

Avatar



TeenHelp.org's eZine
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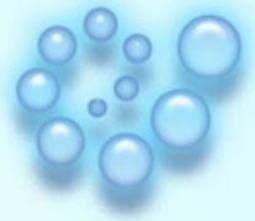


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Letter from the Editors

Hello Avatar readers,

Happy June to all of you. This month, as many students are (finally!) getting out of school, the weather is becoming significantly more friendly, and Avatar is releasing its twelfth and final edition of Volume Two!

In this edition you'll find an educational piece on the one sickness you've probably heard more of in the last month than anything else: H1N1, Swine Flu. In addition be sure to read about the thyroid hormone and its effect on your body as well as how to better communicate with your doctor.

On a lighter note, this issue contains a fun piece on an anime convention, an article with a multitude of tips on cheap summer fun, and our last Caption This! in Avatar. The magazine will conclude with various poems and pictures and, as usual, our Horoscopes. We hope you enjoy the final edition of Volume Two!

Best regards,
The Avatar Editors.

Editors

Editor-in-Chief
Mel (Mel)

Content Editor
Katrina (Katrina)

Graphics Editor
Jes (Jessie)

Sub-Editor of News and Debates
Mai (sushi_error)

Sub-Editor of Mind and Body
Maria (Gidig)

Sub-Editor of Lifestyle
Nat (Strider)

Contact

Your valuable contributions are what make Avatar what it is. Please submit us your content, whether it be an article, poem, joke, game, photo, drawing or anything else you have to share!

Email us at
avatar@teenhelp.org



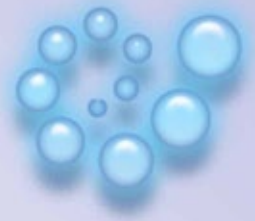
By Mai (sushi_error)

A few weeks ago, I woke up with a sore throat and runny nose. I found myself sneezing (yes, not snoozing) through all of my classes, going through tissue after tissue until I looked like Rudolph, and suddenly half of my hand sanitizer was gone. I had the works of a cold – sneezing, runny nose, itchy throat. It was awful. The next day, I was talking to a friend and mentioned I wasn't feeling well. Immediately, she asked jokingly, "Do you have swine flu?" Now, when you are sneezing like there is no tomorrow in the wake of a growing flu epidemic, you begin to worry and let your emotions take over. Nevertheless, I took a physical health day and returned to school later in the week, sneeze free and breathing with ease.

Now, I have recovered from my mini cold epidemic, but what about the unlucky hundreds who were recently stricken with swine flu? Can it be prevented? What the heck is swine flu? Why has it struck such immense fear and anxiety into the world?

Swine flu is a respiratory virus caused by influenza Type A. There are various types of swine flu, but the most common type, H1N1, has infected thousands of people worldwide. The first recorded outbreak was in Mexico, prompting Mexican authorities to close down hundreds of businesses and restaurants across the country for several weeks. The symptoms, which may include fever, cough, and body aches, are similar to seasonal flu. It infects pigs annually, however, in some cases; those with the Swine Flu had never come in contact with infected pigs. The virus can spread quickly through coughing and/or sneezing by someone who is infected by it. What makes this particular flu alarming is the fact that it contains both human and animal genetics. In late April, a World Health Organization official said the possibility of this outbreak becoming a pandemic "is very high and inevitable". In the beginning, the Obama Administration referred to it as 'Swine Flu', but later called it 'H1N1'. The reasoning behind this is that the administration wanted consumers to know that it is perfectly safe to consume pork and pork products. According to the Center for Disease Control, there have been over 6,000 cases of H1N1 with 9 deaths in the United States alone. Currently, most cases of swine flu are being considered as mild, rather than extreme. This flu can be treated if detected early by using antibiotics such as Tamiflu and Relenza. Both medications are used to treat seasonal flu, but must be prescribed by a physician.

In the past, there have been major flu pandemics such as the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic which infected at least 40% of the world's population, killing more than 50 million people worldwide. While in 1957, the Asian flu killed at least 2 million people. Despite the media-produced frenzy behind H1N1, many people are beginning to question whether or not this could be a false alarm. Currently, the pandemic alert level for swine flu is phase 5 (meaning this could be a potential pandemic) according to the WHO. However, a few days ago, WHO officials met in Geneva, Switzerland to decide whether or not to declare H1N1 as a pandemic. There are currently no vaccines to prevent the current swine flu, but scientists are hoping to create one soon. Nevertheless, while I do not think it is necessary to be at the edge of our seats at this time, we should still be wary. We should maintain a healthy diet, good sleeping pattern, and exercise daily to prevent becoming sick. We should wash our hands with soap and stay away from those carrying flu or cold-like symptoms.



