

# WebMD®

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BACK TO SCHOOL  
**HOW  
TO TALK  
WITH YOUR  
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# SOLEDAD STRONG

Award-winning journalist and  
busy mom Soledad O'Brien  
takes a special interest in  
kids' health and well-being

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### Soledad Survivor

Award-winning journalist **Soledad O'Brien** opens up about her own health issues, as well as those of her son Jackson, who developed hearing loss as a young child. Passionate about public health, O'Brien also discusses her series with WebMD on the problem of teens and stress.



### Face Time

The teen years can be a challenging time for parents and kids when it comes to communication. Try these six strategies to engage your teen and stay connected.

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Cover photograph by Bryan Derbala



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“

**I FIND  
SATISFACTION  
IN BRINGING  
ATTENTION  
TO THINGS  
THAT DON'T  
GET A LOT OF  
COVERAGE.**

”

IN EVERY ISSUE

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### EDITOR'S NOTE

#### TAKE 10

Actor/musician **Charles Esten** of the hit TV show *Nashville* opens up about his daughter's battle with leukemia, and shares his best health tips—including how going shirtless on TV is a great motivator to stay in shape.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE



Summer is over, and if you have kids, they're heading back to school. But today's academic pressures can be stressful for students, as you'll see in our story on page 66. They can be stressful for parents too, especially if you have a child who is struggling.

In this issue, award-winning journalist **Soledad O'Brien** opens up about her own son, whose behavior in school was a mystery until she discovered the cause—hearing loss—and began to develop tools and strategies to help him.

O'Brien also shares with us her strategies for balancing family, a hectic work schedule, and staying healthy. It's even harder when you're also managing a condition. In a new special series on WebMD.com this month, O'Brien explores the challenges of two patients as they proactively search for treatment options to keep their health in check.

In our documentary-style report, you'll meet a working mom who has changed virtually every aspect of her lifestyle to manage her diabetes, and a dad and his young son who both have genetic forms of high cholesterol. Both stories are a source of hope and inspiration for the millions of people living with these conditions.

Find our report by searching for "diabetes innovations" or "cholesterol innovations."

Enjoy the fall.

*Kristy*

Kristy Hammam  
Editor in Chief  
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TOP LEFT: GREGORY MILLER



## CUTTING EDGE

We're excited to bring you **Path to a Breakthrough**, a five-part original video series developed in partnership with Robin Roberts and her independent production company, Rock'n Robin Productions. You'll find compelling patient stories and insights from medical experts on up-to-the-minute innovations like precision medicine, immunotherapy, and biologics—powerful new tools doctors can use to treat disease, ease symptoms, and even reverse some debilitating conditions. Go to [WebMD.com](http://WebMD.com) to find the series.

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# HOT TOPICS!

FACTS AND STATS FOR STARTING THE SCHOOL YEAR OFF RIGHT

**9** Hours of **sleep** **teens need** each night. **vs** **7** Hours of **sleep** **they get.**

Source: Nationwide Children's Hospital

## Better Lunches

Thanks to a government program to make **school meals healthier**, kids eat **16% more vegetables** and **23% more fruit** in school lunches than they did in 2012.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture



Just **13%** of students in grades K-8 walk or ride their bikes to school, compared to **48%** in 1969.

Source: National Center for Safe Routes to School



**22%**

Percentage of students who say they were bullied during the school year.

**36%**

Percentage of kids who are bullied and report it.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education; Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center

**FEWER THAN 1/3**

of high school students attend gym classes every day at school. Only **27%** get the **60 minutes** of daily exercise health experts recommend.

Source: CDC



**2 MILLION**

high school students are injured playing sports each year.

About **62%** of **injuries** happen during practice.

Source: Youth Sports Safety Alliance

Only **45%** of public schools in the U.S. have a full-time nurse.



Just **30%** have a part-time nurse, and **25%** don't have any nurse.

