



Your Amazing Body

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I'm Too Hot! I'm Too Cold! I'm Just Right!

This title sounds like something out of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," doesn't it?! Remember how Goldilocks found three bowls of porridge? She tasted the porridge from the first bowl and said, "This porridge is too hot!" Then she tasted the porridge from the second bowl and said, "This porridge is too cold!" Then she tasted the last bowl of porridge and said, "Ahhh, this porridge is just right," and she ate it all up.

Maybe you hear similar kinds of things when you're at home with your family. Maybe your dad likes the temperature at your house, but your mom is always freezing. Or maybe you are just right but your brother is roasting hot. Let's take a closer look at the fascinating way our bodies control our internal temperature and see why this is so.

It's amazing when you think about it. Human beings are warm blooded. That means our biggest source of heat is within us and we create that heat by our own natural body processes. Some animals, like snakes and lizards and insects, are cold blooded and their body temperature is the same as their environment. Can you imagine being 35° degrees in January and 95° in July!!! Yikes!!!

Thankfully you don't have to worry about that. Because you're warm-blooded, your body maintains a fairly constant temperature no matter what the temperature is outside or in your house. This miracle is accomplished by a small structure at the base of your brain called the hypothalamus. It monitors the temperature of the blood flowing through your body and triggers changes in the diameter of your blood vessels as necessary to heat you up or cool you down. If your internal temperature gets too high--maybe because it is very hot or you are exercising hard or you have a fever--then the blood vessels expand to increase the amount of blood flowing near the surface of your skin so the heat can escape. That is why your face gets red when you exercise hard.

On the other hand, if your internal temperature decreases--because it's very cold outside or you jumped into a cold swimming pool--the hypothalamus directs the blood vessels to shrink to reduce the blood flow to the surface to help your body conserve heat.



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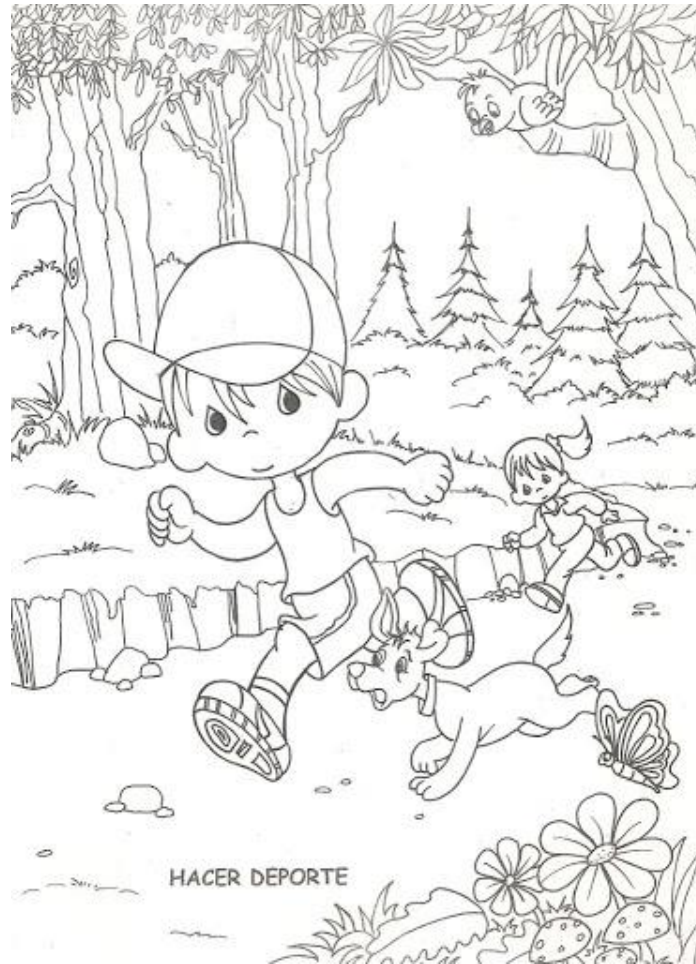
This action combined with muscle contractions, which actually produce heat (known to you as shivering), keep your internal temperature about the same even on a cold winter's day.

Sounds like magic, doesn't it?! But it isn't!!! Your body can do all of this because it talks to itself using your nervous system. Your brain and your body are connected by your nervous system. The better your brain and body are connected, the better your whole body works, including your ability to control your internal temperature.

Sometimes, the bones of your spine will misalign and interfere with the communication between your brain and your body. Then things might not work as well as they should or could. Your chiropractor will check your spine for these (called vertebral subluxations) and reconnect you whenever necessary so you can be the best warm blooded creature you were meant to be.

- Judy Nutz Campanale, DC, ACP, FCSC

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Provided by *Pathways to Family Wellness* magazine, published by ICPA, Inc. For more information visit:

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