

**SCAD: HEART ATTACK THAT STRIKES YOUNG WOMEN** PAGE 39

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2017

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HOW

**Mayim  
Bialik**

**TAPS SCIENCE TO  
HELP GIRLS GROW UP  
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Spontaneous coronary artery dissection is responsible for 40% of heart attacks in women younger than 50. We look at the latest research.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES BANASIAK





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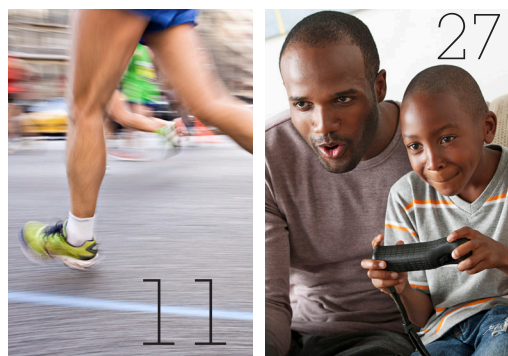
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**Correction:** In the March/April 2017 issue of *WebMD Magazine*, singer Brandy's brother Ray J was incorrectly listed as her husband. We regret the error.

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## On the Cover

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES BANASIAK





# May Is Mental Health Awareness Month



Mental health conditions affect about one in five Americans every year. So why is it still so hard to talk about? Although society has become more understanding and accepting of mental health issues, the stigma still exists.

Surrounding yourself with supportive people is one way to cope. Just ask this month's cover celebrity, Mayim Bialik, who has not only leaned on support groups herself but has worked to dispel myths about mental illness. And while her star power can certainly help get the message out, it doesn't hurt that *The Big Bang Theory* actor also happens to be a neuroscientist. In addition to her advocacy and

her acting, Bialik has just published her latest brainchild, *Girling Up*, a new book aimed at helping young girls understand what it's like to grow up from a neurological and psychological perspective.

While her book covers more than mental health, continuing to educate around this topic is one key way to help counter negative stereotypes. Read our story, "Big Brain Theory," on page 29.

*Kristy*

Kristy Hamman  
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on the App Store.

## INTRODUCING: THE PREGNANCY TIMELINE

Just in time for Mother's Day (and especially for moms-to-be), we've launched a new video series called the Pregnancy Timeline. Videos cover major milestones, from the moment you start to show that baby bump and the day you feel the first kick to those final weeks when you're feeling a little squeezed for space. Nutrition, sleep, weight gain, how your baby's growing, and labor and delivery are just a few of the videos you can view.

CHECK IT OUT AT  
[WEBMD.COM/PREGNANCY-TIMELINE](http://WEBMD.COM/PREGNANCY-TIMELINE).



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## FACTS &amp; STATS

## Top Skin Secrets

The skin is your body's biggest organ and its first line of defense. That makes it worthy of special care.

→ **Behind the Mask**  
Reading reviews or clinical research can help you find effective skin care products.

0.5 mm

Thickness of the skin on your eyelids—the thinnest-skinned part of your body and one of the most wrinkle-prone areas. Your heels have the thickest skin, at 4 mm.

21

square feet

Amount of skin that covers your entire body. Skin is the protective covering that keeps out germs and helps you stay cool in summer and warm in winter.

50,000

Number of skin cells you shed every minute, as your skin constantly renews itself.

\$121 billion

Amount of money people around the world spend on skin care products. Americans account for almost \$11 billion in annual skin care product sales.



## IN THE NEWS

# An Unfamiliar Foe



**COLLEEN PARETTI**  
Editorial Director  
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In the popular imagination, younger women and heart attacks just don't go together. But in the annals of medicine, not to mention doctors' offices across the country, a little-known type of heart attack is now attracting more attention—even as patients are still often misdiagnosed. "For the past 100 years," says one of our experts, "we've been missing it." Spontaneous coronary artery dissection, SCAD for short, accounts for 40% of heart attacks in women younger than 50; the average age is 42. Unlike the more familiar plaque buildup in arteries that leads to many heart attacks, SCAD starts with a tear in an artery that can block blood flow. Men can get SCAD too, but women far outnumber them for reasons doctors don't yet understand. While research continues, check out our story "Sneak Attack" (page 39) to discover what researchers do know about this disease—and how SCAD patients use social media to connect survivors, trade information, and support one another. — *Colleen*



## Bacteria to the Rescue?

### TOXIC BACTERIA FROM THE SEA

are now an effective treatment for some types of prostate cancer. The bacteria, which live in darkness deep in the ocean, are poisonous only when exposed to light. Doctors inject a drug containing the marine microorganisms into the prostate, then activate the medication with lasers. The bacteria unleash their toxic effects and destroy the cancer cells.

SOURCE: The Lancet

# 6 in 10

**NUMBER OF AMERICANS**  
who are satisfied with their  
health care costs.

SOURCE: Gallup



## INTRODUCING PEANUTS

Some babies—those with severe eczema or egg allergies—are much more likely to develop peanut allergies. Now the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease has new recommendations to help prevent peanut allergies. After an allergy specialist gives parents the green light, they can introduce peanuts to their baby by 4 to 6 months of age if they've started solid foods.

SOURCE: Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology



**STAY ACTIVE, MADISON!**

Madison, Wisconsin, is the best U.S. city for an active lifestyle, followed by Boise, Idaho, and Scottsdale, Arizona, according to a new analysis. The worst of the 100 cities considered? Memphis, Tennessee. The top-ranked cities had lots of affordable gyms, parks, and other recreation facilities.

SOURCE: WalletHub

3.1

**MILLION**

Number of U.S. adults who have inflammatory bowel disease. That's three times as many as scientists previously believed.

SOURCE: JAMA

## iPad vs. Eye Patch

Researchers have developed an iPad game that works better than an eye patch to correct lazy eye in children. In a new study, 28 children with lazy eye either wore an eye patch for two hours a day or spent one hour five days a week playing the game wearing special glasses that required them to use both eyes. After two weeks, the game players saw more improvement in their vision than those wearing eye patches.

SOURCE: JAMA



## WEEKEND WORKOUTS

**ONLY HAVE TIME FOR** exercise on the weekend? That may put you at greater risk of injury, but weekend-only workouts are better than nothing. In a study of 63,591 people age 40 and up, "weekend warriors" who crammed the recommended 150 weekly minutes of physical activity into

two days got the same health benefits as those who spread their exercise out over the week. They were 30% less likely than non-exercisers to die for any reason during nine years of follow-up. They also had lower risk of death from cancer or heart disease.

SOURCE: JAMA

**COSTS FOR KIDS**

Health care spending for kids in the U.S. has hit \$233.5 billion. That's up from \$149.6 billion in 1996. Treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is among the top expenses.

SOURCE: JAMA



# 3.5

**BILLION**

Number of adults who have high blood pressure worldwide. Their ranks have steadily increased during the last 25 years.

SOURCE: JAMA

## THE TAO OF TAU

### A MAJOR FOCUS OF ALZHEIMER'S

research is to find a way to detect the disease before irreversible brain damage occurs. Tau protein builds up in the brains of people with Alzheimer's but is difficult to test. Chilean researchers have now devised a test that can detect tau in blood platelets. A study of 53 people with Alzheimer's and 37 healthy people confirmed that those with Alzheimer's have higher levels of tau in their blood. The researchers hope this could lead to a simple, inexpensive blood test for earlier diagnosis.

SOURCE: *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*



## Bias Starts Early

As early as preschool, children can learn social bias through nonverbal cues. In an experiment, preschoolers watched a video with an adult actor demonstrating a nonverbal preference for either a woman in a red shirt or a woman in a black shirt.

Later, when the preschoolers saw photos of the women and were asked whom they liked better, they were more likely to choose the woman who got preferential treatment in the video. They were also more likely to emulate the preferred woman and to prefer a woman introduced as her best friend.

SOURCE: *Psychological Science*

## NAP TIME

In a study of 2,974 Chinese people age 65 and older, those who took a nap for 60 to 90 minutes after lunch every day had better brain function than those who took shorter naps, longer naps, or didn't nap at all.

Source: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*





## IN TUNE

## Sound Mind

Whether you prefer country, rock, classical, or hip-hop, music is good for your brain

**YOU KNOW THE FEELING** you get when you hear a favorite song or medley—that undeniable urge to move your feet, tap out rhythm, even burst into song? Music has a powerful ability to improve mood—especially when you engage with it. Research finds that people who go to concerts feel happier and have lower levels of stress hormones. Music might also do wonders for memory. In a recent study, older adults who complained of memory problems reported better mental performance after participating in a music listening program.

—STEPHANIE WATSON

→ **Listen Up**  
Research shows music helps lower stress and boosts your mood.



➔ Search for **7 Things Every Runner Should Know**, a video on WebMD.com.

## FITNESS SMARTS

# Shoe Shine

If you're a runner, you can say goodbye to your old-school kicks. New technology has transformed running shoes from one-size-fits-all to just-right-for-you.



➔ **Tech Trot**  
Running shoes are now smarter and soon may predict injuries.



**STEWART SANDERS,**  
DIRECTOR OF THE  
SHARP REES-STEALY  
RUNNING CLINIC

RUNNING SHOE TECHNOLOGY IS MOVING AHEAD AT lightning speed—blink and you might miss it. Puma recently partnered with BMW to create the X-Cat DISC, a running shoe with the same material used in its high-tech, fabric-covered concept car. Not to be outdone, New Balance introduced a high-performance shoe with a midsole crafted on a 3-D printer. Physical therapist Stewart Sanders explains some of the most promising innovations.

## HOW THEY WORK

At the top of Sanders' list: 3-D printer technology, which New Balance used on its Zante Generate shoe.

Midsoles engineered with 3-D printing provide a running surface that's more durable and has better shock absorption than traditional midsoles, says Sanders. In the future, these types of shoes may be tailored to your personal running style. "The potential for customization is appealing," he says. "It will allow people to have shoes that are specific to their foot structure and running mechanics."

He's not the only one who's optimistic. "Other companies, such as Adidas, Nike, and Under Armour, are following suit with 3-D technology," Sanders says.

## BIOFEEDBACK

Also on Sanders' list: biofeedback. Just as your wearable tech gives you the 411 on heart rate, pace, and GPS location, an electric sensor in your shoe sends details about your biomechanics—like how your foot interacts with the ground—to your smartphone.

The technology is in its infancy. "Nike has a GPS pod that will provide info on basic things like pace and distance," Sanders says. He predicts it will get better, sensing dynamics like impact and force to help you optimize training and prevent injury.

## Tailor Made

DON'T TAKE SHORTCUTS WHEN IT COMES TO FINDING THE OPTIMAL RUNNING SHOE, SAYS PHYSICAL THERAPIST **STEWART SANDERS**

### GO LIGHT

"Choose a lightweight shoe with ample space in the toe box. This helps your toes spread out and takes stress off your bones and joints."

### AIM LOW

"Avoid high, thick cushioning or a large heel-to-toe drop. Less height in the heel leads to a better strike pattern."

### FIT YOUR FEET

"Consider your foot structure. If you have low arches, try a stability shoe. If you have high arches, pick a neutral-cushion shoe."

### BUY LATE

"Try shoes on late in the day or post-activity, when your feet have more blood flow, or you'll end up with shoes that feel tight during runs."

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→ Search for **How Much Do You Know About Semen?** a quiz on WebMD.com.

REVIEWED BY *Sheldon Marks, MD*  
WedMD Medical Reviewer



→ **Save Up**

Once thawed, frozen sperm can swim just as well as fresh.

MEN'S HEALTH

## Freeze the Future

You may be able to father children now, but disease, injury, and other factors can change that. Fortunately, men have options—they can take their sperm to the bank.

A NUMBER OF CIRCUMSTANCES CAN MOTIVATE MEN TO SAVE SPERM samples for future use. Occasionally, men who opt for a vasectomy freeze some sperm before the procedure just in case they want it later. Men in the military or other dangerous occupations may bank their sperm in case of an injury that would harm their fertility. Most often, though, the need to preserve sperm arises after a cancer diagnosis, because radiation and chemotherapy can kill the cells that produce sperm.

“One of the saddest things I see is a man who had a toxic therapy to cure cancer that left him infertile, and his doctor never discussed this possibility with him before treatment,” says urologist Edmund Sabanegh, MD, director of the Center for Male Fertility at the Cleveland Clinic. “If you are about to undergo any medical treatment, ask your doctor if it may hurt your fertility. If there’s any question, have your doctor refer you to a fertility specialist to get that question answered for you.”

