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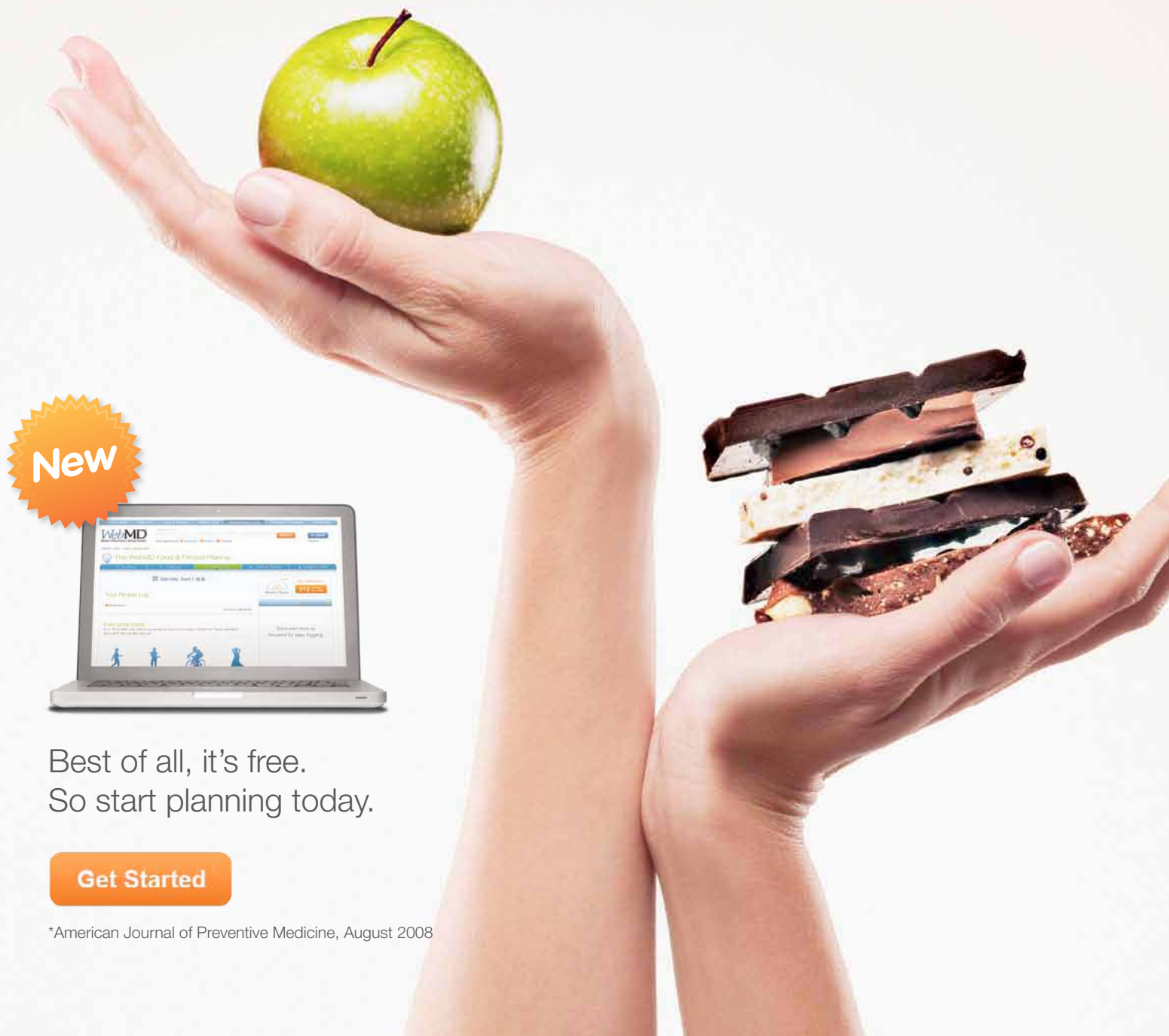
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New

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Get Started

*American Journal of Preventive Medicine, August 2008

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Modern Mom

After long days shooting TV's top comedy, *Modern Family*, **Julie Bowen** goes home to a family including three kids under age 3. How does this self-confessed control freak balance it all? With lots of help and a good sense of humor, Bowen tells WebMD contributing writer **Lauren Paige Kennedy**. The award-winning actor reveals her tips for managing motherhood and a career—and making it fun every step of the way.



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Green Zone

From your living space and yard to the air you breathe, going green can boost your family's overall health. WebMD contributing writer **Heather Hatfield** offers easy eco-savvy strategies to make over your home inside and out. **AND:** Clean-and-green expert product picks.



44 allergies

Spring to Action

Do you greet the warm weather with a stuffy nose and watery eyes instead of a happy heart? WebMD contributing writer **Gina Shaw** asks medical experts for five ways to cope with seasonal allergies' peskiest symptoms.



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COVER PHOTO BY KATE POWERS

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take the test you can take to your doctor

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Checkup

Rap artist **Nelly** talks about the importance of bone marrow donation and his personal ties to the cause, how he stays fit, and what being a dad has taught him about life.



Everyone wanted to know how the Princess was...
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NAME: Taylor
HEALTH CONDITION: Cancer
VISITS TO WEBSITE: 632,130
MESSAGES OF SUPPORT: 12,211

CaringBridge provides free websites that connect people facing a significant health challenge to family and friends, making it easy to share updates and receive support.

CaringBridge.org

Making each health journey easier.

EDITOR IN CHIEF • Nan-Kirsten Forte, MS

“Mom, I need to write a paragraph answering the question: Is there is a basic human need for justice, equality, and freedom?” my daughter announced. “Oh, and I need to give examples of each.”

This request came from our 7th grader while my husband and I were watching the events in Egypt unfold on television last month. My mind raced through my grade-school memory (oh, boy): justice...Emmett Till, equality, a woman’s right to vote, freedom of speech.

The news showed Cairo footage reminiscent of Tiananmen Square. I turned off the TV and looked at my daughter. Here she was learning about our country’s history while we were watching another country’s history happening right before us, and it was steeped in matters of justice, equality and freedom.

Some questions are best answered with other questions: “Olivia, can you imagine a place where people are put in jail when they did not commit a crime and not put in jail when they did? Where people are treated differently because of the color of their skin, whom they pray to, or whether they are a man or a woman? Where people cannot express their opinions or choose what they will do for a living, where or if they will get an education, whom they will marry or not, and where they will travel in this world?”

“Mom, you know that would be ridiculous.”

My husband and I exchanged that oh-so-familiar look. I knew I couldn’t get through to her on world issues, so I had to make my point in a way I knew she would understand. I made it personal.

“OK, little one, here’s the deal.” I laid it out: “The one thing we can all control is ourselves. You need to take better care of yourself. You need to finish your homework earlier, get to sleep earlier, eat a better breakfast, learn some more basketball moves for your team—and your iPod and mobile phone may

not, not, not go to bed with you because that is the unhealthiest thing I have ever seen.”

“Jeez, Mom.” Silence.

Ten minutes later...

“Mom I really need some help with all that. I am learning about the human body in school but you need to help me with myself.”

“Kid, I thought you’d never ask. Have I got something for you...”

That would be our new **Teen Health Center** at **WebMD.com**. And that’s just the start—there’s much more to come for our kids. We’ll let you know all about it on WebMD.com.

And if you have an iPhone, be sure to **download WebMD the App—it’s as easy as scanning this QR code at right with your iPhone**. You can use your phone to access games, news, and sports—and to do the right thing for your body, too. (But do not, not, not take your iPhone to bed with you!)

Nan-Kirsten Forte

Nan-Kirsten Forte, MS
Editor in Chief, WebMD the Magazine



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SPRING's Quick Picks



skin care

PENNYWISE PAMPERING

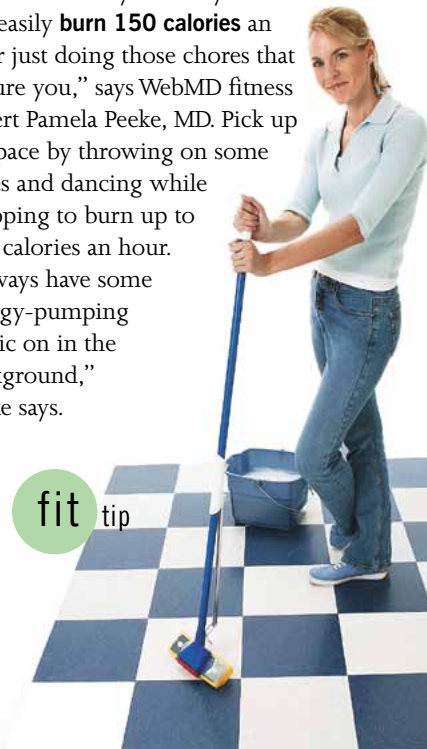
In desperate need of a facial but don't have the time or the extra cash? Behold the power of the papaya, says WebMD skin care expert Susan Evans, MD. "It's a great skin fruit," she says. It contains vitamins A, C, and E, which help prevent signs of aging, and the **papain enzyme acts as a natural exfoliant**. To put it to work for you, blend together a cut-up, seedless papaya with a whole egg, and apply as a 10-minute mask. "You'll see improvement in your skin's texture and tightness, and you'll have that fine glow," Evans says.



Andi Gabrick
Senior Editor, WebMD the Magazine

CHORE JOY

Cleaning the floors does more than make over the kitchen—it can help make over your body. "You can easily **burn 150 calories** an hour just doing those chores that torture you," says WebMD fitness expert Pamela Peeke, MD. Pick up the pace by throwing on some tunes and dancing while mopping to burn up to 200 calories an hour. "Always have some energy-pumping music on in the background," Peeke says.



fit tip



healthy eats

DOZE PATROL

Stifling yawns at your desk? Beat the afternoon slump with these tips from WebMD nutrition expert Carolyn O'Neil, MS, RD. First, drink up. "Being dehydrated is one of the top causes of lethargy and lack of focus," O'Neil says. Next, "check your snack scorecard," she says. All-day snackers tend to skip meals, which can zap energy. So make sure your snacks are healthy and filling. "**Snacks should be about 150 calories**, and high in fiber and protein," O'Neil says.

FORE GOOD

Work on your swing and help those in need. March is **National Kidney Month**, a perfect time to sign up for one of 40 National Kidney Foundation Cadillac Golf Classic tournaments held across the country this year. One tourney takes place in Lakeland, Fla., in mid-April. For a full list, go to kidney.org.

give back



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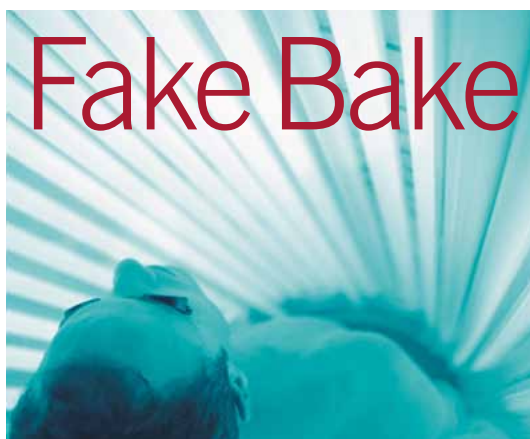
Fit: The Place for KIDS to Play & Learn About Healthy Habits

Start Now



Take this issue's **Healthy Start Challenge** and you could **win a prize!** WebMD.com

Fake Bake



Although the trend toward sunless tanning (think sprays and lotions) is becoming increasingly popular, new research shows that people who use those products are also more likely to go to indoor tanning salons—which expose them to cancer-causing UV rays.

Researchers at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis analyzed the records of more than 2,800 people ages 18 to 64. They found that women are three times

more likely than men to use indoor tanning facilities and that both men and women who use spray tanning products were more likely to visit tanning salons. The study also showed that only 13.3% of the women and 4.2% of the men knew that avoiding tanning beds is one way to decrease the risk of getting skin cancer.

Source: Archives of Dermatology

Double Duty

You know the old saying that “two heads are better than one”? It’s true, new research finds, but only if both heads contain the same skill sets.

In a study of shared decision-making, researchers from University College London showed that two people of equal abilities solved problems better when they worked together, probably because individuals tend to lose focus over time.

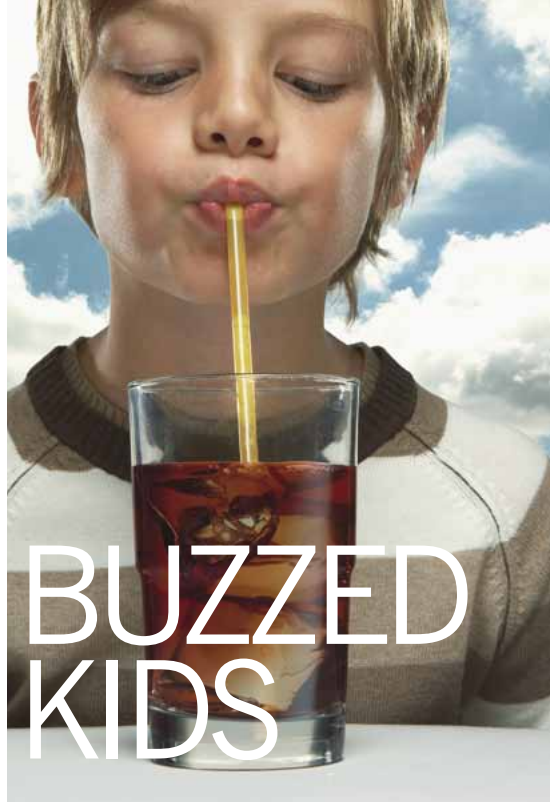
But when a competent person was paired with someone who wasn’t

so competent, group and individual performance suffered. In those cases, the researchers say, people are probably better off working alone.

The findings suggest people can work together most effectively when they understand their individual competence level.

But given that many people aren’t that self-aware, the onus may be on business managers to evaluate employees’ abilities and match them accordingly.

Source: Science



Think most parents limit their kids’ caffeine intake? Think again. A recent study found that a full 75% of children ages 5 to 12 consume caffeine. What’s more, it might be keeping them up at night.

After surveying 201 parents, researchers at the University of Nebraska Medical School in Omaha learned that children ages 5 to 7 had about 52 milligrams of caffeine a day (equivalent to half a cup of coffee or about 1.5 cans of soda), and children ages 8 to 12 had 109 milligrams (equivalent to one cup of coffee or 3 cans of soda). Most of that caffeine came from soft drinks.

Not surprisingly, the researchers found that the more caffeine individual children in the study consumed, the less they slept. And, taken on average, children ages 5 to 7 slept an average of 9.46 hours per night, while children ages 8 to 12 slept an average of 8.47 hours per night. (Sleep experts say school-age kids need 10 to 12 hours nightly.) The study didn’t show that caffeine was the only cause of that sleep loss in older children, but it did find a correlation.

While the FDA has not established recommended caffeine limits for children, the study authors advise parents to be “prudent” and regulate the amount of caffeine their children consume. Caffeine can cause anxiety, and any resulting sleep loss can affect school performance. Soft drinks and sleep loss have also been linked to weight gain and related diseases, including heart disease and diabetes.

Source: Journal of Pediatrics

RICE REDUX



For years, brown rice has been the rice of choice for people seeking a healthy alternative to processed grains. Now, studies show black rice is also extremely healthy because it contains antioxidants similar to those found in blackberries and blueberries. In fact, it may be even healthier than brown rice.

“Just a spoonful of black rice bran contains more health-promoting anthocyanin antioxidants than...a spoonful of blueberries, but with less sugar and more fiber and vitamin E antioxidants,” says Zhimin Xu, PhD, of Louisiana State University Agricultural Center. “If berries are used to boost health, why not black rice and black rice bran?” Anthocyanin antioxidants show promise for fighting cancer, heart disease, and other health problems, Xu says. He adds that food manufacturers could use black rice bran or bran extracts to boost the health value of breakfast cereals, beverages, cakes, cookies, and other foods.

Currently, black rice is used mainly in Asia for food decoration, noodles, sushi, and puddings.

Source: American Chemical Society fall 2010 national meeting

Dare to Dream?

It’s normal to daydream. In general, people spend almost half their waking hours thinking about something other than what they are doing in the present. But this kind of mind wandering typically gives rise to unhappiness, according to new research.

Researchers used a new type of iPhone app to gather data about the thoughts, feelings, and actions of 2,250 volunteers at random intervals during the day. On average, the participants reported their minds were wandering 46.9% of the time. In fact, the only time their minds wandered less than 30% of the time was during sex, during which their minds wandered only 10% of the time. The researchers found that people in the study were least happy when resting, working, or using a home computer.

So what’s the best predictor of happiness? How often our minds leave the present, not the activities we’re doing. These research findings mirror the teachings of many religious and philosophical traditions that preach happiness can be found through “mindfulness” and by living in the moment.

Source: Science



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The Belt Way

You know those “Click It or Ticket” signs you’ve seen on the roads? They work. A recent CDC study finds that state laws that fine motorists and passengers who don’t buckle up really do increase seat belt use and decrease car crash injury rates.

The research shows that the kinds of laws states enact affect compliance. In states where police can give tickets to people who aren’t wearing seat belts, 88% of all people say they always wear their seat belts. In states where police can only give tickets for not wearing a seat belt if they’ve already pulled the driver over for something else, fewer people, 79%, say they always wear their seat belts.

Data show that people wearing seat belts are half as likely to be seriously injured (and 45% less likely to die) than those not wearing seat belts.

How does your state stack up? Here’s a list of the states with the highest and lowest percentage of residents who say they always use seat belts.

Top 5 Seat-Belt-Wearing States:

1. Oregon (93.7%)
2. California (93.2%)
3. Washington (92.0%)
4. Hawaii (91.4%)
5. Texas (91.1%)

Bottom 5 Seat-Belt-Wearing States:

1. Montana (69.4%)
2. Wyoming (67.4%)
3. New Hampshire (66.4%)
4. South Dakota (59.7%)
5. North Dakota (59.2%)

Source: *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, “Vital Signs” report



There are many reasons to keep your cholesterol in check, and here’s one more: New research indicates that higher levels of HDL—the “good” cholesterol—may reduce your risk of getting Alzheimer’s disease.

Researchers at Columbia University monitored 1,130 seniors for four years. None had memory trouble or dementia at the start of the study. But by the end of the study, those people with the highest HDL counts (over 55 mg/dL) were 60% less likely to develop Alzheimer’s than those whose HDL level was under 39 mg/dL. (However, high levels of “bad” LDL and total cholesterol did not appear to be linked to a reduced risk of developing the disease.)

Although the researchers aren’t sure exactly how HDL protects the brain against Alzheimer’s, they hypothesize that HDL reduces the risk of stroke, which in turn is associated with the disease.

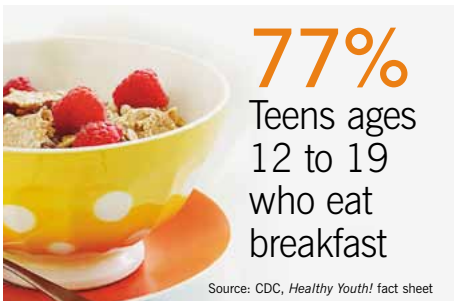
Not all studies have led to the same conclusion. A 2001 study found that Japanese-American men with higher HDL levels were more likely to develop Alzheimer’s-related plaques and tangles in their brains. Yet plenty of studies have shown that higher levels of HDL protect the heart. So it’s smart to try to boost HDL levels above 60 mg/dL, doctors familiar with the new research say.

According to the Harvard University School of Medicine, good ways to boost HDL cholesterol include getting regular aerobic exercise, losing weight (if needed), quitting smoking, avoiding trans fats and highly refined carbohydrates (such as white flour), and taking certain kinds of medication.

Source: *Archives of Neurology*

16 Americans’ life satisfaction rank, compared to people in 132 countries. Denmark ranked No. 1.

Source: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*; Gallup World Poll



77%
Teens ages 12 to 19 who eat breakfast

Source: CDC, *Healthy Youth!* fact sheet

Walk This Way

Forget about boots. Your brain was made for walking. Walking is a great way to help clear your head—and ward off dementia, according to new research that finds that walking seems to help prevent brain shrinkage, which can cause memory loss.

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh examined data on 299 dementia-free people with a mean age of 78 who recorded the number of blocks they walked weekly. Nine years later, the research team took brain scans to measure brain size. Four years after that, the team tested for cognitive impairments or dementia.

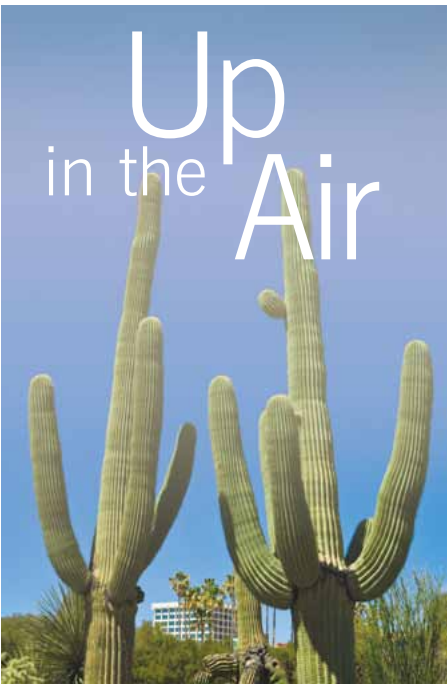
The researchers discovered that those who walked at least six miles a week had more gray matter volume in their brains nine years after the start of the study than people who didn’t walk as much. Thirteen years after the study began, the walkers had cut their risk of developing memory loss in half.

Earlier research found that moderate exercise can enhance the connectivity of important brain circuits, which in turn combats age-related performance on cognitive tests.

Source: *Neurology*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MARTIN HOSPICH/GETTY IMAGES; YUJI SAKAI/GETTY IMAGES; TERESA AREVALO/GETTY IMAGES



Up
in the
Air

Although air pollution levels have improved over the last 10 years, poor air quality is still a threat to the health of 58% of the U.S. population, the American Lung Association reports.