Thyroid and Mood Disorders

By Gidig (Maria)

You go and talk to your doctor about depression, and they do a blood test to check your thyroid function. This may sound off the wall, but evidence and research is beginning to show that your thyroid and mood may be linked.

Many people who have a mood disorder, such as manic depression especially, seem to have thyroid dysfunction. Thyroid dysfunction could be caused by your thyroid working overtime, or snoozing on the job. So now, if you're getting prescribed anti-depressants or mood stabilizers without your doctor checking your thyroid function, it may not be a bad idea to request that they take a look. This could save you a lot of misery with pills and depression later on.

What is the thyroid?

The thyroid is a large endocrine gland that is located in your throat. It is a controlling gland so to speak, making proteins, controlling how fast your body burns energy, and dictating how the body should react to other hormones. It does this by producing the thyroid hormone and sending it throughout the body.

Thyroid hormone:

The thyroid hormone is obviously produced by the thyroid. It increases the basal metabolic rate, which is basically a measure of the rate of your metabolism in fancy terms. This gland also affects protein synthesis as well as many other functions that help around your body. The thyroid hormone is a very important one within your body. And now, it's also being shown to affect your mood.

Hyperthyroidism:

The definition of hyperthyroidism according to the American Thyroid Association is "any condition in which there is too much thyroid hormone in the body. In other words, the thyroid gland is overactive."

Symptoms: 70% of the time hyperthyroidism will lead to overproduction of the thyroid hormone. Since the thyroid controls a large amount of bodily function, if it's overproducing the thyroid hormone, it speeds up nearly everything in your body. You may be nervous, irritable, or have a racing heart, anxiety, difficulty sleeping and other similar symptoms. Many people lose quite a bit of weight due to increased me-

tabolism, and women tend to have a lighter menstrual flow.

Treatment: Whether it be a beta blocker or an anti-thyroid drug, most people suffering from hyperthyroidism are on medication. If your doctor determines that you do have hyperthyroidism they will speak to you about other newer options to deal with this condition as well.

How might it affect my mood? The symptoms of hyperthyroidism are fairly indicative of any mood changes. It can increase anxiety, make you nervous, give you mood swings, and otherwise greatly affect your mood.

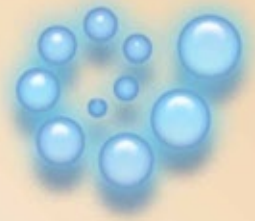
Hypothyroidism:

Hypothyroidism is the opposite of Hyperthyroidism. Rather than having an overactive thyroid, those with hypothyroidism have an under active thyroid. This means that your thyroid is not producing enough of the important hormones your body needs. This, however, is a common condition; it is estimated that 10% of women have some sort of thyroid hormone deficiency.

Symptoms: You may have a slow metabolism, meaning you may gain weight if you have Hypothyroidism. Unlike Hyperthyroidism, this condition slows down everything in your body, potentially leading to weakness and/or fatigue. You may have dry, coarse hair, dry, pale skin, hair loss, muscle cramps and aches, and memory loss along with possible other symptoms. This can cause depression and irritability.

Treatment: Normally, as with Hyperthyroidism, you take an oral thyroid hormone to help and continue regulating your thyroid hormone.

How might it affect my mood? The main mood symptom experienced with hypothyroidism is depression, which is tagged along with lethargy and physical weakness, both signs of depression. Mood swings are also common with this condition.



Communicating With Your Doctor

By Kathy (drowningangel)

Getting Started

When you have a problem or need to visit a doctor, there are certain things you're going to need.

Records: If this is a new doctor, bring any records you have with you of your health or medical situation that is to be addressed.

Insurance: Always make sure you have any insurance information with you at the time of the appointment, along with co-payment (the amount some insurances ask you pay per office visit, ER trip, surgery, etc).

