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Cell phone warnings have parents questioning decision

By Jodie Lynn
PARENT TO PARENT
10/07/2009

Q: We were thinking about buying cell phones for our 10-year-old son and our 12-year-old daughter for a gift. However, with the recent reports of them being bad for children, even into the teen years, we are not sure. Plus, the reports are confusing. Can anyone help to explain them in layman's terms?

A: We have three kids ages 8 to 14, and they all have cell phones. With the latest report being released, like most parents, we too are concerned about the potential danger of tumors and cancer. We've decided to go with limiting their usage to only three hours per day and two hours for the younger kids. They now all have earpieces that are specially designed for kids. Until the final verdict is written in black and white, proving health risks, we feel we have no other choice but to allow them to use the phones. — J.C. in Boca Raton, Fla.

FROM JODIE

While the idea that cell phones emit carcinogenic radiation or may contribute to the human body developing cancer in some way has been around for years — a controversial topic that came about shortly after the first cell phone was developed in 1973 — it is still perplexing scientists and researchers today.

Many of us seem to think that with today's vast array of ingenious technology, surely we're safer than decades before, but no one really knows. The latest report on the matter from International EMF Collaborative finds that young people who use cell phones today may find themselves involved in a disease epidemic later in life. Diseases could range from brain tumors, cancer, constant fatigue, Parkinsons, chronic headaches, sleeping problems, autism and Alzheimer's, to name only a few.

The conclusions also state that there is a greater risk for kids than for adults due to their brain development still being under way. To understand what causes these potentially life-threatening illnesses and disorders, please see www.radiationresearch.org/pdfs/15reasons.asp for more details. For one of the best Internet sites using layman's terms, also check out cellphones.procon.org/ for clear and concise information. In fact, it lists both pros and cons and is indeed fair to both sides of the issue. Once you've done your research, try to base your decision on making the best one for the health of your children, even if they might not agree.

CAN YOU HELP?

My husband smokes daily, yet he argues with our 16-year-old son when catching him doing it. It is constant turmoil around our house with heated debates, but my husband wants to instill the "do as I say and not as I do" theory, which clearly does not work with

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our son. Even though my husband has tried countless gimmicks and prescriptions to stop smoking, nothing has worked so far. Is there something that could help him to stop smoking for good and help us help our son to also stop?

To share parenting tips or submit questions, write to: Parent to Parent, 2464 Taylor Road, Suite 131, Wildwood, MO. 63040, or, to direct2contact@parenttoparent.com via e-mail. They can also be sent through the contact form at ParentToParent.com which provides a secure and easy way to submit tips or questions. All tips must have city, state and first and last name or initials to be included in the column.

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