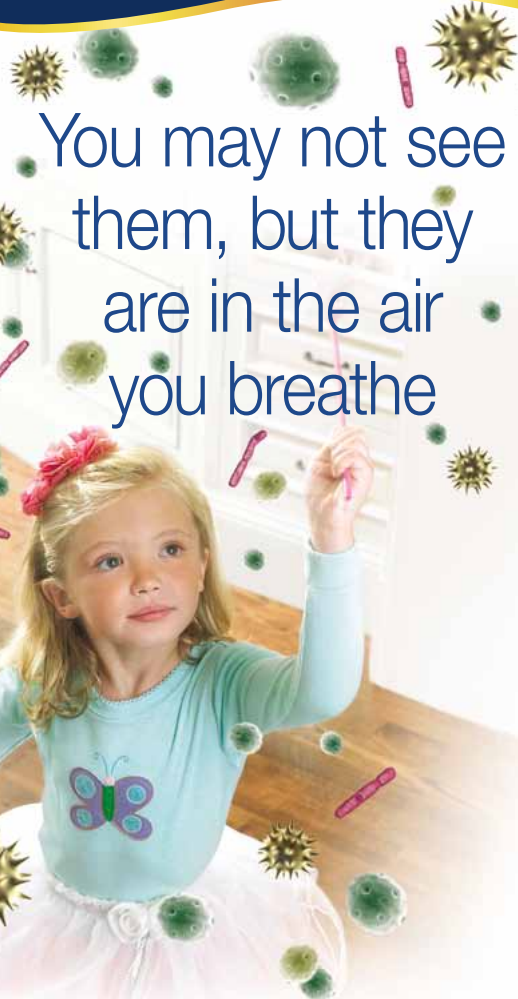
The association’s 2010 *State of the Air* report ranks cities by their levels of ozone, short-term pollution, and long-term pollution. Based on their year-round particle pollution—from diesel and gasoline engines, power plants, demolition and construction projects, dust, and soil, which can all trigger lung diseases—the five dirtiest cities are:

1. Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz.
2. Bakersfield, Calif.
3. Los Angeles-Long Beach-Riverside, Calif.
4. Visalia-Porterville, Calif.
5. Pittsburgh-New Castle, Pa.

The five cleanest cities for long-term particle pollution are:

1. Cheyenne, Wyo.
2. Santa Fe-Española, N.M.
3. Honolulu
4. Anchorage, Alaska
5. Great Falls, Mont.

Source: American Lung Association



You may not see them, but they are in the air you breathe

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DOSING DILEMMA

Ever been boggled by the dosing instructions printed on over-the-counter meds for kids? It's not you.

When researchers at Atlanta's Emory University School of Medicine recently examined the packaging of 200 of the best-selling kid-strength liquid medications (including cough and cold, allergy, pain, and gastroin- testinal remedies), they dis- covered a slew of confusing elements. One-fourth of the medicines didn't come with a dosing device (such as a cup, dropper, or syringe), for instance. In 99% of those that did, the markings on the device were inconsistent with the label instructions; 80% of the dosing devices included extra markings that had nothing to do with the recommended doses. And more than half of the medicines' directions didn't use standard abbreviations for measurements such as milliliter or teaspoon.

These findings are important because more than half of U.S. children take at least one medication per week. More than half of those are OTC drugs.

Source: JAMA

1.75 million
Number of
people who
visited
emergency
rooms for
asthma
in 2007



Source: CDC's National Center for Health Statistics

Medical Mistakes

To err is human. Even for doctors. A new study finds that, despite recent preventive measures, serious medical mistakes continue to occur in the United States.

In the study, researchers examined data collected by an insurance company that provided liability coverage to 6,000 doctors. They found that between 2002 and 2008, doctors performed the wrong procedures on 25 patients and performed a procedure on the wrong part of a patient's body in 107 cases. As a result, one person died and several others suffered complications. The main factors in wrong-patient medical mistakes were errors in diagnosis (56%) and errors in communication (100%). Errors in judgment contributed to 85% of wrong-site medical errors, and lack of verification before starting the surgical procedure was cited as the cause in 72% of these mistakes.

The study authors are calling for stricter adherence to the Universal Protocol, which was introduced in 2004 by the Joint Commission (which regulates medical profes- sions) to help all hospitals and outpatient facilities reduce medical errors by verifying the patient and surgical site before, during, and after a procedure. But surgeons aren't the only ones at fault; general practitioners and internists, as well as emergency room doctors and pediatricians, were as much to blame, the study authors report.

Source: Archives of Surgery



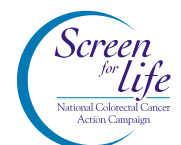
This is personal.



Photo: Andrew Macpherson

“My mother died of colon cancer when she was only 56.”

Terrence Howard, actor/musician



Colorectal cancer is the 2nd leading cancer killer in the U.S., but it's largely preventable.

If you're 50 or older, please get screened.

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
www.cdc.gov/screenforlife



Orange you Happy to Erase MS SHOP ONLINE

ERASEMS.ORG and propel us one step closer to finding a cure for multiple sclerosis.

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The Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis is a non profit organization dedicated to the treatment and ultimate cure of MS. Funding research is the core focus of the Foundation and all funds raised support our Center Without Walls program, a selected network of the nation's top MS research centers.

START SHOPPING

The WebMD POLL

The results are in from the January/February issue poll!

Q: What's your No. 1 way to spend "me" time?

37% Read a book

17% Do nothing at all

16% What "me" time?!

14% Work out

6% Soak in the tub

6% Shop

3% Try a new recipe

Visit WebMD.com/magazine and enter our March/April 2011 poll!

Source: 2011 WebMD Poll

Single Serving

Q: What do you usually make for dinner when you're feeding only yourself?

○ Eggs, any style

○ Pasta with tomato sauce

○ A big salad

○ Cereal (with skim milk, of course)

○ A bowl of popcorn

○ Ice cream (shh...don't tell!)

○ Leftovers!



OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM LEFT: MACIEJ TOPOROWICZ, NYCGETTY IMAGES; OPPENHEIM BERNHARDGETTY IMAGES; ABOVE: PHOTOALTOERIC AUDRASGETTY IMAGES; TITUSGETTY IMAGES

the Pulse

by Colleen Paretti,
WebMD Executive Editor



If you, like me, spent your teenage years in an era without Internet access to just about every fact known to humanity, how did you find answers to those, ah, difficult questions—you know, about your body and your skin, emotions and friendships, school pressures and family troubles? For me, select books from the library, *Seventeen* magazine, and one or two trusted girlfriends were my lifeline. Having so few resources sounds pretty lame to today's teens, but I know two things: One, they have the same questions and are just as flummoxed, embarrassed, and worried as adolescents have always been, and two, vast tidal waves of information from who knows where are not always helpful. Which is why we are very proud of our just-launched Teen Health Center on WebMD.com, the first time we have corralled health and wellness information

especially for and about teens into one place. (We're starting with girls—"boys" is coming soon.) Note I say "for" teens because everything here speaks directly to them, not parents. Four areas—Your Mind, Your Body, Your Relationships, and Your Life—cover sleep, fitness, nutrition, puberty, and more as well as the less hard-facts kind of stuff, those iffy dilemmas that confused us all: Why am I so moody? Why is my best friend avoiding me? How can I talk to my parents (or let them know I don't want to talk sometimes)? We hope the teens in your life find the answers they need here. Visit me in the magazine's Community at WebMD.com and let me know. I'm listening.

Osteoporosis

TOP SYMPTOMS INCLUDE

- Backache
- Gradual loss of height and stooped posture
- Fractures of the spine, wrist, or hip
- None

Osteoporosis, the severe thinning and weakening of the bones, is a slow-growing disease that may first become apparent with the above symptoms—or none at all, until a person sits down, lifts a bag of groceries, or just coughs and fractures her spine, wrist, or hip. Those fractures, in turn, can result in chronic pain, disability, even the loss of independence. Risk increases with age (especially for post-menopausal women) and tests to detect its progression are available, but prevention is key. Get plenty of calcium and weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, running, and aerobics. If you have osteoporosis already, these measures, plus medications, can help slow the rate of bone loss.

symptomchecker



Key in your symptoms

FIND THE ANSWER

Designs on a Cure

Tommy Hilfiger tackles MS with conviction and style

Designer Tommy Hilfiger has played a leading role in the world of fashion since he was 18. So it's no surprise that his foray nearly 15 years ago into a different arena—giving back—was done with style.

The red, white, and blue ski jackets he designed for the Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis were an instant hit at a fundraiser. "Everybody loved them," Hilfiger, 59, recalls. That was just the beginning of his relationship with the foundation as well as a personal friendship with Davis, the daughter of oil and entertainment industry maven Marvin Davis. Shortly after his fashionable contribution, Davis asked Hilfiger to be on the foundation's board of directors and serve as co-chair of the annual fundraising gala, Race to Erase MS (erasems.org). He eagerly accepted.

His involvement was particularly apt—his younger sister has MS, a neurological disease that attacks the central nervous system, resulting in problems with muscle control, vision, balance, and sensation (such as numbness). MS affects about 400,000 Americans, with around 200 new diagnoses per week, according to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Since she was first diagnosed when he was a teen, Hilfiger has watched Dorothy, 58, struggle with the condition. "When you see someone's life change as a result of a disease, it really hits home," Hilfiger says. "I'm a healthy person, and I'm very grateful being able to get up in the morning. Seeing [Dorothy] suffer makes me feel that I should be able to do something."

Since he joined the board in 1995, Hilfiger has regularly participated in fashion shows and golf tournaments to promote the foundation's mission and help raise funds and awareness. Davis founded



Hilfiger has helped Nancy Davis, founder of the Nancy Davis Foundation for Multiple Sclerosis, raise more than \$30 million.

the charitable organization in 1993, two years after she was diagnosed with MS, and to date has raised more than \$30 million to help find a cure for MS. "I've watched Nancy relentlessly grow the organization," Hilfiger says. "I just wanted to be able to help out the best way I could."

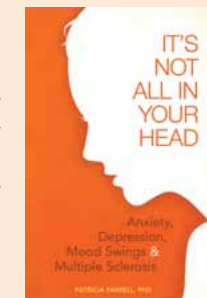
This year, the Race to Erase MS gala is on April 29 in Los Angeles and primarily funds Davis' Center Without Walls program, which links seven multidisciplinary scientific programs and experts across the country to advance research toward finding a cure.

"Hopefully, [that] will happen sooner rather than later," Hilfiger says. "If I could help out, I would do whatever I could possibly do, but certainly now the doctors are the ones who really deserve all the credit."—Chloe Thompson

MS SUCCESS

Psychologist Patricia Farrell, PhD, resident expert on WebMD.com's anxiety & panic disorders community and reviewer of this magazine's "Mind Matters" department, has always been about self-direction. Her 2003 book, *How to Be Your Own Therapist: A Step-by-Step Guide to Building a Competent, Confident Life*, probably did keep lots of people out of therapy (a rather odd goal for someone who sees patients).

In *It's Not All in Your Head: Anxiety, Depression, Mood Swings, & Multiple*



The book's title is a nod not only to the historical (and continued) dismissal of these symptoms but also (and more optimistically) to emerging research that points to the role

Sclerosis, Farrell takes up the "you can do this" approach for managing the psychological symptoms that often come with MS, an autoimmune disease that affects the body's central nervous system.

the mind-body connection in MS and the powerful potential of leveraging this connection for a better quality of life.

Farrell peppers her book with patient stories and MS researchers' recent findings, but the best takeaways are detailed self-help techniques to battle depression, reduce pain, and boost the immune system. Exercise is especially highlighted. The result of taking charge of this complex disease? "You turn something upsetting," Farrell writes, "into something good."—Colleen Paretti

HEALTHY READ

GET GROCERIES FOR A NEIGHBOR. SHARE EXTRA FOOD. ORGANIZE A RIVER CLEAN-UP. SUPPORT A SENIOR IN NEED. DONATE WINTER COATS. SIGN UP TO TUTOR. DONATE YOUR EYEGLASSES. GIVE VEGETABLES FROM YOUR GARDEN.

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE A LIFE

HELP FEED HUNGRY FAMILIES. DONATE FREQUENT FLYER MILES. BRING A MEAL TO A SICK PERSON. BUY A HOMELESS PERSON A SANDWICH. START A WALKING GROUP. PLANT A TREE. DONATE SCHOOL SUPPLIES.



Join Harrison Ford, his son Ben Ford and thousands of others who are helping to make the world a better place. For more ideas, please visit:

www.CreateTheGood.org

Harrison Ford and Ben Ford are EIF Ambassadors. Photograph by Jesse Dylan.



DIAPERS

Fresh Start

The name “diaper” comes from the type of fabric used in the first cloth diapers.

Miracle Material

Procter & Gamble first commercialized the disposable diaper in the 1950s. Nearly a decade later, Pampers made the diaper out of cellulose rather than paper for greater absorbency.

Stick to It

The invention of Velcro in the 1980s took the place of safety pins previously used to hold together diapers.

Basic Training

According to studies, babies go through more than 5,000 diapers before being toilet trained.



Vend Trend

California began dispensing diapers in vending machines in 1989. Diaper vending machines are now in public restrooms across the nation.

Aisle File

Disposable diapers were so revolutionary when they were introduced that retailers didn't know where to put them in the store.

Huge Waste

Americans throw away an average of 49 million diapers per day.

Compost Crawl

Traditional disposable diapers take about 300 years to biodegrade (some newer options break down more quickly).
—Chloe Thompson

TED MORRISON

Where can people living with **lupus** go to find their voice—and many reassuring echoes?

us in lupus.com
together we're stronger

As someone who's living with lupus, you may sometimes feel alone. But there's a whole group of people living with lupus coming together. Whether we have lupus or care about someone who does, we are taking on our challenges together, and not giving in to them. We are learning from each other and moving forward. We are **the us in lupus**.

Where can you find us? At the **usinlupus.com**. There you'll find stories for us—inspired by us. You'll get access to information about living well with lupus. Best of all, you'll find the voice of people living with lupus—and a community that embraces it.

Visit the **usinlupus.com/joinus** today.
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First Last

E-mail*: _____

Address (Line 1)*: _____

Address (Line 2): _____

City* State* ZIP Code*

Gender*: ☐ Female ☐ Male Year of Birth: _____

Tell us a little bit more about yourself so we can send you the lupus information that's designed for you.

1. Please choose the option below that best describes you:

- ☐ I have been diagnosed with lupus ☐ I am a family member/friend of someone diagnosed with lupus
☐ I think I may have lupus ☐ None of the above

2. When were you diagnosed with lupus? Month _____ Year _____

3. Are you currently being treated for your lupus? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Please indicate how much lupus impacts your ability to perform your daily responsibilities.

(1=Not at all; 5=Very significantly)

1 2 3 4 5

5. Please indicate how much lupus impacts your sense of self-worth.

(1=Not at all; 5=Very significantly)

1 2 3 4 5

6. Please rate your agreement with the following statement:

"I seldom experience pain from lupus that interferes with my daily routine."

(1=Completely disagree; 5=Completely agree)

1 2 3 4 5

7. Please rate your agreement with the following statement:

"My healthcare professional is the best there is when it comes to managing my lupus."

(1=Completely disagree; 5=Completely agree)

1 2 3 4 5

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Gone Overboard?

The stress-binge connection

Q ▶ I stick to my diet until my stress level hits a certain point. Then I binge and feel horrible. How can I stop?

A ▶ First off, a definition. A “binge” is the rapid consumption of an excessive amount of food at one sitting, usually 1,000 to 2,000 calories or more. Many people binge because they are anxious or depressed. Many binge secretly, which brings on more feelings of shame and guilt.

Research shows that consuming large quantities of refined sugar and fat really does decrease levels of stress hormones. But the resulting calmness is short-lived, and afterward, you’re likely to feel emotionally drained as well as physically uncomfortable.

At its core, bingeing is not about food. It’s about a consistent difficulty coping with life’s stresses. The key to nipping your binges in the bud is to learn how to adapt and adjust to the ups and downs of everyday life.

A few tips: Learn to be mindful of every mouthful you eat. Try sitting down and breathing deeply when you feel stressed, rather than running to the fridge. Get help

learning new problem-solving skills—ones that are productive and constructive, not self-destructive. Keep junk food out of your house, so if you do binge, you do it on healthy food. Most important: Learn to forgive yourself when you binge. Falling off the wagon occasionally is natural when you’re learning new habits.



Pamela Peeke, MD, MPH, FACP
WebMD FITNESS EXPERT

I've heard that I can't take my newborn outside for a month. Is this true?

The idea that babies have to stay inside the house for several weeks after they're born is FALSE. In fact, as long as your baby is healthy, getting some fresh air can be great for mom and baby if you take a few precautions.

First, be careful not to over- or underdress your baby when you leave the house. Your best bet is to put as many layers on her as you're wearing yourself, and keep a blanket handy.

Second, be sure to keep her out of direct sunlight. “Newborns’ delicate skin burns easily, and that kind of early skin damage can increase their lifelong risk of skin cancer,” says Anne Hansen, MD, MPH, medical director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Children’s Hospital Boston. “Keep them fully shaded with clothing or an umbrella.”

And third, while there’s no preventing your baby from getting sick, try to stay away from places where you know there are people who are ill.

What’s most important, however, is for baby to have a happy, healthy, and well-rested mom, Hansen says. “And natural light, exercise, and fresh air can help.”



Q ▶ I've had two children, and I don't want any more. I'm thinking about getting my tubes tied, but what are the risks?

A ▶ The term “tubes tied” refers to a bilateral tubal ligation (BTL), when a woman’s Fallopian tubes are severed and sealed to prevent her eggs from becoming fertilized. BTLs can be done several different ways, including using clips, rings, sutures, and cauterization to seal the tubes shut.

The physical side effects of getting your tubes tied are usually minimal. Recovery from the surgery is relatively quick, and studies show most women don’t have any changes afterward in menstruation, sexual function, or moods. There is a slight risk of pregnancy after having a BTL—about 1.8%—and if you do get pregnant, there’s a 30% chance of it being ectopic (when the fertilized egg lodges in the Fallopian tube). But in general, this is a safe procedure.

Patients often ask me if it’s possible to have a BTL reversed. It is, but the procedure is fairly expensive (between \$1,500 and \$6,500), and it’s rarely covered by insurance. There’s also no guarantee that you’ll get pregnant. Studies indicate that women are able to conceive after the procedure only about 55% of the time. So it’s best to think of a BTL as permanent birth control.



Jane Harrison-Hohner, RN, RNP
WebMD WOMEN'S HEALTH EXPERT

Get expert answers to all your health questions. WebMD.com

Vision Quest

By Erik Weinstock
WebMD.com community member



Erik Weinstock lost his vision gradually throughout his life and now helps people understand what it's like to be blind.

I’VE BEEN GOING blind my whole life. I was born with choroideremia, a rare, inherited disorder that causes gradual vision loss. My doctors diagnosed it when I was 14, after my pediatrician saw small spots in my eyes. I had known I was having trouble seeing, especially at night, but at that age I didn’t care. But then the doctors said, “You’ll have a hard time in your 20s, a very hard time in your 30s, and you’ll be blind by 60.”

They were right. I am 49 now and almost completely blind, except for a sliver of vision in my left eye. I can see some light and some movement. But I don’t know what my 9-year-old son looks like. I can’t walk down a sidewalk without a cane.

I accept this now, but I was in denial for 30 years. The vision loss was so gradual it was hard to monitor. But I was trained as a mechanical engineer and working full time, and I didn’t want to accept the fact that I was going blind. I didn’t want to ask for help. In fact, I did not use a cane until 2004.

It was a wonderful optometrist at LensCrafters who told me that year to stop driving. She also said I could get disability payments and training about how to live with blindness. At the 10-month training program at the Center for the Visually Impaired in Atlanta, I learned how to use public transportation, how to talk to people, and how to use adaptive aids in my own home—like bumps on my appliance dials and software that “reads” the text on my computer screen out loud. My phone also talks to me, as does the thermometer I use for taking my son’s temperature.

I’m more independent now, and my self-esteem is higher. I’ve started volunteering with the Choroideremia Research Foundation, which is working to find gene replacement therapy for the disease. In 2008, my vocational rehab counselor told me about Dialog in the Dark, an exhibit that has been presented in more than 20 countries and is currently in Atlanta, where it made its United States debut. (An exhibit is set to open in New York City this summer.) I’m one of the visually impaired guides who leads visitors through several darkened galleries—replicating settings such as a food market and a park—so they can sense what daily life is like for someone who is blind. It’s a rare chance for blind people to lead, not to be led.

The goal isn’t to make people feel sorry for blind people. It’s to help them discover how very capable blind people are—how they use their other senses to navigate their world. It’s about helping people change their perceptions of otherness and difference. The experience is so exciting—peoples’ perceptions really do change.

I like to tell people, “I don’t want your sympathy. I want your empathy, tolerance, and understanding.” And if you want to help a blind person, don’t grab their arm and push them. Simply say, “Can I offer you some assistance?”

Read more stories and share your own in our community. WebMD.com

spotlight

nutrition

Golden Rules

Test your
smarts about
dietary needs
as you age



By Christina Boufis, WebMD Contributing Writer

Do you need to change what and how you eat in your 50s, 60s, and beyond? Yes, though maybe not in ways you might think. Fallacies about nutritional needs later in life abound, and it's not always easy to separate myth from fact, especially because a lot of information is aimed at younger adults.

1 You should eat less as you get older.

True. "Energy requirements decrease with every decade," says Connie Bales, PhD, RD, professor of medicine at Duke University Medical Center and associate director of the Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center at Durham VA Medical Center. "We move around less, we have less muscle, and our metabolic rate goes down." But Bales says the challenge while eating less overall is to consume more nutrient-rich foods, such as low-fat milk and lean meat, which calorie for calorie, pack more of a nutritional punch.

case. Your body requires the same amount of protein, vitamins, and minerals and, in some instances, even more nutrients.