Paperwork: Many doctors will send you paperwork in advance or will ask you to fill out forms at your arrival. Always fill out everything you can, as honestly as possible (smoking, drug usage, alcohol, etc). Note: Your doctor will not "turn you in" for being honest about these things, no matter your age or their legality.

Medications: You may either bring a bag with your prescription bottles and any over-the-counter medications you may take or a list with these medicines (name, dosage, usage).

The above items are normally required at most clinics, although walk-in clinics may not require your records. Having these items ahead of time will help you when the appointment arrives and will also keep you from having to explain things repeatedly to the nurses and the doctor.

The Symptoms

Before your appointment, it is a good idea to make a list of the symptoms you are experiencing. This often helps you to remember issues you may otherwise forget in your rush to explain everything, and it will also help your doctor in their perception of what is going on. Try to be as exact and concise about your symptoms as possible. The more descriptive and specific you can be, the better. Here are some good questions to ask yourself when listing your symptoms:

- What are my symptoms?
- When did they start? How long have they been a problem?
- Are my symptoms constant? If not, when do they come back?
- What makes the symptoms worse or better?

- Do the symptoms affect me daily? If so, how? When?

After your name is called, you will likely have your blood pressure and temperature taken, and your height and weight will be measured. Once you are taken into a room, someone (a nurse or assistant) will sit down and ask you why you have come to the doctor. This is where most people become embarrassed and begin to stammer or blush, especially with issues such as incontinence, reproductive/genital problems, or rectal issues (such as hemorrhoids).

Most doctors recommend the following: If you feel uncomfortable talking to the nurse or assistant about the problem you are having, let them know you are only comfortable speaking to the doctor about your issue. Always keep in mind, though, that these people are professionals, and though it might be embarrassing to you, they will not be bothered nor will they attempt to intentionally embarrass you further. If you choose to wait until the doctor comes in to discuss your problem, you must be honest and tell them exactly what is wrong. They cannot help you if they do not know all of your symptoms – all of them.

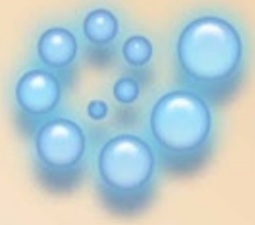
Always keep in mind that symptoms do not simply mean physical manifestations. The term also includes emotional and mental states. For example, patients with chronic pain often experience depression, and treatment of the mental state is critical to helping the physical state as well.

Time Management

It is not unusual for a patient to feel rushed or short of time during a doctor's visit. That is because, typically, a doctor's visit is booked for a length of fifteen minutes, so as patients, it is our responsibility to learn how to make the most of our time with the doctor.

Decide which questions are the most important. Pick three or four issues that are the most pressing and important to you. Ask them at the beginning of the appointment, and if you have time, move on to the other concerns.

Stick to the point. Although we may like to go into detail about some issues, try to give exact but brief answers, such as what the symptom is, approxi-



Communicating With Your Doctor (continued...)

By Kathy (drowningangel)

mately when it began, and what causes it.

Be honest. Beating around the bush can be tempting, especially if you are not doing something your doctor recommended or something with which they may not agree. For example, if you are underage but are having sex, this is something your doctor needs to know to perform the appropriate procedures and tests.

Taking Notes

Although making lists and taking notes of issues to mention during the appointment is a good idea, you may also wish to take notes during the appointment itself on any tests your doctor may recommend, possibilities for what may be wrong, prescriptions you're given, or suggestions they may make. This is all for your benefit for the future, and you can also research any of this further once you leave the office.

Bring a small pad of paper, pen or pencil, or even a tape recorder to your appointment. Ask for copies of test results, doctor's notes, prescriptions, anything you may feel you'll need at a later time. Most offices will be happy to oblige you.

Ask Questions

Understanding what your doctor is saying or doing is a big part of being active in your health care. If you do not ask questions, your doctor will likely assume you understand what they said and move on, and if you don't ask your question then, you may forget what you wished to ask by the end of the appointment.

Ask questions when you don't know the meaning of a word (aneurysm or hypertension, for example) or if you don't know what a certain test is. Knowing as much as you can about what is being done for you and your health is a vital tool and is in your best interest. Understanding tests and terms will help you further on with any diagnoses you may receive.

Tests: How is this test administered? What does it tell you? Why are you ordering this test? When are the results back? Are there any dangers?

