

How To Teach Safe vs Unsafe Touch To Your Child? (More Than Bad Touch)

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SUMMARY

Swati discusses the importance of educating children about body autonomy and the concepts of safe and unsafe touch, emphasizing the need for parents to trust their children's instincts and feelings. She advocates for a shift in language from "good touch" and "bad touch" to "safe touch" and "unsafe touch," and outlines a developmental approach to sex education that begins with proper terminology for body parts and progresses through ongoing conversations as children grow.

- *Shift from "good touch/bad touch" to "safe touch/unsafe touch" to better encompass all forms of touch.*
- *Encourage children to trust their body intelligence and feelings about touch.*
- *Parents must respect children's autonomy from a young age, starting with feeding practices.*
- *Begin sex education early by naming private parts correctly and discussing body autonomy.*
- *Teach children about safe adults and safe spaces for nudity.*
- *Sex education should be an ongoing dialogue, not a one-time conversation, involving 200-300 discussions from ages 2 to 15.*
- *Discuss menstruation and body changes in a simple, age-appropriate manner.*
- *Understanding sex is crucial for children to comprehend the concept of sexual abuse.*

Speaker 1: Hey Swati. So nice to have you.

Speaker 2: Hi.

Speaker 1: Mansi Swati is an applied psychology and certified behavior profile analyst, certified lactation expert, counselor, and is also Dr. S.H. lean health coach, Senior Inch campaign. And it's very exciting to know how you've been doing some incredible amount of work in, in educating parents about how you should go about that conversation. Swati, tell me, how do you accept to write from a three year old the concept of good touch and bad touch?

Speaker 2: So first of all, it's, it's no longer good touch and bad touch. It is safe touch and unsafe touch. So we are, you know, asking parents to change it from good touch bad touch to safe touch unsafe touch because a touch can happen anywhere apart from the genitals. Also because good touch, bad touch videos, if you go check. No, what they say is any touch on the chest, in between the thighs, on the buttocks is what they say.

Speaker 2: But a pedophile or an abuser can touch anywhere else and make the child feel bad or feel unsafe. So

we are tapping into the emotions of the child and asking the child what you feel when this particular touch is happening. So when the child understands, you know, I feel unsafe so this person is not okay, then I have to move away from there. The child has that innate body intelligence that tells the child whether something is okay or not okay.

Speaker 2: This is something that I want every parent to understand. Children have very strong body intelligence that tells them if something is okay or not okay. Our job as parents is just to allow them to trust their body intelligence. That much is enough. We don't really have to do anything. Yeah, if they're uncomfortable, they will go away. The thing is, when I was a child, I remember my neighbor uncle used to come home a little drunk in the evenings to just talk to my father for some time, his colleague.

Speaker 2: So I remember I used to be in the living room and his uncle used to come there. No sexual touch at all. Actually, let's not go to sexuality at all. Simply, he'll sit next to me and I used to feel uncomfortable. Or he'll sometimes give me a chocolate and I'll be like this. Or he'll, he'll try to just tickle me.

Speaker 1: I feel one. At kidstoppers, we always talk about the fact that trust your intuition and your child's intuition. I feel kids are extremely intuitive about things and you know, and I talk a lot about it on my. Well, that, you know, if you, you know, I feel like your gut is your gps, you know, it will help you navigate, you know, and And I teach that to my kids as well. That, you know, just follow your gut because it's telling you something.

Speaker 1: And I feel like. And to all the parents who are listening, life gives you a lot of whispers. And I feel your children also give you a little bit of whispers before the sound becomes too loud, which is like an alarm bell. Okay, now you need to take notice, etc. But I truly believe that even as parents, one is trust your child's instincts and how they are so intuitive about things. And the second is, you know, listen, you know, listen to those whispers because it's never one fine day that something happens.

Speaker 1: It's accumulated, it's a compound, compounding factor that leads to a lot of things. So it's extremely, extremely important that we as parents are also intuitive and listen to us.

Speaker 2: Yeah. The sad thing is parents are not intuitive themselves. So they have lost touch with their own personal inner voice. So that's where they stop realizing that the child also has an inner voice. So parents also, if they can, you know, understand that. Yes, there is something that tells me also that something is not okay because a lot of parents have actually told me, I don't find my brother in law touching my daughter in a good sense.

Speaker 2: I don't, I don't feel comfortable, but I'm not able to tell anything. So parents themselves, adults themselves are not able to stand up for themselves or for their child or they don't know what means by autonomy, body autonomy. So all that is part of sex education, not just sex abuse.