Take B-12, for example. After age 50, your body's ability to absorb the vitamin often decreases due to reduced stomach acids needed to break it down from food sources. The same holds true for vitamin D. Aging skin is less able than younger skin to convert the vitamin from sunlight, which in turn affects the body's ability to absorb calcium—and both vitamin D and calcium are needed to prevent bone loss. That's why taking a daily vitamin/mineral supplement is a good idea; so is talking to your doctor to see if you need additional supplements beyond the multivitamin, Bales says.

2 Nutritional needs decrease with age.

False. People often think because you need fewer calories as you age, you need fewer nutrients. That's not the

Reviewed by
Brunilda Nazario, MD
WebMD SENIOR MEDICAL EDITOR

3 It's OK to skip meals if you're not hungry. It depends. "If it's once a week, that's fine. But if this happens regularly, I don't think it is," Bales says. While it's true that you generally eat less as you

age, she explains, "you don't always respond to the need for food with the normal hunger sensation," perhaps due to neurological or chemical changes in the body.

Frequently skipping meals can backfire nutritionally. "It's not good to go eight hours without protein," Bales explains. "The body needs a regular supply of protein and essential nutrients to maintain metabolism, and for making bone and muscle and enzymes." Try to eat every few hours—even if it's a light meal like a peanut butter sandwich.

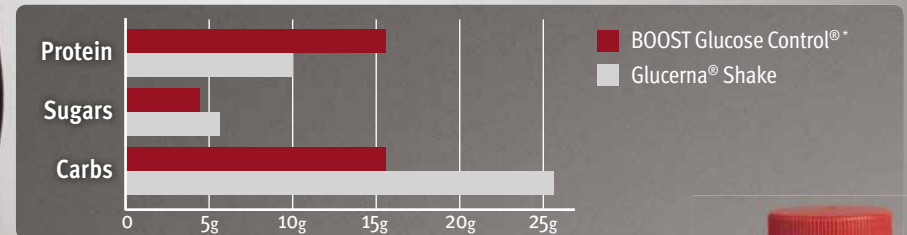
4 Older people need to drink less fluid. False. Though it may seem that you aren't as thirsty, that doesn't mean you need to drink less. "You don't always respond to dehydration with the normal thirst sensation," Bales says. "Our regulatory processes are just not as sharp." So you might not feel thirsty even when dehydrated. Her recommendation? Drink six glasses of water daily and other fluids as well.

Perhaps the biggest myth about nutrition and aging? That older people are set in their ways, Bales says. "That really is not true. I've found that most are really motivated about their health, and many of them are quite willing to try to change." ■

Get all the facts about your changing nutrition needs. WebMD.com

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Foot Soldiers

Step into spring with our expert picks for softer, more radiant feet

Sole Salvation 1
Spread **L'Occitane Shea Butter Foot Cream** on your tootsies to keep them hydrated.

2 Close Shave
Shed dead skin with the easy-to-use **PedEgg Pro Pedicure Foot File with Handle**.

Sleep Walk 4
Get some work done while you snooze with **Dr. Scholl's Ultra Overnight Foot Cream**.

3 Steer Clear
Use **OPI Start-to-Finish Base & Top Coat** to protect your nails from discoloration.

Q. What can I do now to get my feet soft and ready to show off by sandal season?



Daphne LaSalle, 30, U.S. Air Force, Altus, Okla.

A. Thick, dry patches pop up on heels during winter months because feet are often crammed into heavy socks and boots that don't allow for effective exfoliation of dead skin. To loosen up that scaly epidermis, use a nightly cream like **Dr. Scholl's Ultra Overnight Foot Cream** (\$6.99), containing aloe and palm oil to soothe tough skin.

To buff the dead skin away once it's been softened, try the **PedEgg Pro Pedicure Foot File with Handle** (\$12.99). It's better than a pumice stone for gently sanding down thick skin on the heel and ball of the foot because its stainless-steel micro files stay sharp. Once the bottoms of your feet are smooth, keep them hydrated with an emollient-rich lotion like **L'Occitane Shea Butter Foot Cream** (\$26), which is packed with moisture-locking shea butter.

If you painted your toes in rich, dark hues throughout the winter, you may be noticing some nail yellowing. Take a break from polish for a week or two, and the discoloration will slowly fade. Once you're back to coating your toenails in polish, be sure to start with a clear base coat without formaldehyde, a chemical that can react with the keratin protein in nails and make them change colors. The formaldehyde-free **OPI Start-to-Finish Base & Top Coat** (\$12.50) is a good one to try.

Elizabeth Tanzi, MD, co-director, Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery, Washington, D.C.



The opinions expressed in this section are of the experts and are not the opinions of WebMD. WebMD does not endorse any specific product, service, or treatment.

You asked!

Dr. Tanzi says:

A. During winter months when humidity is low, skin dries out more rapidly. In some cases, feet get so dry they peel or crack. While there are plenty of prescription medications that work wonders, I like to start with home remedies, which are inexpensive and can be just as effective.

To soften super-dry areas, soak your feet in original **Listerine Antiseptic** mouthwash (\$4) (yes, Listerine!) once or twice a week. Mix one part Listerine with two parts warm water in a basin and soak your feet for 15 to 20 minutes, then apply a moisturizer like **Eucerin Plus Intensive Repair Foot Creme** (\$5.59), which contains hydrating urea. In addition to skin-sloughing benzoic acid, Listerine contains ethanol, which kills bacteria, fungi, and germs that can lead to athlete's foot.

Coating feet in a cream like **Burt's Bees Thoroughly Therapeutic Honey & Bilberry Foot Creme** (\$10), which is loaded with moisture-replenishing honey and jojoba oil, and wearing socks to bed is an excellent way to lock in moisture for softer feet. If you can't stand to sleep in socks, place a humidifier at the foot of your bed to keep feet hydrated. Treat thick, dry patches on your feet by massaging them with **Vicks VapoRub** topical ointment (\$3) in the p.m. to battle bacteria while you sleep.—Ayren Jackson-Cannady

Eric Reynolds, DPM, podiatrist, Jersey City, N.J.



Toe the Line

A normal nail bed is pink and smooth. Anything other than that may be a sign of a serious medical condition, says podiatrist Eric Reynolds, DPM. Here's what to be wary of.

Are your nails brown or black?

See a doctor ASAP. A black or brown spot on your nail could be an indication of melanoma, the most dangerous form of skin cancer.

Are they green?

This might be a bacterial or fungal infection caused by trauma to the nail—the tint could be from trapped fluid or pus underneath the nail.

Are there horizontal ridges?

Bumpy lines that run across the nail may be an indication of chronic eczema on the skin under or around the toenail.

Are there vertical ridges?

Some people with rheumatoid arthritis or problems with circulation have lines running along the length of their toenails.



1 Natural Selection
Burt's Bees Thoroughly Therapeutic Honey & Bilberry Foot Creme is a buzz-worthy nighttime treat for your feet.

Liquid Gold 4
It's OK to put your feet in your mouthwash—if it's **Listerine Antiseptic**.

2 Repair Shop
Mend flaky feet with **Eucerin Plus Intensive Repair Foot Creme**.

3 Treasure Chest
Battle bacteria and treat dry patches with **Vicks VapoRub** topical ointment.

“During the winter months when humidity is low, skin dries out more rapidly.”

Find more expert pedi cures and remedies.





Bright Start

Get the scoop on teeth whitening

Everyone loves a dazzling smile. That's why so many of us reach for the bleach when our pearly whites start to look more like kernels of corn.

Common foods and drinks, such as coffee, red wine, and berries, and, of course, smoking, cause teeth to stain and lose their brightness. The effects are often exaggerated as we age, says Mark Wolff, DDS, PhD, professor at NYU College of Dentistry. Wear and tear creates etchings on the tooth surface, "making teeth more susceptible to stains," Wolff says. That's why you might notice that foods you've been eating for years discolor your teeth more these days.

Teeth whiteners, sold by dentists and drugstores, use a form of peroxide (hydrogen and carbamide are the most common) of varying strengths to oxidize or eat away at the tooth's color particles to brighten smiles. The amount of peroxide in store-bought kits ranges from 3% to 10%; in professional-grade whiteners (available in your dentist's office), it runs as high as 35%.

It is true that professional whiteners are generally more effective than those sold over the counter, but not just because the concentration of peroxide used is higher. More important for effective whitening, Wolff says, is that whitening trays made by dentists are molded especially for your mouth, keeping bleaching solutions in close contact with the tooth's surface. This not only enhances the whitening effect but also increases safety by minimizing the amount of peroxide that contacts the gums or is swallowed. However,



that personalized fit will cost you: Professional whitening systems range from \$400 to \$800, compared with \$25 to \$100 for products you buy in the store.

But lower cost doesn't necessarily mean poor quality, and OTC whiteners can be a good option, Wolff says. Whitening strips are your best bet because they adhere reasonably well to the tooth surface, particularly on the top teeth, keeping gel where it can best penetrate enamel.

White teeth are alluring, but keep expectations in check. "There's only a finite color change you can achieve," Wolff says. Two or three shades lighter than your current color is reasonable. And be sure to follow instructions. Overdoing whitening efforts can harm tooth structure, leading to translucence—see-through teeth that appear blue or gray.

That's why, Wolff says, transforming a dull, yellow smile into a bright, white one is best handled like most things in life: "Everything in moderation."—Lisa Zamosky

“There's only a finite color change you can achieve. Two or three shades lighter than your current color is reasonable.”

WHITE WASH

Mark Wolff, DDS, PhD, offers some tips for safely whitening your smile:

Be sensitive. Tooth and gum sensitivity is a common side effect of teeth whiteners. "You don't want to use the strongest and fastest [solution] because it comes with the most side effects," Wolff says.

Avoid rainbow teeth. If you have bonding or veneers on your teeth, whiten before having dental work done or skip it altogether. "These don't whiten with bleaching agents," Wolff says. Restorations will maintain their original color while the teeth around them lighten. The end result is a multi-colored smile.

Go for strips. OTC whitening strips are a better bet than store-bought trays. "The trays tend to be loose and so don't provide a high enough concentration [of solution] to really do the job of bleaching," Wolff says.

Know when to pass. If you've been diagnosed with gum disease, talk with your dentist about alternate ways to brighten your smile. Whiteners can accelerate gum disease.

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Say "cheese" with more secrets to whiter teeth.



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*American Journal of Preventive Medicine, August 2008

mind matters

A HEAD START ON EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Reviewed by
Patricia A. Farrell, PhD
WebMD MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT



Right Brain

Learning to be fair may be more than good manners. It might be hardwired into our prefrontal cortex

When Lori West's kids complain, "That's not fair!" she responds with, "Wow, you are so smart! You've already learned that, and you're only 6."

West, a 39-year-old stay-at-home mother of five in Virginia Beach, Va., found that her brood began grappling with issues of fairness while they were still toddlers. Research shows we tend to dislike unfair situations, and that this aversion is part of the way the

It's not surprising that, when the poor man saw the potential of his receiving a bonus, the striatum and the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, two areas of the brain that decide how much we like something, showed more activity. What was surprising was that the reward center of the rich man's brain also showed more activity at the idea of the poor man's getting a payout. More surprising was that when the rich man got even more

money while the poor one stayed poor, brain activity went down, showing that he found this less rewarding.

It's possible that serotonin, a brain chemical that helps control mood, contributes to the unpleasantness we feel about injustice. Research shows that as serotonin falls, we react more strongly to inequity. In other words, our sense of fairness isn't based entirely on social rules we've learned.

It's an integral part of the way our brain responds to rewards: We like to see the underdog win.

From an evolutionary perspective, it makes sense, says Elizabeth Tricomi, PhD, assistant professor of psychology at Rutgers University, who conducted the study. "When we cooperate, we all might get something better than if we only cared about ourselves." —Susan Kuchinskas

FROM AN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE, IT MAKES SENSE THAT WE MIGHT PREFER A FAIR SPLIT OF RESOURCES.



HELENA INKERT/GETTY IMAGES

brain reacts to rewards. A recent study showed that our objection to unfairness holds true even for the person who benefits from the unfair situation. In this study, one of a pair of strangers was randomly designated as rich and given \$50 in cash. The other person was "poor" and got no money. Then, as their brains were scanned, each was shown an additional amount of money that one of them might receive.

FAIRLY YOUNG

It's probably a mix of nature and nurture that develops our sense of fairness, Elizabeth Tricomi, PhD, says. Try these tips to help your kids understand fair play.

Accept their feelings of disgust. There's evidence that moral disgust may develop from our early aversion to icky food. In that case, encouraging a kid to express his gross-outs could make it more likely he'll speak out against injustice as a grown-up.

Empower them. Tricomi says that, despite our brains having an innate capacity to evaluate what's right, "we certainly teach our kids about fairness; there's definitely a component we learn early on," she says. Help kids develop this ability by asking questions, such as, "Was that fair? Why or why not?"

Explain and practice. Even if the sense of fairness is rooted in our emotions, we still use judgment to make complex moral decisions. As your kids grow up—and their brains develop—continue to point out more sophisticated examples of sharing, as well as injustice.



More than 75% of Americans think our morals are getting worse, a recent Gallup poll reveals.

Do you know the do's and don'ts of **teaching kids values**?



WebMD.com



Sleep Starved

The surprising link between early-childhood snooze time and weight problems later in life

You've probably heard that increased TV watching, high-calorie snacking, and decreased physical activity are linked to skyrocketing rates of children's obesity. But recent research points to a new culprit: lack of sleep. "Children who don't sleep enough are at much greater risk for obesity than children who do sleep enough," says Frederick

not sleeping well, about 25 or so would wind up obese who otherwise wouldn't be," Zimmerman explains.

That's why researchers say "there is a critical window prior to age 5," when inadequate nighttime sleep can set the stage for childhood obesity for years to come. The difference between those

who got enough sleep and those who didn't? About 45 minutes, Zimmerman estimates.

The study didn't explore causal mechanisms behind inadequate sleep and weight gain, though Zimmerman suspects several factors. "Younger kids, even kids who are 6 and 8 years old, who are under-slept are uncomfortable," says Zimmerman. And they might try to feel better by eating. Also, hormones

involved in regulating appetite, leptin and ghrelin, are thrown off-kilter by inadequate sleep in adults, and the same might happen in children. Finally, there's the possibility that kids who are really tired just aren't able or don't want to do a lot of physical activity. Clearly, more research is needed in all these areas.

One surprising result of the study: Napping did not reduce the risk of obesity.

The bottom line? "Getting adequate [nighttime] sleep is one of the easiest ways to reduce the risk of obesity," Zimmerman says.—Christina Boufis

GOOD NIGHT

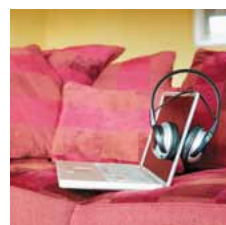
Want your kids to sleep more? Amy Jordan, PhD, director of the Media and the Developing Child sector of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, offers these tips.

Turn off the TV.

"Television doesn't effectively transition the child from being awake to being asleep," says Jordan. Studies show children who watch TV in the hour before bedtime stay up later and have a more difficult time falling asleep.

Shut down screen time.

Light from computer, TV, and video game screens is disruptive to children's sleep/wake cycles. Experts theorize lit screens delay production of melatonin, which is necessary for sleep.



Snuggle up with a book.

Reading—even for five minutes—creates a reassuring pattern, giving children a stable routine before bed.

Monitor media. Research shows that children exposed to frightening content have a more difficult time falling and staying asleep.

KIDS WHO HAD INADEQUATE NIGHTTIME SLEEP
HAD ABOUT AN 80% HIGHER
RISK OF OBESITY.



J. Zimmerman, PhD, chair and professor in the Department of Health Services at UCLA School of Public Health, and one of the lead researchers in a recent study.

The study followed 1,930 children, ages 0 months to 13 years, tracking their sleep and weight patterns for five years. What they found: Children 0 to 4 years at the start of the study "who had inadequate nighttime sleep had about an 80% higher risk of obesity five years later. This is a big, meaningful difference," Zimmerman says. "If you took a group of 100 kids who were



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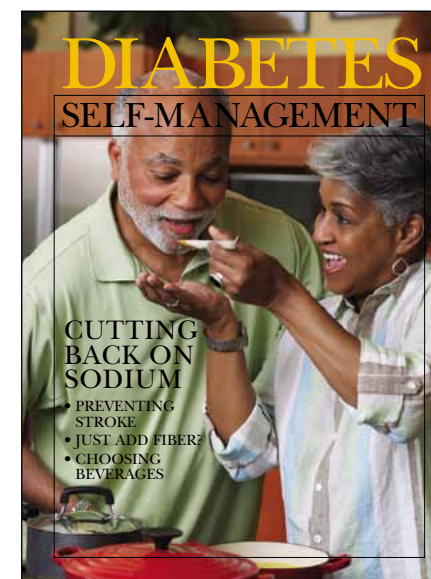
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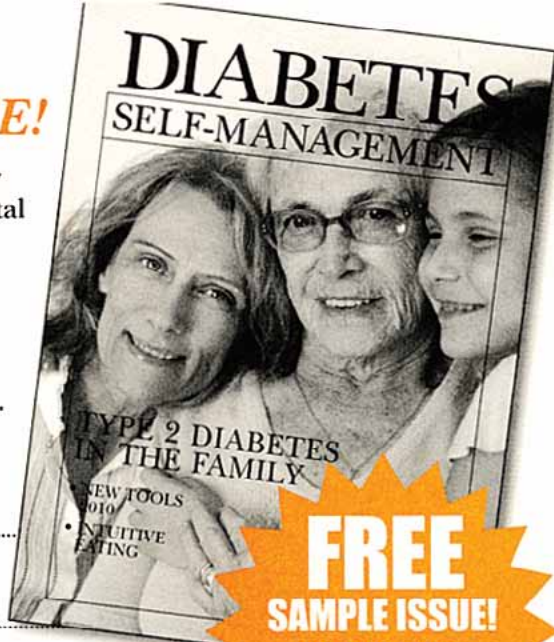
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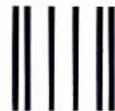
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Fit to a Fault

Measuring your target heart rate may not be the best way to track your workout, ladies. Here's why

Fitness buffs have long turned to heart rate monitors—either ones they own or those found on exercise machines—as a way of gauging whether they're exercising hard enough. But heart rate monitors aren't as helpful as you might think.

The problem? First off, the numbers used to calculate your maximum heart rate are a little squishy.

it by 85% to get your "target" heart rate. But the studies that gave rise to this equation were only done on men. And, after looking at the correlation between heart rate and heart attack in the exercise tests of more than 5,000 women, researchers at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago found the maximum heart rate for a woman really should

be determined by subtracting .88 of her age (her age multiplied by 0.88) from 206.

The new math may sound like gobbledygook, but here's the takeaway: If you're a woman and if you've found the goals hyped by personal trainers and elliptical machines to be too strenuous, you're justified in slowing down a bit. A 40-year-old woman who has been aiming for a maxi-

mum rate of 180 beats per minute (with a target rate of 153 beats per minute), for instance, can now strive for a maximum rate of 171 beats per minute (with a target rate of 145 beats per minute).

More important, while treadmills and elliptical machines often let you monitor your heart rate (and even provide tidy charts of "fat burning" and "cardiovascular training" zones), tailoring your workout to your heart rate is not as important as tailoring it to how you feel. That is, you can have an excellent workout at a lower or higher heart rate than what's recommended, depending on what you do and how long you do it—and as long as it's fun.

Turns out the traditional calculation isn't right for, oh, just about half of the population.



The traditional calculation has been based solely on age, but factors like fitness level and genetics also play a role in just what heart rate is healthy or even safe for individuals. If you're quite sedentary, for instance, and you try to reach the peak heart rate for your age group, you could get into cardiovascular trouble quickly—trouble that includes breathlessness and dizziness. In fact, the latest research suggests that the traditional calculation isn't right for, oh, just about half of the population.

Under the old guidelines, you were told to subtract your age from 220 for an estimate of your maximum safe heart rate and then multiply

IS YOUR WORKOUT TOO HARD?

How do you know if you're exercising too intensely? Watch out for these four classic symptoms.

Chest pain, irregular heartbeat, or extreme shortness of breath

These can all be signs of heart distress. Stop exercising immediately and get emergency help.

Chills, muscle pain, or blurred vision

If these occur when you're working out in the heat, stop exercising and get medical help. You may be having heat stroke.

Headache, dizziness, or lightheadedness

These can indicate dehydration. Stop what you're doing and take a water break. If you don't feel better, seek medical attention.



Severe fatigue

After exercise this could signal overexertion or heart attack. If you're pregnant, be alert for all these symptoms, as well as vaginal bleeding, uterine contractions, and blood or fluid leaking from your vagina. All can signal a serious problem with you or your baby.

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Are You Covered?

Do you have the right kind of health insurance plan for your family's needs?

Once upon a time, having health insurance meant security. If you got sick, your care was covered. At least that's what we all thought.

But a 2009 study published in *The American Journal of Medicine* found that in 2007, 62% of all bankruptcies in this country were related to medical expenses. And three out of four people with medical debt had health insurance.

100% of your costs? Any health plan without a maximum limit on your out-of-pocket expenses puts you at risk for a whopping bill in the event of a major illness or injury.

The same is true for plans with dollar limits on hospital stays. "These plans can be tricky and misleading," says Candy Butcher, chief executive of Medical Billing Advocates of America. The monthly premiums may be low, but they cover only a fraction of the costs associated with an inpatient stay, the most expensive form of care. For example, "catastrophic" or "hospital-only" plans might give you the impression that you're covered if you become very ill. But some only pay for certain diagnoses, Butcher says.