Diagnosis: What may have caused this? How will this affect me? What is the treatment? What is the prognosis (outlook)?

Medications: How long will I be taking this? What

does this medicine do? What are the side effects? When should I take it? Will this interact with any of my other medications?

If you happen to forget something and remember a question you wish to ask after the appointment is over, call the office and ask to leave a message, or call your local pharmacist (if it's concerning a prescription). Your health team encompasses nurses, pharmacists, office managers, and doctors. Don't be afraid to contact any of them with a question.

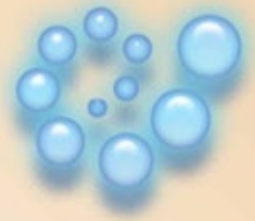
"Taboo" Topics

We talked a bit earlier about embarrassing questions and symptoms. It is very important to understand that you need to feel you can talk to your doctor about anything, at any age. Too many patients let a lot of problems go for too long due to fear or embarrassment of discussing it with their doctor. There are many of these problems, but we'll list a few of the most common.

Sexuality: It doesn't matter if you are a teenager or an adult. If you are unsatisfied with your sex life due to what you feel may be a physical issue, or if you have questions about sex, sexually transmitted diseases, or pregnancy, feel free to ask your doctor. Allowing some STDs to go for too long can cause serious problems without medical treatment, even including infertility.

Family problems: If you are having issues within your family, especially if it is causing you to be hesitant on discussing your health, tell this to your doctor. They can tell you what they can and cannot tell your parents, the specifics of doctor-patient confidentiality in your area, and may even be able to suggest further tips to help you and your family's relationship. If therapy is needed, they can also refer you to a therapist who specializes in the problem area.

Problems with your doctor: Many worry that if they bring up an issue with their doctor that is causing them to be unhappy with their treatment they will be dismissed. While doctors do reserve that right, it is usually not the case at all. Most physicians want to work to make sure their patient is happy with their care, but they can't know what they are doing wrong if they are not informed. For instance, a question could be: "I understand you have a lot of patients, but I'm really unhappy on the length of time it takes for you or one of your nurses to call me back. Is there something we can do about



Communicating With Your Doctor (continued...)

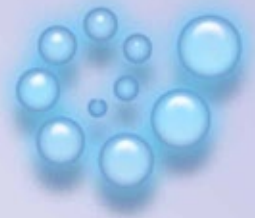
By Kathy (drowningangel)

this?" If, however, you feel you are not receiving the standard of care you should be after discussing it with your doctor, begin looking for a new physician and request a transfer of records.

Bringing a family member/friend

Some find that they often forget some things during the appointment, or they're simply more comfortable with someone else there. If this is the case, you have the right to bring a family member or a friend with you to your appointments. They may think of questions you forget to ask, and they may be able to help you after the appointment to understand everything said.

Doctor appointments may never be fun, but a trusting relationship between you and your doctor can make visits much easier to handle. Communication is essential to being active in your healthcare, so be proactive! Keep these tips in mind, and hopefully, your next visit will be a breeze.



Anime North 2009

By Nat (Strider)

It's not every day you see Super Obama, blood-sucking vampires, and teenagers wielding ten foot long weapons roaming the streets, but it happens for a weekend every year in Toronto, Ontario at one of North America's biggest anime conventions. Hosting over ten thousand people, Anime North stretches over two hotels and the Toronto Congress Center, no individual building able to support the masses. Now why do over ten thousand people get together in goofy costumes for a weekend? Well, it's a load of fun! Hosting a dealer's room, artist's alley, a Masquerade, raves every day, and a bunch of famous voice actors, there is an endless supply of activities. And, of course, they are all Otakus.

If you still don't quite understand why anyone would spend their weekend this way, and think the word 'Otaku' sounds like something you'd say while waving a magic wand, don't worry! Anime conventions are just a way for people who share a common interest to come together and have some fun—almost like a club, except super sized.



Photos courtesy of Strider, taken by Matt.

But, seriously, what's an 'Otaku'?

An 'otaku' is a Japanese word that is used to describe someone with a manic obsession, commonly used to refer to a wildly obsessed fan of anime, manga, and video games (in other words, just about everyone at the convention). On the various badges given out at the convention, they each had a label that referred to the kind of pass you bought. Mine had the label 'Week-end Otaku' on it.