Speaker 1: Agree with you there that I feel one is that parents listen to your children because I think that is very

important. Sometimes I also feel that parents are not ready to accept, like you, what you said, you know, sometimes your child may actually come and tell you something and you'll be like, no, no, no, it's all fine, it's all fine. Right under the carpet. And the second thing you said is very interesting. The parents somehow don't seem to find the courage to stand up that Listen, listen, Swati, I don't think you're touching my child appropriately.

Speaker 1: So please don't do that. So coming to the second part of the question, how do you educate parents to correct that? Swati?

Speaker 2: Yeah. So I tell the participants of my workshop that it all starts with starting solids, introducing solids. So the moment your child crosses six months, when you give solid foods, be it baby led, traditional meaning whatever method you want to follow, please respect the child's hunger cues. Please respect the child's. No, understand that the child has, you know, a Clear idea of whether its stomach is getting full, whether it is enough, whether it likes something, dislikes something, all that the child knows.

Speaker 2: As parents, our job is just to understand what the child is going through and then react or respond accordingly. Our job is not to shove food, food down the throat. So first thing parents have to stop doing is force feeding or using distraction to feed the child. Because there's no point in teaching a four year old or a five year old how to say no if from six months onwards that child's no has not been respected.

Speaker 2: Yeah. So it all starts with solids.

Speaker 1: Yeah. And again coming back to feeding. You know, I often get asked this question on kids press as well, that you know, what should I do? I have a picky eater or what should I do? My child refuses to eat something. And I, and you know it. You know, as, as Indians we're always taught that whatever's in your plate, completed, completed. But we never teach our children, take how much you need. But you know, we're always taught that.

Speaker 1: But I think it's important to teach them how much do you need? And also, you know, I always say this, that, you know, there have been once or two, you know, once or twice where I fed my child and my child said I'm not feeling too good, I don't want to eat it. I said a class by day class bite. And obviously I think every parent needs to go through that. And then your child throws up in the middle of the night and then you get the, get the brain.

Speaker 1: Yeah, stop overfeeding your kids.

Speaker 2: Right.

Speaker 1: But that will not come when we actually go through that cycle. So I love the example that you gave that, you know, let's, let's start respecting when they say no and not those distractions. How important is it to empower our children with the knowledge about their bodies? And how should it change through the years?

Like what would you tell a child at one, what would you tell a child at three and what would you tell a child at eight or nine, five or six at age?

Speaker 2: So it all starts, the first sex talk is naming the private parts using the right terminologies. So first of all, girls, women don't know the name of their own private part. A lot of people are using vagina instead of vulva. So they have to start using vulva and penis. And they have to tell the child that vagina is inside the body, vulva is outside the body, and there is penis, testicles, scrotum, anus, breast, nipple. All of these words has to be communicated and consistently Communicated.

Speaker 2: So during bath times, they have to name the private parts and also to tell that these parts are private. You, you can be naked, but then only in the private zones or the private rooms in the house, which is bedroom and bathroom. So these things has to be communicated from age 1, 1 and a half, 2 onwards. They can start next, what will happen? Safe adults. So these people are your safe adults. You can be as close to them as possible.

Speaker 2: You can hug them, kiss them, all that is allowed. But then in each family, it's a different rule. Some in some places, some families don't even consider the grandparents as safe adults. So if that's the case, communicate accordingly. Next comes safe touch, unsafe touch. So that also has to be communicated by the age of 2, 3 itself. I'm sure the child will not understand par listening. Also, please, please realize that the child will not understand these concepts.

Speaker 2: Your job is only to communicate this concept. And by the age of three, what will happen? The child will start observing the mother going to the bathroom and changing the pad or menstrual cup, whatever the mother has been using. So periods has to be communicated in a very small manner. You know, she doesn't have to tell that the endometrium is, you know, coming out. And then, you know that this, she doesn't have to tell all that.

Speaker 2: Am I going through periods? That's all. End of story. And she uses pads for periods or cups. That much is enough. So what the parent has, has to know here is sex education is not just one conversation that they're having. It's a series of conversations. It's around 200 to 300 conversations that the parent will have between the age of 2 and 15. So yeah, it's a consistent activity that the parent will be doing. So periods. And then from there, okay, well, okay, I have penis.

Speaker 2: What does she have? Oh, she has a vulv. She's a girl. She has a vulva. Okay, so papa, what does he have? Okay, he has a penis. Okay. Amma has a vulva. Okay. Right. So what is pregnancy? How did the baby get there so that there comes sex. So a child that doesn't understand sex will never understand sex abuse.