Does your health plan exclude care for certain health conditions (maternity care is a common one), or require a waiting period for pre-existing conditions (something that will go away when health reform goes into full effect in 2014)? If the answer is yes, you're essentially uninsured if you need to receive care. "The best place to look for that information is in the list of excluded benefits found in your summary plan description," explains Tracy Watts, health and benefits partner with the consulting firm Mercer.

Your best strategy is to go back to the basics. Boring as it may be, "Review your policy book from front to back," Butcher advises.—Lisa Zamosky

GET YOUR PLAN TO WORK HARDER

Health plan expert Candy Butcher offers these tips for getting the most coverage out of your health insurance.

Watch it. If you're having surgery at an in-network hospital, make sure every health professional you see while admitted is in your network as well. Surprise bills have been known to show up for out-of-network anesthesiologists, radiologists, and pathologists a patient didn't agree to see while hospitalized.

Insist on it. Insurance plans with caps on services, such as lab tests and X-rays, often stop processing your claims with the in-network discount once you've reached your limit. Examine all bills carefully and make sure you're not being charged the full, out-of-network amount.

Check it. Speaking of bills, as many as 80% contain inaccuracies, according to Medical Billing Advocates of America. If you don't understand the explanation of benefits (EOB) from your insurance company, pick up the phone.

KNOW
WHAT YOUR
MAXIMUM
FINANCIAL
EXPOSURE
IS IN A
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SCENARIO.



The difference between a good and not-so-good health insurance plan makes a huge impact on both your health and finances. So, how can you tell which kind you have? Start by doing the math. Look beyond your monthly premium, and add up out-of-pocket expenses in the form of deductibles, co-pays, prescription costs, and co-insurance (the portion of medical bills you pay once the deductible has been met and insurance coverage kicks in).

Also, know what your maximum financial exposure is in a worst-case scenario. How much money will you have to lay out before your insurer picks up



Health plans **cannot charge you higher fees** for out-of-network emergency services.

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MICHAEL BLANNGETTY IMAGES

Do you work shifts or a non-traditional schedule?
Do you struggle to stay awake when you need to be awake?

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NUVIGIL may cause serious side effects including a serious rash or a serious allergic reaction that may affect parts of your body such as your liver or blood cells, and may result in hospitalization and be life-threatening.

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*Limitations apply.

References: 1. US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Workers on flexible and shift schedules. Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/flex.pdf>. Accessed January 8, 2010. 2. Schwartz JRL, Roth T. Shift work sleep disorder: burden of illness and approaches to management. *Drugs*. 2006;66(18):2357-2370. 3. Waage S, Moen BE, Pallesen S, et al. Shift work disorder among oil rig workers in the North Sea. *Sleep*. 2009;32(4):558-565. 4. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *The International Classification of Sleep Disorders: Diagnostic and Coding Manual*. 2nd ed. Westchester, IL: American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2005. 5. NUVIGIL [prescribing information]. Frazer, PA: Cephalon, Inc; 2010.

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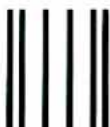


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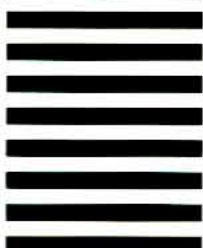
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Important facts

NUVIGIL[®] (nu–vij–el) Tablets [C-IV]
Generic name: armodafinil

| What is NUVIGIL? |
|---|
| NUVIGIL is a prescription medicine used to improve wakefulness in adults who are very sleepy due to one of the following diagnosed sleep disorders: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narcolepsy |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). NUVIGIL is used with other medical treatments for this sleep disorder. NUVIGIL does not take the place of using your CPAP machine or other treatments that your doctor has prescribed for this condition. It is important that you continue to use these treatments as prescribed by your doctor. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shift work disorder (SWD) |
| NUVIGIL will not cure these sleep disorders. NUVIGIL may help the sleepiness caused by these conditions, but it may not stop all your sleepiness. NUVIGIL does not take the place of getting enough sleep. Follow your doctor's advice about good sleep habits and using other treatments. |
| NUVIGIL is a federally controlled substance (C-IV) because it can be abused or lead to dependence. Keep NUVIGIL in a safe place to prevent misuse and abuse. Selling or giving away NUVIGIL may harm others, and is against the law. Tell your doctor if you have ever abused or been dependent on alcohol, prescription medicines or street drugs. |
| What should I avoid while taking NUVIGIL? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not drive a car or do other dangerous activities until you know how NUVIGIL affects you. People with sleep disorders should always be careful about doing things that could be dangerous. Do not change your daily habits until your doctor tells you it is okay.• You should avoid drinking alcohol. It is not known how drinking alcohol will affect you when taking NUVIGIL. |
| What should I tell my doctor before taking NUVIGIL? |
| Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions including, if you: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a history of mental health problems, including psychosis• Have heart problems or had a heart attack• Have high blood pressure. Your blood pressure may need to be checked more often while taking NUVIGIL.• Have liver or kidney problems• Have a history of drug or alcohol abuse or addiction• Are pregnant or planning to become pregnant. It is not known if NUVIGIL will harm your unborn baby.• Are breastfeeding. It is not known if NUVIGIL passes into your milk. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby if you take NUVIGIL. |
| Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take , including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, herbal supplements, and hormonal birth control. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women who use hormonal birth control may have a higher chance for getting pregnant while taking NUVIGIL, and for one month after stopping NUVIGIL. |

| What is the most important information I should know about NUVIGIL? |
|--|
| NUVIGIL may cause serious side effects including a serious rash or a serious allergic reaction that may affect parts of your body such as your liver or blood cells. Any of these may need to be treated in a hospital and may be life-threatening. Stop taking NUVIGIL and call your doctor right away or get emergency help if you have any of these symptoms: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skin rash, hives, sores in your mouth, or your skin blisters and peels• Swelling of your face, eyes, lips, tongue, or throat• Trouble swallowing or breathing• Fever, shortness of breath, swelling of the legs, yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes, or dark urine. |
| If you have a severe rash with NUVIGIL, stopping the medicine may not keep the rash from becoming life-threatening or causing you to be permanently disabled or disfigured. |
| NUVIGIL is not approved for use in children for any medical condition. It is not known if NUVIGIL is safe or if it works in children under the age of 17. |
| What are possible side effects of NUVIGIL? |
| NUVIGIL may cause serious side effects. Stop taking NUVIGIL and call your doctor right away or get emergency help if you get any of the following: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A serious rash or serious allergic reaction. (See “What is the most important information I should know about NUVIGIL?”)• Mental (psychiatric) symptoms, including: depression, feeling anxious, hearing, seeing, feeling, or sensing things that are not really there (hallucinations), an extreme increase in activity and talking (mania), thoughts of suicide, aggressive behavior, or other mental problems• Symptoms of a heart problem, including chest pain, abnormal heart beats, and trouble breathing. |
| Common side effects that can happen in anyone who takes NUVIGIL include: headache, nausea, dizziness, and trouble sleeping. |
| Who should not take NUVIGIL? |
| Do not take NUVIGIL if you: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are allergic to any of its ingredients. See the end of the Medication Guide for a complete list of ingredients in NUVIGIL.• Have had a rash or allergic reaction to either armodafinil (NUVIGIL) or modafinil (PROVIGIL[®]). These medicines are very similar. |
| Need more information? |
| Read the Medication Guide that comes with NUVIGIL before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your condition or treatment. |
| Talk to your doctor or pharmacist, go to www.NUVIGIL.com, or call 1-800-896-5855. |
| You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch , call 1-800-FDA-1088, or by fax at 1-800-FDA-0178. |



Class Act

The sexes really do learn differently. A is for “action” when it comes to educating boys

Shortly after my son started his first year of elementary school, I asked him to name his favorite subject. “Basketball,” he answered without skipping a beat. “Everything else is boring.”

Declarations like this—“I like recess and P.E. best!”—from young boys about their school experience sometimes raise concern for parents, but



LEFT: IMAGE SOURCE/GETTY IMAGES; DORLING KINDERSLEY/GETTY IMAGES

they shouldn’t necessarily, says Michael Gurian, MA, co-founder of the educational research and training Gurian Institute and author of *The Minds of Boys: Saving Our Sons From Falling Behind in School and Life*. Instead, these words should be understood as the clue that it is. “What they are saying is, ‘If you want me to learn well, you have to understand how my brain and body work when I learn,’” Gurian says.

And studies show that boys do learn differently than girls. Brain scans tell part of the story: In general, more areas of girls’ brains, including the cerebral

cortex (responsible for memory, attention, thought, and language), are dedicated to verbal functions. The hippocampus—a region of the brain critical to verbal memory storage—develops earlier for girls and is larger in women than in men. “That has a profound effect on vocabulary and writing,” Gurian explains.

A greater part of the cerebral cortex of boys’ brains, on the other hand, is dedicated to spatial and mechanical functioning. For that reason, boys tend to learn better with movement and pictures, rather than just words, Gurian says.

“If teachers let boys draw a picture or story board before sitting down to write, they’ll be better able to access color and other details about what they are writing; they can access more information,” he says.

There are biochemical differences, too. Boys have less serotonin and oxytocin—hormones that play a role in promoting a sense of calm—than girls. That’s why it’s more likely that young boys will fidget and act impulsively. “Teachers think the boy who can’t sit still and is wriggling in his chair and [making noise] is being defiant,” says Leonard Sax, MD, PhD, author of *Why Gender Matters* and *Boys Adrift*. “But he isn’t. He can’t be quiet.

“There are no differences in what girls and boys can learn,” Sax says. “But there are big differences in the way to teach them.”—Lisa Zamosky

PLAY’S THE THING

Leonard Sax, MD, PhD, and education expert Michael Gurian, MA, say parents can work with teachers and schools to best support their boys’ learning needs.

Move it. Children should be allowed and encouraged to move around while they do their work. Leg tapping, standing, and doodling while kids read, write, or take a test—activities often seen as distractions—can help many boys learn.

Wait a year. Kindergarten today is much more academic than 40 years ago. “We’re asking 5-year-olds to do what 6-year-olds used to do,” Sax says. Although opinions vary, some boys with a fall birthday may benefit from delaying school an extra year. Consult your boy’s teachers before deciding.

Get out. Confirm that your son’s school offers playtime in the yard (many new schools are being built with no playgrounds) and that even on bad-weather days he’ll have free time outside. Research shows that kids learn better after recess.



The language center of the brain develops a year or two later in boys than in girls, giving girls a head start in reading and writing skills.

Find more childraising tips in the [parenting community](#).



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ANATOMY OF VANILLA

Sole Provider

Vanilla is the only fruit-bearing member of the orchid family.

Sticker Shock

After saffron, vanilla is the most expensive spice in the world.

Sweet 'Script

In Europe, vanilla was once used in the production of certain medicines such as nerve stimulants and as an aphrodisiac.

Bean Count

Pure vanilla extract contains 13.35 ounces of vanilla beans per gallon during extraction, according to FDA specifications.

Time's Up

The flower that produces the vanilla bean lasts only one day. The beans are handpicked and then cured, wrapped, and dried in a process that takes four to six months.

On Ice

Nearly 30% of Americans choose vanilla as their No. 1 ice cream flavor (followed by chocolate, at less than 10%).

Bee's Knees

Only the Melipona bee, found in Central America, can pollinate vanilla. In other parts of the world, humans duplicate the process using a wooden needle.

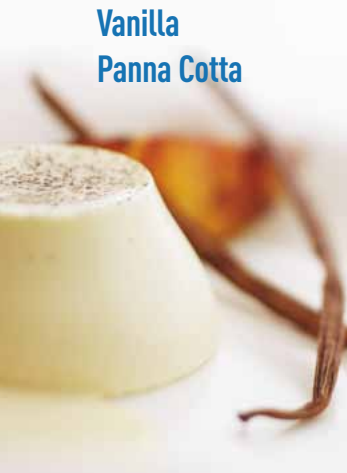
Simple Syrup

One tablespoon of vanilla extract has 37 calories, a large portion of which comes from sugars and alcohol.—*Chloe Thompson*



healthy recipe

Vanilla Panna Cotta



Makes 4 servings Ingredients

- 1 1-oz envelope unflavored gelatin
- 1 1/3 cup whole milk, divided
- 1 cup fat-free half-and-half
- 6 tbsp sugar
- 1/2 vanilla bean, split lengthwise (can substitute 1 tsp vanilla extract added after custard is removed from heat)
- cooking spray
- 1 mango
- 2 tbsp chopped pistachios

Directions

1. Sprinkle gelatin over 1/3 cup milk in a small bowl and let stand 5 minutes until thickened.
2. Combine remaining milk, half-and-half, sugar, and vanilla bean in heavy-bottomed saucepan and bring to a simmer (do not boil) over medium-low heat. Remove from heat, remove vanilla bean, and add gelatin mixture.
3. Stir until gelatin mixture is completely dissolved.
4. Pour mixture into individual ramekins coated with cooking spray.
5. Cover and chill until set (about 6 to 8 hours).
6. Peel and chop mango into bite-size pieces.
7. Invert ramekins on individual plates, garnish with mangoes and pistachios.

Per serving: 223 calories, 7 g protein, 36 g carbohydrate, 7 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 11 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 32 g sugar, and 117 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 26%.

TOP: VISIONS/STOCKFODD (MUNCH); STOK-YARD STUDIO/GETTY IMAGES

Smart Start

I would be thrilled if

drinking coffee was proven to be the most nutritious way to start the day. Unfortunately for me and all the other caffeine addicts out there, it's not. Besides, I'm not just cooking for myself in the morning—I'm cooking for my family. Just serving coffee won't cut it.

And here's why: Numerous studies show that eating a complete breakfast improves kids' academic and behavioral performance as well as their school attendance rate. The end result? Your family needs a tasty, filling breakfast that provides them with energy for the whole morning—and gives you the satisfaction of knowing you fed them well. Here are some tips for getting your day started right.

Smooth it out. One of the fastest (and yummiest) ways to get fruit, protein, and calcium into your family is with smoothies. I like to use frozen organic berries when fresh ones aren't in season—they have more flavor and vitamins than out-of-season berries. And frozen bananas add a rich, creamy texture.

Add it in. Adding healthy ingredients to standard breakfast fare can boost the nutritional level considerably. Try adding ricotta cheese and whole grain flour to pancakes, for instance, to create more protein, calcium, and fiber per serving.

Switch it up. Think of creative ways to substitute healthy ingredients for not-so-healthy ones (like fat, sugar, and refined carbohydrates). For example, I like to make a hippie version of eggs Benedict by using a whole grain English muffin and baby spinach, and replacing the sinful Hollandaise sauce with the runny yolk of the egg itself. The kids think it tastes great, and I like the nutrition they're getting in every bite. Everyone wins.

“Eating a complete breakfast improves kids' academic and behavioral performance as well as their school attendance rate.”



healthy recipe

Guiltless French Toast

Makes 4 servings (one slice per person)

Ingredients

- 8 large egg whites
- 1 tbsp vanilla
- 1/4 cup orange juice (or juice from two oranges)
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 4 slices whole wheat bread (with no corn syrup or hydrogenated oil)
- 4 pats butter
- 2 tbsp pure maple syrup
- 1 cup fresh blueberries

Directions

1. Mix egg whites, vanilla, orange juice, and cinnamon together in a shallow dish.
2. Soak the bread until it has absorbed most of the liquid. Heat a pan or griddle and add butter.
3. Put bread in pan and pour remaining egg batter onto bread. Cook a few minutes, then flip.
4. Toast is done when both sides are golden. Top with fresh berries and maple syrup.

Per serving: 200 calories, 11 g protein, 25 g carbohydrate, 5 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 11 mg cholesterol, 3 g fiber, 13 g sugar, and 272 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 23%.

Extract more sweet and savory **vanilla recipes.**



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Find more **healthy breakfast recipes** and tips.



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modern mom

Julie Bowen's tricks and tips for balancing TV's No. 1 comedy and family—no easy feat with three kids under age 3

By Lauren Paige Kennedy
WebMD Contributing Writer

KATE POWERS



Reviewed by Louise Chang, MD
WebMD MEDICAL EDITOR

On the spectrum of mommy sainthood, Julie Bowen is much like her character Claire Dunphy on ABC's hit TV show *Modern Family*: She lands somewhere on the higher end of the scale but falls far short of perfection—and that's OK with her.

This proud working mom of three boys—all under age 3—remains a self-admitted control freak, however: “I function on the belief that if I were not around, the wheels would slowly fall off the bus, and no one would ever be dressed or fed,” she jokes.

Still, after she and husband Scott Phillips, a software engineer, welcomed twins John and Gus, now 22 months, when their firstborn Oliver was just hitting the “terrible twos”—within weeks of her landing the role on what has become the No. 1 comedy on television—the in-demand actress knew something had to give.

"I breastfed for a year with my oldest," Bowen, 40, tells WebMD. "We did the Mommy & Me classes—we did everything. But once the twins came along, I slid a lot farther down that scale."

She cites the new bar-setting trend of making your own baby food: "Organic in a jar is better than anything I'm going to come up with," she riffs. "There's a whole secret underground movement of people who feel like they're being bullied by these messages of 'You must grow your own food and purée it!' If you can do that and it brings you pleasure, do it. But if it doesn't work for you...there are so many options out there that are healthy, why beat yourself up because you can't can your own peas?"

Bowen's views on TV-watching sound just as liberated: "I've heard all the evidence about television for kids, but every now and then *Yo Gabba Gabba!* is your best friend when you need to get the dishes done or just chill out for a minute."

Sounds like a line her alter ego Claire might deliver deadpan into the camera, a staple of *Modern Family*'s confessional, break-the-fourth-wall style. The show—which won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Comedy Series last fall and a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series in January—has become

The *Modern Family* cast took home a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series in January.



a certifiable fan favorite. The series hilariously depicts a dysfunctional clan of three interconnected couples who marry themes of gay partnership, foreign adoption, May-December romance, culture clashes, religious differences, warring spouses, and uppity teenagers. In other words: real life.

Bowen as Claire is a mom who believes she knows best—but much to her chagrin (and the audience's delight) very often doesn't. Women especially respond to Bowen's character because she makes so many laugh-inducing mistakes. They love her because she mirrors just about every well-meaning if fallible mother out there.

Under Pressure

The Baltimore-bred actress first earned household-name status as the primary love interest on the series *Ed* from 2000 to 2004. Bowen made additional star turns on *Weeds* and *Lost*, as well as in Adam Sandler's 1996 film, *Happy Gilmore*. Along the way, she's had to acquire some serious juggling skills to satisfy the demands of a skyrocketing career and burgeoning home life.

Still, Bowen's balancing act is not so different from that of other working moms—she's simply traded the office cubicle for a studio set. Consider breastfeeding twin newborns while trying to memorize lines to

“I’ve heard all the evidence about television for kids, but every now and then *Yo Gabba Gabba!* is your best friend when you need to get the dishes done or just chill out for a minute.”

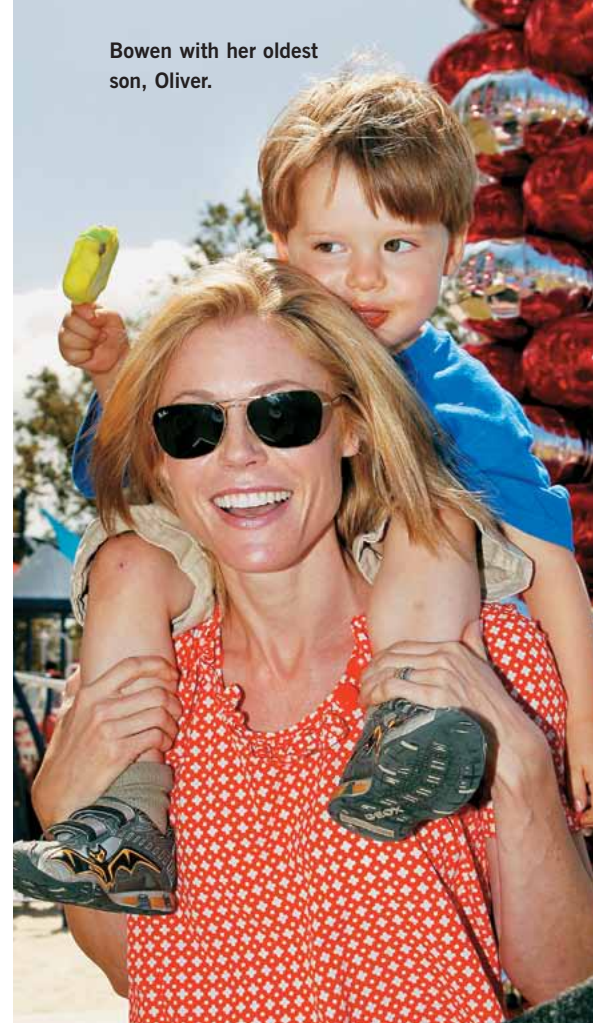
perform before a live audience: “I pumped a lot. I pumped in my car. I pumped at work...I pumped in a hotel room and sent it back to Los Angeles on dry ice. Not because I'm some kind of saint, but because it was easy for me. Again, if it's not easy, or if it's painful...quit. I really resent the militants who insist things must be one way or another. Do what works for you, and cut yourself some slack with the comparisons.”

With this mantra, Bowen's earned another big fan, Debra Gilbert Rosenberg, LCSW, psychotherapist and author of *Motherhood Without Guilt: Being the Best Mother You Can Be and Feeling Great About It*.

“The pressures of modern-day motherhood can feel overwhelming,” Rosenberg says. “Women buckle under it. They simply can't be in three places at once—yet they try to be. With so many women working full-time jobs while attempting full-time motherhood, there are many false expectations. And this combination of factors pushes toward ever higher, often unattainable standards of what it means to be a good mother.”