Sperm can be banked by anyone old enough to produce sperm, which usually starts around age 13. Before banking, you will need to abstain from ejaculating for at least three days to be able to produce a sizeable sample. You masturbate into a sterile container at a clinic or at home, and then the staff will analyze your sperm.

Men with a healthy number of sperm normally need to produce one to two

samples; if your sperm counts are low, you may have to provide five or six, says Sabanegh.

The sample is mixed with liquid nitrogen to freeze it, a process called cryopreservation. Sperm bank staff then thaw a very small specimen to test whether the sperm survived freezing. “On average you’ll lose about 50% of the viable sperm in a freeze,” says Sabanegh, who adds that stored sperm swim or move normally just as well as fresh, even after being frozen for 20 years.

Sabanegh says that insurance companies will likely pay for the procedure when it’s done for fertility preservation during cancer treatment. Fees vary depending on the facility you choose, but if your insurance does not cover sperm banking, expect to pay about \$500 initially and \$400 more each year to cover storage costs, which include monitoring via computer plus staff, security, and backup storage if necessary.

BY THE NUMBERS

5%

Percentage of men who qualify as sperm donors, based on family health history, sperm analysis, genetic testing for disease, and other factors.

70,354

Number of babies born in 2014 as a result of artificial reproductive technology, such as in vitro fertilization, according to the CDC.

150

Number of children fathered by a single sperm donor, according to a *New York Times* report on increasingly large donor sibling groups.

50%

Percentage of cases in which the causes of a man’s infertility remain unknown.

WORK WISE

## Go Green

Want to be a better employee? Tweak your office space to become more productive and healthier—at work and at home.



A RECENT STUDY SUGGESTS THAT PEOPLE WHO WORK IN “GREEN” buildings—defined as environmentally responsible construction that uses sustainable materials—think better in the office, sleep better when they get home, and are happier and more productive. Workers in these buildings also reported 30% fewer health issues, such as headaches and eye and respiratory infections.

So far, so good for those working in green buildings, but what about everyone else? Try these tips to make your workspace greener—and boost your own health and happiness.

**Unplug your electronics when not in use.**

“Studies have found that electromagnetic activity affects your circadian rhythms, or sleep patterns,” says Aly Cohen, MD, founder of TheSmartHuman.com and co-editor of *Integrative Environmental Medicine*. “Other things can help, too, like turning off your cell phone at work and using your desk phone.”

**Turn off the lights.**

A recent study found that too much exposure to artificial light was linked to premature aging, as well as a loss in muscle mass and an increased risk for osteoporosis. “If you have a window, open the shades to get as much natural light as possible,” says Cohen.

**Clean your air.**

Buildings with poor ventilation or air pollution are linked to respiratory infections, headaches, and even depression. “Take frequent walks to get fresh air, when possible,” says Cohen. “Or invest in a portable air purifying machine.” You can also decorate your office with plants known for their air-cleaning capabilities like money plant, mother’s tongue, and areca palm.

**Dust often.**

Some 95% of dust in homes and workspaces contains toxic chemicals, according to a new study. “Chemicals in everything from cleaning supplies to office furniture to copier chemicals can break down and are found in the dust that we touch and breathe in on a daily basis,” says Cohen. Wipe down everything in your office with a damp cloth (using water only). If you have an office cleaning crew, leave non-toxic cleaning supplies for them to use in your work space.

BY THE NUMBERS

75%

Percentage of the world’s population exposed to artificial light at night, which health experts believe may affect people’s circadian rhythms.

26%

Percentage by which green building workers outperformed other employees on cognitive tests.

10

Number of harmful chemicals in indoor dust, according to researchers at George Washington University.



## MIND MATTERS

# The Quiet Ones

They're not shy or rude. Introverts are hard-wired to seek tranquility and pull away from the center of the crowd.



THEY LEAN AGAINST THE WALL AT THE PARTY—IF THEY GO TO THE PARTY at all—leaving some to wonder if they are arrogant or maybe just shy. Often misunderstood, introverts may seem unusual, but these quieter members of our species are not so rare. Introverts account for about half the U.S. population, and their distinctive personalities help maintain a delicate balance.

“For that party to work, where the introverts are against the wall, you need both introverts and extroverts,” says Bernardo J. Carducci, PhD, director of the Shyness Research Institute at Indiana University Southeast. “If you had only extroverts, it would be a loud mess.”

## THE INTROVERT BRAIN

An introvert is not necessarily shy, nor is a shy person by definition introverted. When shy people avoid social interactions, it's because they are afraid or lack the confidence to participate. “They want to be in the mix,” says Carducci. “They just don't know how.”

If an introvert, on the other hand, is leaning against the wall at a party,

that's exactly where she wants to be. “They prefer less noise and less arousal because their brain is different,” says Carducci.

Tests of electrical activity in the brain show that the introvert brain is more sensitive to noise and other stimulation than the extrovert brain. Introverts may also process more sensory information per second than extroverts. The high noise level in the brain and rapid sensory overload might explain introverts' innate preference for smaller, more intimate social activities.

## A DELICATE BALANCE

Introverts, by nature, don't command attention, but they help maintain a crucial balance in society.

Extroverts tend to take more risks, while their quieter counterparts “step back, move a little more cautiously, and bring a more critical evaluation,” says Carducci. A society made up only of risk-takers or only of the risk-averse wouldn't function as well as one that includes both. Consider, for example, the cost of auto insurance if every driver were a risk-taking extrovert.

Extroverts also gravitate toward social jobs, like sales and leadership, while introverts do the quiet, often solitary, work of artists and researchers.

“You need the introvert to come up with the idea, and you need the extrovert to sell it,” says Carducci.

## 4 Lessons

SCIENCE REVEALS SOME FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT INTROVERTS AND EXTROVERTS.

### STIMULATION

Extroverts seek sensory stimulation. That makes them more likely to listen to loud music, prefer bright colors, smoke, and drink.

### CONFIDENCE

In a test of deductive reasoning, introverts got more correct answers but extroverts were more confident about their answers—even when they were wrong.

### MEMORY

Extroverts may have a stronger prospective memory—the ability to remember future events, such as plans to attend a meeting or pay a bill—than introverts.

### EVOLUTION

Personality traits, such as introversion and extroversion, may shift with age and changing life circumstances.



## SKIN CARE

## Spot Check

When it comes to detecting melanoma, full body skin exams are key

YOU SEE YOUR DOCTOR FOR a physical once a year and the dentist for a cleaning every six months, but what about a dermatologist for a skin check? Bruce Katz, MD, a clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center, says ask yourself a few questions: Does skin cancer (including melanoma) run in your family? Do you have a lot of moles on your body? Have any of your present moles changed in size, shape, or color? If the answer is “yes” to any of these questions, see a dermatologist for an annual full-body skin exam at any age—sooner if any moles have changed.

—AYREN JACKSON-CANNADY

→ **Protect and Prevent**

The best defense against skin cancer is prevention—protective clothing and SPF are your friends.



ANATOMY OF...

# Gel Nail Polish

Learn how this polish is tough as, well, nails

## TAKE YOUR TIME

Gel polish can last anywhere from 10 days to three weeks, so patience is required for removal. To avoid damaging nails, soak the polish in acetone and gently push it off with an orange stick.

## GET OUT OF JOINT

A liquid plastic contributes to the gel's flexibility and hardness. Different forms of the plastic are used as bone cement in hip and knee replacements.

## MIX WITH OIL

To bolster the staying power of gel polish, apply a few drops of cuticle oil each day. The moisture keeps the nail bed healthy and helps prevent the polish from peeling.

## THINK THIN

To ensure the polish completely cures, apply it in thin layers. This allows the light to penetrate the polish to harden each coat.

## DON'T BE TACKY

A residual tacky layer, or "inhibition layer," is left after the last coat is applied and cured. This is due to a reaction with oxygen and can be removed with a wipe soaked in alcohol to seal the polish.

## SEE THE LIGHT

While standard polish dries as solvents evaporate, gel polish cures with exposure to LED or UV light (depending on the formula). A photoinitiator in the gel reacts to the light, causing the molecules to crosslink and harden.







**JOSHUA ZEICHNER, MD**  
DIRECTOR OF COSMETIC  
AND CLINICAL  
RESEARCH, MOUNT  
SINAI HOSPITAL,  
NEW YORK CITY

EXPERT PICKS

# Pore-fection

Truth is, pores are here to stay (and they grow with age). But minimizing their appearance is easy with these dermatologist tips and product picks.



**1. SMOOTHING COMPANY**  
**Neutrogena Pore Refining Moisturizer**  
(\$16.99)

"This moisturizer contains a combination of salicylic acid, retinol, and vitamin C to help exfoliate dead cells from the skin surface that make pores stand out. At the same time, this lotion helps build collagen, which helps minimize the appearance of pores."

**2. PRIME TIME**  
**Dr. Brandt Pores No More Primer**  
(\$17)

"Combining anti-inflammatory tea tree oil with oil-absorbing flaxseed extract, this primer contains mineral microspheres that sit on the skin's surface and minimize the appearance of pores."

**3. FOAM, SWEET FOAM**  
**Aveeno Clear Complexion Foaming Cleanser**  
(\$7.99)

"This foaming cleanser with salicylic acid helps remove excess oil and dead cells that sit around the openings of your pores, making them look more prominent."

**4. OVERNIGHT SUCCESS**  
**SK-II Skin Refining Treatment**  
(\$160)

"This p.m. serum contains high concentrations of beta hydroxy acid that exfoliate dead cells from the skin's surface and minimize pores. It also is rich in pitera, an extract shown to help brighten dull complexions."

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.

➔ Search for the video  
The Truth About Your  
Pores at WebMD.com.



➤ Search for the article [How to Avoid Skincare Purchases You'll Regret](#) at WebMD.com.

BEAUTY SMARTS

# Shop Like a Dermatologist

When it comes to shopping for the best over-the-counter skin care, no one knows better than a dermatologist. Here are three skin doctors' strategies for buying skin care that delivers.



➔ **Skin Deep**  
The secrets behind good skin care products lie in the ingredients.

BY *Liesa Goins*

REVIEWED BY *Mohiba Tareen, MD*  
*WebMD Medical Editor*

THE SCOOP

## What Can I Do About Back Breakouts?

CHECK OUT THESE FOUR DOS AND DON'TS FOR PREVENTING BACK BREAKOUTS, SAYS **ELIZABETH TANZI, MD**, ASSISTANT CLINICAL PROFESSOR OF DERMATOLOGY AT GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER.



**DO**  
In the shower, use an acne-fighting salicylic acid cleanser on one day, then alternate with a blemish-banishing benzoyl peroxide wash on the other.

**DON'T**  
Sit in sweaty workout clothes. Instead, shower off immediately after a gym session to prevent clogging pores on your back (and elsewhere).

**DO**  
If you can't shower after sweating, use glycolic acid-containing pads or a glycolic acid-based acne toner to wipe down the acne-prone area on your back.

**DON'T**  
Wear tight activewear all day long, even if they are not sweaty. The tight fabric obstructs hair follicles and sweat glands and can lead to irritation and breakouts.

PART OF A DERMATOLOGIST'S JOB IS TO SAMPLE PRODUCTS—WHETHER they're only available in a doctor's office, prestige offerings at high-end department stores, or among the many options that line drugstore shelves. Just like you, the pros have to wade through the packaging and claims to decide what they should recommend to their patients, along with what to use themselves.

"Like everyone else, I hear the siren call of beauty products when I walk into a drugstore," says Papri Sarkar, MD. "I'm lucky that being a dermatologist helps me narrow down the options and be a more informed shopper."

Sarkar and two fellow dermatologists reveal how they decide which products deserve a spot in their carts.



**PAPRI SARKAR, MD**  
BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS, SECRETARY OF THE NEW ENGLAND DERMATOLOGICAL SOCIETY

SHOPPING APPROACH

Cast a wide net. "I shop everywhere because I really like trying new things. Right now I'm exploring Asian beauty products because they have innovative formulas and approaches."



