

# Body Parts

by Dr Robyn Wallace

Knowing about the body parts in your head (mirror needed)

What is your favourite part of your body?

Do you know where all the parts are and what is under the skin? Learning and knowing this is called anatomy. I used to think that under the skin was just gizzards and gore. But since studying medicine I know this is not true- it very organised and things are in the right place even if they are hidden on the surface..just like on my desk! After reading this article, I want you to know more about your body ...a lesson in anatomy.

Here is a test for you. Let us start with the head...well yes we know it sits on our neck and it is photographed a lot ..but what about it? How many parts of your body can you think of in or on your head? You can look in the mirror, you can pinch (lightly) your face, you can stick your finger in any little bits and pieces, you can look at your friend's head to get the answers.

I can think of at least 7. Now for extra trick questions - can you name what they are for, how big are they and how much is under the skin and how much is outside the skin? Also can you think about how to keep each part healthy?

How many did you get? Here are my answers starting with the easy ones:

## Your two eyes

They are shaped like large marbles and are used for seeing. Most of the eyeball is hidden inside the head. Look at the eyes of your work mates- you will see different shapes and colours. Also look at eyebrows- I am not sure what they are for- can you think of anything? Sometimes whatever you do your eyes can get crook but wear sunglasses and eat vitamin A such as carrots to help you see better at night. See if you need glasses with your doctor.

## Your two ears

They are curly shaped and they are used for hearing. Most of the ear is inside the head too. After the curly part there is a long tube inside the head and noises go down this. Some people have big ears and some little ears, and others such as grandparents tend to have hair growing out of them. You might use a hearing aid to help your ears do their job. To keep your ears as healthy as can be ask your GP to check them twice per year and avoid too much loud noise.

## Your brain

This is my favourite body part but you cant see any of it at all from the outside. The brain is for thinking, memory and helps you use your arms and legs too. It is about the size of a mango and it is very soft and squishy. Knock on your head- it is hard bone and underneath this bone is the soft brain. To keep your brain healthy you should eat well and not too much, exercise your muscles, do lots of puzzles and games, and try some new projects.

## Your mouth

This is my second favourite organ because I enjoy putting food in it and talking and smiling. The mouth is really just a large hole and you can pretty well see most of it on the outside and by opening it. You can wear lipstick on the lips around the mouth, you can grow a beard around the mouth. To keep your mouth healthy you should drink plenty of fluids and keep your teeth clean.

## Your skin

This is a thin coat over your body, about the thickness of orange peel but softer. It is like the basket of the body- it holds things in, protect things underneath, and keeps you cool in summer and warm in winter. Look at the skin of your brother and your sister. What is the difference? The boys have whiskers and the girls have smoother skin and maybe makeup. Feel your own skin on your face- sometimes it is smooth and then it is rough and scaly, you might have freckles. Sometimes it gets sweaty, sometimes very red, other times white if you are sick. Pimples can come up on young adults. Some people have very brown skin. To keep your skin healthy, use sunscreen and hat, and face lotion to keep it soft; sometimes you might need to talk about your skin with your GP.

## Your tongue

This is inside the mouth and you can easily poke it out. It is joined to your throat right at the back of your inside mouth. It is helpful for eating, tasting, drinking, swallowing and talking. To have a healthy tongue you just need to eat and drink non-sugar drinks and clean your teeth.

## Your teeth

These are inside your mouth..I don't know how many. They are used for chewing food. Can you see that they come out of skin in the gums? They grow out from the gums like plants, but they only have one root. Mmmm- teeth need a lot of attention to keep them clean and healthy..clean at least three times per day and see your dentist at least once per year. You don't want to lose your teeth.

## And the rest of you

Now I want to you test yourself and point to your chin, your cheeks, your smile, your forehead, your moles, your frown (do you know that your frown and smile are from muscles under the skin?), look at your tonsils, your hair, look at your nose and up your nose! Decide what you really like about your own face. When I look at my John, I especially like his chin and nose. When I look at my face I don't like the wrinkles.

Where is Down syndrome in the head?- Down syndrome can be in all of your body parts, including all the parts we have talked about- eyes, ears, brain, teeth, skin. Having Down syndrome means that you have to take extra special care of your body parts and health, and keep your mind active. Remember to ask for help from your GP too. But you knowing where your body parts are and what they do helps you look after yourself and learn about your body.

## SHAID\* Clinics,

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SHAID clinic for adults with Down syndrome is held the second Thursday of every month at the Mater Hospital and is sponsored by DSAQ.