

Read the articles below then answer the questions that follow.

Nail Biting, Ages 6 to 12

Children bite their nails for many reasons, including boredom, stress relief, passing the time, or just because it's what they do. The most common "nervous habit" is biting your nails. Other "nervous habits" include thumb sucking, picking your nose, twisting or pulling your hair, and grinding your teeth. None of these are always signs of anxiety, so calling them "nervous habits" is a bit misleading. Nail biting is most common in children who are very nervous. It tends to run in families and is the nervous habit most likely to continue into adulthood.

Growing up is a stressful time, and many of the stresses and pressures that kids face are hidden from their parents. If a child bites a little bit but doesn't hurt himself and does it unconsciously like while watching TV, or if he tends to bite in certain situations like before a performance or test, you probably don't need to worry.

If you know or think that a recent move, a divorce in the family, or a new school is making the child bite his or her nails due to anxiety, make an extra effort to help him talk about how he feels. If a child's nail biting seems self-destructive, though, it's time to call his doctor or school counsellor. You should be worried if, for example, his fingertips are rough and bloody, or if he bites his nails and also picks at his skin, pulls at his eyelashes, or doesn't sleep well. Talk to the child's doctor as well if the habit of biting their nails started suddenly and got worse quickly. If the child's behaviour changes in a big way, you should always find out why. If, on the other hand, the habit doesn't seem to cause any physical or mental harm, ignoring it is the best way to make sure that the child will either stop on his own or ask you to help him quit in the future.

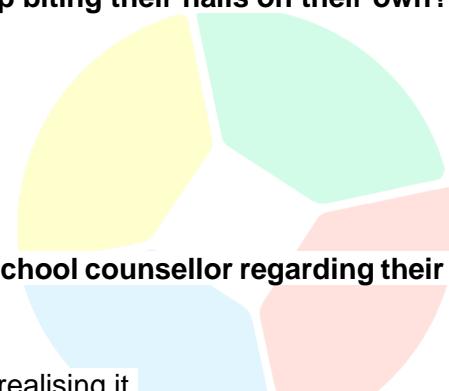
When it comes to unconscious habits, though, nagging and punishing don't work and, at worst, lead to a fight over who is in charge. You could try giving the child something else to do instead, like a "worry stone" to keep in his pocket. You could help him stop biting his nails by gently and consistently bringing it to his attention. You could also agree on a signal you can give him so you don't embarrass him in public. For example, you could tell him calmly at breakfast, "Honey, it would be nice if you didn't bite your nails today," and then tell him that every time you see him nibbling, you'll lightly touch his hand with your index finger.

As long as he isn't hurting himself and doesn't seem stressed, the best thing to do is let the habit go away on its own. The less attention he gets for biting his nails, the more likely it is that he'll stop on his own when he's ready and that he'll feel comfortable asking you for help.

Answer the following questions by choosing the letter of the best answer.

1 Which is the best way to make sure a child will stop biting their nails on their own?

- A. Ignoring the habit
- B. Nagging or punishing the child
- C. Making a big deal out of it
- D. Encouraging the child to talk**



2 When should a parent consider calling a doctor or school counsellor regarding their child's nail biting habit?

- A. When the child bites their nails unintentionally without realising it.
- B. When the child's fingertips turn a bluish-purple colour and are icy to the touch.
- C. When a child's habit of biting his or her nails becomes self-destructive.**
- D. When there is an abrupt change in the child's mood and behaviour.

3 What is the best lesson you can get from the article?

- A. Nail biting is okay as long as you would know how to deal with it.
- B. There is an explanation to unusual behaviour and a right way to deal with them.**
- C. Children should not be embarrassed with nail biting as most adults do it as well.
- D. Learn to be more attentive with things as it might be your fault someday for not noticing it earlier.

4 How should parents respond to a child's nail biting habit in public?

- A. Set the child aside and talk to him about what he did wrong.
- B. Embarrass the child so he will not do it again in public.
- C. Discuss and decide upon a sign that you will silently give.**
- D. Give the child a timeout on one corner and ignore him.

5 What is the most common reason for children to bite their nails?

- A. Excitement
- B. Stress relief**
- C. Passing the time
- D. Self loathing

6 How can parents distinguish between normal nail biting and a self-destructive habit?

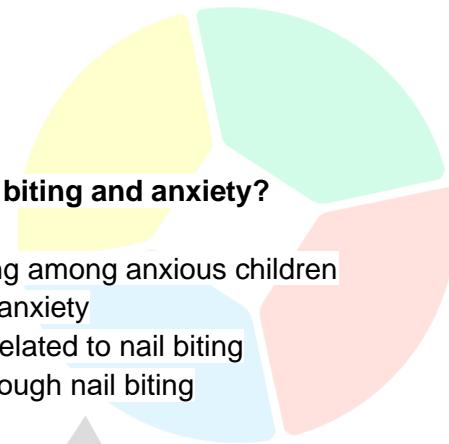
- A. Observing if the child is happy or sad while biting.
- B. Observing which fingernail the child bites more.
- C. Observing the child's way of interacting with people around.
- D. Observing if the child also has other habits that might potentially hurt him.**

7 **What is the main organisational structure of the article?**

- A. Chronological order
- B. Spatial Order
- C. Problem and solution
- D. Comparison and contrast

8 **How does the article address the link between nail biting and anxiety?**

- A. by providing statistics about the prevalence of nail biting among anxious children
- B. by explaining that nail biting is a common symptom of anxiety
- C. by discussing the potential causes of anxiety that are related to nail biting
- D. by providing tips on how to reduce a child's anxiety through nail biting



Scholarly

Answer key:

Non-fiction 1 - Nail Biting, Ages 6 to 12

1. 
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.