

Erasing: an unsafe teen game parents should know about

Even after over a decade in pediatrics, teens always surprise me.

Last week a junior high student came into a checkup with the scabbed hand pictured in the photo above. Apparently there is a game new to me called "Erasing". My patient told me the game can be played with any type of eraser, but the pink one at the end of a number two pencil works best. The object of the game is rub with an eraser hard enough to "erase" as much of your skin on the back your hand as possible. The players each choose a ligament (one of the cords which run from your knuckles to your wrist) to "erase." The first person to stop erasing loses the game.

If you find your teen erasing, tell them about the dangers of infection and scarring. Since a teen often does not understand long term ramifications, it is often a more a more effective deterrent to tell him/her to stop because it "looks ugly". Even if your teen is not erasing, use a discussion about erasing as a starting point to talk about other self injurious behaviors (i.e. "choking games" where the object is to cut off someone's breathing and the "find your true laugh" game).

Since I thought erasing was a brand new trend, I took the photograph to show the other doctors in my office. When I flashed the photo in front of one of my colleagues, he glanced briefly at it and said, "Oh, that's erasing- I did that when I was a kid."

Amazing we all got through.

Pass this info on to other parents.

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