

How can I help my mom?



Dear American Girl,

My dog just died, and my mom is really sad. Every time I mention him, she starts to cry, and I can't help her through the pain.

REALLY sad

Losing a pet can be heartbreaking because animals not only make cherished friends but are close members of the family. When a pet—or really anyone—dies, it's normal to feel sad. How long that feeling lasts is different for each person. Your mom may need more time to grieve, and that's OK. You can't take away her pain, but by giving her a hug or holding her hand while she cries, you provide comfort she'll appreciate. If she's really feeling down, bring up lighthearted stories of your pet to make her laugh and smile. Remember: Your dog may be gone, but he'll always be alive in your heart.

Dear American Girl,

During timed math tests, I get teary-eyed and start to shake. I'm really good at math, but I don't do my best when timed.

timed tests

The teary eyes and shakes you're feeling can be a sign of overactive nerves. Even when you've studied and know all the material, having to "beat the clock" may cause you to freak out or even freeze when it's time to show your smarts. To feel more calm, go in being extra prepared—rested from a good night's sleep and nourished from a yummy breakfast. Take a deep breath before you begin, and pump up your confidence by repeating in your head: "I'm awesome at math, and I've totally got this!" Because it's true! If you are still struggling, tell a parent. Your doctor might have some ideas, too.

Dear American Girl,

I have type 1 diabetes. Some girls at school gossip and say that I get whatever I want because I have diabetes. That's not true!

diabetes

It sounds as if the girls at school don't understand type 1 diabetes, and when people don't understand something, they sometimes tell stories or talk in ways that come off sounding hurtful. While they're likely not trying to hurt you, they may feel jealous of the special treatment you might receive at school. If these girls are your friends, try talking to them to tell them how you feel. Or better yet, why not teach your classmates about your condition? Ask your teacher or guidance counselor if you can do a short presentation about diabetes, how you take care of yourself, and why you sometimes get special accommodations. Hopefully once these girls know what it takes to manage diabetes, they will be kinder and more understanding.

Dear American Girl,

I'm afraid I'm wearing too much makeup. I usually wear nail polish, lipstick, and even eye shadow. Should I stop?

Too much makeup

Makeup is a personal choice for every girl. If your parents are OK with you wearing makeup, and you enjoy doing so, then go for it. But here's a little tip on how much to wear: Less is more! You don't need lipstick, eye shadow, and every other product in the makeup aisle to be beautiful; your confidence and kindness will let your real beauty shine! Still, a little makeup can be fun to wear on special occasions or when playing makeover with your friends during a sleepover.



Dear American Girl,

Every night, my little sister comes into my room to sleep because she gets scared in her own room. I love her and care about her, but I need my own space. What can I do?

Spaceless

Your little sister looks up to you and feels safe around you, which shows how important you are in her life. Still, you're absolutely right in needing your own space, especially at night when getting a good night's sleep can be tricky with another wiggly person lying beside you. During the daytime, have a one-on-one talk with your sister to dig deeper into why she sleeps with you. If she's truly scared, ask your parents to get involved so that they can help your sis feel more settled. If she misses you, set aside quality time together to read stories, play games, or just hang out. You could also schedule a slumber party once in a while. The together time will give her something to look forward to that doesn't creep on your privacy.