



## HEALTH TIPS

Can't get garlic or onion odour off your hands? Wash them with a blob of toothpaste



Sprinkle a pinch of cornstarch inside socks to absorb moisture and prevent blisters

# STEPMOM SURVIVES

The most challenging job any woman will face is not impossible to master. Kareena should listen in

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Actor Kareena Kapoor is lucky she won't have to play the role she doesn't want to — that of the evil stepmother. Her five-year-long relationship with actor Saif Ali Khan culminated in marriage earlier this month, and Khan's daughter Sara (18) and son Ibrahim (11) — from his first marriage to actor Amrita Singh — were part of the festivities. Khan married Singh in 1991, and after 13 years the couple divorced in 2004. The children live with their mother.

Media reports have often suggested that Kapoor shares a warm bond with the kids. In fact, her father Randhir Kapoor had this to say when asked about the children: "I have seen the children with Kareena. They are extremely comfortable and they like her very much."

And yet, moving from being dad's girlfriend to stepmom changes things dramatically. How large a role must Kapoor play when parenting decisions are taken regarding the kids, if at all? Or should she leave all responsibility to the biological parents?

"Stepfamilies are complex. Don't expect things to go easily or smoothly, especially for the first few years," says psychologist Harriet Lerner, who has spent years researching the subject. "It's important that the stepmom keeps in mind that the kids are not looking for another mother or father. Having a 'parent-like' relationship, if at all, is earned by building a positive history over several years," says the author of *The Dance of Anger and Marriage Rules* in an email interview.

Doing more than you should, and faster than you should, to inch closer, will only backfire. It's best if stepparents hang on the periphery, without aiming to be any kind of parent. "Aim to be more of a coach or friend or aunt," advises Lerner.

And that's where Kapoor seems to have



YOGEN SHAH

With Kareena Kapoor now officially Mrs Saif Ali Khan, how large a role should she play in parenting decisions concerning his kids Sara and Ibrahim (in picture)?

got it right. Two years ago, media reports had hinted at a cold war between the couple because Khan wanted her to play 'mommy' to his kids. The couple is believed to have had an argument since she showed no desire to pamper the kids. Kapoor, however, denied the incident. Experts say it's not mandatory that you become a full-time parent and walk

straight into the role of disciplinarian once you marry someone with children. In fact, psychologists suggest that it's best if the stepparent desists from playing the role of direct disciplinarian. An active supporter of the biological parent's disciplinary efforts should be your aim.

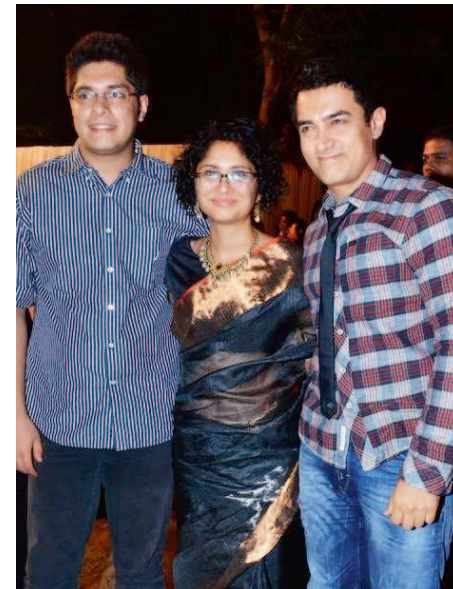
Swinging to the other extreme, and relin-

## NEVER CRITICIZE THE OTHER

IT'S IMPORTANT to support the child's relationships with "both sides", and refrain from criticizing key figures. "Be at your best behaviour. Be mature even if the other adult is being a jerk. Don't add fuel to the fire," suggests Lerner.

Being nice isn't restricted to the other partner. Be kind to yourself, and go easy on the pressure to blend into one big happy family. "Being a stepparent is very, very hard. Give yourself a medal of honour for just breathing easily and getting through the day. Remember, it takes a few years for everyone to adjust to their new roles, sometimes, much longer," says Lerner.

VIRAL BHAYANI



Aamir Khan (right) with second wife Kiran Rao and Junaid, his son from his first marriage. She says she's more friend, less mother figure to Khan's kids

quishing all control may mean you risk the danger of making the kids feel like they are unworthy of your time and attention. Counsellor and psychologist Malini Shah says, "Don't be the enforcer, but work with

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## ASK THE SEXPERT

DR MAHINDER WATSA



**1 I am 28, and my wife is 27. We have been trying to have a baby for the last six months. I suffer from delayed ejaculation, and lose my erection. I have to masturbate for release. I have undergone a semen analysis (the result was 29 m/ul). I have been undergoing treatment for anxiety for three years. Is delayed ejaculation due to anxiety pills? I didn't suffer from this problem earlier.**

Please revisit the doctor and ask him about ways to improve count and motility of sperm. You can withdraw the penis from the vagina midway, and use your hands,

but make sure you reinsert it at the time of ejaculation so that you come inside her.

**2 I am a 56-year-old man, and am healthy. I have been in a relationship with a woman for four years. She is now 40. Whenever I have sex with her, I doze off soon after. I have noticed that this is peculiar only to the times I have sex with her. When I get physical with my wife, for instance, it doesn't happen. Sometimes, I experience an orgasm without ejaculating, two to three in a row. At times, I have dozed off even**

**before completing intercourse. It's getting a bit embarrassing. Is this normal for a man my age?**

At your age, it's possible that you may not ejaculate but since your orgasm has been satisfying, it may make you feel like relaxing and dozing off. I have no idea why you don't experience a similar feeling when you have sex with your wife.

**3 My partner and I have had sex several times, but recently when he tried inserting his penis inside me, his penis started bleeding. Why?**

A dry vagina due to the lack of lubrication can cause the joint on the

undersurface of the penis to rupture.

**4 I am a 22-year-old male. Recently, I have noticed that whenever I experience nightfall, it is accompanied by a strong odour like that of urine. This was not the case earlier. I urinate before sleeping every night.**

Urine and semen do not pass out together. It's possible that you may have also passed urine.

**SEND YOUR QUERIES TO:** Ask the Sexpert, Mumbai Mirror, Times Of India Building, Dr D N Road, Mumbai 400001 or email at drwatsa@indiatimes.com. Contact Dr Watsa, send an email to mcwatsa@hotmail.com