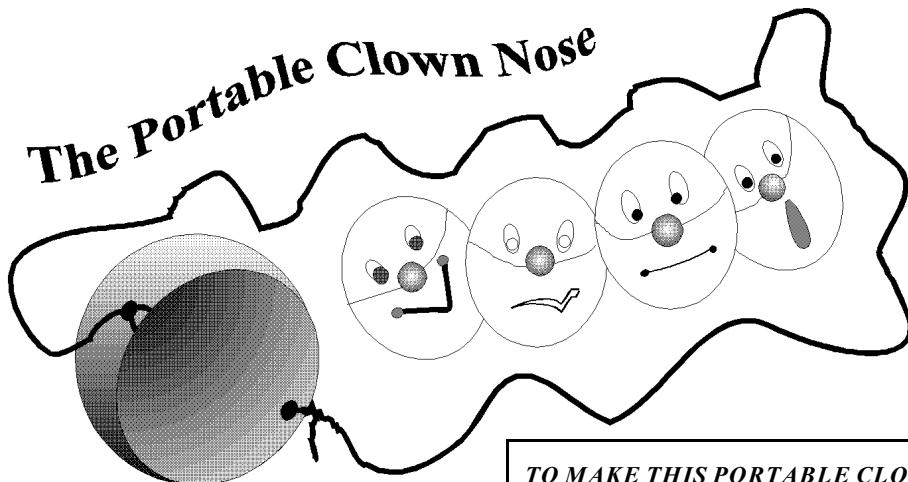


# Hospital Clown Newsletter

## The Gentle Art of The Caring Clown

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### Putting on a Happy Face



This little gem of a nose is from Arina Isaacson of The Clown School of San Francisco.<sup>1</sup> Made from half a ping-pong ball and secured around the head with elastic thread, it really transforms your face. ♥ Arina uses them in all her character development and performance workshops. ♥ Shobi Dobi gives them with a prescription to parents of hospitalized children. **Prescription is on next page**

**TO MAKE THIS PORTABLE CLOWN NOSE,** Cut a ping pong ball in two around the seam, using a curved cuticle scissors. With sand paper on a flat surface smooth out the edges. Lay the half balls on a newspaper and spray paint (outdoors) with red paint. Use a small hole punch for a hole on each side (as shown). Tie elastic thread at holes. The knots can be dabbed with a little glue and then the extra thread cut off.



David and Joey  
Kaiser East Bay Medical Center in Oakland CA

**F**ACE PAINTING designs to the left are from *Put on A Happy Face*, Marcela Murad (“Mama Clown”).<sup>2</sup> This is a chance to give real caring strokes to children in the hospitals or clinics. Shobi Dobi started out with Mama Clown’s book, because it gave the children a chance to choose a design. Now she has her own photo album of designs.

Face painting is one procedure in the hospital that doesn’t cause pain. Often, it can take the patient’s mind off their discomfort. It does wonders for the teen age girls and children who have lost their hair to chemotherapy. Painting the faces of their family makes the hospital visit more fun for siblings and, therefore, the hospitalized children.

Children love looking at themselves in the mirror, so now I make mirror-back buttons for the children to keep.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes I make the buttons in advance with a drawing on the non-mirror side. Once I get a polaroid camera I will use a picture of their painted faces. Kids love the reminder that something is fun in the hospital.

Joey didn’t win his fight with cancer, but he won a place in everyone’s heart.

## ***Portable Nose Prescription***

(Continued from page 1)

This idea came to me while reading Lighten Up by C.W. Metcalf.<sup>7</sup> He writes of a Tibetan monk who once told him that to understand life you must first discover the silliness in seriousness. To do this, the monk continued, rise each morning and stand in front of a mirror and laugh at yourself (even if you don't feel like it). Repeat this every morning until you find yourself laughing from the heart. I have added the nose as it does bring out the ridiculous. It's a way of opening up the humor perspective or track - to get rid of the fear of foolishness. ♥ Hospitalized children need to see the silliness in their parents!