**PRODUCT PICK**  
**CERAVE Therapeutic Hand Cream** (\$7)  
"I'm a huge fan of the ceramides in this hand cream—they restore the skin barrier and keep moisture in the skin. Plus, it's not greasy and is affordable."  
**Carina Wasko, MD**  
*assistant professor of dermatology, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston*

**PRODUCT PICK**  
**THERASEAL Hand Protection** (\$27)  
"The active ingredient in this product is dimethicone, which lacks the greasiness of many formulas. It's also alcohol- and fragrance-free. I recommend applying it to damp skin to lock in moisture."  
**Vail Reese, MD**  
*dermatologist, San Francisco*

**PRODUCT PICK**  
**AVENE XeraCalm Balm** (\$32)  
"This is a truly preservative-free preparation that is incredibly smooth and moisturizing. It's a great option to use during the day."  
**Peter Lio, MD**  
*assistant professor of clinical dermatology, Northwestern School of Medicine, Chicago*

RECENT FINDS

- **Simple Cleansing Micellar Water** (\$7.79) "It's gentle but has enough power to remove makeup."
- **Pixi Glow Peel Pads** (\$22) "These are strong (they contain 20% glycolic acid), so I use them once a week to treat sun damage on my chest."
- **Blossom Jeju Brightening Vitamin Essence Petal Mask** (\$6) "The hydrating camellia oil and hyaluronic acid made me pick up this sheet mask."
- **Aquaphor Advanced Therapy Healing Ointment** (\$4.96) "This is great for stubborn dry patches of skin and dry, cracked lips."



**REBECCA TUNG, MD**  
LA GRANGE PARK, ILLINOIS, CHAIR OF THE DIVISION OF DERMATOLOGY AT LOYOLA UNIVERSITY, CHICAGO

SHOPPING APPROACH

You can't go wrong buying the basics—cleanser, moisturizer, sunscreen. And do your research. "Reading reviews

about the product or looking for clinical research can help you find the most effective option."

RECENT FINDS

- **CeraVe Hydrating Cleanser** (\$8.38) "Since I have extremely sensitive skin, I try to stick with fragrance-free products with a minimum of preservatives."
- **La Roche Posay Anthelios 50 Mineral Ultralight Fluid Sunscreen** (\$33.50) "I'm vigilant about sunscreen no matter the weather. This blends easily and is water resistant."
- **Neutrogena Makeup Remover Towelettes** (\$6.00) "I stock up on these for my post-exercise cleanse. They're fragrance-free and remove sweat that can cause an acne flare."
- **RoC Retinol Correxion Deep Wrinkle Night Cream** (\$25.79) "Retinols are mild but effective products to reverse the early signs of aging."
- **Olay Eyes Eye Lifting Serum for Sagging Skin** (\$31.99) "Peptides are great for the thin skin around the eyes because they help rebuild collagen."

*Continued on page 20*

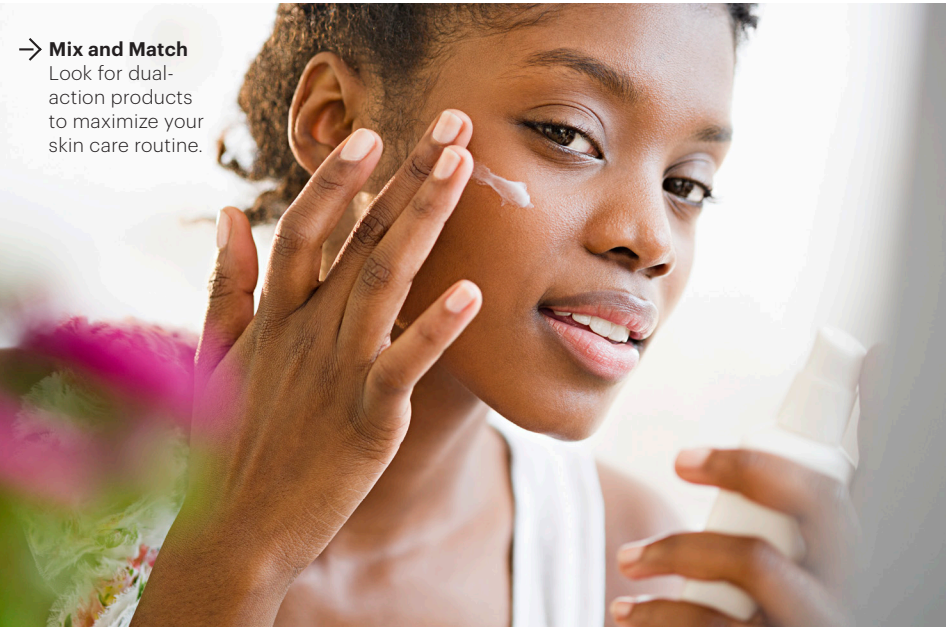
## Aisle Do

HAND CREAMS: WAVE GOODBYE TO CRACKED, DRY SKIN WITH THESE DERMATOLOGIST FAVORITES THAT KEEP YOUR HANDS NOURISHED AND SMOOTH.

GETTY IMAGES; ILLUSTRATIONS: ULI KNORZER



Continued from page 19



→ **Mix and Match**  
Look for dual-action products to maximize your skin care routine.

SHOPPING APPROACH

Look for multitasking products. “Our skin has needs, like sun protection and hydration, and wants, like anti-aging and damage repair. Whenever possible, it’s nice to have the needs and wants overlap.”



MATT MAHLBERG, MD  
MEDICAL DIRECTOR,  
COLORADO CENTER  
FOR DERMATOLOGY  
AND SKIN SURGERY,  
DENVER

RECENT FINDS

- **Cetaphil Daily Facial Moisturizer with SPF 50+** (\$15.49) “The UVA and UVB rays are more intense in Denver’s high altitude. This is gentle, non-comedogenic, and provides much-needed protection.”
- **Neutrogena Razor Defense Shave Gel** (\$5.79) “This is my favorite drugstore option—it has a very rich lather and helps prevent razor bumps.”
- **Neutrogena Oil-Free Acne Wash** (\$8.29) “Salicylic acid is great for clearing pores and minimizing blackheads. It just needs to be rinsed well or it can dry out the skin.”
- **Differin Gel Acne Treatment** (\$11.59) “To treat and prevent acne, this is a wonderful topical retinoid that only recently became available over-the-counter after years of being prescription.”

GETTY IMAGES; ILLUSTRATION: ULI KNORZER

Dirty Secret

“I SLEEP IN MY CONTACTS.  
HOW BAD IS THAT?”

—Zaina Al-Mohtaseb, MD,  
assistant professor of ophthalmology, Baylor  
College of Medicine, Houston

MICROBES LOVE CONTACTS

Protein and germs land on your lenses all day, so when you shut your eyes to sleep, microscopic organisms have a fertile feeding ground. Plus, you’re at risk for microabrasions—the perfect gateway for infection-causing bacteria, fungi, or even amoebas.

Read Your Labels

FOR THE MOST EFFECTIVE DRUGSTORE PRODUCTS, CHECK THE INGREDIENTS LIST FOR ONE—OR MORE—OF THESE, SAYS DERMATOLOGIST **REBECCA TUNG**

ANTIOXIDANTS

Look for free-radical fighters like vitamin E, green tea, and niacinamide. These are great counterparts to sun protection to ensure you cover your bases against UV damage.

HYALURONIC ACID

For instant hydration, look to this powerful moisturizer. It’s lightweight and instantly plumps skin.

HYDROXY ACIDS

Both alpha and beta hydroxy acids are go-to ingredients for light exfoliation and to stimulate collagen growth. Look for salicylic, glycolic, and lactic acids.

PEPTIDES

These amino acids help rebuild collagen to improve the appearance of wrinkles. This is especially effective in the area around the eyes.

RETINOL

This vitamin A derivative has proven benefits, including exfoliation, acne control, and pigment



lightening—it’s one of the best all-around anti-agers.

UV PROTECTION

Drugstore shelves are packed with effective and affordable sun protection. Look for broad-spectrum formulas that shield against both UVA and UVB rays.

“Look for free-radical fighters, like *vitamin E*, *green tea*, and *niacinamide*.”

YOU RISK SIDE EFFECTS

The long-term implications are serious, including severe corneal ulcers, scarring of the cornea, and conjunctivitis (also called pink eye). In some severe cases, blindness is an outcome. It just takes one bad infection to change your life.

SWITCH BRANDS

Some lenses are FDA approved for extended wear, but that doesn’t rule out the risk for infection. Daily lenses are a good option since you throw them out at the end of the day and put in a fresh pair in the morning.



## STRESS LESS

## The Case for Downtime

Exams, field trips, and final projects—it's the school end-of-year rush. Help your kids (and yourself) ease the pressure and move into summer.

→ **Get on Board**  
Unstructured time counteracts the information overload that can happen at the end of the school year.

**MANAGING STRESS IS IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS.** Stress can affect kids' mood and behavior—and even suppress their immune system, says Bobbi Wegner, PsyD, clinical health psychologist at Boston Behavioral Medicine and Harvard Graduate School of Education. Make time to eat meals as a family, which research shows can reduce stress and depression in kids, and limit screen time. But most important, let your kids be bored. "Kids need a 1-to-1 ratio of structured time versus downtime," says Wegner. "When they're bombarded with new information and stimuli [think final-exam cramming], they need downtime to integrate the information in their brain. Boredom also sparks the creative process, which will help them as future thinkers in school and at work."

—COLLEEN OAKLEY





PREGNANCY

## Skin Safe

**Baby-proof your beauty products. Skin care is important during pregnancy, but some acne remedies, hair removers, and other skin treatments aren't safe for your growing baby.**

YOU CAREFULLY MONITOR EVERYTHING THAT GOES INTO YOUR BODY during these nine-or-so months. But are you equally careful about what goes onto it? Skin creams and lotions can make their way into your bloodstream to your baby, especially if you use them every day.

Though most skin products aren't harmful, "you always want to be extra cautious," says Susan Goodlerner, MD, a dermatologist with the California Skin Institute and clinical associate professor at Harbor/UCLA Medical Center. Check with your doctor about a few products in particular.

### ACNE CREAMS

When pregnancy hormones lead to breakouts, glycolic acid and topical antibiotics (clindamycin and erythromycin) are fine to use, but stay away from vitamin A. "We don't recommend that women who have acne use topical vitamin A [Retin-A] by prescription, because oral versions of these medications have been found to cause birth defects," Goodlerner says. Ask your doctor before using salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide, which haven't been well studied in pregnant women.

### HAIR REMOVERS & SKIN LIGHTENERS

Go back to your razor for a few months, especially during the critical first four weeks of your pregnancy when your baby's organs are developing. Although hair-removal creams and bleaches don't appear to harm growing babies, it's worth being wary.

The ingredient hydroquinone in skin lighteners could be problematic because your skin absorbs it in large amounts, and it hasn't been safety tested in pregnancy, Goodlerner says.

### SUNSCREEN

Pregnancy hormones make your skin especially sensitive to the sun. You can safely use sunscreen while you're pregnant, but one ingredient—oxybenzone—could be risky because it mimics the effects of estrogen.

"If you want to be extremely safe and avoid chemicals, you can use a non-chemical sunscreen with zinc oxide and titanium dioxide," Goodlerner says. These ingredients block the sun's rays.

## Pregnancy Skin Care

YOUR PREGNANCY GLOW COMES ALONG WITH A FEW BUMPS AND LINES YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE EXPECTED. HERE'S HOW TO TREAT THEM.

### STRETCH MARKS

To minimize these red, pink, or purple streaks, don't gain more weight than your doctor recommends. Stretch marks should fade after you deliver.

### MASK OF PREGNANCY

Prevent these dark patches on your nose, forehead, and chin by protecting your skin from the sun. Wear sunscreen and a broad-brimmed hat whenever you go outside.

### ACNE

Head off acne by washing your face each day with a gentle cleanser. Avoid greasy or irritating cosmetics and hair care products that can trigger breakouts.

### PREGNANCY LINE

This dark line down the center of your belly—called linea nigra—should vanish soon after your baby's birth.



→ Search for the **WebMD Baby App** at [WebMD.com](https://www.webmd.com) to track growth and capture your baby's special moments.

## BABY

## Weight Class

Parents can establish good habits during infancy to set up a child for a healthy weight later on



→ **Feeding Freedom**  
Let your baby decide how much to eat of the healthy foods you provide.

*"Babies are born knowing when they're hungry and when they're full."*

WHEN HEALTH EXPERTS REFER TO CHILDHOOD OBESITY AS an epidemic, they don't exaggerate. Obesity rates in children have more than doubled over the last three decades. Many kids now have the same health complaints as their grandparents—heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

To win this battle, parents should start waging the war early, says Jennifer Savage Williams, PhD, interim director of the Center for Childhood Obesity Research at Penn State University. "When women are overweight or obese in pregnancy, their babies are at increased risk for labor and delivery complications, as well as being bigger when they're born," she says.

Research finds chubby babies are likely to grow into chubby preschoolers and obese adults. Early intervention can help your child stay at a healthy weight.