Walking down the parking lot of the Toronto Congress Center, it was evident that the atmosphere had the same feel to it as a Disney theme park—except every-

one was in a costume! It was nearly impossible to walk ten steps without someone asking for a picture or a hug. 'FREE HUGS' signs were held up by many a hand and glomps were given out like free candy. But no one seemed weirded out by the cheery mood. There was no judgment at the convention, and everyone fit in no matter what they were wearing or how they acted.



Photo courtesy Strider, taken by Matt.

The main guests at the convention were Nobuyuki Hiyama, Jessie Flower, Vic Mignogna, and Mark Hildreth, all voice actors for various animes and comic based TV shows. When they were there, not only did they speak individually to groups, but also sang in a concert and signed autographs for fans. One of the most famous was Vic Mignogna, the actor who does the voice of Edward Elric in the *FullMetal Alchemist* English dub. Also a singer, songwriter, and musician, he put on quite a show at the concert. Even more interesting was his work as an actor and director, as he showed a short film he wrote and directed entitled *FullMetal Fantasy*, in which a large number of the voice actors for *FullMetal Alchemist*, including himself, cosplayed as their characters from the anime.

'Cosplaying' is the term for when people dress up as a character from a manga, anime, video game, or movie. Nearly everyone at the convention cosplayed, some even dressing up as more than one character over the span of the weekend. Some popular costumes were the characters from *Naruto*, L from *Death Note*, the teams from *Team Fortress 2*, the group from *Ouran High School Host Club*, and the characters from *D-Gray Man*. Others included ninjas, large fluffy animals, furies, Pokemon, random objects, and, of course, any character with a ten foot long gun or sword.

Anime is well known and obsessed-over art style all over the world, and many cities host conventions. It still may seem a little weird to travel miles to dress up as a fictional character, but it's really a lot of fun, and it is an experience you'd never forget.



Cheap Getaways for Tough Economic Times

By Jessie

Although "vacation" probably brings tropical beaches and ski resorts to mind, during these tough economic times we may not have the luxury of taking off for our ideal destination. That doesn't mean your summer has to be stale! Most people are completely unaware of the multitude of attractions and vacation destinations just hours away, or even right down the road.

For day trips, hop to the internet and type your location and the word "attractions" or "tourism" into a search engine. If you aren't quite satisfied with your results, you can search for something more specific, like "parks" or "museums." Also, keep on top of upcoming local events! During the summer, many cities and large towns have carnivals, fairs, and other events that will be advertised in the city hall, local papers, on announcement boards at local business, and online. Although there is sometimes an entrance fee for events like these, it is usually very reasonable and donated to a local good cause or volunteer organization, like a fire station.

For a weekend getaway, keep your sights set within a few hours of home. Although many camping venues charge fees, some do not. Regardless, camping is a cheap and fun way to spend time outside with friends or family. If you want to go a little farther, you should be able to find a reasonably priced bus service in a small nearby city which services a larger city. When planning a trip by bus to a large city, you should decide ahead of time if you want to go for one day or stay overnight. Hotels are often expensive and typically have a minimum check in age limit of eighteen; hostels are a cheap alternative, but make sure to check out the safety of any hostel you may stay in and the safety of the surrounding area.



Photo by Katrina

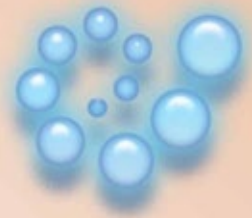
Don't be afraid to get creative with your summer! Look into local attractions you've never considered before: drag races or boat races (if you live near water), your community's theater, a local minor league sports game, or events aimed to raise money for causes. You might not think a walk for cancer is fun, but with your family and friends anything can make a nice day out.



Photo by Katrina

Your available budget for summer fun will vary depending on you and your family's income(s) and the price of local attractions. Allocate yourself a reasonable amount of money for your chosen destination, keeping in mind that some places you go will have souvenirs and food for sale. Decide ahead of time if those things are in your budget and plan accordingly. If spending money on food and drink isn't an option, take your own with you! Most venues are open to small coolers coming in. Pack healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, bottled water, and foods that won't go bad or be ruined due to heat. A sandwich may get soggy, so consider alternatives like crackers and cheese. As long as your food is kept in a cooler, it should remain safe to eat.