Are women under too much pressure today? “Yes,” Bowen says. “There is too

Bowen with her oldest son, Oliver.



much pressure. I feel awful! An actress whom I adore—who helped me audition—told me: ‘You’ve ruined it for all of us. You were hired for *Modern Family* when you were eight months pregnant with twins, and now that’s the expectation—that we can all do that. Nobody’s getting a break.’ How awful, that in any way, shape, or form I’ve made it harder for any new mom. Because I’m just as swamped as the rest of us.”

Swamped is right. In the world of network TV, actors often log brutal hours. While Bowen is luckier than most, her schedule can be erratic.

“The model for *Modern Family* is to do it quickly and inexpensively,” she explains. “We try to shoot 10-hour days where most shows shoot 12 or 14, so that happens to dovetail nicely if you have a family...[but] there are weeks when it's in balance, and there are weeks when it isn't. Put it this way: There's a lot of kid time, and there's a lot of work time. It works.”

“It works” means fewer Mommy & Me classes these days and an ability to stop sweating the minutiae of her children's

mommy & me time

Striking a balance between motherhood and the rest of life's demands is no easy task. Psychotherapist Debra Gilbert Rosenberg, LCSW, offers some pointers for women faced with the urge to be all things to all people, all of the time:

Know your needs. “It's important to strike a balance that works for you on all levels—financially and emotionally. Listen only to your needs and the needs of your family, to establish this balance, whatever it may be.”

Banish the guilt. “If finances dictate that you work a full schedule, or if you need to work to maintain a healthy sense of personal identity, then good: Work. If this is what's best for your family, accept it. Then find nurturing child care and *let the guilt go*.”

Be a “good enough” mother. Rosenberg cites Donald Winnicott, a mid-20th century English pediatrician and psychoanalyst who made the concept of the “good-enough” mother famous. “You don't need to be Super Mom,” she says. “Your job as a parent is to provide your children with healthy food, safe shelter, good education, love, respect, and nurturing. But no one ever said it all has to come solely from *you*.”

Remember: No one has it all. “‘Having it all’ was not what the women's movement of the 1960s and '70s was about: It was about having choice and opportunity. It's been twisted into this notion that women are supposed to have the amazing career and the amazing kids and the amazing husband and the amazing body—all at once. Men don't have it all—and they never have. Why do modern women believe they can have—no, expect to have—everything, all at once? Something has to give.”



Bowen with husband Scott Phillips, a software engineer. They have three boys: Oliver, 3, and Gus and John, 22 months.

like the world revolves around them—and that's a good thing.”

Her Best Shot

One subject Bowen *does* sweat is the ongoing debate over vaccinations. Like many other mothers of young children, she felt daunted by anxiety-inducing mixed messages delivered by the media and traded among moms about the risks of annual and seasonal vaccine shots. In the end, she consulted her favorite doctor for advice.

“I cried making the decision, I'm not gonna lie,” she says. “But I spoke with my sister, who is an infectious disease doctor—and then also with my own doctor and my pediatrician, who said to me: ‘By not vaccinating your children, you're putting them at serious risk.’ That was it for me. Once I made that decision, there were a few tears—mostly mine—but now all three boys are on regular vaccination schedules.”

While there are no guarantees in this preventive approach, accepting it led Bowen to join the American Lung Association (ALA; lungusa.org) as the national spokesperson in its ongoing public awareness campaign,

lives—a healthy relaxation, according to Rosenberg.

“With her first child,” the therapist explains, “a mother is often vigilant about every detail: counting every step on the stairs, pointing out every flower. By the time her third one arrives, it's ‘Hurry up!’ Believe it or not, the latter may actually be better for children. Then they don't feel



Bowen as senior associate attorney Denise Bauer in *Boston Legal*; as Adam Sandler's love interest in *Happy Gilmore*; and on *Lost* with Matthew Fox.

"Faces of Influenza" (facesofinfluenza.org), about the importance of getting an annual flu shot.

"The flu is a significant disease," says Norman H. Edelman, MD, chief medical officer of the ALA. "Each year between 10% and 15% of all Americans get it. An estimated 15,000 to 40,000 die from complications."

"It's a privilege to get to educate people," Bowen adds. "Everybody should make the choice that's right for them. But, please," she adds, "make an educated choice."

A Good Pace

It's clear that Bowen is a woman on the run. So it comes as no surprise that she jogs nearly every morning. "You can pick up a pair of sneakers anywhere and you're off," she says. "And 45 minutes later, you've had a great workout."

Anyone who's caught Bowen glammed-up and glowing with good health on recent awards shows can testify she looks downright amazing, considering the woman is in her fourth decade of life and has birthed three babies since 2007. What's her secret?

For starters, she's the first one to tell you that staying in shape takes hard work. It also requires sleep, the aforementioned daily runs, plus the commitment to do both.

"I front-load it," she says of getting a good night's rest, meaning she's typically in bed before 10 p.m., a healthy habit that enables her to rise by 5 a.m. and run a few miles before the kids wake up.

“Running puts me in a better mood. For me, it's brain medicine.”



Surprisingly, Bowen has worn a pace-maker since she was diagnosed in her early 20s with a cardiovascular condition where the regular heartbeat can drop to dangerously low levels. The pacemaker "serves as a monitor for me," she explains, kicking in when her heart requires it.

And while she doesn't "hear or feel" the device, she's grateful "to live during a time when the technology exists to treat my condition," and is in "excellent health."

Managing a significant health complication helps her understand the importance of staying fit. But there are emotional benefits, too. "Running puts me in a better mood," she says. "For me, it's brain medicine."

Still, Bowen is fast to repeat her philosophy: "If this doesn't work for people, I don't begrudge them one iota. If you like to work out once a week, or work out after work, great. I like to come home and just be with the kids. So I exercise early...I'm willing to give up late nights and going out in order to get up early—and that's fine."

Which seems like a perfectly reasonable position to take for a seriously stretched, almost comically busy modern mother of three. ■

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LEFT: DANNY FELD/FOVEVERETT COLLECTION; UNIVERSAL/EVERETT COLLECTION; BOB D'AMICO/ABC

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help beat
seasonal
allergies

At last, the first warm days of spring! Time to open the windows, pack away the winter coats, get out in the garden—and head to the pharmacy to stock up on allergy medications.

If you greet the arrival of spring each year with a stuffy nose and watery eyes instead of a happy heart, it's time to take a new look at your seasonal allergies. You may have been struggling with spring allergies for years, but that doesn't mean you can't learn a few new tricks about coping with them.

With the help of one of the nation's top allergy experts, WebMD has put together some tips for managing seasonal allergies that can help you enjoy spring instead of just suffering through it.

About 40 million people in the United States have some type of “indoor/outdoor” allergy, known as seasonal allergies, hay fever, or allergic rhinitis, says James Sublett, MD, FAAAAI, a clinical professor and section chief of pediatric allergy at the University of Louisville School of Medicine and managing partner of Family Allergy and Asthma in Louisville, Ky.

“Allergies have a strong genetic component—if your parents had allergies, you're far more likely to have them yourself,” he explains. “Most allergies develop in childhood, but in some people, they develop later after exposure to environmental factors ‘flips the switch.’ For example, we know that diesel particulate exposure can trigger allergies. The end result is a runaway response in the immune system,” he says.

Among the most common allergy triggers, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, are:

- * Tree, grass, and weed pollen
- * Mold spores
- * Dust mite and cockroach allergens
- * Cat, dog, and rodent dander

Seasonal and other indoor/outdoor allergies aren't just annoying. Asthma is sometimes triggered by allergies (although most people with allergies do not develop asthma). But if you do have asthma and your allergies aren't well controlled, you may be more likely to have asthma attacks, which can be dangerous and even life-threatening.

Here's what you need to know to control your allergy symptoms *before* they ruin a perfectly good spring season.

By Gina Shaw, WebMD Contributing Writer



Reviewed by Laura J. Martin, MD
WebMD MEDICAL EDITOR

Start Early

Spring pollen season starts much earlier than many people think. In large swaths of the country, including the Eastern Seaboard and the Ohio Valley, pollen starts filling the air as soon as the weather warms up just enough for the trees to begin budding.

“Here in Kentucky, we’ll see pollen sometimes in mid-February,” says Sublett. “As long as you’re not in the snow belt up around the Great Lakes, the pollen season starts very early, and by mid-March we’ll have our first peak.”

This means that if you take medications to control your seasonal allergies, the time to start them is mid- to late February, not late March. “Allergies create an inflammatory response that is like a smoldering fire. If you can keep it smoldering rather than flaring, you’ll do a lot better,” says Sublett. “By starting your medications early, you’re less likely to have a snowball effect with your symptoms.”

Know Your OTC Meds

Three main kinds of over-the-counter medications are used to help control seasonal allergies: topical nasal sprays, inhaled corticosteroids, and antihistamines; oral antihistamines; and decongestants.

If you have mild seasonal allergies, nasal sprays and inhalants and oral OTC antihistamines can both effectively manage your symptoms. Despite what you might have heard, antihistamines are not addictive, although they can lose some of their effectiveness over a few months.

If your symptoms are not controlled, consider switching brands periodically to make sure your medication is still packing the greatest punch. You may want to buy the kind that read “nonsedating” on the label (unless you’re planning to go straight to bed after taking them).

Sublett doesn’t advise using OTC decongestants for allergies, although many people do. “They’re designed for use with a cold, for seven days or less, while allergies last for weeks,” Sublett explains. “They work by reducing the blood flow to your nose, letting you breathe better.”

However, nasal decongestants should be taken on a short-term basis only. If used for more than a week, a disorder called rhinitis

medicamentosa may occur, where rebound nasal congestion (when congestion returns and gets worse) occurs each time the medication wears off.

Also, oral decongestants can cause significant side effects, including an elevation in blood pressure, nervousness, and sometimes heart palpitations. If you have high blood pressure, glaucoma, or heart conditions, talk to your doctor first before trying decongestants.

Control Your Environment

You don’t want to have to stay indoors on a beautiful day just because you have allergies. But if you’re going to be working outside, consider wearing a protective allergy face mask for tasks like mowing the grass, raking leaves, or washing the car. Depending on how severe your allergies are, you can buy a simple disposable paper mask or a more long-lasting “respirator mask” with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.

Remember Sublett’s advice about starting allergy medications early in the season so your allergic response doesn’t get out of control? That applies to your daily life as well. If you’re working outside in the afternoon, take your allergy medication at lunch so it will have a chance to get into your system before the pollen does.

“Keep an eye on the pollen counts, and try to plan more of your outdoor work for days when pollen counts are expected to be low and it’s not so windy,” says Sublett. If you have a smartphone, download an app that gives you regular pollen updates.

What about inside? “There’s a myth that if you keep your windows shut, you’ll be OK,” Sublett says. “But homes have to have ventilation, and about one-third of what’s outside gets inside no matter what you do.”



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Important Safety Information: You should not take BONIVA if you have certain problems with your esophagus (the tube that connects your mouth and stomach), low blood calcium, cannot sit or stand for at least 60 minutes, have severe kidney disease, or are allergic to BONIVA. Stop taking BONIVA and tell your doctor right away if you experience difficult or painful swallowing, chest pain, or severe or continuing heartburn, as these may be signs of serious upper digestive problems. Follow the dosing instructions for once-monthly BONIVA carefully to lower the chance of these events occurring. Side effects may include diarrhea, pain in the arms or legs, or upset stomach. Tell your doctor and dentist about all the medicines you take. Tell them if you develop jaw problems (especially following a dental procedure) or severe bone, joint, and/or muscle pain. Your doctor may also recommend a calcium and vitamin D supplement.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please read Patient Information on the next page.

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IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT BONIVA

(bon-EE-va) ibandronate sodium 150-mg tablet

What is BONIVA?

BONIVA, a bisphosphonate, is a prescription medicine used to treat and prevent osteoporosis in postmenopausal women, characterized by weakening of the bone.

Taken once a month in tablet form, BONIVA may stop and reverse bone loss in most women. It has been clinically proven to help build and maintain bone density, which can help reduce fractures.

What is the most important information about BONIVA?

BONIVA may cause serious problems in the stomach and the esophagus (the tube that connects your mouth and stomach) such as trouble swallowing, heartburn, and ulcers.

Who should not take BONIVA?

Do not take BONIVA if you:

- have abnormalities with your esophagus, such as restriction or difficulty swallowing
 - have low blood calcium (hypocalcemia)
 - cannot sit or stand for at least 60 minutes
 - have kidneys that work very poorly
 - are allergic to BONIVA or any of its ingredients
- See Patient Information for complete list.

Before you start BONIVA.

Tell your health care provider if you:

- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant
- are breast-feeding
- have trouble swallowing or other problems with your esophagus
- have kidney problems
- are planning a dental procedure such as tooth extraction

Tell your health care provider and dentist about all medications you're taking, including vitamins, antacids, and supplements.

How should you take BONIVA?

You must take BONIVA exactly as instructed by your health care provider.

- Take first thing in the morning, on the same day each month.
- Swallow whole (do not chew or suck) with a full glass (6 to 8 oz) of plain water (not sparkling or mineral). Do not take with tea, coffee, juice, or milk.
- After you take BONIVA, remain standing or sitting for at least 60 minutes before you eat, drink, lie down, or take any other oral medications, including calcium, vitamins, and antacids. Some medicines can stop BONIVA from getting to your bones.
- If you take too much BONIVA, drink a full glass of milk and call your local poison control center or emergency room right away. Do not make yourself vomit. Do not lie down.
- If you miss a monthly dose and your next scheduled BONIVA day is more than 7 days away, take one BONIVA 150 mg tablet in the morning following the day that you remember. Do not take two 150 mg tablets within the same week. If your scheduled BONIVA day is only 1 to 7 days away, wait until your next scheduled BONIVA day to take your tablet. Then return to taking one BONIVA 150 mg tablet every month in the morning of your chosen day, according to your original schedule. If you are not sure what to do if you miss a dose, contact your health care provider, who will be able to advise you.

What are the possible side effects of BONIVA?

Stop taking BONIVA and call your health care provider right away if you have pain or trouble swallowing, chest pain, or very bad heartburn or heartburn that does not get better. Follow dosing instructions carefully to decrease the risk of these effects.

BONIVA may cause:

- Pain or trouble swallowing
- Heartburn
- Ulcers in stomach or esophagus

Common side effects are:

- Diarrhea
- Pain in extremities (arms or legs)
- Upset stomach

Less common side effects are:

- Short-term, mild flu-like symptoms, which usually improve after the first dose

Rarely, patients have reported allergic and skin reactions. Contact your health care provider if you develop any symptoms of an allergic reaction including skin rash (with or without blisters), hives, wheezing, or swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat. Get medical help right away if you have trouble breathing, swallowing, or feel light-headed.

Rarely, patients have reported severe bone, joint, and/or muscle pain starting within one day to several months after beginning to take oral bisphosphonate drugs. Contact your health care provider if you develop these symptoms after starting BONIVA.

Rarely, patients have reported serious jaw problems associated with delayed healing and infection, often following dental procedures such as tooth extraction. If you experience jaw problems, contact your health care provider and dentist.

This summary is not a complete list of side effects. For a complete list, consult your health care provider or pharmacist.

Want to know more?

This summary is not everything you need to know about BONIVA. It does not take the place of talking with your health care provider about your condition or treatment. For more complete information, talk to your health care provider or pharmacist. Visit myboniva.com or call 1-888-MyBONIVA for the complete Prescribing Information, which includes the Patient Information.

To minimize the allergens circulating throughout your house, get a high-efficiency furnace filter (MERV level 11 or 12 is what you're looking for), and be sure to change it every spring and again in early summer—for example, in March and June. You can also cut down on circulating allergens by using a HEPA filter on your vacuum and getting a HEPA air filter.

And when you're in the car, keep the windows shut and set your ventilation to recirculate. "Studies show that recirculating air through the car's cabin filter can help with allergies," Sublett says.

One "don't" for coping with allergies indoors: vaporizers and humidifiers. "The droplets are so big that they don't get into your nose, and increasing the humidity in your home can lead to problems with mold and dust mites," says Sublett.

Consider Natural Remedies

Some natural remedies do help with allergy symptoms, but keep in mind that they have their limits. One popular tool is the neti pot, which flushes out your nasal cavities by using gravity to rinse them with a saline solution. Studies show that neti pots are effective for minimizing seasonal allergy symptoms.

"They definitely help if you're congested and symptomatic," Sublett says. "But they're just rinsing the mucus and irritation out of your nose. They're not actually removing the pollen, which is causing the symptoms in the first place."

The jury is still out on acupuncture. Some swear by it as an allergy remedy, but studies on the subject so far have been mixed. Researchers reviewing the overall evidence say that a large, randomized clinical trial is needed to resolve the conflicting data.

Don't Suffer in Silence

If the latest batch of OTC antihistamines in your medicine cabinet isn't doing the trick, a visit to an allergist can bring relief.

An allergist will help you determine precisely what you're allergic to by discussing your symptoms and doing skin tests, which involve exposing you to a small amount of an allergen through a skin abrasion to see if you react. Allergists can also test for antibodies in your blood that can signal the presence of allergies. Your

Allergy Shot Basics

About half of people with seasonal allergies say they do fine with over-the-counter medication, according to allergy specialist James Sublett, MD, FAAAAI. The other half have moderate to severe allergies that may often leave them impaired—missing work, missing school, or showing up but barely functioning. Some people are helped by prescription medications, but many could benefit from allergy shots, Sublett says.

Immunotherapy for allergies—commonly known as "allergy shots"—works by exposing the immune system to small amounts of an allergen. Over time and in increasingly larger doses, the body learns not to see it as a foreign invader and develops a tolerance to it. If neither OTC nor prescription medications do the trick, and you're suffering miserably through spring, fall, or both, then allergy shots may be the answer for you.

When allergy shots were first developed (they've been around since the mid-20th century), the process took years to be fully effective. But today, you can begin allergy shots in January and have a good chance that your symptoms will be significantly decreased, if not eliminated, by the time the first tulips peek out in April.

Clustering is an even more aggressive approach. It takes more of your time at the outset, but you can build up to full effectiveness within just four to five weeks. "Two times a week, you'll come in to the allergist's office for a couple of hours. You get one shot, and then wait, and then get another shot later in the visit," says Sublett.

No matter which approach you take, once you reach the **maintenance level** with allergy shots—that is, you've built up a tolerance to your allergens, and your symptoms have become minimal—your allergist will gradually decrease the frequency of your injections. Ultimately, you'll need them only once every month or so throughout the year, and after a few years you may even be able to discontinue them altogether without having your allergies return.

allergist might ask you to keep an "allergy diary," tracking when and where you have allergic reactions.

Several prescription allergy medications are available:

- Antihistamines
- Leukotriene modifiers, which work by blocking the action of inflammatory chemicals known as leukotrienes, which are released when your body is exposed to allergens.

- Intranasal antihistamines, which are fast-acting and work better than oral antihistamines to control congestion.

- Antihistamine eye drops, which can reduce the redness, swelling, itchiness, and wateriness that often go hand-in-hand with seasonal allergies. Eye drops with anti-inflammatory agents may help as well. Corticosteroid eye drops have an anti-inflammatory effect but can cause significant side effects and should be used under the supervision of a doctor.

"Eye symptoms can really make you miserable," Sublett says. "People often

don't really appreciate the importance of good prescription eye drops." But, he adds, some eye drops cannot be used with contact lenses.

"The take-home message this allergy season is simple: You don't have to be miserable," Sublett says. "See an allergist, find out exactly what you're allergic to, and develop a plan." ●

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green zone

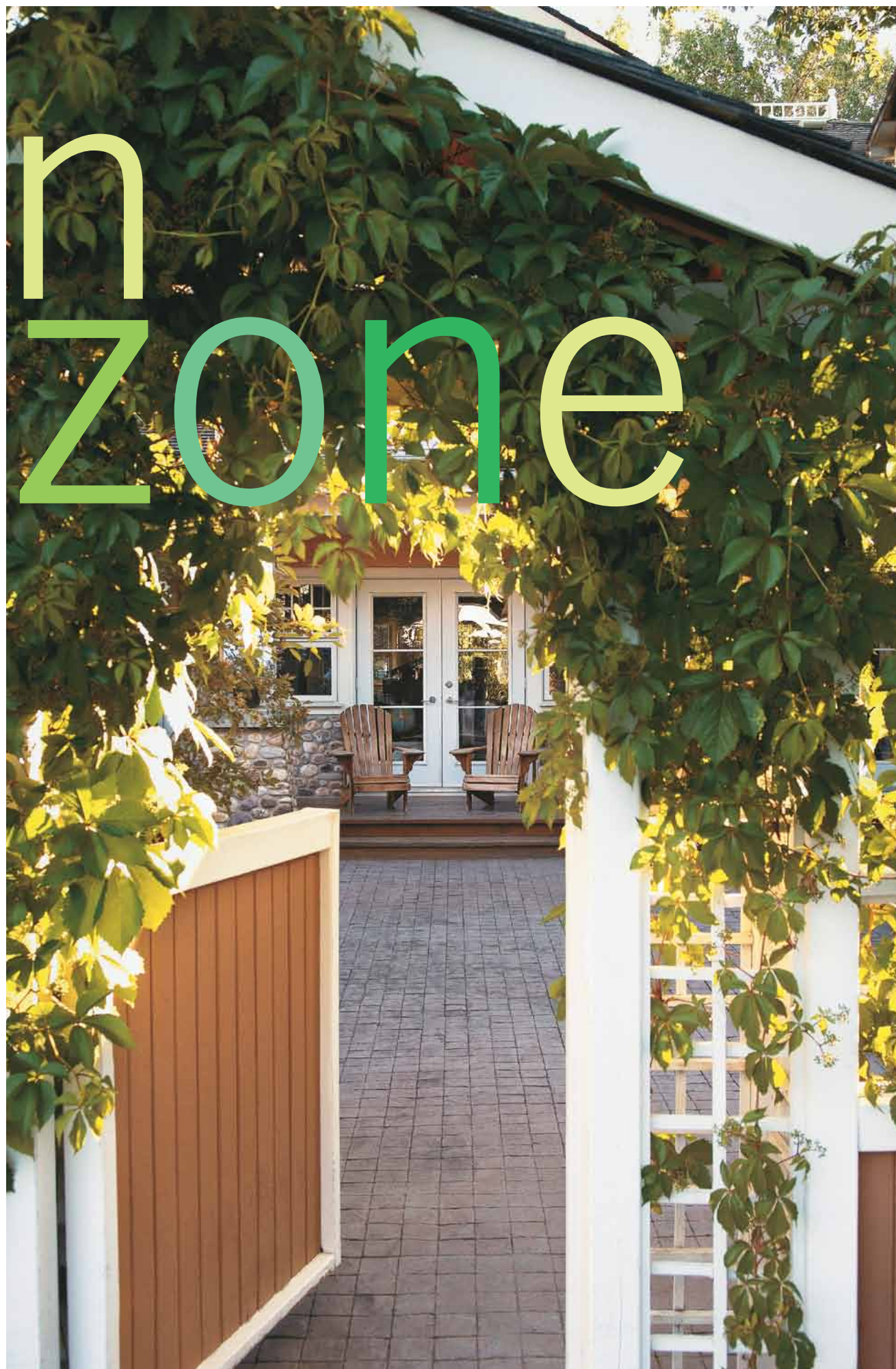
Ready to make your home and yard more eco-friendly?