### LET BABY TAKE THE LEAD

"Babies are born knowing when they're hungry and when they're full," Savage Williams says. Don't push the bottle or use food to soothe her tears. As long as your child's growth is tracking normally, let her lead feedings.

"The parent's job is to provide healthy options—breast milk and/or formula and appropriate foods as they transition to solids. But it's the baby's job to decide how much of those foods they eat," says Savage Williams. Putting your child in control will teach her how to self-regulate food as she grows.

### EARLY TO BED

Children who don't sleep enough each night are more likely to be overweight. The timing of sleep matters, too. Late bedtimes (past 9 p.m.) are linked to excess weight. "A later bedtime might result in more night milk feedings," Savage Williams says. She suggests putting your baby to bed by 7 or 8 p.m.

### PRIORITIZE PLAYTIME

Infants can't lift weights or join a soccer team, but they can improve their motor skills by engaging in active play. "Babies learn best from their parents. Give your baby time to interact and play—don't just stare at your phone," she adds.

## Solid Start

NUTRITIONAL SCIENTIST **JENNIFER SAVAGE WILLIAMS**, PhD, OFFERS PARENTS TIPS FOR STARTING A BABY ON HEALTHY FOODS

### WAIT FOR SOLIDS

"We recommend that you start introducing solid foods at around 6 months but not before 4 months. Through the first year, breast milk or formula is the primary source of nutrition."

### MIX FLAVORS

"Expose babies to different flavors and textures. That sets the foundation when they're transitioning to table foods."

### TRY AGAIN

"Babies accept sweet and salty flavors from birth, but it might take five, six, or even 10 exposures, depending on the child's age, before they like one of the less-preferred flavors, like broccoli."

### DON'T PRESSURE

"Give them a taste or two. If they're spitting it out or giving you negative facial expressions, give them something they like and try the food again on another day."

→ Search for 7 Signs You Might Be  
a Helicopter Parent at WebMD.com.

## PARENTING

## Culture Club

Do you want your teen to set college goals? A study says skip the tutor and hit a museum together instead.



→ **Time Well Spent**  
Cultural activities help children see the value in education.

QUALITY TIME WITH YOU—NOT MORE STUDY TIME—IS MORE likely to motivate your tween to want to attend college. So says new research from the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom, based on an annual survey involving nearly 11,000 young people.

Researchers found that kids who engaged in cultural activities with their parents, such as visiting museums and galleries, going to concerts, and similar activities, were 14% to 20% more likely to consider college and other advanced studies to be important. In fact, this “cultural capital” appeared to be a bigger motivator for tweens’ college goals than achievement-oriented activities like homework clubs, tutoring, or extracurricular activities.

The study suggests that parents reconsider the priorities they set when their kids come home from school, says lead researcher Dimitra Hartas, associate professor in the Centre for Educational Studies. The home environment should be “a web of emotionally and intellectually charged

*“Participating in cultural activities together gives you the opportunity to show your values in action.”*

relationships between parents and children rather than an extension of the school day.”

Quality cultural time with parents might raise kids’ aspirations toward college in a couple of ways, says parenting educator Rosalind Wiseman, author of a number of books focused on tweens and teens, including *Queen Bees and Wannabes*. “First, there is rule-following: The more time a child spends with you, the more they buy in to your expectations about going to school, assuming the relationship is good.

“But more important is passion-following, when the activities you pursue with your child help them explore their passion, develop a sense of belonging, and see the value in education. Participating in cultural activities together gives you the opportunity to connect and bond and show your values in action.”

It can be hard for some parents to resist the temptation to focus on academics, extracurriculars, and outward signs of success, says Wiseman. Recently, she asked a group of teachers who had adolescent children of their own to review every social media post they had made about their children for the past few months. Many were shocked to see that virtually every post focused on their children’s achievements: making the honor roll, getting the lead in the school play, winning the robotics competition.

“One parent of three children said that she didn’t realize she only posted about one child,” Wiseman says. “This exercise really helps you take a step back and learn about the nature of your relationship with your kids—and what you’re focusing on when you’re with them.”

## BY THE NUMBERS

69%

Percentage of 2015 U.S. high school graduates who went on to college.

57%

Percentage of U.S. young people ages 16–24 enrolled in high school or college.

20 million

Projected number of enrolled college undergraduates in the U.S. by 2025.

GETTY IMAGES



## BABY

# Little Boxes

A Finnish tradition helps lower the risk of sleep-related deaths, and it's coming to the U.S.



## → Safe Sleep

Comfy boxes help babies sleep in their parents' room.

BABY BOXES FIRST APPEARED IN FINLAND IN THE 1930s. SINCE THEN, THE idea spread to the U.K.—even the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge received one while expecting their first child. Now the trend is taking off in the U.S.

The boxes are an effective way to reduce the risk of infant death due to sleep-related causes, such as SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

The idea sounds almost too simple, but it's paid off. In Finland, the program helped the country achieve one of the lowest infant death rates in the world. In the U.S., SIDS is the leading cause of death in infants younger than 12 months old, claiming the lives of about 1,500 babies per year.

Each box is made of certified nontoxic cardboard and comes with a mattress and fitted sheet. Some versions also arrive with infant-care essentials like diapers, baby wipes, clothing, and more, though all objects should be removed when the baby is inside the box. Babies should always sleep on their back with no other items in the box, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

The AAP also says that the best place for a baby to sleep until 6 months of age is in the same room (but not the same bed) as his parents, which may reduce the risk of SIDS. The hope is that with this box, parents will have an easier time making that happen. Plus, because it's portable, it can also be used for naps and playtime.

One company in the U.S. now follows in the footsteps of the Finnish tradition of giving them away for free. After partnering with the New Jersey Child Fatality and Near Fatality Review Board, which found that 93% of SIDS deaths in the state were directly related to sleep environments, the Baby Box Co. plans to distribute 105,000 boxes to expectant parents in New Jersey in 2017. Similar programs are launching in Ohio, Minnesota, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and San Antonio, Texas, as well as parts of Canada. The company has plans to expand to more cities. (You can also buy a box online, starting at \$69.99.)

The catch: Parents have to pass an online education program on infant health and safety before they register for a box. After that, they have free access to a website, where they can find tips and advice for raising newborns.

→ Search for the article **ADHD and Video Games: Is There a Link?** on WebMD.com.

## KIDS' HEALTH

# Game On

Do your kids love video games? Our expert weighs in on some pros and cons, with parenting tips for the digital age.



→ **Team Up**  
Play video games with your kids, but be sure to limit the screen time for you both.



*"Parents need to teach their kids how to integrate technology in a healthy, balanced way."*

—JODI GOLD, MD  
PEDIATRIC  
PSYCHIATRIST

New research published in *Annals of Neurology* says kids' cognitive and motor skills may benefit from playing video games for one to two hours per week, but additional time leads to reduced social skills. Do you agree?

It's not always about how much screen time. If your child is using a device in a thoughtful, creative way—making an iMovie, designing a world in Minecraft, writing a blog—or if they are connecting with others through a social video game or app, then be more flexible with time limits.

**Should different kids have different rules?**

Excessive gaming is probably never good. You need to understand your child. Pay attention to their cues if they're on a single-shooter game and can't seem to shut it off. For some kids, playing for 30 minutes to unwind is fine; for others, it's not. If your child can't wrap it up or becomes more irritable, introduce set limits. Kids with attention deficit

hyperactive disorder are particularly vulnerable to the overstimulation of games. It's harder for them to turn them off and transition to other activities.

**What about parents' digital habits?**

Our habits profoundly influence children. Prior to age 10, kids' usage is directly proportional to parents' usage, research shows. Parents create the culture of the family, so we must model balance. During the tween years, kids develop their own relationship with technology.

**In your book, you refer to today's parents as "immigrants." Why?**

We're just learning to speak "tech," yet our children speak digital fluently. We grew up with paper books; now we go back and forth, and we're wary. Kids are excited about this new world and aren't afraid of it. Our goal is to help children navigate technology. To do that, we need to manage our fears.

As the author of *Screen-Smart Parenting*, where do you stand on kids playing video games?

If your child is on a single-player video game, that means he or she plays solo on a device in a possibly addictive way. It doesn't encourage interaction. For these types of games, I prefer a positive, organic reinforcement model. Say: "You can play for 15 minutes before the bus comes if you're ready for school. Or later, after you finish your homework." Kids must earn game time with a natural end.

## Digital Dos & Don'ts

WHETHER PLAYING VIDEO GAMES OR POSTING SELFIES ON INSTAGRAM, CHILDREN OF ALL AGES SHOULD FOLLOW THESE "DOABLE" RULES, SAYS JODI GOLD, MD

### TRUST BUT VERIFY

Kids under 12 should understand and follow parental restrictions and time limits, says Gold. Parents should supervise younger kids' game playing and screen time usage.

### SET AN EXAMPLE

Gold advises parents to model and teach balanced, healthy digital habits so when kids reach the tween and teen years they can manage technology on their own.

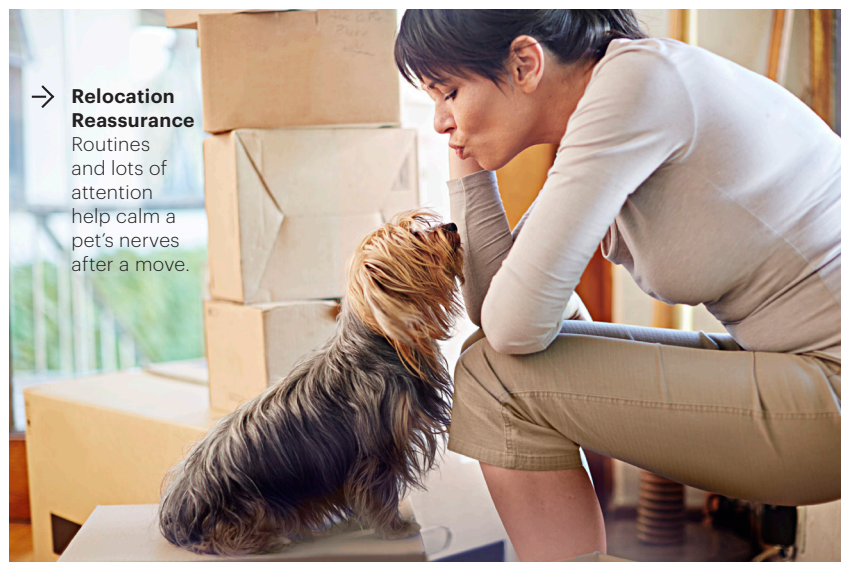
### LOG OFF EARLY

All kids and adults should avoid screen time for at least one hour before bedtime to allow the brain enough time to wind down.

### PRIORITIZE SLEEP

"Never let your kids sleep with any digital devices in their bedrooms," says Gold. "This goes for adults, too." Charge all devices in another room overnight."





➔ **Relocation Reassurance**  
Routines and lots of attention help calm a pet's nerves after a move.

## PETS

# Smart Moves

Going to a new home? Try these strategies to keep your pets stress-free during the transition to a different zip code.

MOVING CAN BE STRESSFUL FOR PETS, says Nicholas Dodman, DVM, professor emeritus at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, and their discomfort may start long before you unlock the door to your new home.

"Seeing boxes in the house and strangers coming in and out moving things can cause a lot of anxiety," says Dodman, author of *Pets on the Couch*.

Common signs of stress in dogs and cats include diarrhea or constipation and loss of appetite. Cats often hide under furniture or in closets when stressed, while nervous dogs may start chewing, barking, pacing, or licking compulsively, which can cause hair loss and sores. Make an appointment with your vet if symptoms persist for more than a few days, says

Dodman. Several anti-anxiety medications can help ease nervousness.

If you're moving across state lines, the American Veterinary Medical Association notes that many states require a health certificate from your veterinarian as proof that your pet is healthy and current on vaccinations.

To ease stress on moving day, Dodman suggests putting pets in a room with food, water, a bed, and toys and keeping the door closed. Confined dogs and cats can't slip out of a door propped open for the movers.

In the new home, maintain your pet's existing routines for feeding and walks. Dodman also suggests providing lots of attention, positive reinforcement, treats, and exercise to help pets feel more at ease.

## 3 Tips

**NICHOLAS DODMAN,**  
DVM, EXPLAINS  
HOW TO KEEP YOUR  
PET SAFE IN YOUR  
NEW HOME

### UPDATE ID

Make sure dogs and cats wear collars with ID tags, and update them with your new phone number, if needed.

### CONSIDER MICROCHIPPING

Since collars can slip off, Dodman advises having your vet place a microchip under your pet's skin for permanent identification.