Source: JAMA Pediatrics

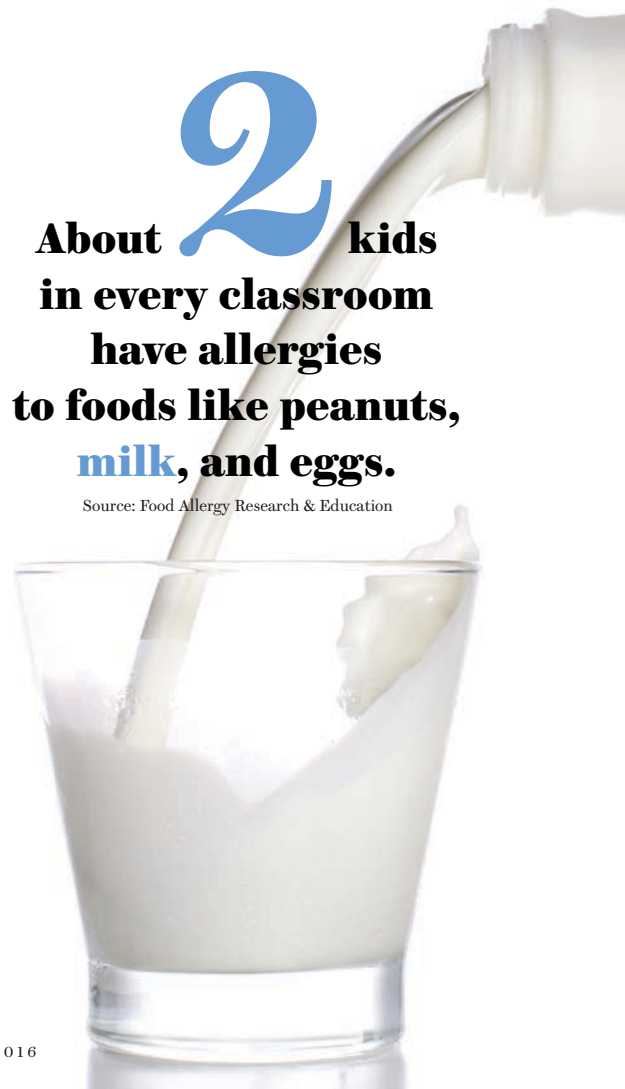
**>33%**

Percentage of children and teens in the U.S. who are overweight or obese.

Source: CDC

About **2** kids in every classroom have allergies to foods like peanuts, **milk**, and eggs.

Source: Food Allergy Research & Education





## Café OIL-ait

If you love your French press, listen up. Coffee contains oily substances called diterpenes. Coffee filters remove the oil slicks, but your French press, *sans* filter, isn't up to the job. Research shows that too much of the unfiltered elixir can raise your LDL cholesterol—that's the bad stuff. But you needn't say *au revoir* to your favorite coffee carafe. Just limit yourself to four cups a day.

Source: Harvard Medical School



## JUMP START



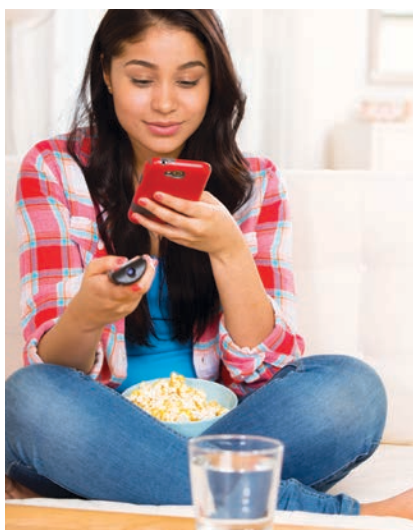
You wouldn't think you'd need a road map to talk to your own child, but many parents would no doubt welcome such a tool, especially if they have teenagers in the house. Why do they suddenly seem to shut down and say as little as possible?

Relax. This maddening behavior is just a normal part of growing up, says our expert in "Face Time" on page 34. "Puberty triggers a lot of changes in the brain, signaling that it's time to work on becoming an individual, not dependent on the parents," she says. But she also offers six targeted ways to engage your teen and keep the communication flowing.

Another tactic involves the family dinner table. Toss out a provocative question (we have a few suggestions) to get a conversation going. Remember, your kids want to know what you think and by encouraging a lively discussion (instead of lecturing), you'll likely learn what they're thinking, too. Try it tonight and see what happens.