By Heather Hatfield
WebMD Contributing Writer

Your home is where your health begins, so making your living environment as green as possible can only mean good things for your mind and body. Our living spaces, the air we breathe, and our yards offer numerous ways to make eco-friendly and health-conscious choices. Three environmental medicine experts offer tips for how to greenify your home to ensure your family's well-being.



Reviewed by Michael W. Smith, MD
WebMD CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR



your home

From the kitchen to the carpeting, most homes can be made more eco-friendly and healthy for every member of the family.

Mold killer. Finding mold in your bathroom is easy—just look inside your shower or toilet a few days after its last cleaning. Eliminating mold, however, means you need to get creative if you want to be green.

“Vinegar is naturally acidic,” says William Rea, MD, a thoracic and cardiovascular surgeon and environmental medicine expert at the Environmental Health Center in Dallas. “And acid is the key to getting rid of mold and other fungi that grow in humid environments like bathrooms.”

Vinegar straight-up at 5% concentration—the kind you can purchase at the grocery store—with no water added, is a natural mold killer. Better yet, it earns bonus points for killing bacteria and germs as well as fuzzy fungi.

HEPA clean. You can vacuum till your fingers turn blue, but if you don't have a HEPA-armed vacuum cleaner you're just blowing dust in the wind. An acronym for high efficiency particulate air, HEPA filters have a well-deserved reputation as green-worthy.

“HEPA filters basically suck air in and clean it out,” says Darryl Zeldin, MD, clinical director at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. “They pull allergens like pet dander, mold, and fungi out of the air and trap them in an exhaust system rather than blowing them back into your living environment.”

You can retrofit your vacuum with a HEPA-designated filter. Or if you're buying a new vacuum, look for a certified HEPA vacuum with a minimum efficiency of 99.97% at a particle size of 0.3 microns.

Humidity be gone. Dehumidifiers are a home's best friend when it comes to minimizing mildew, mold, and dust mites.

“You want to keep your humidity levels in your home below 50%,” says Zeldin. “Dehumidifiers are an inexpensive way to lower your allergen and exposure levels to molds and dust mites.” So along with purchasing a dehumidifier, test the air moisture levels in your home with a humidity sensor, and shoot for that 50% mark.

your air

While you might take the air you breathe for granted, it is a golden opportunity to go greener. In fact, taking clean air action is a must when you're improving your home to improve your health.

« Potted plants take in toxins and give out oxygen, which is a natural way to purify the air. »





« Simple solution: Make sure the venting over your stove is installed so it draws smoke outside instead of in, and always turn it on when cooking. »

Go green—literally. Placing houseplants around your home is just about as green as it gets when you're going green.

"Potted plants take in toxins and give out oxygen, which is a natural way to purify the air you breathe," says Toni Bark, MD, a medical consultant and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-accredited professional at the Center for Disease Prevention and Reversal in Evanston, Ill. According to research funded by NASA, plants like the butterfly palm, rubber plant, and philodendron strip toxins such as benzene, formaldehyde, and carbon monoxide out of the air. Water your plants frequently and breathe easy.

Smoke out. Gas stoves and the fumes they release, especially when frying meat, are hotbeds of toxins.

"Gas fumes from gas-powered stoves may cause dizziness, nausea, depression, muscle aches, allergies and asthma, and a host of other symptoms that you might

experience every day without understanding the cause," Rea says. Throw a slab of meat on a gas stove, he says, and the levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and other potentially harmful, cancer-causing substances in the air go up in smoke around you.

Simple solution? Make sure the venting over your stove is installed so it draws smoke outside instead of in, and always turn it on when cooking.

Kick the habit. You can properly vent your stove and install all the air filters you want, but if someone inside your home is smoking, environmental health experts say those efforts are a complete waste of time.

"Hands down, the biggest contributor to poor indoor air quality is cigarette smoke," Zeldin says. "Any changes you make to try to improve air quality in your home are trivial if you don't quit smoking."

Secondhand smoke is a known carcinogen, containing nicotine and toxic chemi-

cals, according to the National Cancer Institute. Even thirdhand smoke—residue from tobacco smoke that clings to furniture, clothes, rugs, and walls—can affect your health.

Researchers from the University of California recently found that thirdhand smoke can hang around your house for months, mixing with common pollutants to form carcinogens and tiny particles that hurt your health. One in five U.S. adults still smokes, Zeldin says. If you're among them, start lighting up outside for the health of your housemates. Better yet, quit altogether.

your yard

Walking through a lush garden is an idyllic way to pass the time—just be sure your flower beds are maintained the way nature intended.

Best for pests. Bugs are a nuisance, and the typical way to get rid of them is chemical pesticides. Fortunately, the answer to your pest problem just went au naturel. "Diatomaceous earth is a rock powder that kills bugs like fleas, ticks, and slugs," says Rea. "It's completely natural and a harmless way to eliminate pests."



« If you wear your shoes in the house, you are introducing chemicals into the environment. »

Diatomaceous earth is made up of tiny fossilized water plants, and it works by dehydrating bugs that inhabit your garden and devour your plants. The mineral-based pesticide's flower power comes from its all-natural composition, which chemical counterparts can't compete with.

Foot first. Leave your yard outside. Before you step into your home, remove the dirt and germ magnets from your feet—lose your shoes.

"When you wear your shoes in the house, you are introducing all kinds of chemicals into the environment," Bark says. "There's no point in making big changes if you don't start small and take your shoes off."

If you filled up your car with gas on the way home, you just trekked gasoline into your kitchen, where you prepare food, she explains.

Or if you entered a public bathroom, the industrial cleaners used to disinfect the floors are now on your carpet.

DIY green-cleaning solutions

Going green is an easy recipe to follow, and most of the ingredients you'll need are already in your kitchen cabinets. Here's a sample of cleaning products you can make at home, from the book *Healthy Child Healthy World: Creating a Cleaner, Greener, Safer Home* by Christopher Gavigan.

Drain do's. While harsh drain chemicals work magic on clogged drains, so can a simple solution of 1 cup baking soda poured into the sink or tub, followed by 1 cup vinegar. After some bubbling and fizzing, your drain should be flowing freely.

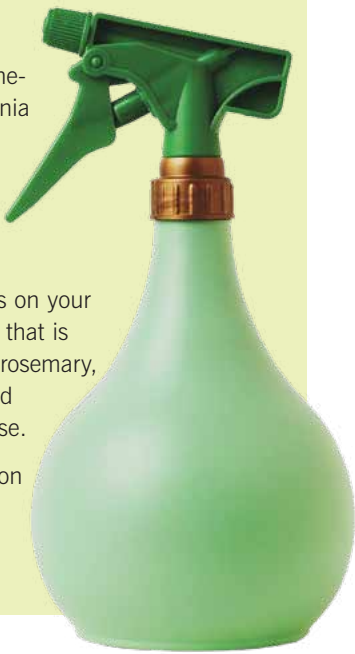
Clean concoction. A simple mixture of ½ teaspoon washing soda (sodium carbonate) and ½ teaspoon liquid Castile (vegetable-, not animal-fat based) soap mixed with 2 cups hot water in a 16-ounce spray bottle makes for an all-natural, all-purpose cleaner that can be used on most surfaces.

Mold management. After donning gloves and a mask so you don't inhale spores, eliminate mold by spraying with vinegar at 5% concentration, or by scrubbing with a non-ammonia detergent such as borax, hydrogen peroxide, or tea tree oil.

Fresh scent. For a lemon-fresh smell to deodorize the air, mix 1 teaspoon baking soda with 1 teaspoon lemon juice and 2 cups hot water in a spray bottle. Spritz and savor!

Dog gone. You don't need a pesticide to kill the pesky fleas on your dog. Instead, wash him with ¼ teaspoon of an essential oil that is insect-repelling, such as citronella, cedarwood, eucalyptus, rosemary, or bay leaf, with 1 teaspoon of a chemical-free shampoo and 1 cup water. Pour it over your pet, let it dry a little, then rinse.

Buffed to shine. Two cups of olive oil and one juiced lemon in a glass makes for a natural furniture oil. After testing on a small section of your favorite furniture, apply with a soft polishing cloth and buff to a shine.—HH



How are you going green? Find tips in our [Health eHome center](#).



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Green and Clean

Expert **product** picks for **greening** your home

It's easy being green, especially when you get some pointers from William Rea, MD, founder of the Environmental Health Center in Dallas, and Toni Bark, MD, an environmental expert in Evanston, Ill., who is certified in healthy eco-living with a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation.

They know phrases like *phosphate-* and *chlorine-free* on the label are good when it comes to buying products that are better for your body. Even easier, look for green “stamps” that designate a product has eco- and body-friendly attributes, like chemical-free or organic, such as the “Green Seal” of approval, the A-OK from Green Seal, an independent nonprofit that certifies products and services that are greener and healthier. Here's what Rea and Bark stock their cabinets with to keep their homes as clean as green can get.—Heather Hatfield

BATHROOM STAPLES

Heinz Distilled White Vinegar is all-natural, made from corn and water. Its 5% acidity is where the product gets its mold-fighting power, making it a good bathroom staple. (\$2.19/32 ounces)

Biokleen Super Concentrated All Purpose Cleaner & Degreaser works in every room in the house, says Bark, including the bathroom, without harsh chemicals and fumes that can be released with steam when you hit a hot shower. (\$5.75/16 ounces)

Dr. Bronner's Sal Suds Liquid Cleaner contains natural ingredients such as fir pine oil, and biodegrades after it dries. (\$11.59/32 ounces)

KITCHEN CLEANERS

Bon Ami Powder Cleanser is an oldie but goodie. First produced in 1886, it's still used today for scrubbing away grease and grime using all-natural ingredients like the mineral feldspar, limestone, and palm oils, Bark says. (\$3.29/14 ounces)

Green Works Natural Dishwashing Liquid is made with plant-based, biodegradable ingredients and has no harsh chemical fumes. (\$3/22 ounces)

Seventh Generation Natural Automatic Dishwasher Gel is made of lemon, grapefruit, and other natural ingredients, says Rea, to help keep your dishes clean and your air chlorine-free. (\$3.99/42 ounces)

Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day Liquid Dish Soap comes in extravagant scents, including basil, lavender, and lemon verbena—with no toxins such as ammonia and chlorine. (\$3.99/16 ounces)

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SLEEP

QUIZ

THE ABCs OF CATCHING ZZZ's

We spend (or should spend) about one-third of our life asleep. But sleep can be something of a mystery to most of us. **"I have no problem getting to sleep at night," macinthehouse** writes in our sleep disorders community. **"The problem is that if/when I wake up in the night, my mind starts racing and I often can't fall back to sleep for several hours. Is this a medical condition?"** It could be, so talk to your doctor and test your sleep smarts with this quiz.

- Which age group needs the most sleep?
 - ☐ Newborns
 - ☐ Infants (up to age 2)
 - ☐ Teens
 - ☐ Adults
 - ☐ Older adults (aged 65 and up)
- During a 24-hour period, people feel sleepy
 - ☐ Once
 - ☐ Twice
 - ☐ Four times
 - ☐ Six times
- Which of these problems can result from too little sleep?
 - ☐ Decreased immune response
 - ☐ Depression
 - ☐ Impaired memory and thinking
 - ☐ Weight gain or difficulty losing weight
 - ☐ All of the above
- Most health experts recognize this many sleep disorders:
 - ☐ 20
 - ☐ 55
 - ☐ 88
 - ☐ 125

Answers: **1.** Newborns need about 16 to 17 hours of sleep daily; infants need 14 to 15.5 hours; teens need about 9; and most adults need 7 to 9, according to the American Sleep Association. **2.** People tend to feel sleepy twice during a 24-hour period, usually between midnight and 7 a.m. and between 1 and 4 p.m. **3.** A good night's sleep helps you think clearly and solve problems, stave off depression, recover from illness, and, recent research suggests, maintain a healthy weight. **4.** There are 88 sleep disorders that can cause trouble with falling asleep or staying asleep.

Source: NIH and the [WebMD Sleep Disorders Health Center](#)

PAIN

QUIZ

THE 411 OF BACKACHE CARE

Eighty percent of Americans have back pain at some point—pain that ranges from mild aches to breathtaking contractions. But learning what treatment is best for your type of back pain can be confusing. **"Is there ANYTHING that can be done for recurring muscle spasms other than fix the underlying cause?" lifesajourney** asks the WebMD back pain community. **"I am having these every month. I'm using ice...Any other suggestions would be gratefully welcome!"** What do you think the options are for treating back pain?

- To avoid further injury, be sure to call a doctor right away if your back is in pain.
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
- Plenty of bed rest and relaxation is the best cure.
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
- Heat is the best treatment for back pain.
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
- Surgery can help all types of back pain.
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

Answers: **1.** Yes—but only in certain circumstances. Try self-care for a couple of days if pain is persistent but moderate. But don't hesitate to call your doctor if pain is severe or if you have a fever. Call 911 if you have back pain with chest pain or if you fell or suffered a severe blow, are vomiting, or have weakness, tingling, or numbness in your legs. **2.** No. Don't stay in bed more than a couple of days. Getting up and moving about some will speed your recovery. **3.** No. Ice is generally preferred over heat. Apply ice packs for 20–30 minutes; repeat every two hours as needed for the first 48 hours. **4.** No. Surgery usually helps only certain types of back pain, such as pain caused by a pinched nerve, a compressed spinal cord, or too much movement between the vertebrae (spinal bones).

Source: American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the [WebMD Back Pain Health Center](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

Lower back pain is often triggered by some combination of overuse, muscle strain, or injury to the muscles and ligaments that support the spine.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR

- What can I do to prevent my back pain from getting worse?
- Why is my back vulnerable to pain and injury? Is there anything I can do to prevent it?
- What are my treatment options? Will I need medication or surgery?
- If you advise surgery, what are the risks? How long does it generally take to recover?

GET THE 411: PAIN

Sign up for the latest news and lifestyle management tips—delivered directly to your email inbox! Go to [WebMD.com](#) and search for “chronic pain newsletter.”



DIABETES

QUIZ

IS YOUR DIABETES IN CONTROL?

If you have diabetes, “tight control”—monitoring and managing your blood sugar levels to prevent the disease from getting worse—is crucial. But we know it’s not easy. **“I am glad to hear you have cut out a lot of the unhealthy foods and soda,” DianeR01** tells another member of WebMD’s diabetes community. **“You have taken a step in the right direction. Congratulations on quitting smoking! You have a great victory there.”** But, she adds, **“You still need to work on your weight. Have you worked with a dietitian to put together an eating plan that works for you?”** How well are you keeping your own diabetes in control?

- 1 I follow my diabetes food plan:
 - ☐ Every day
 - ☐ Most days
 - ☐ What food plan?
- 2 I check my feet for cuts and sores:
 - ☐ Very often
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ When my doctor reminds me
- 3 I exercise:
 - ☐ Regularly, checking my blood sugar before and after
 - ☐ I prefer spectator sports
- 4 I check my blood sugar levels:
 - ☐ Per my doctor’s instructions
 - ☐ When I feel like it
 - ☐ I rarely remember

Answers: 1. Follow your diabetes food plan. If you don’t have one, ask your doctor about seeing a dietitian/nutritionist who specializes in diabetes. 2. Check your feet every day and maintain proper foot care, including nails and skin. Check for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling. 3. Get 30 to 60 minutes of activity on most days of the week. Before changing your level of routine physical activity, check with your doctor. 4. Check your blood glucose the way your doctor tells you to. High blood sugar can make you feel thirsty and tired, cause blurry vision, or make you urinate often. Low blood sugar can make you feel weak, tired, confused, or shaky.

Source: American National Diabetes Education Program and the WebMD Diabetes Health Center

DID YOU KNOW?

Blood glucose levels should be between **80** and **120** before meals (readings taken from monitors that read whole blood).



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR

- 1 What kinds of dietary and fitness changes do I need to make?
- 2 What other doctors and medical professionals should I see? How often?
- 3 Will I need to inject insulin or take medications? If so, how often?
- 4 How do I avoid complications? What kinds of things do I need to be aware of?

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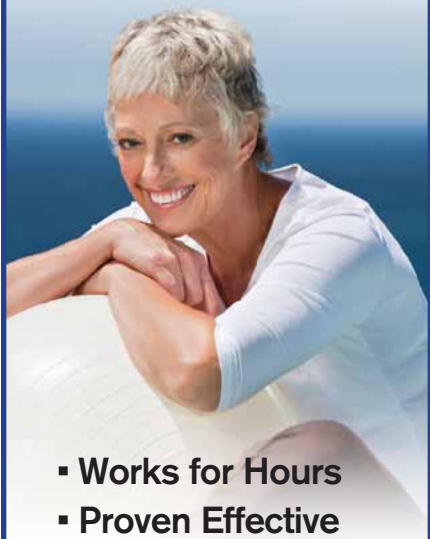
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QUANTUM
HEALTH

DIET

QUIZ

IS YOUR KID OVERWEIGHT?

Is it baby fat or a real problem? Only your child's doctor can say for sure. But if you're worried about your child being (or becoming) overweight, it may be time to reflect on your parenting style. **"About one-third of the kids I see are medically overweight,"** says **Roy Benaroch, MD**, one of WebMD's parenting experts. **"Many of these children will remain overweight as adults, and many will suffer from psychological and medical problems as a direct result."** There are no easy fixes, he adds, but a few changes can make a big difference in your child's health. For instance:

- 1 Do you encourage your child to eat slowly to detect hunger and fullness better?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 Do you discourage eating in front of the TV, which can promote overeating?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3 Do you avoid rewarding your child with food?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4 Do you plan fun forms of exercise, such as bike riding, dancing, or swimming?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Answer: If you answered yes to most of these questions, you're on the right track. Consult a doctor about whether your child is too heavy. Kids grow in unpredictable spurts, which makes determining unhealthy weight gain tricky. For example, a boy may put on pounds first and catch up in height later. Your doctor will measure height and weight and will consider age and growth patterns. If your child's body mass index is greater than the BMI of 95% of children of the same age and gender, he or she is considered overweight. Don't put your child on a weight-loss diet unless your child's doctor prescribes it, though. Without enough healthy food, children may not grow and learn as well.

GET THE 411: DIET

Sign up for the latest news and lifestyle management tips—delivered directly to your email inbox! Go to **WebMD.com** and search for "weight control newsletter."



Source: NIH, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the **WebMD Health & Parenting Center**

overweight children

WebMD SEARCH

ALLERGIES

QUIZ

WHAT ARE FOOD ALLERGIES?

Any number of foods can trigger an allergic reaction, with varying symptoms. **"I have a 5-year-old who has just been diagnosed with cow's milk, egg white, and shrimp allergies,"** blossomrose recently wrote in WebMD's allergies community. **"What are the symptoms of allergies? I know the rashes, hives, cannot breathe, but can hyperactivity be part of the allergic reaction?"** What do you think? How much do you know about food allergies?

- 1 Which of the following foods commonly cause allergic reactions in kids?
a. eggs b. milk c. peanuts d. all of the above
- 2 Which body system sets off an allergic reaction?
a. immune b. respiratory c. gastrointestinal d. nervous
- 3 Food allergies do not usually trigger this symptom:
a. itchy mouth b. hyperactivity
c. nausea and vomiting d. hives or eczema

Answers: 1. d. Eight foods account for 90% of all food allergy reactions: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, wheat, shellfish, and fish. 2. a. Normally, your immune system rushes to defend your body against harmful substances, such as viruses, bacteria, and toxins. A food allergy will also trigger an exaggerated immune response. Reactions range from mild to very severe. 3. b. Hyperactivity is not a symptom. Symptoms of food allergies usually occur on the skin and include itching; hives; and swelling of the eyelids, face, lips, or tongue. Digestive symptoms can include cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea. Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, dizziness, and loss of consciousness could signal a more serious allergic reaction requiring immediate care (call 911).

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; NIH; the FDA; the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology; and the **WebMD Allergies Health Center**

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CANCER

QUIZ

ARE YOU AT RISK FOR CERVICAL CANCER?