Remember to keep safe and protect your body this summer! Wear sunscreen when outside as well as bug repellent, especially if you will be near wooded areas. Check for ticks regularly and see a doctor if you notice any strange bites or unusual bruises anywhere on your body. If you will be in an area unfamiliar to you, always be sure to let someone else know where you will be, even if you aren't going alone. Make sure to heed all warning signs when camping or at local parks. For example, don't swim in areas where "No Swimming" signs are posted. Keep your money safe and valuables with you at all times and, most of all, have fun and stay safe!



Caption This!

May's Winners!



Photo courtesy of Gidig

"We tried to warn her it wasn't wise to spend a full night in chat..." - *Ellie*

"These invisible balloons are difficult to inflate!" - *Lizzie*

"Experiment number 678: How long does it take for a human head to explode?"
- *x_nicola*

"I DON'T WANT THE MONKEY!!!" - *JennJenn*

"I will impale upon you boogies of death if you do not step away from my chocolate cake" - *wonderbread*

"Note to self: Never pair a Warhead with Tabasco sauce." - *freelancertex78*

"If you get any closer, I will bite you." - *udontno*

"No closer!!!" - *x-x-xblackx-x-xrosex-x-x*

"Leave me ALONE!! Can't you see I've got GAS?!" - *CanadaCraig*

"Why so serious?" - *x_nicola*

Self expression



Photograph by Katrina

That One Special Wish

By x_nicola

If I could have just one wish,
You know what it would be?
I'd turn myself into a bird,
And fly with you over the sea.

Among the clouds we would soar,
As high as we should please.
Nobody could stop us there,
Not one person to tease.

My tears will not be noticed,
As we fly and fly and fly.
And all the worries we once had,
Will not come back, though they may try.

At one stage if I fall as rain,
You'll know I've just exploded.
From all the stress before this heaven,
I was so heavily loaded.

So once again I will wish,
And you will come to me.
Our love will be spread wide and far,
For all the world to see.

I'm Here

By fightingthebattle

When you're lonely, I'm here
When you're sad, I'm here
When you're happy, I'm here
When you're at a loss of hope, I'm here
When you need me, I'm here
When you need to talk, I'm here
When you just need someone to listen, I'm here

I'm here when there's nothing left for you to live for

I'm here when you don't know what to do next

I'm here when you want to give up all that you have left

I'm here when you need a loving hug or friend

I'm here when you are in the trouble you don't know how to get out of

I'm here when you have a question no one else will answer

I'm here when you want to just hang out

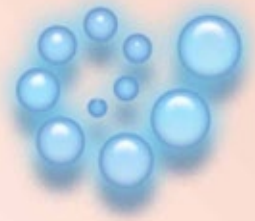
I'm here when you are struggling the most and least

I'm here to be the friend you've always wanted



Photography by Shish

We want to quote you! Now, in addition to submitting literature, artwork, and photography, we also want to hear your quotes! These quotes, as long as they follow the TeenHelp.org rules and guidelines, are basically a free for all. So, if you have any memorable, meaningful, "sigable," or just plain hilarious quotes, please send them in by PMing an Avatar Editor or emailing avatar@teenhelp.org.



Here's your sign

By Katrina

This month's sign: Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

Brace yourself, Gemini, I have good news and bad news. In the middle of the month you're going to feel the need to symbolically "pick up the pace" in your life. Know, though, that you don't have to too much. While it is good to get things done, you don't want to get overly stressed out in such a big month. On the other hand, happy birthday to you! I hope that you have an amazing year ahead of you; you should try to start it off well!

Strength: You're lively, you're youthful! You have an incredible ability to focus on and learn about several things at once.

Possible Weakness: You can be nervous or tense. You distract yourself from the things that you most need to focus on.

Famous Geminis: Nicole Kidman, Paul McCartney, Barry Manilow, Anne Frank, George Bush, Johnny Depp, Clint Eastwood, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bob Dylan

Aries

(March 21 - April 19)

Hiya, Aries! This month it's time for you to (finally!) learn how to manage your money. In the middle of the month you're going to have some down time. Unfortunately, during that time, money is also going to be running a bit slow, so try and make sure you save up until then, okay? This month will be pretty fabulous for you as long as you focus on making wise decisions.