*Colleen*

Colleen Paretty  
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## UNDIVIDED ATTENTION

For teens, TWW (texting while watching) could spell academic trouble. Researchers surveyed 73 teenagers to find out how often they consume more than one form of media at a time, like watching TV while looking at their phones. Kids who media-multitasked most often had lower test scores in English and math. This may be because they also had poorer working memory—the ability to hold words or numbers in their heads for a few minutes or hours.

Source: *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*

# 28%

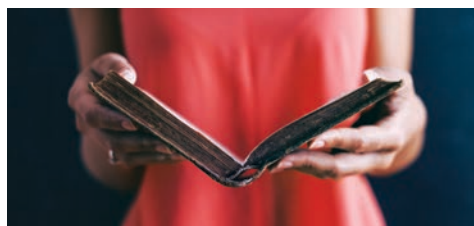
Percentage of Americans who  
are obese (a record high)

Source: Gallup

## Keepin' the Faith

People—or at least women—who frequent churches, synagogues, mosques, and the like might live longer. For 20 years, researchers followed more than 74,000 women who started out without heart disease or cancer. Those who attended religious services more than once a week were 33% less likely to die for any reason during the study period than women who never attended. What do the faithful have going for them? Researchers found lower rates of smoking and depression and higher rates of social support and optimism.

Source: *JAMA*



## Cry Baby

Does letting your baby cry himself to sleep seem cruel and unusual? Rest easy. A recent experiment shows that babies who are sleep-trained this way—put to bed and left to cry it out—fall asleep just as quickly as babies whose parents take them through a series of bedtime rituals. Crybabies woke up less often during the night, too. Twelve months after the experiment, the babies showed healthy attachment to their mothers and no behavioral problems.

Source: *Pediatrics*



FROM TOP: SAMUEL EUGENE SOMERA/ISTOCK PHOTO; THE PICTURE PANTRY/OFFSET; WAVEBREAKMEDIA LTD/THINKSTOCK; SZEFEI/THINKSTOCK

# 32.8%

Percentage of high school students who drank while driving in the past month

Source: CDC



## BRIGHT LIGHTS, HEALTHY DINNER

Ambience seems to affect calorie intake when dining out. Restaurant diners were seated either in a bright room or a dim one. The well-lit diners ordered healthier items than their peers in shadows. Under low lights, diners ordered 39% more calories, though they ate 14% fewer. Bright lights keep you alert, which leads to better choices.

Source: *Journal of Marketing Research*



## BRING PAIN TO ITS KNEES

Doing tai chi exercises is just as effective for painful knee arthritis as standard physical therapy, new research shows. About 100 people with knee osteoarthritis got two sessions of regular physical therapy per week for six weeks, then six weeks of monitored home exercise. The other 100 had two sessions of tai chi per week for 12 weeks. Afterward, both groups reported significantly less pain, and the benefits lasted a whole year.

Source: *Annals of Internal Medicine*

WebMD.com

## Hot Hits

What's trending on WebMD.com right now\*

Yoga poses

What are hemorrhoids?

Anxiety symptoms

Atkins diet

Knee exercises

Cold feet

Boost metabolism

Butt exercises

Toenail fungus

Signs of depression

7-minute workout

Worst shoes

\*as of July 1, 2016



## Power Skills

Want an extra shot of brainpower? Dust off your old backpack and enroll in a class. Research suggests learning a new skill may spark brain cell growth and slow your brain's aging. Simple tasks won't cut it.

The trick is to pick a challenging activity, like these:

- Master a new language.
- Take a public speaking class.
- Try your hand at oil painting or sculpture.
- Play a new musical instrument.
- Learn a complex skill, like digital photography, quilting, or fixing a car.

Here's the icing on the cake: Acquiring new skills also leads to a spike in self-confidence. Not only will you be sharper, you'll walk taller, too.

—Kara Mayer Robinson





## WORKPLACE HEALTH

# Flex Time

STUDIES SHOW EMPLOYEES ARE MORE PRODUCTIVE—AND HAPPIER—  
WITH FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

By Sonya Collins

Too often, people feel that meeting all the demands of work means failing everywhere else. But it doesn't have to be that way. A recent study shows that when employees have more flexibility to get the job done on their terms, they do a better job at the office and in their personal lives.