"I took birth control pills for about 20 years," LeftCABehind posted in WebMD's cancer community. **"Then I was diagnosed with early cervical cancer. I went off the pill but want to get back on to help my PMS. But the women in my family are convinced the pill caused my cancer. What are the risks?"** Does your medical history include:

- 1 Human papilloma virus (HPV) infection?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 Multiple sexual partners?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3 Chlamydia (an STD that doesn't always have symptoms)?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4 Cigarette smoking?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 5 Oral contraceptives?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Answers: If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, you may be at higher risk for cervical cancer. **1.** HPV, a sexually transmitted disease, is by far the major risk factor for cervical cancer. The virus has been found in 99% of cervical cancer biopsy specimens taken worldwide. **2.** Having multiple sexual partners increases your risk of contracting HPV, the major risk factor for cervical cancer. **3.** Several studies show that a current or previous chlamydia infection increases a woman's risk of cervical cancer. **4.** Smoking cigarettes has been linked to changes in the cervix that can lead to cancer. **5.** Taking oral contraceptives for more than five years has also been linked to both a higher risk of HPV and cervical cancer. One theory is that women on the pill don't take other safe sex measures. Another is that hormones in the pill affect cervical cells in a way that helps HPV enter them. Get regular gynecological checkups and Pap tests.

Source: NIH, the American Cancer Society, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the [WebMD Cancer Health Center](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

Since its debut in 1941, the **Pap test** has decreased U.S. cervical cancer death rates by an estimated 70%.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR

- 1 Based on my age and risk factors, how often should I have a Pap test?
- 2 What role does my family history play in determining risk factors?
- 3 If I get an abnormal result, what does that mean? Will I need additional tests?
- 4 What else can I do to reduce my risk for cervical cancer?

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[WebMD SEARCH](#)

HEART

QUIZ

ARE YOU UNDER PRESSURE?

One in three American adults has high blood pressure (also called hypertension). Left untreated, HBP puts you at greater risk for stroke, heart disease, kidney failure, and eye problems. But even when it's under control, HBP can be worrisome. **"On occasion I have a mild headache, and a sudden little vision impairment, which lasts around five minutes,"** Wilma_I_T tells WebMD's hypertension and high blood pressure community. **"Would this be related to my BP?"** She needs to check in with her doctor to be sure, but how much do you know about this disorder?

- 1 A healthy blood pressure for an adult is 140/90.
☐ True ☐ False
- 2 You have HBP if you have these symptoms: blurry vision, chest pains, or headache.
☐ True ☐ False
- 3 Cutting back on salty snacks and foods is all you need to do to lower HBP.
☐ True ☐ False
- 4 The only way to know if you have HBP is to have your blood pressure checked.
☐ True ☐ False

Answers: **1.** False. A normal blood pressure for an adult is less than 120/80. Anyone with a blood pressure measured at 140/90 on at least two occasions has HBP and requires treatment. **2.** False. HBP does not cause symptoms unless it is severely high. In fact, nearly one-third of people who have HBP don't know it. **3.** False. While reducing sodium can help, other lifestyle changes are usually necessary, such as losing weight, stopping smoking, eating healthy foods, and getting enough exercise. **4.** True. Be sure to get your blood pressure checked regularly, especially if you have a close relative who has HBP.

Source: American Heart Association and the [WebMD Hypertension Health Center](#)

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QUIZ

IS IT MORE THAN
THE BABY BLUES?

Many moms have a brief, mild bout of the “baby blues” after delivery. But some new moms develop a more intense medical condition called postpartum depression. **“I thought I had the baby blues at first, with the stress of my bf working 3rd shift and me being pretty much alone with the baby all night and all day,”** *ssf10* wrote recently in Baby’s First Year, a WebMD community. **“But it’s not going away. I still cry often, and I hardly see or talk to anyone anymore. I feel very overwhelmed by it all, especially doing it alone.”** About 10% of new mothers develop PPD. Are you at risk?

- 1 Have you ever been diagnosed with depression unrelated to pregnancy?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 Do you have a family history of depression?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3 Did something stressful happen during your pregnancy, such as a death of a friend or relative?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4 Are you facing life stresses, such as marriage or financial problems?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Answer: If you answered yes to any of these questions, you’re at increased risk for postpartum depression, an illness that can strike anytime up to a year after you give birth. While the baby blues fade on their own—usually within 10 days after delivery—postpartum depression is more serious and lasting. Left untreated, it can become disabling. Symptoms include sadness, anxiety, mood swings, and feelings of guilt or worthlessness. You may worry about hurting yourself or your baby. You may also cry often and have less energy and motivation. Talk with your doctor about getting care—not just for your sake, but your child’s, too.

Source: NIH, American Academy of Family Physicians, and the [WebMD Depression Health Center](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

If you’ve already had one episode of postpartum depression, you face a 50% chance of getting it again with later pregnancies.

QUESTIONS
FOR YOUR DOCTOR

- 1 How do I know if I am at risk for postpartum depression (PPD)?
- 2 If I develop PPD, what treatments—medication, counseling, or support groups—can help me?
- 3 What can my partner or family members do to help me?
- 4 What are the warning signs that I need immediate medical help?

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[WebMD SEARCH](#)
WebMD *checkup*

10 QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND WELL-BEING

NELLY RAP ARTIST

You really don’t need an introduction, do you? In the past decade, you’ve recorded some of rap’s most popular records, you’ve won three Grammy awards, and you have six studio albums under your belt. Your latest, 5.0, hit the charts four months ago. However, you do some of your most important work outside the music field. In 2003, you and your older sister, Jackie Donahue, who died of leukemia, founded Jes Us 4 Jackie. How did the campaign get started?

When we first started, we were trying to find a bone marrow donor for my sister. It didn’t happen. But I hope to save somebody else’s sister someday.

One of the goals of this campaign is to educate minorities about the importance of bone marrow and stem cell transplant donations and to encourage them to sign up for the donor registry. How do you do that? Is it hard to convince people to register?

We’ve held bone marrow drives in New York and Los Angeles at the same time, in urban communities. A lot of people think donating is going to be dangerous, that it’s going to take weeks to recover, but it only takes a couple of hours. You’re in and out quickly.

What did you learn from your sister’s illness?

That you can live your life as a quote-unquote healthy person and have it all suddenly taken away from you. All that you took for granted, all the obvious, everyday things, they become so much more important... The best medicine outside of a cure is the love of your loved ones. It was my sister who was sick. I can only imagine it as a lonely scenario. You can’t take away the pain, but you can make them as comfortable as possible. Keep positive; it’s the only thing you can do.

In the past year, you’ve released a hit single, a new record, an exercise video—part of the *Celebrity Sweats* series—and you’ve got your own clothing line, Apple Bottoms. Do you ever have time to relax?

I don’t look for down time. I don’t take that many vacations. Maybe I should. But I have only got so much time. It’s hard to slow down when there are always new dreams, new options.

You’re now 36. With so much to do, how do you stay fit?

If I’m not in album-making mode, I work out five times a week. In album mode, it’s rough finding the time. But I always play basketball. Basketball is the best for cardio. It’s better than a treadmill, better than running. It’s about fun and cardio and hooping with the boys. You release stress, you channel your stress into the game.

What’s your best health habit?

My best health habit is going to the gym, even when there are a million excuses not to go.

What’s your worst health habit?

My eating habits. I can get away with a lot, because I’ve been blessed with a great metabolism. As a kid, I was skinny. I only got large from lifting weights. I know it gets harder to keep off the weight as you get older, but as a child I always needed to gain weight.

Name one of your guilty pleasures.

Waking up at 3 a.m. and eating chocolate mousse and ice cream.

You have two kids, Chanell Haynes, 17, and Cornell Haynes III, 12, and adopted your sister’s kids. What has being a father taught you?

It’s taught me to appreciate smaller, everyday pleasures, like just hanging out with them. I know they like my success, but there’s a bitter side to it, too, because I’m not there as much as they want me to be.

Is your name on the donor registry?

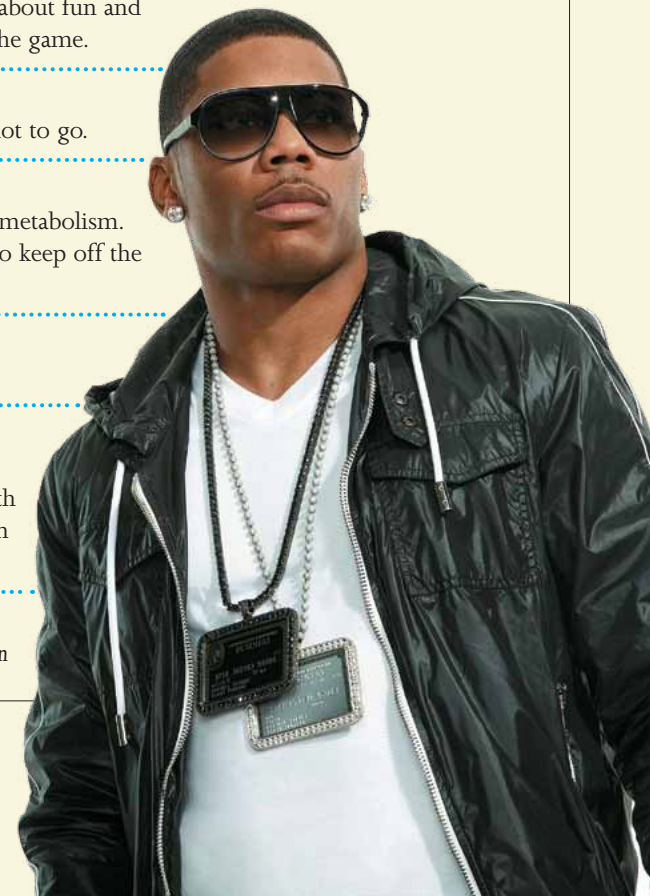
I’ve signed up. Hopefully, I will get a call and be able to save someone.—Matt McMillen

MARC BAPTISTE

Read [Nelly’s full interview.](#)



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DID YOU KNOW?

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INSIDE

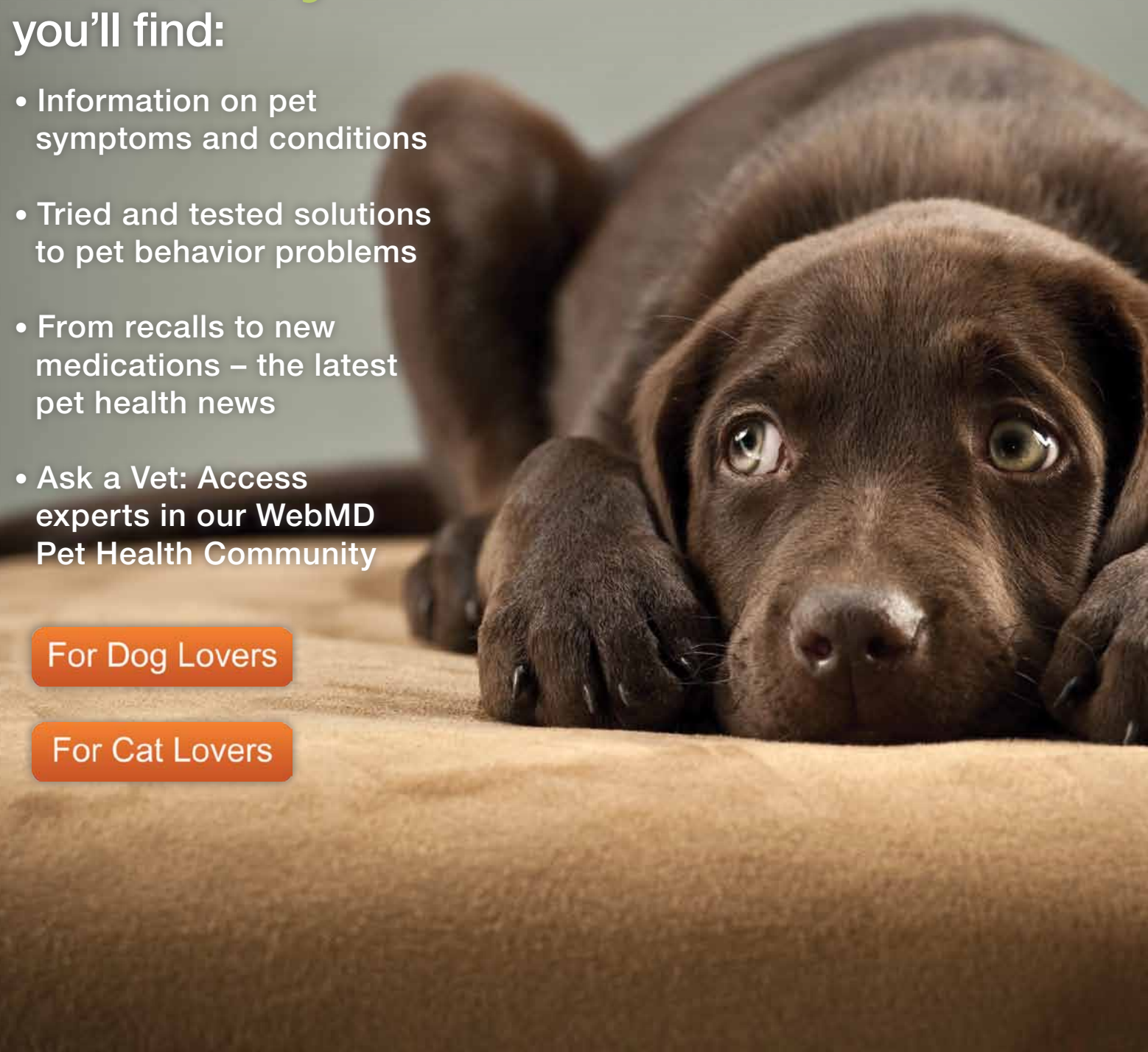
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Isabella Rossellini

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Barking Mad

How can she get her loud dog to make less noise?



Q ▶ How can I get my dog to stop barking so much?

A ▶ Training your dog to bark less will take work, practice, and consistency. It won't happen overnight, but with proper techniques and time, you can see progress. Here are a few tips.

Don't bark. Shouting stimulates your dog to bark more because he thinks you're joining in. So the first rule is to speak calmly and firmly, but don't yell.

Silence is golden. Most dogs don't know what you want when you're yelling at them to "shut up." So train your dog to understand the word "quiet." Here are two methods:

When your dog is barking, say "quiet" in a calm, firm voice. Wait until he stops barking, even if it's just to take a breath, then praise him and give him a treat. Just be careful never to reward him while he's barking. Eventually he will figure out that if he stops barking at the word quiet, he gets a treat (and make it a high-level treat, such as cheese or chicken bits).

Alternatively, you can teach your dog to "speak." Then once he's doing that reliably, signal him to stop barking with a different command, such as "quiet," while holding your finger to your lips (dogs often pick up body signals faster than voice commands).

Practice these commands when he's calm, and in time he should learn to stop barking at your command, even when he wants to bark at something.



Mark J. Stickney, DVM
WebMD PET HEALTH EXPERT

Q ▶ My cat is prone to coughing up hairballs. What are they, and can I do anything about them?

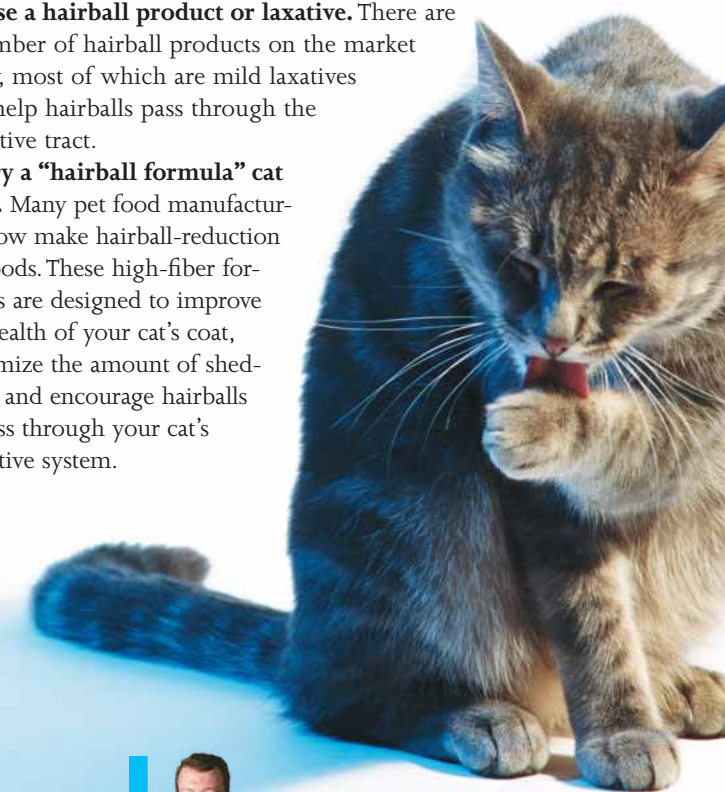
A ▶ Hairballs, technically called trichobezoars, develop as a result of your cat's healthy and fastidious grooming routine. Tiny hook-like structures on his tongue catch loose and dead hair, which is then swallowed. The majority of this hair passes all the way through the digestive tract with no problems. But if some hair stays in the stomach, it can form a hairball. Ultimately, your cat may vomit the hairball to get rid of it.

Here are a few things you can do to reduce the likelihood your cat will have hairballs or to cut down on their frequency.

Groom your cat regularly. The more fur you remove from your cat, the less fur that will end up as fodder for hairballs in her stomach. Combing or brushing your cat on a daily basis can be an effective way to minimize hairballs. If you can't get your cat accustomed to grooming or brushing, think about taking her to a professional groomer for a grooming and haircut (especially for long-haired cats) every six months or so.

Use a hairball product or laxative. There are a number of hairball products on the market today, most of which are mild laxatives that help hairballs pass through the digestive tract.

Try a "hairball formula" cat food. Many pet food manufacturers now make hairball-reduction cat foods. These high-fiber formulas are designed to improve the health of your cat's coat, minimize the amount of shedding, and encourage hairballs to pass through your cat's digestive system.



Drew Weigner, DVM, ABVP
WebMD PET HEALTH EXPERT

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Animal Instincts

When she's not training guide dogs, **Isabella Rossellini** turns her lens on a wild world starring non-humans

Isabella Rossellini has played a nightclub singer (*Blue Velvet*), a legless beer baroness (*The Saddest Music in the World*), and even a cuttlefish (in her *Seduce Me* shorts for the Sundance Channel). But what she'd really like to do is get inside the head of animals, which is precisely what happens in *Animals Distract Me*, a film that premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and will air on April 22, Earth Day, on the Discovery Channel's Planet Green.

Rossellini, 59, is the director, star, and writer of her newest project, which follows her and a pooch named Sweetie through a day in Manhattan. While Rossellini discusses a fashion exhibit with *Vogue* editor André Leon Talley, attends a shoot with star photographer Fabrizio Ferri, and lunches with chef Mario Batali, she becomes preoccupied by the animals around her.

"Even though I'm in an urban environment, I keep on going to animals, whether it's a dog or crickets or pigeons or cockroaches, and with each animal [I notice] there is a little vignette," Rossellini says. The movie shows scenes first through the eyes of a human and then from the point of view of an animal, such as her former guide dog, Sweetie. She even introduces puppet characters, including one based on Charles Darwin (actually played by Rossellini with a voiceover by Campbell Scott) to help educate the audience about animal behavior.

Exploring the world with a camera is natural for the legendary actress and model, who grew up in the spotlight. She is perhaps best known for her famous lineage, as the daughter of actress Ingrid Bergman and Italian director Roberto Rossellini, and for being the face of Lancôme for

nearly 15 years. In addition to directing, Rossellini maintains a full acting schedule. She recently shot *Late Bloomers*, a romantic comedy with William Hurt, and *Chicken With Plums*, a new film by Marjane Satrapi, the Iranian director of *Persepolis*. Her *Seduce Me* shorts about animal courtship were released last year, following on the heels of her award-winning 2008 *Green Porno* series, about the mating life of animals.

Rounding out her busy schedule is a role she's taken in recent years, away from the limelight: training Labrador puppies for the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind (guidedog.org).

Rossellini and her friend, actress Linda Larkin (best known as the voice of Princess



Rossellini dresses up as Charles Darwin in *Animals Distract Me* to explain how over time, wolves became our household pets.

Jasmine in *Aladdin*), live with and train one pup per year. They split custody between their Manhattan apartments and Rossellini's Long Island home. This exposes the dogs to noise and traffic in the city (where they encounter crosswalks and taxis) and wildlife in the country (where they learn not to chase birds and fight with cats). To date, they have raised eight guide dogs. Bau, a 6-month-old black Lab, is Rossellini's newest puppy in training, since Sweetie finished her schooling last year.

Rossellini has had dogs all her life, and nearly every dog she's encountered has a fascinating story. "My mama gave me my first dog, a white Maltese called Yupee," Rossellini says. "She ran off and came back pregnant. We gave away the puppies, and she was so desperate that night, searching for her babies. The night after, we found a little black cat meowing for its mother in the street. We rescued the cat. The dog nursed the cat and was convinced it was her baby. She was so proud her baby could climb trees and do things other dogs couldn't do."

Rossellini's next dog was a dachshund named Nando who was with her for nearly 20 years. After meeting the Jack Russell terrier of director (and one-time boyfriend) David Lynch while filming *Blue Velvet*, she got her own Jack Russell named Macaroni, who died a few years ago. "After that, I thought, I can't go through another death," she says. But now, she says, working with guide dogs connects her to the entire life cycle—including helping whelp puppies every summer. "It is the drama of life," she says. "It's inevitable that they die, but it's so painful."

But if she can help it, drama-free is how Rossellini likes to keep her daily activities, including playtime with the pups. "I don't think life is as fun without a dog," she says. "I cannot say that they cure my flu or my headaches, but for sure they give me a great sense of companionship, and they're entertaining. [When they're not there] you miss the little circus they always bring." ■

By Melanie D.G. Kaplan and
Chloe Thompson
WebMD contributing writers

ROBERT ASCROFT/CPA SYNDICATION



4 ways
body
language
reveals your
feline's true
feelings

Cat clues

By Adriane Bishko, WebMD Contributing Writer

What is your cat thinking? His body language may give it away. Cats use a variety of signals (body postures, facial expressions, and vocalizations) to convey their message and avoid unwelcome confrontations. By learning how to decipher these feline postures, you can deepen the bonds of affection with your cat—and prevent misunderstandings and potential aggression.

