

# A diet of recycled gum, paper and nuggets - yuck!

## COMMENTARY

By Joe Shearer

A few weeks back, we took a family trip to Meijer. My wife Crystal took Riley, our 4-year-old, and Mason, the youngest at 9 months, into the store while I fumbled with my 2-year-old daughter Jenna's car seat. When I got in the store, I found them waiting for me with a cart. Riley was chewing gum.

"Where did you get that gum?" I asked.

Riley paused, his eyes darting from side to side.

"Mamaw," he said. Mamaw was at home, 20 miles away.

So I prodded. "Where?" I demanded.

He pointed to the door. "Outside," he said. Further questioning revealed my son was in fact snacking on some bona-fide already-been-chewed gum.

That he found on the ground. In the parking lot.

Jenna is fond of excavating old chicken nuggets from under the seat in our car, and Mason, who is just learning the joys of being mobile, dutifully shoves into his mouth anything that will fit. Paper has been a staple in his diet recently.

They do, however, know the meaning of "yucky" enough that Riley refuses to throw away, or even touch, a poop diaper, and Jenna loves to bounce around the house stark naked, holding the lower cup of her recently-used potty seat, shouting "Gockey," (her toddler approximation of "yucky") as yellow liquid sloshes onto the carpet.

Sure, this is typical behavior for kids, between the normal oral fixation kids develop and just not having that concept of germs. It's as typical as playing house, loving bologna, or using swear words.

But my kids are so cute, cuddly and innocent. How can they be the kids that drop their suckers in the dirt, wipe them off and put them back in their mouth?

Kids will be kids? Sure. But do they have to be so gockey?



Joe Shearer is a freelance writer from Noblesville and the exhausted father of three kids under five years of age. He also writes for [www.thefilmyap.com](http://www.thefilmyap.com) and blogs at [www.indyparentsource.com](http://www.indyparentsource.com).