### FIND A NEW VET

Be prepared for emergencies. Ask your current veterinarian for a recommendation, or locate the closest vet office in your new town.



# BIG BRAIN THEORY

Emmy-nominated actor & neuroscientist  
**Mayim Bialik** talks about brain science, her new book  
*Girling Up*, and fighting the stigma of mental health

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By **Gina Shaw**

Reviewed by **Hansa Bhargava, MD**  
WebMD Medical Editor

PHOTOGRAPHY: TJ MANOU







**“Sheldon falls in love with [my character]** because of her. I think it’s important to highlight that there are different kinds of females and different ways to be a woman, which is an important message for girls.”



**It’s probably safe to say** that only one top-rated television show features a real neuroscientist—not just someone who plays one on TV. For the past seven years, Mayim Bialik has starred as neurobiologist Amy Farrah Fowler, Sheldon Cooper’s “friend who’s a girl,

but not a girlfriend” (except now she is) on *The Big Bang Theory*, one of the highest-rated comedies on television.

But playing a scientist on TV isn’t much of a stretch for Bialik, who earned a PhD in neuroscience from the University of California-Los Angeles in 2008.

Now the Emmy-nominated actor brings that brain-science perspective to a new book for girls in the throes of tween and teen transitions. *Girling Up: How to Be Strong, Smart, and Spectacular*, out this month, uses kid-friendly insights about brain-body connections as a framework for girl-to-girl advice about everything from periods and body image to the ups and downs of friendships, first kisses, and budding sexuality. For young readers, it’s sort of like having a grown-up version of *Blossom*—Bialik’s popular TV character from the 1990s—plop down next to you on your bed and give you the straight scoop about what’s going on in your life.

### Grateful to be a late bloomer

The book got its inspiration from a piece Bialik wrote for her website, GrokNation—named after the verb meaning to understand something intuitively or by empathy—about what it’s like both to be a sexual “late bloomer” and play one on TV (after the episode of *The Big Bang Theory* in which Amy and Sheldon become intimate for the first time).

“I knew that lots of people had sex well before marriage, and I was the kid and teenager who just stayed confused about that for most of my young life,” Bialik wrote. “I was a very late bloomer, and I felt a lot of shame about that. Now that I am a grownup, I am grateful I was a late bloomer. It protected me from a lot, and if I could do my teen and young adult years again, I would not change a thing.”

Intrigued, Bialik’s editor asked if she would be interested in writing a book about sexuality from that point of view. But Bialik, who also wrote, *Beyond the Sling* and *Mayim’s Vegan Table*, was thinking bigger. “I proposed that we cover more than just sex or dating. I wanted to write a full exploration of what it’s like to grow from a girl to a woman, from a neurological and psychological perspective. I had an early medical book for kids teaching about how we grow and how our bodies work, and that was the inspiration for my book.”

This angle is a great way to help girls understand what’s going on as they grow physically and mentally,

says Catherine Steiner-Adair, a clinical psychologist and author of *Full of Ourselves: A Wellness Program to Advance Girl Power, Health and Leadership*, designed to strengthen middle-school girls’ self- and body esteem.

“When I work with girls, particularly when I talk about their social/emotional intelligence, I always include neuroscience, because it’s so important for girls and for parents to understand their own wiring and what’s happening in their brains,” says Steiner-Adair. “Reflective practices like these help girls—all kids, of course—really understand how they can better handle the challenges of growing up.”

For example, as Bialik explains in the chapter titled “How We Love,” when you start to get romantic feelings for someone, “the nervous system is sending information to the body to indicate that there is excitement going on. When that happens, adrenaline (a hormone) is sent out from the brain to increase heart rate and blood flow—that’s responsible for the blushing and rapidly beating heart and also the sweating.

“The ‘out of it’ feeling is caused by a sort of overload that the brain experiences when there is a lot of exciting input happening at once. If we’re focusing on someone’s beautiful clear blue eyes or their adorable freckles, our brain sometimes has a hard time also managing to multiply fractions or remember who was the prime minister of France in 1879.”

### From Blossom to STEM

Bialik praises writers on *The Big Bang Theory* for creating a character like Amy—a brilliant, offbeat woman who isn’t a traditional “romantic lead” but still has a romantic storyline. “They wanted her to be not androgynous, but not sexual,” she says. “Sheldon falls in love with her because of her. I think it’s important to highlight that there are different kinds of females and different ways to be a woman, which is an important message for girls, and something I talk about in the book.”

Bialik has been vocal about encouraging girls to pursue careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields, filming a series of videos for PBS’s *Nova* series *The Secret Life of Scientists*, and visiting schools with Texas Instruments (the maker of her favorite calculator) as a spokesperson for TI Education Technology. (Bialik also participated in an educational event with the cancer center City of Hope last fall.)

But she confesses she was a “late bloomer” as a scientist herself—in part because of outdated attitudes about girls and science.



“I was raised by English teachers with a real love for being intellectually involved, but I always thought science and math were for boys,” she says. “All the boys said so! They were subjects that did not come smoothly to me, so I assumed that I just wasn’t smart in those areas. It wasn’t until high school, when I was on *Blossom*, that I had a biology teacher who really taught me a love of science. Working one-on-one with a female mentor who was so passionate about the sciences really inspired me.”

After getting her PhD, Bialik didn’t pursue postdoctoral studies so she could stay home with her children, Miles, who is now 11 (and reviewed *Girling Up* to make sure Mom got the language right), and Frederick, now 8. “I had my first son while I was in graduate school, and I got pregnant with my second son right after I filed my thesis,” she says. “So for about five years I raised my kids, and I taught Hebrew and piano, neuroscience, and biology in the homeschool community here in Los Angeles.”

Bialik returned to acting, at least in part, for very practical reasons: “We were running out of health insurance. I figured if I could get a couple of jobs here and there, I could take care of my family. I was not planning on being cast full-time in the most popular comedy in America!”

Although Bialik and her husband, Michael Stone, divorced in 2012 after nine years of marriage, they still celebrate holidays together and are close to one another’s families. “I think I talk to my mother-in-law more than my husband does,” she says. “It took a lot of work individually and together to describe to ourselves what it would look like to put our kids’ needs first. It works well for our

boys—they’re not confused. They know we’re not getting back together. We’re all focused on what the children need.”

## Standing up for mental health

In 2016, Bialik partnered with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for a series of public service announcements in support of its #StigmaFree campaign, aimed at dispelling myths about mental illness and encouraging people to see the person first, not the mental health condition.

The issue is personal for her. “There’s suicide in my family—actually, my family history includes depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder. You name it, and it’s in my family somewhere,” she says. “So I am a direct recipient of NAMI’s services. I used to attend their support groups, and they provided a lot of help when my family member was ill.”

She made sure to devote attention to that topic in *Girling Up* as well. “I have a whole chapter devoted to the difficult things in life: major stressors, unusual events, what symptoms spell depression versus those that spell grief. I feel really passionately about educating young people about this—it’s so important that we talk about it.”

In addition to the book and her intense filming schedule for *The Big Bang Theory*, Bialik has plenty of other plans. “GrokNation takes up a lot of my time and energy, and I’m hoping to make that more of a charity platform,” she says. “I’d love to do other acting work for sure—I would love to be in a movie. And the rest of the time, I’m pleasantly governed by whatever my two children need.”

## How to Be #StigmaFree

**Mayim Bialik uses her celebrity to speak out about mental health issues**, but you don’t have to be on TV to make a difference. About one in five adults has some type of mental illness in a given year. Despite its prevalence, many people are still reluctant to talk about it, and negative stereotypes about mental illness can lead to further isolation and make people afraid to seek help. Here are three easy, but important, steps you can take to fight mental health stigma:

### Educate yourself and others.

“When you’re talking about changing behaviors for a condition that has been so historically shrouded in misunderstanding, the first step is learning,” says Katrina Gay, communications director for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Find out more about mental health conditions and how to support friends and loved ones with fact sheets at [NAMI.org](http://NAMI.org).

### Strive to see the person first, not the condition.

If your friend has diabetes or asthma, you don’t think of that chronic condition as defining them. The same should be true of depression or schizophrenia. Avoid using stigmatizing terms when referring to people with mental illness, like “crazy,” “wacko,” or “nutjob.”

### Speak out and get involved.

“May is mental health month, so it’s a great time to start the conversation,” says Gay. “Participate in a NAMI walk or another mental health awareness walk or event, or speak out on social media to show that this cause is important to you.”

PHOTOGRAPHY: TJ MANOU







→ **Soup's On**  
Miso, made with fermented soybeans, is often used as a base for soups.

GETTY IMAGES

# FERMENTATION EXPLORATION

FERMENTED FOODS ARE TRENDING WITH PLENTY OF BUZZ ABOUT THEIR HEALTH BENEFITS. **SOME SAY THEY HELP PREVENT DISEASE—BUT WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?**

A

T HER HOUSE IN PORTLAND, Oregon, art teacher Julia Himmelstein always has a batch of kombucha—a fermented sweet tea—brewing to satisfy her bottle-a-day habit. Himmelstein, 33, says both her paternal grandparents had colon cancer (though they died of other causes), and knowing that has spurred her interest in foods that might help prevent the disease. She's brewed kombucha for the past year and a half.

Kombucha is just one of many fermented foods and beverages growing in popularity around the country. Fermented foods made Whole Foods' top five food trend predictions of 2016, and an estimated one in four consumers drink kombucha, according to a 2015 food trend report from Mintel, a global marketing research firm that tracks the food industry. Kimchi, a condiment of pickled vegetables popular in Korea, is now on three times as many restaurant menus as it was in 2010.

In addition to kombucha and kimchi, other popular fermented foods include yogurt, sauerkraut, kefir (a milk beverage), and tempeh, made from soybeans.

People like Himmelstein hope—and some early research suggests—that the beneficial bacteria found in fermented foods may promote gut health by increasing healthy bacteria.

By MATT McMILLEN

Reviewed by BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD  
WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR



## ➔ HEALTHY ORGANISMS

“If you’re consuming a diet rich in fermented foods, you’re essentially bathing your gastrointestinal tract in healthy, food-related organisms,” says food scientist Robert Hutkins, PhD, a professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln whose lab focuses on the link between fermented foods and human health.

An estimated 100 trillion micro-organisms make a home in your gut, and they play a big, though not yet fully understood, role in your health. They influence metabolism and the immune system, and they may be involved in the development of colorectal cancer, obesity, and diabetes.

Foods can be fermented in a variety of ways. Vegetables, for example, are often fermented using a salt brine that encourages the proliferation of healthy bacteria while blocking the growth of harmful bacteria. The healthy bacteria break down components such as sugar and starch and convert them to lactic acid, which gives fermented foods their distinctive sour taste. The process also makes it easier for the body to digest and absorb the food’s nutrients.

And they do more, says Zhaoping Li, MD, PhD, a professor of medicine and chief of the division of clinical nutrition at UCLA: “Fermented foods produce many active compounds that are beneficial to us.” In some foods, for example, the chemical transformation that occurs during fermentation produces a variety of B vitamins those foods did not have before.

## ➔ EARLY RESEARCH

In a recent review of studies on fermented foods, Hutkins and his colleagues list many potential reasons to add them to your diet. Yogurt, for example, may help you avoid heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Kimchi may reduce the risk of diabetes and obesity.

Researchers have also studied fermented foods’ effect on gut problems. One study found that fermented milk eased symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, possibly due to beneficial changes in gut bacteria.

Other fermented foods appear to relieve the diarrhea that people often

develop while taking antibiotics. Antibiotics disturb the balance of gut bacteria, and diarrhea can follow. The probiotics—or healthy bacteria—in fermented foods appear to help restore that balance.

But there’s a caveat. So far, Hutkins says, much of the research shows only associations between consumption of fermented foods and improved health. Much more research needs to be done to prove a direct link. Until then, stud-

**“THE MORE I STUDIED THEM, THE MORE I BEGAN TO EXPERIMENT WITH THEM, AND NOW THEY ARE A PART OF MY FAMILY’S DIET.”**

ies on the health benefits are lagging behind the current interest in fermented foods, he adds.

Unfortunately, such research can be difficult to come by. The most conclusive studies require placebo controls. In drug trials, that means that some people in a study take a mock version of the drug while the rest take the drug being investigated. Researchers can then compare the outcomes of both groups to determine the drug’s safety and effectiveness. Neither the subjects nor the researchers know who takes what during the study.

While it’s easy to create a fake pill that looks like the real thing, the same can’t be said for fermented foods. Because they have distinctive flavors and textures, creating a placebo that could fool the study subjects would be difficult, if not impossible.