"Flexible work arrangements can make it easier for employees to juggle all the responsibilities in their lives and to work when and where they can be most productive and on task," says Erin Kelly, PhD, a professor of work and organization studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a study co-author.

### Culture change

In the study, published in *American Sociological Review*, employees at a large corporation were divided into two groups. In one group, employees got to choose where they worked—from home, in the office, or a combination. They got to change their schedules on a daily basis. As a team, they could choose to cut down on face-to-face meetings and communicate in other ways. Their managers learned how to support their employees' professional development and work/life balance in this new flexible setting.



For the other half of the employees, it was business as usual. After one year in the flexible environment, workers felt less burnout, stress, and psychological distress. They had greater job satisfaction, too.

"Employees reported less conflict between work and the rest of life," Kelly says. "They were more likely to say they had enough time to be with their families."

Reducing stress and burnout in the workplace, the researchers say, can improve attendance, engagement, and productivity.

### Sign me up

Wish you had this kind of flexibility? Now might be the right time to raise the subject. "Workplace cultures are shifting to recognize that people have responsibilities outside of

work and that we need to think about working in a healthier, more sustainable way," Kelly says.

But the arrangement in Kelly's study was a full-scale culture change. Individual agreements that apply to one person but not the whole team can backfire. "Research suggests that those who seek out flexibility through an individual agreement are seen as less committed or competent and may face penalties," Kelly says.

Instead, rally your co-workers and approach management as a team. Both you and your employer could benefit. "Being thoughtful and creative in how we do our work can be a pathway to redesigning work to be more effective, efficient, and sustainable for all employees," Kelly says.

## START THE CONVERSATION

ERIN KELLY, PhD, OFFERS THESE TIPS FOR GUIDING A CONVERSATION WITH TEAMMATES AND SUPERVISORS ABOUT A MORE FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE AT WORK:

**Examine** what tasks team members do, and how the team coordinates and communicates that work, in order to find ways to be more efficient.

**Focus** on changes that could facilitate more flexible schedules and working from home, or help keep hours from creeping up.

**Give** equal attention to how flexibility can help you meet professional and personal goals. That way, employees and managers can see the mutual benefits.

**Negotiate** for flexible arrangements—but not in lieu of a raise. This can promote the idea that flexibility is a perk rather than the most effective way to do your job.

Reviewed by  
Arefa Cassoobhoy, MD, MPH  
WebMD Medical Editor



## MEN'S HEALTH

# Real Men Go to the Doctor

SKIPPING APPOINTMENTS ISN'T MACHO—AND COULD HARM YOUR HEALTH IN THE LONG RUN

By Matt McMillen

Men, if you want to live a longer and healthier life, dial down the manliness. Two recent studies show that the more a man values traditionally masculine traits like self-reliance, bravery, and toughness, the less likely he is to go to the doctor. And when he does go, he often downplays his symptoms. This is especially true when such men see a male doctor.

"It's bro culture, in which men feel they need to be more masculine around other men," says Diana Sanchez, PhD, an associate professor of psychology at Rutgers University and co-author of both studies. "It typically happens at the playground when you're a boy or at work when you're an adult. And apparently, it bleeds into your health care interactions with male doctors."

Sanchez and her co-author, Mary Himmelstein, MS, also found that men who consider themselves manly more often choose to see male doctors, whom they believe to be more competent than female doctors. Ironically, when those men do see a female doctor, they are more open and honest about their problems, which makes them more likely to get the type of care they need.

On average, women live longer than men in the U.S. Several factors may explain this gap in longevity: Men are much more likely to have heart attacks and heart disease than women. Men take more physical risks than women, which can lead to fatal accidents. Also, men more often hold down dangerous jobs, such as firefighter or soldier. But men's attitudes toward health care also likely take a toll on their longevity.

If this sounds like you (or a man you know), a few

simple tips can help change your mindset—and your doctor-patient dynamic.

### **Raise your awareness.**

Sanchez believes that men likely behave the way they do without realizing it, and she hopes that her research will give them a clue. "Maybe if men are aware that this is going on," she says, "they can be more conscious about how they report their symptoms to their doctor."