Prescription to parents of hospitalized children as follows:

- ♥ Take the clown nose into a room that has a large mirror where you can be alone (as a bathroom),
- ♥ Put the nose on and make as many different faces as you can.
- ♥ Do not leave the mirror until you are laughing at yourself from that silly being inside.
- ♥ Bring the nose to hospital and show your son/ daughter. Children love to see their parents act silly.

-- *Shobi Dobi*

## ***Face Painting and Hygiene***

The following guidelines are for face painting in hospitals. We have printed this before, but it is worth a reprint. I've had people tell me that at a convention a hospital clown said they put a few drops of alcohol in their water (this does nothing as you will see from reading this). Some other teacher told them to use Q tips. Sure, but what about contaminating the paint? These guidelines sound complicated and take some time to prepare, but the rewards of face painting in the hospital are wonderful. You need to go over this with your infection control people, to let them know you are aware of infection control. These have been approved by my hospital.

Using products that come in tubes allows the paint to remain closed and unexposed to pathogens. I wipe off the tips with an anti-bacteria wipe after squeezing out paint/water/glitter/lotion.

- ✓ Always check with a nurse before face painting.
- ✓ Do not paint a face that has open wounds, rashes, severe acne or a surgical incision
- ✓ Wipe the face with a Handiwipe. This will remove dirt and help you insure skin integrity.
- ✓ If the child's skin is quite dry or on very young skin, the color can penetrate the skin. Use a little cream or lotion (from a tube again for infection control) on the child's face first. Some face painting companies (as Grimis from Holland) sell special creams for this purpose.

- ✓ Only use paint designated for face painting such as Snazaroo, Kryolan, and/or Mehron. Do not use acrylic paint on skin. Even though it is labeled as "non toxic," this rating signifies that it is not poisonous if swallowed. Acrylic paints can contain ingredients that are harsh on the skin and it is also difficult to scrub off.
- ✓ Use water soluble paint that comes in tubes (Kryolan and Mehron). Fresh clean paint can be easily dispensed for each patient, therefore keeping the remaining paint clean. The more common small flat containers of makeup are not appropriate for hospital use due to contamination problems. The idea is not to go from face to paint to face to another face. Get the idea? The traveling germs.
- ✓ If you use glitter, make sure it is labeled "non toxic" and that it is not metallic. If in doubt, don't use any glitter at all. Graffiti Glitter (Jerome Russell) in little bottles squeeze out a small portion and are handled the same way as tube paint.
- ✓ Use a clean palette for each patient to mix your colors. You can use a sketch pad or cut up paper plates that you've put into plastic bags.
- ✓ Use disposable makeup applicators or cotton swabs to apply the paint. Really cheap swabs are best as they don't have a lot of cotton on them. I also use sponges to apply and shade paint. I get 1 inch chair foam from the craft store and cut it into 1 inch pieces. Use a new clean sponge for each patient and store other new ones in a plastic bag.
- ✓ If the more traditional brush is used, use the brush for only one patient, then place it in a plastic bag until it can be cleaned at your home. You can use the same brush over and over for different colors on the same patient. Clean it off in fresh water.
- ✓ At the end of the day, wash all your used brushes in hot water with a soap that contains an antimicrobial agent and allow them to air dry.
- ✓ For added disinfecting, after your brushes are clean and dry, swirl them in 70% isopropyl alcohol (most rubbing alcohol) for about 10 minutes. You must swirl and swish your brushes in this solution so that the bristles are exposed to the liquid. Simply soaking them will not insure that the germicidal ingredients reaches all the fibers nor will using a little alcohol in your wash water.
- ✓ Shobi sets a timer and watches the news on TV while she swirls her brushes. This is a discipline that I must abide by if I want to face paint in the hospital. Most of the face painting I do is with children and I certainly do not want to be responsible for causing them any more pain and illness than they already have.

As I do a lot of commercial face painting jobs, I have a separate face painting box for the hospital. It's just a small pencil box and contains a mirror which I can wash with an alcohol wipe, plus a small sketch book for a palette, and brushes/Q-tips/makeup applicators in plastic bags. The box also contains some alcohol wipes and tattoos. I use hospital paper cups for water. Once the case is set up the hygiene is easy.