## ➔ A FERMENTED DIET

That said, if you want to add fermented foods to your diet, what’s the best approach? “Start small and see how your gut reacts,” says Kristin Kirkpatrick, a registered dietitian at the Cleveland Clinic.

Nutritionists say everyone is different, so ultimately it comes down to trial and error. Kirkpatrick says people who eat a single serving a day tend to have healthier gut bacteria. Los Angeles-based

registered dietitian Lori Zanini often recommends two to three servings of fermented foods per day.

You may develop gas, bloating, and perhaps some changes to your bowel habits as your stomach adjusts to these new foods in your diet. This should only last a few weeks.

“Listen to your body,” says Zanini. “If you have stomach discomfort, that would be a sign to tone down the amount you eat.”

Also, keep in mind that these foods will add calories to your diet—some more than others. Kombucha, for example, has a high sugar content, as do many varieties of flavored yogurts. If you make them a part of your daily diet, be sure you take the added calories into account, says Li.

Be aware, too, that fermented foods can be an acquired taste. Many have a

distinct sourness that people often find unfamiliar and, at first, off-putting. When Hutkins started his research into fermented foods more than 20 years ago, he was not a big fan of the flavor. That’s changed.

“The more I studied them, the more I began to experiment with them, and now they are a part of my family’s diet,” he says, listing kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, and soy sauce among his favorites.

You can also make your own fermented food, like Himmelstein, who in addition to kombucha has made kimchi and buttermilk. Classic guides like Sandor Katz’s *Wild Fermentation*, as well as numerous online tutorials, can teach you how.

Most people, however, rely on their local markets for fermented foods. Hutkins recommends that you head to the refrigerated section and seek out sauerkraut and other items there. Choose brands that say they contain live organisms. Jarred and canned fermented foods undergo heat processing, which kills most if not all of the beneficial bacteria, he says.

Finally, know that fermented foods are not a cure-all, Li says, and that eating them will not offset less healthy foods that you eat on a regular basis.

“Eat fermented foods as part of an overall healthy dietary pattern,” says Li. “That’s the right way to go.”

## ➔ Cucumbers and More

The Korean condiment kimchi, which can be made with cabbage, cucumbers or other vegetables, is now on three times as many menus as it was in 2010.

# FERMENTED FINDS

As fermented foods gain in popularity, you’ll see more of them on menus and supermarket shelves. Here’s a quick guide to some common varieties.

**KEFIR:** a fermented milk beverage with a sour taste falling somewhere between buttermilk and sour cream

**KIMCHI:** a traditional Korean dish of fermented vegetables, often made with cabbage, ginger, garlic, radishes, and other ingredients

**KOMBUCHA:** a slightly sparkly, sweetened fermented beverage made with green or black tea

**MISO:** a paste, originally from Japan, made with fermented soybeans, salt, and a grain like barley or rice, often used as a base for soups


**TEMPEH:** made from fermented soybeans and formed into wedges; has a mild, nutty flavor and often is used as a meat substitute

**SAUERKRAUT:** finely chopped fermented cabbage with a strong sour taste

**YOGURT:** thick and creamy and made from milk fermented with the addition of live bacteria cultures



# SNEAK ATTACK



**Spontaneous coronary artery dissection** is not new, but did you know it's **responsible for 40% of heart attacks in women younger than 50?** Find out what it is, who's at risk, and what the latest research says.

BY JENNIFER CLOPTON

REVIEWED BY

BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD  
WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR



**M**EGHAN SCHEIBER WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A 60-HOUR WORKWEEK WHEN the call came: Her 2-year-old son was sick at day care and needed to be taken home. Buried in work and deadlines at her medical billing job, Scheiber already felt stressed. As she worried about how to juggle everything, she suddenly felt as if she were going to pass out. Her chest and arms felt heavy. But the symptoms subsided a bit so she chalked it up to an anxiety attack or the start of the flu, let her husband pick up their son, and finished her workday before driving home.

When the heavy feeling came back the next morning after she'd carried laundry up and down three flights of stairs at home, Scheiber, then 33, knew she had to act: "I said to my husband, 'We have to go to the ER.'" By the time she got there, she was in the middle of a heart attack. She was admitted to the intensive care unit and had a second heart attack two days later.

Doctors diagnosed Scheiber with a spontaneous coronary artery dissection, or SCAD, a type of heart attack they now see increasingly in younger women.

"I asked my doctor if I would die," she recalls tearfully six years later, "and he said he didn't know what would happen."

#### What is SCAD?

Unlike heart attacks caused by a buildup of plaque in the arteries, a SCAD heart attack starts with a tear in an artery. This tear creates a flap or blood clot in the arterial wall that narrows the artery and blocks blood flow to the heart, leading to a heart attack.

Although SCAD causes a small percentage of heart attacks overall, the condition is responsible for 40% of heart attacks in

women younger than 50. And it's mostly happening to women—more than 90% of SCAD patients are female. Doctors don't know why men are not similarly affected.

"This is an important cause of heart attacks among younger people, and it has really only been in the past four or five years that our thinking on it has changed. For the past 100 years, we had been missing it," says Sharonne N. Hayes, MD, of the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, and one of the world's most renowned SCAD researchers.

People with SCAD are generally healthy and don't have common heart attack risk factors like smoking, diabetes, or being overweight. In fact, "SCAD is happening to a group of women who appear healthy, are thin, and have no risk factors," Hayes says. "So even though they have classic heart attack symptoms, they are often being misdiagnosed." Many SCAD patients are even sent home from hospitals in the middle of a heart attack that isn't discovered for days.

Plaque-buildup heart attacks are diagnosed with blood work and a test called an electrocardiogram, but SCAD can only be diagnosed with an angiogram (an X-ray that takes pictures of blood flow in the artery).

#### Who is at risk?

While SCAD patients range in age from their teens to their 80s, the average age is 42. Ellen Robin was a bit older, 53, when it happened to her. "It felt like an elephant sat on my chest," she recalls. "I wobbled and grabbed onto a folding chair because it almost knocked me off my feet. I felt dizzy, both arms were going numb, and I thought, *What the heck is this?*"

About 10% to 15% of cases happen in later-term pregnancy or within the first couple of weeks after childbirth. Researchers haven't been able to pinpoint an explanation, but they know the physical strain of childbirth isn't the main cause, since SCAD can happen in women who have either C-section or vaginal deliveries.

SCAD does appear to be connected to other artery problems, most commonly fibromuscular dysplasia (FMD). This disease causes cells to grow abnormally in artery walls, and doctors see FMD in at least half of SCAD patients.

Heather Gornik, MD, a cardiologist and vascular medicine specialist at the Cleveland Clinic, says patients often don't know they even have FMD until doctors look for artery abnormalities after a heart attack. "So it is now recommended that all SCAD patients be checked for FMD and other artery problems, such as brain aneurysms or blockages or dissections or tears in other vessels," she explains.

SCAD can also run in families, although Hayes says researchers haven't cracked the genetic tie. Her research team is collecting DNA samples from patients and sometimes sees the condition in mothers, daughters, aunts, nieces, and sisters.

But in many patients, like Scheiber, the cause remains uncertain. "Unfortunately there are a lot of us like that—you don't know why it happened, so there is a fear of the unknown. But I try to live in the moment," she says.

Doctors don't know how to prevent SCAD and often give patients personalized recommendations. Given its high chance of recurrence, patients are generally told to take a daily aspirin in hopes that the blood thinner might reduce the chances a blood clot would form, causing a bigger heart attack if they have another one. They are also asked to avoid pregnancy, hormone therapy, high-intensity or high-impact sports, and heavy lifting that causes strain, such as bodybuilding or shoveling snow.

Scheiber's two heart attacks caused damage to the bottom of her heart, but six years later she is symptom-free and hasn't had another attack. She now exercises regularly, eats well for general heart health, and says that, as a result, she is in better shape at 39 than she was a decade ago. "My plan is to be 40 and fabulous," she says.

#### What the latest SCAD research shows

As recently as 2009, Hayes thought SCAD was too rare to study. Then she met a patient who told her about an online SCAD community that had grown to 70 women. Hayes connected with them and started a pilot study that has since enrolled more than 700 women and men into a SCAD registry. That's led to several discoveries about the condition, including:

- Certain things can set off an attack. Patients often report extreme emotional or physical stress in the days before a SCAD attack, like a death in the family, breakdown in marriage, job stress, or intense physical exercise—even lifting heavy items.
- Survival rates are much better than doctors originally thought. They used to view SCAD as often fatal. But the death rate is very low, ranging between 1% and 5%. Outcomes are better than for people who have heart attacks due to plaque buildup. However, chances for a repeat SCAD attack are greater, happening in more than 20% of cases.
- Standard heart attack treatment isn't optimal. Other heart attack patients often receive stents that are implanted to open blocked arteries. But stents can make things worse for SCAD patients since they have a tear or tears in their arteries. "With SCAD, the artery that's dissected or torn is very fragile and procedures can extend the tear," Gornik says.



ELLEN ROBIN

HELPS SURVIVORS  
CONNECT ONLINE.

#### Finding a way forward

People can find online support groups that advocate for increased SCAD research and help survivors connect. Robin is an administrator of a private Facebook group that has grown to more than 1,500 members in five years. "Every day I add another one or two survivors to our group. We just keep growing," she says.

Robin hasn't had another SCAD attack but admits to being depressed and anxious that one would happen for the first few years after her diagnosis seven years ago. She says time and connecting with other survivors have helped ease those fears and inspired her to reassure others who are newly diagnosed.

"I promise them it will get better and easier. I want them to know they aren't alone," she says. "We are working on finding answers, and we'll have an answer someday because we'll never give up."

#### IF YOU THINK YOU'RE HAVING A HEART ATTACK

SPONTANEOUS CORONARY ARTERY DISSECTION (SCAD) researcher Sharonne N. Hayes, MD, is helping to write the first scientific statement about SCAD for the American Heart Association in the hopes of improving diagnosis rates and standardizing treatment. It's set to be released later this year.

Until then, she says the best advice for women is to call 911 if they think

they are having a heart attack. Young women who don't have risk factors and are having trouble getting a diagnosis should ask about SCAD.

Heart attack symptoms include:

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Pain in the arms, back, neck, or jaw
- Nausea, lightheadedness, and sweating



MEGHAN SCHEIBER

THOUGHT SHE WAS GETTING  
THE FLU, BUT IT TURNED OUT TO  
BE A HEART ATTACK.

PHOTOGRAPHY: KATHRYN GAMBLE



## PRODUCE PICK

## Spring Spears

Get it while you can. These tender stalks contain a bonanza of fiber, antioxidants, and other disease-fighting nutrients.

→ **Stalk Report**  
Asparagus is in season from March through June.

**NEED TO GET NUTRITIOUS VEGGIES** on the table fast with minimal fuss? Reach for asparagus. These slender spears cook quickly, work well in a variety of dishes, and offer a host of healthy compounds, including fiber and folate, a B-vitamin that helps prevent birth defects in pregnancy and protects against heart disease. Slice raw stalks and add to salads, or roast spears until crisp in a hot oven. Because asparagus continues to cook for up to a minute after being removed from the heat, roast, sauté, or grill until just crisp-tender.

—ERIN O'DONNELL



➤ Search for **8 Fruits to Add to Your Grocery List**, a slideshow at WebMD.com.

RECIPES BY *Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD, LD*

3 WAYS

# Pineapple

Give your plate a pop of sunny flavor with sweet-tart pineapple, which offers immune-boosting vitamin C and bone-building manganese



# 1

## THE SWEET SIDE

### Asian Pineapple Slaw

Add welcome sweetness to your summer slaw with juicy pineapple and dry-roasted peanuts. The flavor is balanced by acid lime and umami soy sauce.

➔ **THE MIX**  
Pineapple + bok choy, carrot, radish, half a lime, soy sauce, chopped dry-roasted peanuts



➕ **MAKE IT** In a blender combine 2 tbsp each of lime juice and peanut butter with 1 tbsp each of soy sauce, olive oil, and honey. Toss dressing with 2 cups chopped

pineapple, 6 cups chopped bok choy, shredded carrot and radish, and chopped cilantro. Garnish with chopped peanuts and green onions. **SERVES 4**

**PER SERVING (1 ½ CUP)** | 219 calories, 6 g protein, 24 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 4 g fiber, 16 g sugar, 183 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 50%

# 2

## GRILLED GOODNESS

### Pineapple Pork Kebabs

Think of pork-and-pineapple as pork-and-apples 2.0. The contrast of savory and sweet, tender and juicy, and salty and bright lends complexity to a surprisingly simple dish.

