

Here's my "**30 Second Chicken Test**," a tool for quickly assessing the physical well being of our kids.

You know how when you're in the supermarket and you need to get a nice fresh chicken for dinner, you'll spend a half hour prodding, poking and smelling that chicken, nearly knocking over the old lady next you, just so you get the best one?

Give your child at least as much time as you do for that chicken, to ensure that he or she is at their best.

This test will help you determine if your kids are taking care of themselves as healthy children should or if there are serious issues that need to be addressed.

A 30 second hug goes a long way:

1. Look at their eyes to see if they are glassy and or red.
2. Look at their skin to see if they are caring for themselves (ie. Are girls wearing makeup? Using acne medication?).
3. Look for any new marks on their bodies (ie cuts, piercings, tattoos etc.)
4. Smell their hair and breath to assess whether they are brushing their teeth, drinking alcohol or smoking (Don't be fooled by mouthwash or mints cover-ups).
5. Smell them to assess whether they are bathing and wearing clean clothes.
6. Hold them tight to assess weight gain or weight loss.

If one or more of these categories are suspicious, inquire further. This does not necessarily mean that there is a major issue here. Talk to them. If they are less than willing to discuss, then explore their environment (bedrooms, computers, cell phones etc.). If necessary, speak with their friends and or teachers. If your concerns appear to be founded, seek professional assistance immediately.

"A hug a day, helps keep the doctor away."

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