Taurus

(April 20 – May 20)

Try to consider this month of May as a time to regain your balance without making any big decisions in the midst of this regain. This sweet month of May is partially your birthday month, dear Taurus, so I'm guessing you were hoping to make a change and jump into the spotlight, but this just isn't the month for that. Give it a little more time and you'll be good to go.

Cancer

(June 21 – July 22)

Hi, Cancer! If you've had your eye on a higher job position, this is the time to do it! Hopefully your boss is feeling generous and has been noticing all the extra work you've been putting in (and I hope you have been putting extra work in - it will help you get the promotion you've been after). This month take a nice walk outside and breathe some fresh air every once in a while. You deserve it.

Leo

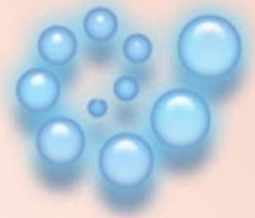
(July 23 – August 22)

Feisty Leo, you might run into a tough situation near the end of the month! If this is the case, go out on a limb and ask your family for advice if you don't usually! You never know what kind of wisdom they could offer you that you never even thought possible. Enjoy the hopefully warm weather by rolling those windows down while you're in the car and preserving some energy you would've used up by turning on the air conditioning.

Virgo

(August 23 - September 22)

Have patience, Virgo! The beginning of the month might seem a little iffy, but by the middle to the end of the month, you're going to be having a blast! Until then, focus on getting financial matters sorted out. You could research a few tips online to make sure you're able to manage your money wisely so that by the end of the month you're able to pamper yourself a bit more than normal.



Here's your sign (continued...)

By Katrina

Libra

(September 23 - October 22)

This month, Libra, like our dear friend Leo, you're going to have to **make** a fairly big decision regarding your life. **Remember**, you have time so don't rush to conclusions! **No matter** what this is about you must **follow your heart** to the right decision. If you feel you've made a mistake, don't regret it. Instead, **know that it** was exactly what you wanted at one time.

Sagittarius

(November 21 - December 21)

This month, Sagittarius, looks like it's going to be quite an unusual month for you! Don't frown just yet though; **unusual**, in this case, is a good thing. If you're looking for **romance**, this is the month to really **be on your game** because the planets are aligned just right for you. If not, feel free to just **chill out** a bit.

Aquarius

(January 20 - February 19)

This is your slow month, Aquarius. Live it up! You've been so busy for the past couple of weeks, I'd definitely say it's about time for you to have some **chill time** for yourself. Read the book you've been meaning to read since January or learn how to knit; basically, you need to do whatever it is you've been meaning to do for ages but never got around to.

Scorpio

(September 23 - October 22)

It looks like all kinds of amazing things are going to happen to you this month, Scorpio. Of all the signs, this month is **luckiest for you**. No matter what happens, remember to **stay grounded** and don't go bragging to others who might not feel so fortunate as you. However, **feel free** to throw yourself a party at all the cool events you'll be able to attend this month.

Capricorn

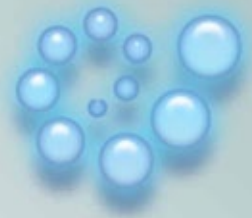
(December 22 - January 19)

You feel like you need to make your dorm, apartment, house, or **place of lodging** a little bit more "you." Take a weekend out for spring cleaning and do whatever you need to in the midst of the cleaning to make your **setting** feel more welcoming and comfortable to you. At the end of the month, if you're ever feeling stressed, you know it's going to be nice to come home to you an apartment that just screams "you."

Pisces

(February 20 - March 19)

This month, Pisces, you truly are becoming a force to be reckoned with! Taking a hint from Leo and letting others hear you roar, **are you?** Well, keep it up! The more "noise" you make, the more you're going to be recognized, and **at the end of the month**, it looks like there's some seriously deserved recognition heading your way.



The wind down...

Acknowledgements

Image sources

Colored Pencils: www.everystockphoto.com

Press hat: www.usagold.com

Star signs: www.grafamania.net

Articles

Zodiac: www.astrostarcharts.com

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Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of Avatar! Any comments, questions, suggestions or criticisms can be directed towards the editorial team. You can also send us any submissions you have for Avatar, which are a really important part of keeping Avatar alive. We appreciate any submissions that are made to us. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!

The Avatar Editors.

Please visit us at the Avatar page, www.avatar.teenhelp.org, or email us at avatar@teenhelp.org.