➔ **THE MIX**  
Pineapple + 1 lb pork tenderloin, red bell pepper, lime, olive oil, jerk seasoning



➕ **MAKE IT** Cube pork and toss with 1 tbsp jerk seasoning. Thread on skewers with pineapple and red pepper. Baste with a mixture of ½ tbsp jerk seasoning, lime

zest, and 1 tbsp each of brown sugar, olive oil, and lime juice. Grill until thermometer inserted in pork shows 145 degrees F. **SERVES 4**

**PER SERVING (2 KEBABS)** | 256 calories, 24 g protein, 23 g carbohydrate, 8 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 73 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 17 g sugar, 362 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 27%

# 3

## THE SIMPLE SUPPER

### Spicy-Sweet Salmon with Pineapple

Want to take the flavor of your fruits and vegetables to the next level? Caramelization (the oxidation of sugar), achieved by cooking, lends a complex nutty flavor to your favorite ingredients.

➔ **THE MIX**  
Pineapple + skinless salmon fillet, canola oil, maple syrup, cayenne pepper



➕ **MAKE IT** Sauté 4 thick pineapple rings in canola oil until golden brown. Remove from pan. Sprinkle four 4-oz salmon pieces with salt and pepper, then brush with a mix of ¼ cup

maple syrup and ¼ tsp cayenne pepper. Cook in pan until salmon is light brown and flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serve each fillet topped with a pineapple ring. **SERVES 4**

**PER SERVING (1 PIECE SALMON WITH PINEAPPLE)** | 358 calories, 23 g protein, 25 g carbohydrate, 19 g fat (4 g saturated fat), 62 m cholesterol, 1 g fiber, 20 g sugar, 214 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 47%

PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK LOZIER; FOOD STYLING: CHARLIE WORTHINGTON





### Tacolicious' Chorizo and Potato Tacos

#### INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup chopped canned chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 3 tbsp cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp sweet paprika
- 1 tbsp dried Mexican oregano
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 5 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- Pinch of salt
- 1½ pounds ground pork
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 large russet potato, peeled and cut into ¼-inch cubes
- 12–18 6-inch corn tortillas

#### MAKE IT (SERVES 6)

1. Puree the first seven ingredients in a blender until smooth, then combine with the pork and set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a large skillet, preferably cast iron, over medium heat. Add the potato cubes and cook for about 8 minutes, or until they are golden brown and cooked through. Salt lightly and transfer to a paper towel-lined plate.
3. Heat the skillet over medium-high heat. Add the seasoned pork and cook, for about 12 minutes, or until cooked through. Add the potatoes and toss for a few minutes.
4. Serve with pan-warmed tortillas, chopped white onion, cilantro, salsa, and lime wedges.

#### NUTRITION INFO (TWO TORTILLAS PER SERVING)

421 Calories, 39 g protein, 36 g carbohydrate, 14 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 97 mg cholesterol, 253 mg sodium, 6 g fiber, 2 g sugar, Calories from fat: 29%

#### OFF THE MENU

## Build a Better Taco

Stuff your tacos with full-flavored, juicy fillings, like braised meat and vegetables, as in the traditional Mexican guisado-style

TACOS CAN DELIVER AN INFINITE VARIETY OF TASTES AND TEXTURES. Among the most pleasing are those stuffed with full-flavored, juicy fillings that meld with the tortilla, says Sara Deseran, co-owner of San Francisco's Tacolicious and author of the small chain's eponymous cookbook, from which she has adapted this recipe. Deseran's pro tip: Buy freshly made corn tortillas or craft your own. That, she says, will truly elevate your taco.



SARA DESERAN,  
CHEF AND  
COOKBOOK  
AUTHOR

### Viva Salsa!

"IN MEXICO, WE LIVE AND BREATHE SALSA," SAYS PATI JINICH, AUTHOR OF MEXICAN TODAY AND HOST OF PATI'S MEXICAN TABLE ON PBS. HERE ARE FIVE OF HER FAVORITES:



LA COSTEÑA GREEN  
MEXICAN SALSA

"Savory, mildly spicy, and made from tomatillos and jalapeños, this salsa pairs with everything—from enchiladas and tacos to stews and sunny-side up eggs."



LA VALENTINA SALSA  
PICANTE MEXICAN

"A very deep, strong and fiery red sauce that's exquisite when splashed on snacks like peanuts and popcorn, jicama, and carrot sticks."



TRADER JOE'S  
CHUNKY SALSA

"It's classic, unpretentious, satisfying, and it feels and tastes super fresh and simple. Just what you need to go with that bag of tortilla chips."



EL YUCATECO  
BLACK LABEL CHILE  
HABANERO

"Rustic, smoky, with hints of bitter orange, and not so raging hot—splash this one on ceviche, in soups, and in stews."



LA COSTEÑA SALSA  
TAQUERA

"A phenomenal salsa for chips, tacos, quesadillas, and tostadas, or spooned onto toast and eggs. It's both sweet and tart with lots of depth of flavor."

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.



**1. HABANERO**

These peppers are 10 times hotter than a jalapeño, very fruity and exotic in flavor, with an almost apricot aroma. Don't be afraid to use them, but use them wisely.

**2. SERRANO**

Essentially, this pepper is just a mini jalapeño, but it's the one Walsh says he cooks with most of the time at his restaurant. It tastes a little stronger, and it's a little hotter.

**3. NEW MEXICAN GREEN (AKA ANAHEIM AND LONG GREEN CHILI)**

Variable in heat, they're ideal roasted and added to posole and other stews, as well as to the green chili sauces that form the heart and soul of New Mexican cooking.

**4. JALAPEÑO**

This is the most familiar and practical of peppers, especially for making salsa. Roast them and remove the white pith and seeds if you want to turn down the heat.

**5. POBLANO**

A big, wide green chili, with just a touch of heat, they sweeten when roasted and are perfect for stuffing with picadillo (a Mexican-style ground beef mixture).

## FOOD 101

## Pick a Pepper

Fresh chili peppers boast unique shapes, tastes, textures, and, oh yeah, heat. Perk up your meals with these versatile veggies.

CHILI PEPPERS OFFER CULINARY ADVENTURE FOR BOTH THE TIMID AND THE BRAVE, ADDING the slightest hint of heat to raging, all-consuming fire to food. Robb Walsh, a Galveston-based chili pepper connoisseur, three-time James Beard Award-winning food writer, and author of several cookbooks, including *Hot Sauces* and partner at Houston's El Real tex-Mex Café, introduces five essential chili peppers that every home cook should get to know.



## FOR THE WEEK

## 1 Day, 5 Meals: Chicken

SHREDDED CHICKEN IS EASY TO MAKE AND INFINITELY VERSATILE. THESE FIVE MEALS—FROM TACOS AND SALAD TO PIZZA AND SOUP—ARE JUST THE START.



## MONDAY

## SHREDDED CHICKEN TACOS

You could simply shred chicken from a store-bought rotisserie chicken. But if you have a pressure cooker, it's a cinch to make fork-tender chicken at home. To have enough chicken for the week, season four pounds of skinless, boneless chicken thighs with salt, pepper, and any other herbs and spices you like, add a cup of water, then cook on high pressure for 15 minutes. When it's cool enough to handle, shred meat using two forks. Layer pulled chicken onto corn tortillas with avocado, shredded cabbage, and salsa for tacos.

## TUESDAY

## COBB SALAD

Top chopped Romaine lettuce with shredded chicken, diced tomatoes, cubed avocado, a quartered hard-boiled egg, a crumbled slice of crispy bacon, and a tablespoon of blue cheese. Finish with a mustard-lemon vinaigrette.



## WEDNESDAY

## CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

Shredded chicken is an excellent addition to soups or chowders, and this one is no exception. Heat up a good-quality, low-sodium chicken broth along with a cup or two of shredded chicken, a 15-ounce can of crushed tomatoes, a can of rinsed black beans, lime juice, chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper. To serve, ladle over baked tortilla chips and add shredded Monterey Jack cheese.



## THURSDAY

## BBQ CHICKEN PIZZA

Spread BBQ sauce over a whole-wheat pizza crust and cover with a cup of pulled chicken, thinly sliced red onion, and grated cheddar cheese. Bake until bubbly and serve with a green salad.

## FRIDAY

## SUMMER ROLLS

Prepare rice wrappers according to instructions. Fill each wrapper with portions of chicken, mint leaves, basil leaves, and mango and cucumber spears, then roll up. Serve with a dipping sauce made of ¼ cup water, 2 tablespoons lime juice, 1 tablespoon fish sauce, a squirt of Sriracha hot sauce, and a pinch of sugar.

## BREAKFAST BOX

## Smoothie, Meet Bowl

BORED WITH THE USUAL MORNING FARE? HERE'S A NEW TAKE ON THE TRIED-AND-TRUE BREAKFAST SMOOTHIE.



You know that smoothies can be an all-in-one, power-packed breakfast (we're looking at you, green smoothie). But sometimes a meal you can drink just doesn't cut it. Take your smoothie to the next level by whirling it up, pouring it into a bowl, then loading it with texture- and nutrition-packed toppings. Dig in with a spoon and enjoy. Try these tasty mix-ins:

- Cocoa nibs
- Fresh berries
- Toasted coconut flakes
- Seeds (chia, sunflower, hemp, pumpkin)
- Chopped nuts
- Pomegranate arils
- Freeze-dried fruit
- Toasted buckwheat
- Dried fruit (goji berries, tart cherries)



**CUTTING EDGE**

**Curious about the latest innovations in birth control for women and men?** The old contraceptive standbys like condoms and pills may not be the most effective options anymore.

**WOMEN HAVE AN OVERWHELMING** preference for short-acting reversible contraception, such as the pill, the patch, and the ring. But a new study shows that long-acting reversible contraception, which includes intrauterine devices (IUDs) and hormonal implants, is far more effective. Researchers tracked 916 women who used one method or the other for a year. About 7 in 100 women who used short-acting contraception got pregnant. Fewer than 1 in 100 women on long-acting forms became pregnant. The researchers also found that most women who tried long-acting contraception were satisfied with it despite a prior preference for a short-acting method.

Long- and short-acting reversible contraceptives use hormones to control a woman's fertility. Men may

soon have a reversible, hormonal birth control option, too. Several clinical trials are testing the safety and efficacy of hormone injections and pills that lower men's sperm count to zero while they take the drug. Researchers still have to work out some of the kinks. For example, one form of the contraception caused depression in many of the men who tried it.

An alternative to vasectomy might be on the horizon, too. Researchers are developing an injectable gel that fills the vas deferens—the channel that sperm travel through during ejaculation. The soft gel blocks the channel for up to 10 years. Another injection can break the gel down and restore fertility at any time. The product's developers expect to start human clinical trials soon. —SONYA COLLINS

→ **Test Case**  
Clinical trials are testing new birth control options for men—including hormone injections.





→ Search for the slideshow **Sun-Damaged Skin** at [WebMD.com](http://WebMD.com).



**JOHN WHYTE, MD, MPH**  
DIRECTOR OF  
PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS  
AND STAKEHOLDER  
ENGAGEMENT AT THE FDA

## EXPERT Q&amp;A

## Sun Smarts

Get the lowdown on sunscreen SPF numbers and what to buy before heading outdoors this summer

→ **Do It Again**  
Reapply  
sunscreen at  
least every  
two hours.



**HAS THIS HAPPENED TO YOU? YOU GOT A SUNBURN EVEN THOUGH** you thought you'd used enough sunscreen. Or maybe you forgot to pack a tube in your suitcase and ended up looking like a lobster in your vacation photos. The summer months are almost here and that means plenty of time outdoors. Before you grab your beach towels and pool toys, stock up

on sunscreen—and be sure to use it correctly. The FDA's John Whyte answers top questions about sunscreen and how to reduce your risk of sunburn, skin cancer, and early signs of aging caused by sun damage.

**Q What does "SPF" on the sunscreen label mean?**

**A** Without getting into a physics lesson, the sun protection factor (SPF for short) is calculated from energy and wavelengths, intensity of light, and exposure time. The number is a ratio comparing the amount of UV radiation (or sunlight) that can cause your skin to burn with and without sunscreen. So SPF 30 can absorb 30 times more UV radiation before you start to burn compared to bare skin.

**Q Which sunscreen should I buy?**

**A** First, understand that sunlight contains two common types of UV rays:

UVA can cause aging of the skin, while UVB can cause sunburns. Choose a sunscreen with "broad spectrum" on the label, which means the product protects against both types of UV rays. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends a product with a minimum of SPF 30.