### **Reframe your thinking.**

It's not manly to avoid having a necessary conversation about your health.

Instead, the opposite is true: It takes courage to confront symptoms that worry you and talk openly about them with your doctor. "We need to get rid of the idea that men who go to the doctor are weak or can't take care of themselves," Sanchez says. "When I told my 6-year-old daughter about this study, she said, 'But you have to be brave to go to the doctor and get shots!'"

### **Realize the positives.**

A healthy man makes a better partner and father, so getting the proper care will help ensure that you're always there to provide for your family. "Part of masculinity is seeing yourself as an effective father, as an effective partner, and if you see going to the doctor and taking care of yourself as something that benefits your family, harness that," Sanchez says.

**Rely on yourself the right way.** Often, says Sanchez, spouses and partners act as healthcare coordinators for their men. Why not take charge and do it yourself? Says Sanchez: "It's actually a sign of self-reliance and bravery not having to lean on your partner to get you to go."



Reviewed by  
**Michael W. Smith, MD**  
WebMD Chief Medical Editor



Watch **What They Don't Tell You About Starting a Workout Routine**, a video at WebMD.com.  
**LEARN HOW ON PAGE 6**

## WORK IT OUT

# Bring the Gym to You

SAVE TIME AND MONEY WITH STREAMING WORKOUTS YOU CAN DO ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

By Kara Mayer Robinson



● ● ● Schlepping to the gym is so 2015. Seriously, who has time? “Streaming workout fans can now do a killer workout in the same time it takes someone else to find a parking spot at the gym,” says celeb trainer Andrea Orbeck, whose clients include Heidi Klum and Julia Roberts. Simply pop open your tablet, phone, or computer, click on the video of your choice, and within minutes you’ll be sweating.

### How they work

Most streaming platforms are simple. Think of them as Netflix for fitness. You log onto the website and pick from a full library of workouts. They’re sorted by categories—like cardio, high-intensity interval training (HIIT), upper body, and yoga—or by instructor so you can choose a workout from a trainer you like.

Many streaming workouts offer a free trial. If you like it, you subscribe for a month, three months, or a year. Others give you free access; just be prepared to sit through ads. For loads of freebie workouts, fire up YouTube or PopSugar.

### Thumbs up

They’re portable. Work out in a hotel, your bedroom,

or at the beach. What’s more, they’re (usually) a good deal. Most services charge a fraction of the cost of a gym membership. Some are free.

You can’t beat the variety. Want Pilates one day and HIIT the next? No problem. Need a quick, 10-minute burst today, but a 45-minute workout tomorrow? Done. “You have a lot of choices,” Orbeck says. “You can find the best fit for you, whether you’re looking for a favorite trainer or a new workout to change up your routine.”

### Thumbs down

Streaming workouts require get-up-and-go. “If you lack self-discipline to push play, you may not be able to be pushed at all,” Orbeck says.

And, “not all streaming workouts are the same,” Orbeck adds. Some services are expensive and give you access to only one trainer. Others have added fees for special equipment. Read the fine print.

Also, not all instructors are experts. “Just having a good-looking body does not make someone qualified to teach others how to exercise,” says certified trainer Pete McCall, MS, CSCS. A good coach should have credentials to lead fitness classes. Look for a nationally recognized certification or exercise degree.

## TOP PICKS

CHECK OUT CERTIFIED TRAINER PETE MCCALL’S FAVORITE STREAMING WORKOUTS.

### DAILY BURN

[dailyburn.com](http://dailyburn.com)

This is one of the first streaming services, and the largest. It’s led by fitness pro Lisa Wheeler, who developed some of Equinox Fitness’s top group programs.

### BOOYA FITNESS

[booyafitness.com/kira-stokes](http://booyafitness.com/kira-stokes)

Work out with super-qualified Kira Stokes, whom McCall considers a fitness ace. “Her classes are where other top trainers in Manhattan go to get their workout,” he says.

### SPIROFIT

[spirofit.com/live](http://spirofit.com/live)

McCall gives this streaming service top marks for its assortment of experienced fitness pros, like Keli Roberts, who helped Cher tone and shape her body.