1 Tummy Display

Feline body language is more nuanced than that of dogs, says Karen Sueda, DVM, Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. "Part of the problem arises when people take their knowledge of dogs and apply it to cats," says Sueda, who works at the VCA West Los Angeles Animal Hospital.

Have you ever wondered, for example, why your cat's seemingly flirtatious behavior of rolling over to expose his belly may turn to overt aggression when you try to stroke him? When your cat is content and relaxed, he may stretch out and roll over. But in other situations, when a cat feels cornered and cannot escape, this pose may be highly defensive, indicating she is prepared to fight—with fully extended claws and sharp teeth, says Pam Johnson-Bennett, a certified animal behavior consultant in Nashville, Tenn.

2 The Fluttering Blink

When a cat greets another cat or a person with slow, languid blinks, it's communicating affection. Why? Because in the feline world, to close one's eyes in the presence of another is the ultimate sign of trust.

By blinking slowly at your cat, you are communicating that you are aware of its presence and pose no threat. So the next time your cat blinks at you, return the gesture.

3 Tail Tales

One of the most accurate barometers of a cat's mood is its tail. When held high, it communicates confidence. Curled around another cat's tail or human legs, it signals friendliness. And tucked below or between the legs, it signals insecurity or anxiousness.

The upright bottle-brush tail is an unequivocal sign your cat is feeling threatened. And when combined with the arched back, upright hair along the spine, and unsheathed claws, this stance is a dead giveaway that you should back off, Sueda says.

4 The Direct Stare

Although people can use direct eye contact to show affection, most cats find it threatening. That's why in social settings, a cat usually gravitates toward the one person in the room who is trying to ignore it.

The more fearful a cat becomes, the wider its pupils expand, says Myrna Milani, DVM, a veterinary ethologist (animal behaviorist) at Tipping Point Animal Behavior Consulting Services in Charlestown, N.H. When dilated and wide open, the pupils take in as much visual information as possible. This bug-eyed, saucer look signals that a cat is frightened and wants to retreat.

In an aroused or angry cat, the pupils may become narrowed to focus more effectively on detail. But cats' eyes also respond to ambient lighting, Sueda says, so it is important to observe the body language as a whole. ■

KNAPPEGETTY IMAGES

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Is your dog terrified of everything?
Help your pooch fight fear with
these expert tips

Scare Tactics

By Katherine Kam, WebMD Contributing Writer

Dee Seiffer was charmed when she spotted a 6-month-old English cocker spaniel at a shelter. The Milford, Conn., resident adopted the adorable stray, but right after little Ruby came home, she began showing signs of fear and aggression.

“She was afraid of everybody and everything. She was afraid of garbage cans, parked cars—she was terrified of a parked truck,” Seiffer says. “She was so cute that people wanted to walk right up to her and pet her. She would go backward, with her eyes as big as saucers, and bark and shake and hide behind me.”

Seiffer knew that fearful dogs can progress from growling and bristling to snapping and biting, so she turned to dog behavior experts for help. In fact, fear and aggression are top behavior problems of pet dogs, according to veterinarians who specialize in animal behavior. What can owners do?

running away. It can be crouching down, moving backward, trying to make your body small. It can mean the face and head are the only things that retreat. Sometimes, it means the head goes down or flexes toward one shoulder, or the eyes avert down.”

“Read what your dog is trying to tell you,” says Bonnie Beaver, DVM, DACVB, MS, past president of the American Veterinary Medical Association and a professor of veterinary medicine at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Too often, owners do the opposite. “The dog doesn’t want to go, it holds back on the leash, so what do we do? We drag it forward,” she says.

Learn to recognize when your dog is fearful. “There’s a world of dog body language that the majority of dog owners have no clue about,” says Lisa Radosta, DVM, DACVB, a veterinarian at the Florida Veterinary Behavior Service in Royal Palm Beach, Fla.

Fear, anxiety, and stress look like “retreat,” she says. “Retreat doesn’t always mean

“You don’t take the dog and put it in the middle of whatever’s causing that fear,” Beaver says. For example, if lightning and thunder terrify your dog, don’t leave it near a big picture window during a storm. Instead, put your dog in an interior room and turn on a radio to help hide the sound.

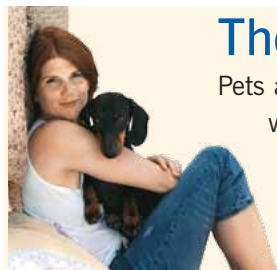
Don’t punish a fearful dog. It’s never a good idea to hit your dog or use negative reinforcement to try to help it overcome fear, experts say. “If your dog’s afraid of you, how could she possibly think you’re going to keep her safe?” Radosta asks.

Instead, “Set up a really good, structured, positive reinforcement relationship with your dog. Teach your dog a trick, then reward it with a tasty treat,” she says.

“You’re setting up this paradigm where the dog is looking to you for instruction and reinforcement and starting to view you as ‘safe,’ and that’s the key to changing fear. If the owner is not considered ‘safe’ in the dog’s mind, the dog will try to keep herself safe and that’s how you climb that ladder of aggression.”

Ruby, now 4, went on a brief course of medication to calm her extreme fear. Seiffer also took her on walks to unfamiliar places, to parks and dog classes—all in an effort to provide her the exposure she likely missed as a young puppy.

Although she’s still skittish about strangers touching her, Ruby has overcome lots of her initial fears. When Ruby went on a walk during a recent garbage collection day, Seiffer says, “she walked by scores of garbage cans and didn’t flinch.” ●



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Feed Back Get the 411 on spitting, burping, and bottles



Q ▶ What are some common bottle-feeding do's and don'ts?

A ▶ The main thing is to engage in lots of trial-and-error to be sure you find a bottle and nipple combination that works for your baby. Don't stock up on too many of the same kind of bottle unless you know she is going to take it well.

When you're bottle-feeding, make sure milk is filling up the nipple. Otherwise, she could swallow a lot of air. One problem is the way parents position babies: Some lay them completely flat, which can make babies choke when feeding on the bottle. Be sure to have your baby semi-inclined or upright.

Another common mistake is propping the bottle. Don't prop it—it can be a choking hazard. That is also why you should always be present when your baby is feeding, even when she's old enough to hold her own bottle.

If an infant is going to burp, it will usually happen in the first minute or two after feeding. Still, some parents worry if their baby doesn't burp, but it's OK. Some babies just don't burp very well, and some don't need to very often. A lot of babies will burp on their own, but for the first few months, most do need a little help. If your baby hasn't burped and you feel she needs to, put her in your lap in a sitting position and tap her back gently.



Did you know?

6 months is the average age at which a baby's mature hair begins to grow in. That hair she was born with is temporary and will start to shed at about 1 month.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Q ▶ My baby spits up a lot and also vomits after I feed him. What causes this, what's normal, and when do I need to worry?

A ▶ After your baby swallows milk, it glides past the back of the throat into a muscular tube called the esophagus and then into the stomach. Where the stomach and esophagus join, there is a ring of muscle called the lower esophageal sphincter that's meant to prevent milk and stomach acid from coming up backward into the esophagus. In babies, this sphincter doesn't always work perfectly. If stomach contents go back up into the esophagus, this is called "reflux."

Infants are especially prone to reflux. Their stomachs are small, about the size of a golf ball, and the lower esophageal sphincter might not tighten up when it should. And babies will occasionally take in more than they're ready to handle.

Every baby spits up, or refluxes, occasionally. Some babies may spit up at least a little bit with almost every feeding. For most babies, these spit-ups don't cause any problems. As long as your baby isn't very fussy and is growing well, ordinary reflux episodes don't need any treatment. Typically, the lower esophagus valve tightens up sometime in the first year, and spitting lessens.

Reflux is called gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD when the spitting up is causing significant problems. GERD symptoms can include pain and fussiness, breathing problems, and poor weight gain. If your baby shows any of these signs, talk to your pediatrician.



Roy Benaroch, MD
WebMD BABY CARE EXPERT



Jennifer Shu, MD
WebMD BABY CARE EXPERT



Math whiz and *Wonder Years* star **Danica McKellar** adds a new role to her impressive résumé: mom

Plus One

Do natural childbirth and the quadratic equation share a common denominator?

It just might be Danica McKellar, the former child actress who first stole hearts as Winnie Cooper on the late '80s hit show *The Wonder Years* before carving out a new niche as a math advocate for girls with three best-selling books: *Math Doesn't Suck: How to Survive Middle School Math Without Losing Your Mind or Breaking a Nail*; *Kiss My Math: Showing Pre-Algebra Who's Boss*; and *Hot X: Algebra Exposed*.

By Lauren Paige Kennedy, WebMD Contributing Writer
Photography by Cathryn Farnsworth

"During the toughest moments," McKellar tells WebMD of her 36-hour labor, "I kept thinking about what I tell my readers about their abilities in math, and it resonated with labor, too: You're more capable than you think you are."

Which is not to say McKellar didn't struggle, like many girls do as they tackle algebraic problems just as puberty hits, as she rode out one painful contraction after another. She faced moments where she wanted to quit. With the support of her doctor, her husband, and her doula (birth coach) and the practice of self-hypnosis, she got through her long labor.

"My goal was to do natural childbirth," she explains. "But I didn't know if it would [fully] go that way until the baby was actually born." McKellar gave birth to her son, Draco—named for a constellation in the sky—"on Labor Day" she says, in a Los Angeles-area hospital under the supervision of a doctor, who happily worked with her doula. "I wanted Western medicine close...I wanted to be prepared, just in case."

McKellar's reward, she says, for resisting an epidural (pain medication delivered through a needle inserted into the spinal cord, numbing the spinal nerves that cause feeling in the lower body) was that she was alert and mobile enough to "pull out Draco myself." When her baby was ready, her doctor invited her to sit up and "come and get him!" Beaming, she relates, "It was one of the most amazing moments of my life."

Natural Selection

McKellar, 36, says she's a firm believer that "every woman has an inner sense that guides her" when it comes to pregnancy, labor, and breastfeeding, and "that we should never judge another woman's choices." She says that a strict approach to nutrition before and after birth, the goal of natural labor, and exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months was right for her.

After a miscarriage in October 2009, McKellar and husband, composer Mike Verta, decided to keep mum when she found herself pregnant again just months later—even when *Maxim* magazine asked her to do a sexy lingerie shoot timed to when she was 11 weeks along. "I wasn't really showing yet, but I couldn't suck in my stomach," she laughs about the photos. "Let's just say no one asked me if I'd had any work done," she adds, referring to her suddenly swollen breasts.

Her discipline translated to other areas: She gave up sugar, white flour, gluten, anything artificial, caffeine, and alcohol during pregnancy and continues with the same diet now that she's breastfeeding.

But not every woman needs to follow McKellar's choices. "Many women think

they need to eat a 'perfect' diet to make nutritious milk," says Marianne Neifert, MD, a pediatrician, national breastfeeding expert, and author of *Great Expectations: The Essential Guide to Breastfeeding*. "I like to keep it simple," Neifert advises. "Maintain your good eating habits from pregnancy while you nurse, and keep taking your prenatal vitamins."

Feeding Time

McKellar used her own advice to conquer her initial challenges with breastfeeding. Her books address the mental blocks that can stall potential math stars before they even attempt to solve that first equation. "So many girls say 'I can't do math' before they even try it. They have to build their confidence and know that by sticking with it, they can have success."

The same holds true for nursing, McKellar believes. Some women and babies face physical challenges that make it impossible, while others simply need

support and professional help to get over the initial hurdles: difficult latching, sore nipples, low milk supply, and mastitis, a painful breast infection, all of which McKellar had.

If a woman can breastfeed, there are significant health benefits for both mother and baby, says Neifert, including a lower risk of ear infections, asthma, and type 1 and 2 diabetes for babies, and a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes as well as breast and ovarian cancers for women, she says.

Still acting (McKellar has done TV guest spots on ABC's *How I Met Your Mother* and CBS's *The Big Bang Theory*, and voices an animated character on *Young Justice* for Cartoon Network) even as she celebrates her third best-seller, she's loving motherhood so much that she and her husband are already planning for baby No. 2.

"The plan is to have them two and a half years apart," she says, calculating the optimal time between siblings. Which means, if you do the math, she'll be pregnant again this time next year. Stay tuned. ■



“I kept thinking about what I tell my readers about their abilities in math, and it resonated with labor, too: You're more capable than you think you are.”





Bottle Recap

By Wendy Fries, WebMD Contributing Writer

When it comes to baby bottles, nipples, bibs, and more, the array of choices facing new parents can be confusing: Should you go with glass, plastic, or disposable bottles? Should bottles be BPA-free? Do you need a bottle warmer and sterilizer? We cover the essentials.

BOTTLES

Which should you choose? Ask for advice from friends, family, or your baby's pediatrician, or try several kinds to see which you and your baby like best. There are three basic choices of baby bottles:

Glass

Pros: Glass bottles last a long time and can also be deep-cleaned by boiling.

Cons: They're heavier than plastic and may shatter if dropped.

Disposable

Pros: These are essentially reusable plastic bottles that use a disposable sterilized liner for each feeding. They're very convenient for quick cleanups.

Cons: The disposable inserts may not be environmentally sound, and the bottles are usually more expensive than regular plastic or glass.

Plastic

Pros: Plastic bottles are lightweight, strong, and unbreakable.

Cons: They may not last as long as glass; safety concerns have been raised about plastic bottles that contain bisphenol A or BPA.

The National Toxicology Program released a report in 2008 that noted "some concern" about BPA's potential effects on the brain, prostate gland, and behavior of fetuses, infants, and children.

If you want to buy BPA-free baby bottles, steer clear of bottles with the number 7 or the letters PC (polycarbonate) on the bottom. Instead, buy plastic bottles with the

numbers 1 to 6 on the bottom, or choose glass baby bottles. In 2009 the top six manufacturers of baby bottles in the United States agreed to stop using the chemical in their bottles. The FDA supports the industry's actions to stop making BPA bottles for the U.S. market.

NIPPLES

Baby bottle nipples are usually rubber or silicone and may be rounded, wide, flat, or shaped to mimic mother's nipple when in baby's mouth. Depending on the size of the nipple hole, they also have different flow rates, from slow to fast.

As with baby bottles, babies may show a preference for a certain nipple type. To get started, ask friends, family, and your baby's doctor which types and brands they like most.

Plan on buying at least 12 nipples and covers, but because nipples crack and leak with use, you may end up buying more over time.

BOTTLE GEAR

Bottles and nipples are just the beginning; manufacturers offer a big assortment of feeding accessories, from brushes and bottle carrying cases to sterilizers and special dishwasher bottle baskets.

Pediatricians and parents generally agree that it's helpful to have:

- 1 baby bottle brush
- 1 nipple brush
- 6 to 12 bibs
- 12 burp cloths

How to
choose the
right one for
your baby



Don't sterilize glass baby bottles and nipples

before every use. (That was necessary in the past, when municipal water supplies were not as reliably clean as they are now.) Do, however, sterilize new glass baby bottles and nipples by putting them in boiling water for five minutes.

Do replace a plastic baby bottle if it's cracked, leaks, is discolored, or smells bad.

TED MORRISON

Cry Baby

What her wails really mean, and how to soothe her like a pro

By Susan Davis, WebMD Contributing Writer

All babies cry. It's a basic way of communicating their wants and needs. But for many new parents, a crying baby can be frustrating and heart-rending. Fortunately, parents can do a lot to help their little ones calm down and be happy.

To start, think of your newborn as not entirely ready to be out of the womb. "I believe the key to understanding babies is to recognize that they come into the world three months before they're fully ready," says Harvey Karp, MD, an assistant professor of pediatrics at the USC School of Medicine and author of *The Happiest Baby on the Block*.

"That's why a big part of soothing your baby—and getting some extra sleep yourself—is giving at least three months, a fourth trimester, of extra rocking and touch."

Once you're equipped with that perspective, the next step to soothing a fussy baby is figuring out what's making him or her cry. Learn to recognize these classic signals:

- Opening the mouth and turning the head from side to side is a sign of hunger in a young baby.
- Yawning, blinking, and drooping eyelids can be signs of fatigue.
- Looking away is often a sign of overstimulation. It means "I need a little break."
- Frowning, grunting, and straining can be signs of gassiness or needing to poop.

If you've ruled out these problems and your baby is still fussy, you may have a more serious issue on your hands.

Babies who cry loudly for several hours a day may have "colic," which can start around two weeks of age and end at three or four months. Although associated with abdominal discomfort, "colic" in babies refers simply to daily, extended crying spells

(usually for three hours or more). Other symptoms of colic include crying that worsens in the evening, a worried or pained look on the baby's face, and crying that starts during or after a meal.

But even a colicky baby who seems to be screaming in pain can be soothed, Karp notes. "Crying doesn't necessarily spell crisis. The vast majority of fussy babies are just homesick for the '5 S's' that constantly calm them in the womb."

Here are Karp's 5 S's—things you can do to imitate the environment in your womb and trigger your little one's calming reflexes.

Swaddling: Wrapping your baby snugly in a blanket is "the cornerstone of calming," Karp says. The arms should be snug and straight; the hips should have some wiggle room.

Side or stomach position: Babies should always sleep on their backs. But to soothe a baby, hold her in your arms either on her stomach or resting on her side.

Shushing: White noise can be a young baby's best friend because the noise in the womb is "as loud as a vacuum," Karp notes. Try making a loud and steady "shhhh" noise to calm your baby.

Swinging: Whether it's bouncing or something slower, rhythmic motions replicate movement in the womb. Remember to be gentle when using motion to soothe.

Sucking: Mouthing a nipple, pacifier, or clean finger helps many babies settle into deep relaxation.

When to call the doc

Sometimes crying is a sign of true illness. That's why a doctor should examine a baby that you just can't soothe. "Babies don't have strong immune systems and can get very sick very fast," Karp says. "And the younger they are, the less prepared their immune systems are to fight off infection. It's always better to be safe than sorry."

Warning signs of illness include:

- Rectal temperature of 100.4°F or more
- Rash
- Cough, congestion or breathing problems
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Blood in the urine or stool
- Not looking well or not feeding well





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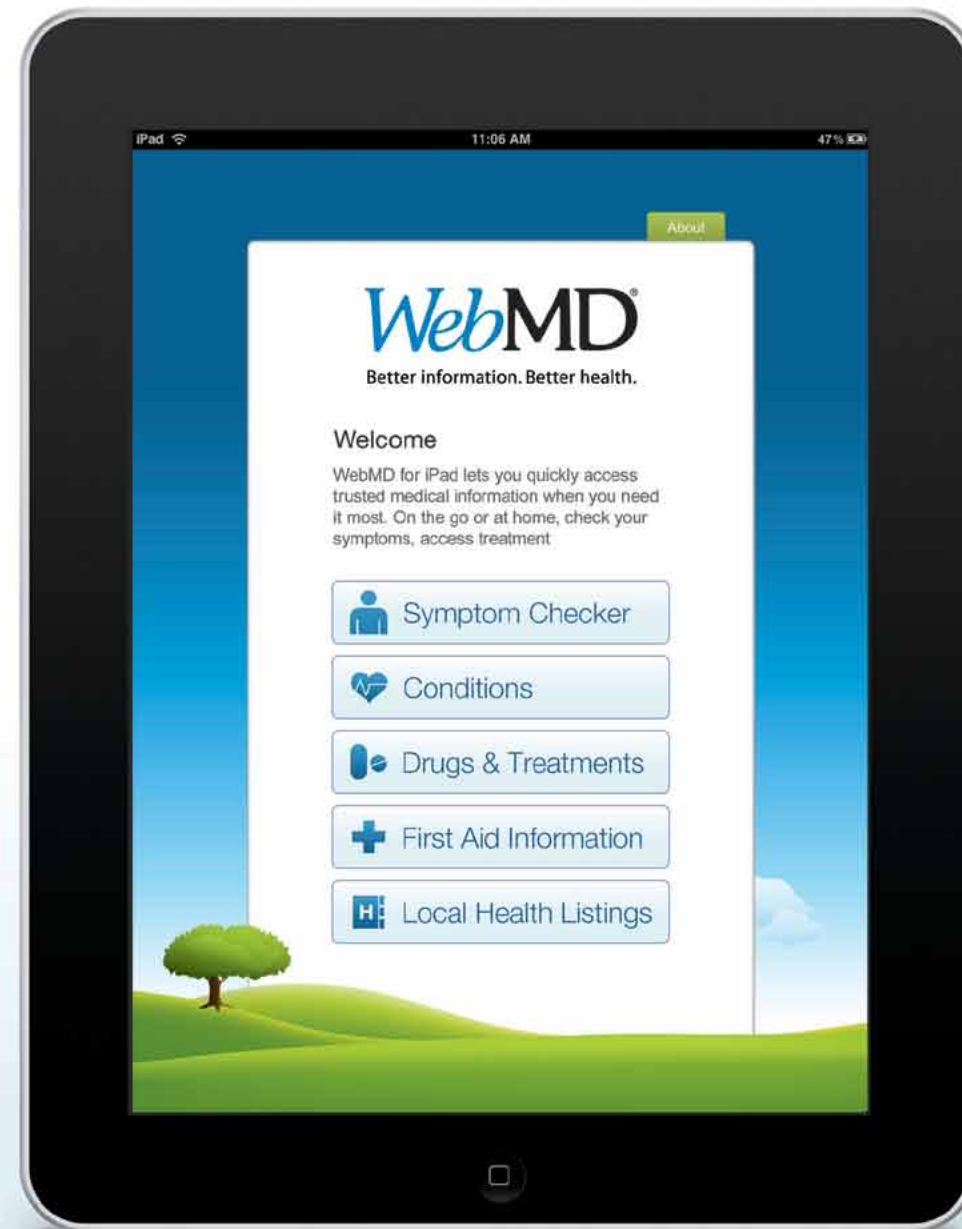
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