**Q Do spray-on sunscreens work as well? How often should I reapply?**

**A** The FDA is still reviewing the safety and efficacy of spray-on products, including the effects from accidental inhalation. Whether you use a lotion or a spray, reapply at least every two hours—more often if you're sweating or jumping in and out of water. Sunscreens are not completely sweatproof or waterproof, nor can they block all UV rays. So cover exposed skin with long-sleeved shirts and pants when possible. Also, wear sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**80%**

Percentage of UV rays that get through on cloudy days. Wear sunscreen year-round, no matter the weather.

**80 minutes**

Longest amount of time water-resistant sunscreens are protective. Be sure to reapply.

**10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**  
Hours of the day when the sun's rays can be the most intense.

**2 tablespoons**  
Amount of sunscreen you need to cover exposed areas of the face and body.



## QUIZ

## What's Your OAB IQ?

Some 33 million Americans have overactive bladder (OAB). How much do you know about this common condition?



## ASK YOUR DOCTOR

**Q** Am I at risk for OAB?

Age is one risk factor; post-menopausal women and men with prostate problems are at higher risk for developing OAB.

**Q** What could be causing frequent urination?

OAB could be to blame, but other conditions, including urinary tract infections, diabetes, and medication side effects, could also be culprits.

**Q** Will lifestyle changes improve my symptoms?

Limiting caffeinated and sugary drinks may help; exercises to relax the bladder muscles can also alleviate symptoms.

**Q** What are my treatment options?

OAB can't be cured, but your doctor can recommend treatments to reduce symptoms and improve your quality of life.

## Quiz

1

Urinating often is the only sign of OAB.

\_\_\_ TRUE  
\_\_\_ FALSE

2

Age is a risk factor.

\_\_\_ TRUE  
\_\_\_ FALSE

3

OAB affects only women.

\_\_\_ TRUE  
\_\_\_ FALSE

4

OAB can affect your sex life.

\_\_\_ TRUE  
\_\_\_ FALSE

5

No reliable tests can diagnose OAB.

\_\_\_ TRUE  
\_\_\_ FALSE

6

Surgery is the only treatment option.

\_\_\_ TRUE  
\_\_\_ FALSE

## Answers

**1. False:** Frequent trips to the bathroom (more than eight times in 24 hours) are only one symptom. Bladder leakage and the sudden urge to urinate are also signs.

**2. True:** Your risk for OAB does increase with age (by age 80, upward of 70% of adults have OAB), but anyone at any age can develop the condition.

**3. False:** Although symptoms can be different—more women than men have urinary incontinence—OAB affects both sexes almost equally. About 12% of the population has OAB.

**4. True:** Research shows that frequent urges to urinate can interrupt sex. A full bladder can cause discomfort, and fears about incontinence can make it difficult to achieve orgasm.

**5. False:** In addition to a physical exam, your doctor may order a urine culture to rule out infections and an ultrasound to see how well your bladder functions.

**6. False:** Surgery is one option. Other treatments, including medications, behavior therapy, injections to numb the bladder muscles, and nerve stimulation, may also alleviate symptoms.



HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

# Arthritis Assist

Rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease that attacks the joints, causing joint pain and swelling, affects 1.5 million Americans. Untreated, it can lead to irreversible joint damage and deformity. Medication and lifestyle changes can ease symptoms and stop inflammation.



## 10 Ways to Cope

TAKE CHARGE WITH THESE LIFESTYLE TIPS

- 1. RESPECT YOUR LIMITS** During flares, scale back exercise to give your inflamed joints a break.
- 2. WORK IT** Do low-impact aerobics, stretching, and strength-building exercises to ease your symptoms.
- 3. GET HELP** See an occupational therapist to learn new approaches for difficult physical tasks.
- 4. GO FISH** To reduce inflammation, add fish oil or fatty fish such as salmon to your diet.
- 5. GET ALONG** You'll see your rheumatologist often, so find one you really like.
- 6. FIGHT BACK** Eat inflammation-fighting fruits and veggies, like broccoli, cauliflower, cherries, and berries.
- 7. TREAT YOUR FEET** Slip custom-made orthotics into your shoes to reduce foot pain.
- 8. BE MINDFUL** Practice mindfulness meditation to better cope with your pain.
- 9. BONE UP** RA increases your risk of osteoporosis. Ask your doctor about protecting your bones.
- 10. COMFORT YOURSELF** Ease your pain with warm showers, ice packs, and rest.



→ Search for the video [Signs of a Stroke](#) at WebMD.com.

## MY STORY

# Striving for Improvement

A woman learns to speak, walk, and even dance again thanks to a supportive spouse, a speech therapist, and others



### Progress Is Possible ←

Merto Robinson has come a long way since a stroke resulted in aphasia 12 years ago.

I REMEMBER IT WAS DECEMBER 16, 2004. BECAUSE I HAVE A type-A personality, I had to make sure everything was in its place before leaving work late that evening. I was about to spend my holiday on a cruise with my husband. I went to the restroom before wrapping up. As I exited, I stumbled and fell on the floor. I recall looking up, but could not speak or move to call for help. Against all odds, my assistant entered the same restroom and found me.

Soon after, the paramedics arrived. I heard them talking but could not answer. Later, I discovered that I was paralyzed on my right, dominant side and unable to communicate my thoughts and intentions. This is what's known as aphasia. The doctors knew right away I'd had a stroke.

*"Thankfully, my husband, who is my caregiver, would not let me give up."*

I was in the hospital for a few weeks, where I learned to swallow, and then had outpatient therapy for many grueling months. My motor skills slowly progressed, and eventually I was able to recognize and speak basic words such as "comb," "toothpaste," and even my husband's name. I would see objects or letters but couldn't recall what they meant or how to say them. I found that aphasia impacts people in many different ways, including reading, writing, and speaking.

Thankfully, my husband, who's my caregiver, would not let me give up. He found a speech therapist who helped my progress. My husband would also say, "You have to move. Come on, let's dance!" Over time, I slowly moved my feet and kept the rhythm. I sometimes still exercise to the old R&B tunes he'd put on.

Over the years, I tried to go back to work, but I'm still challenged sometimes with expressive aphasia—speaking before I gather my thoughts. I have slight trembling of my right hand, which makes it difficult to write and use a keyboard. I joined Toastmasters, a nonprofit group that assists with communication and leadership. I'm also a member of a local aphasia group that helps me understand and use tools and techniques to address this condition.

Today I'm 53 and my improvement continues. Although we missed the cruise, my husband and I have taken many others since the stroke.

## MY STORY DOs AND DON'Ts

DO

"Have a support structure and a caregiver who's patient and understands the different phases of stroke and how it impacts you both."

DON'T

"Let yourself get discouraged. Get involved with the American Stroke Association's support network or another support group. You can see what others are going through and put things in perspective."

DO

"Discover how to make your heart healthy. Find out how to exercise at your desired time of day, cut down on salt, and use seasonings for your taste buds."



## BY THE NUMBERS: Facts and Stats on Trending Health Topics

## Asthma

**\$56  
BILLION**Total annual cost of  
asthma in the U.S.Total number of  
people in the U.S. who  
have asthma  
**24 MILLION****17.7 MILLION**  
Number of adults  
with asthmaNumber of  
**CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA**  
**6.3 MILLION****\$6,452**Cost of controlled  
asthma per person  
each year**5**Age by which  
asthma  
symptoms  
usually appear  
in kids**3,651****NUMBER OF**  
people who die  
each year in the  
U.S. from asthma**14 MILLION**Number of doctor visits each  
year related to asthma**\$14,212****COST OF UNCONTROLLED ASTHMA**  
per person each year**2 MILLION**Number of emergency room visits each  
year due to asthma**H**  
**439,500****NUMBER OF PEOPLE**  
who are admitted to the  
hospital each year  
due to asthma**2**Categories of  
fast-acting  
rescue  
medications  
to treat  
symptoms**7****CATEGORIES**  
of long-term  
medications to  
control symptoms



➔ Search for **Hepatitis C Message Board**  
at WebMD.com.



➔ **Test Results**  
The only way to know if you have Hepatitis C is to get tested.

## LIVING WELL

## Screen Test

Some health experts call hepatitis C a “silent epidemic.” That’s because at least half of people with hepatitis C don’t know they have it.

MANY HEALTH CONDITIONS WILL GIVE YOU PLENTY OF WARNING SIGNS when trouble’s brewing, but hepatitis C isn’t one of those. In fact, “most people won’t have symptoms until they have advanced liver disease,” says Robert Brown, MD, clinical chief for the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Weill Cornell Medicine and New York-Presbyterian.

About three in four people who get the hep C virus will have a lifelong infection, which over time can lead to cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver failure, or cancer.

What can you do about hep C? First and foremost, get screened, says Brown. “It’s a simple blood test, and the only way you’ll know is if you’re tested.”

### ASK YOUR DOCTOR

#### Q Will I be cured?

About 97% or more of people with hep C can be cured with current medications, he says.

#### Q Have I been tested for hepatitis C?

“The only way you’ll know is if you ask your doctor,” says Brown. If not, he or she will recommend the test for you to be sure.

#### Q Should I be treated even if I don’t have symptoms?

“Yes,” says Brown. Curing hep C not only reduces your chance of dying from liver disease but from other causes as well.

#### Q What about treatments?

A few options are available, depending on your diagnosis. Ask your doctor which treatment is right for you.

Those most at risk are baby boomers—born between 1945 and 1965—who make up about 75% of all people infected with hep C, says Brown. People who’ve injected drugs, are infected with HIV, or who were born to mothers with hep C are also at higher risk.

If your test results are positive, get treated, says Brown. “We have the ability to cure hepatitis C in virtually everybody with the drugs now available—and with close to no side effects,” he says. “The only thing people have to remember to do is take the pills for 12 weeks.”

You should also forgo alcohol. “Excessive alcohol is always detrimental to the liver,” explains Brown. And for people with liver disease, “we cannot establish a safe amount of alcohol.” If you choose to imbibe, stick to one drink or less for women, and two drinks or less for men, per day, says Brown.

The bottom line? “Hepatitis C can be cured. It should be cured, and taking care of your liver is pretty simple,” says Brown. “You just have to avoid a few things, and your liver will take good care of you.”



# Take 10

1

**You were recently awarded an honorary Oscar for your lifetime of achievement in the film industry. What was that moment like for you?**

I was surprised when The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Board of Governors' president, Cheryl Boone Isaacs, called me. I couldn't believe an actor like me—who's done mostly action comedies—could get an Oscar. Now I know someone has been watching all these years and has acknowledged my work.

2

**What do you hope young, aspiring actors will take away from your Oscar win?**

I hope young actors will pursue their dreams and never give up.

3

**Your new movie, *The Nut Job 2*, opens in August. How does acting in an animated movie differ from doing a live-action film?**

*The Nut Job 2* is only one of my upcoming projects. I love doing voice dubbing, like *Kung Fu Panda 1, 2, and 3*. I think voice dubbing is more difficult than live action. You have to use your imagination to make believe that you are your animated character.

4

**You've injured just about every part of your body during your career. Why is it important for you to do your own stunts, despite the risks?**

Because this is what makes me

## Jackie Chan

62, Los Angeles  
Actor, martial artist, producer



Jackie Chan. This is why I'm so different and unique. The audience loves to see me do my own stunts. And I can do my fight sequences in one shot, without having to edit them.

5

**Which of your injuries has been the most serious and had the greatest impact on your life?**

The head injury I got in Yugoslavia in 1986—I was in a coma for seven days, and everyone thought I was dying. It made me understand that no

matter whether I'm doing big stunts or small stunts, I need to be really careful.

6

**How do you protect yourself when you're working on a movie that requires a lot of physical action and potentially dangerous stunts?**

I have my Jackie Chan Stunt Team to protect me. We plan and practice and make sure we are all comfortable with the stunts or fight sequences.

7

**What would you say is your best health habit?**

Exercise. I do cross training at least three times a week.

8

**What is your worst health habit?**

I hate to rest. It doesn't affect me at all, though. I usually take a power nap and my energy is back.

9

**Do you have a personal health philosophy?**

My health philosophy is to never go on a diet, eat everything I like, and be happy.

10

**Of the five senses, which do you value most, and why?**

I value my eyes most, because I read and watch a lot of things online and on TV. I do my own research all the time. I have a lot of film projects waiting for me. I research my roles, the story backgrounds, and so on.

—MATT McMILLEN

*"My health philosophy is to never go on a diet, eat everything I like, and be happy."*