably, say, to a head massage if their feet are ticklish. Whatever works for your baby, it’s important to establish a time to do it every day, Brown says, perhaps as part of bath time, using hands rather than wash cloths.

### Laying the foundation

As coordinator of the Families United Network, part of Cape Cod Child Development, Mary Wilson, of Barnstable, learned about massage on her own when daughter Bryce, now 9, was an infant. At that time, she says, there were no formal classes in the community, so she relied on books for information on how to calm her colicky baby. “It was helpful for me to learn how to slow down with her,” Wilson says, noting she also had read about the importance of continued touch and bonding to brain development in babies.

“From birth to age 5, typically there are neural pathways for social and emotional growth

that are laid down,” she says. Attachment disorders, or the inability to bond with others throughout life, often result from a deficit of touch and bonding during infancy, she says, adding that the massage ritual can ensure rich and rapid growth in that area.

### Healing deep wounds

On Good Friday 2000, then 52-year-old Centerville resident Seasanne Bowman took in her grandchild, 9-week-old Jaqueline. Jaqueline, soon affectionately called Jax, had suffered a stroke in the uterus and had several sensory and developmental problems immediately after birth. The diagnosis was fetal alcohol syndrome. The mother’s own impairment in the first weeks of the baby’s life prevented her from understanding that Jaqueline was critically ill, among other things having lost the ability to use the left side of her face and body as a result of the stroke.

“I hadn’t had a baby in 35 years,” Bowman says, “and never one this sick. When we got her, she didn’t move. She was so still. To this day I call Jax my hero for all of her courage in already battling more problems than most people do in a lifetime.”

After Jax’s stint at Children’s Hospital in Boston, where she was fitted with a helmet to correct an ill-developed skull, Bowman says she was unsure where to find help locally. Eventually she was referred to Cape Cod Child Development’s Early Intervention program. Guided by registered nurse Patricia Gagnier, Early Intervention aims to identify babies and young children with special needs that may affect their development, and to provide services for the

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### Resources

■ **Cape Cod Child Development:** 508-775-6240, www.cccdp.org. The next infant massage class, which is free and open to the public, will be held in the spring. Call or check the Web site for more information.

■ **Infant Massage Information Service:** www.infantmassage-imis.com.

■ **International Association of Infant Massage:** www.iaim.org.

■ **Books by Vimala Schneider McClure:** “Infant Massage: A Handbook for Loving Parents,” “Infant Massage Instructor’s Manual”

Bowman’s second husband, Dwight, who at 52 had never been a father. “My husband was a wreck,” Bowman says, “but he learned infant massage and was terrific.” In fact, when a second child, Johanna, nicknamed “Pink,” was born to Bowman’s daughter and came to live with Seasanne and Dwight in 2001, it was discovered she had contracted hepatitis C from her mother, requiring infant massage to relieve digestive problems.

For the Bowmans, the effects of infant massage were immediate and long term, with both girls sleeping, digesting, adjusting and relaxing in a way they hadn’t beforehand. The family still incorporates massage into its weekly routine. “It’s good after a birthday party when they are whiny and wired, to calm them after cake and brownies,” Bowman says with a laugh. “Besides, knowing what they do about massage, they will become adults who won’t run to the medicine cabinet.”

### A voice for infant massage

According to occupational

therapist Kathy Gelzer, who works primarily with babies and children through the Early Intervention program, the infant massage trumpet needs to sound a bit louder. She believes local pediatricians should become more aware of infant massage in order to recommend it to their patients.

Calls to five pediatricians about the possible benefits of infant massage were unreturned, and calls to an additional five resulted in an admitted lack of knowledge about the subject. Linda Sayers, clinical coordinator of maternity and childbirth education at Falmouth Hospital, who took her first infant massage class in Maine about 10 years ago under the auspices of Baby’s First Massage (www.babysfirstmassage.com), believes the real push for pediatricians will come “when we can get more parents interested in doing it for their babies. Patients bring awareness to their pediatricians,” she says. “And overall, massage is certainly a way for parents to be more in touch with their newborns.”

child and family. An evaluation of Jax’s condition led Gagnier to institute a regimen that included extensive infant massage. Over time, Gagnier taught Bowman how to help stimulate Jax’s digestive system and relieve colic, calm constant neurological tremors and anxiety, and regulate sensory problems (some days, for example, everything seemed too loud for Jax, according to Bowman; other days, it seemed she couldn’t hear much at all).

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