### JESSICA SMITH

[jessicasmithtv.com](http://jessicasmithtv.com)

Smith is a fab go-to for short, effective workouts and walking programs, McCall says. If you’re new to working out, she’ll ease you in gently.

Reviewed by  
**Michael W. Smith, MD**  
WebMD Chief Medical Editor





## MIND MATTERS

## Good and Mad

GETTING ANGRY IS NORMAL. HERE'S HOW TO DO IT RIGHT

By Sonya Collins



● You walk in the door after work. Before you can kick off your shoes, you see it hanging there on the wall: A 60-inch TV your partner bought without talking to you first. You explode. A huge argument ensues. You part angry.

Your response to anger is a habit that's embedded in your brain. But you can train your brain to respond to anger constructively. "All of our habits are reflected in neuronal connections in our brain. If we develop new habits, we make the brain connections for that habit stronger, making it a more automatic response," says Bernard Golden, PhD, a psychologist and author of *Overcoming Destructive Anger: Strategies That Work*.

**What is anger?** Anger is a response to an unmet expectation, Golden says. Maybe you expected your partner to consult you before buying something expensive. "Behind all anger," he says, "is a threat to some key desire," like wanting to trust your partner.

Emotions cause impulsive reactions. The amygdala, a bundle of neurons deep inside the brain, is the hub for emotional behavior. It sends impulses to the hypothalamus, which triggers the fight-or-flight stress response. The rational prefrontal cortex evaluates threats and decides whether they warrant an explosive response. But sometimes the emotional center takes off running before the rational brain can get started.

**What can you do about it?** To train yourself to engage your rational mind, Golden offers four steps you can easily remember by the acronym **BEAR**:

**Breathe deeply.** It brings the focus inward, away from the object of your anger.

**Evoke physical calmness.** Scan your body for tension. Relax your jaw, unclench your fists. To learn to do this in a moment of anger, practice when everything's fine.

**Arouse compassion.** Acknowledge that, for example, you're feeling anxiety about money. Next, try having compassion for the person who made you angry. "So my partner bought a TV," you might say to yourself. "Let me ask him about it before I jump to conclusions."

**Reflect.** Were your expectations realistic? Were you too quick to conclude that your partner was in the wrong? "We quickly personalize things when that may not be the other person's intention," Golden explains.

Trying to avoid getting angry is not the point. "It's being able to recognize that anger is a signal to turn my attention inward to see what's going on with me," he says.

Reviewed by  
**Patricia A. Farrell, PhD**  
WebMD Medical Reviewer

## ARE YOU A HOTHEAD?

WORRIED ABOUT YOUR ANGRY IMPULSES? PSYCHOLOGIST BERNARD GOLDEN, PhD, HIGHLIGHTS SOME RED FLAGS:

Your anger escalates quickly, from "zero to 60" in a matter of seconds.

You have trouble letting go of anger.

You tend to feel mild to intense anger several times a day.

You often feel anger in your personal relationships, at work, and in daily activities.

People describe you as a "hothead."

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# Clean Sweep

Looking for the gentlest makeup remover? The answer may be hiding in your kitchen. “Natural oils, like sunflower seed oil and coconut oil, not only remove waterproof makeup in a flash but they can also nourish and enrich your skin at the same time,” says Fran Cook-Bolden, assistant professor of dermatology at Columbia University in New York City. Follow these steps to quickly remove a day’s worth of makeup (and grit and grime) without irritation.

## Massage

Using your fingertips, massage your natural oil of choice (for example, olive or coconut oil) into the skin and eyelashes in circular motions for 30 seconds, paying extra attention to the areas where you applied waterproof makeup.

## Wipe

Gently tissue off the makeup, which should come right off without any struggle. If it is difficult, massage in another dab of oil.

## Rinse

Use your usual facial cleanser to rinse away any remaining residue.

## Protect

Apply an emollient sunscreen if it’s still daytime and you’re going back out, or a hydrating night cream if you’re down for the count.

—*Ayren Jackson-Cannady*





## EXPERT PICKS

## Made in the Shade

AFTER YOU APPLY SUNSCREEN, CHECK OUT THESE DERMATOLOGIST-APPROVED, SPF-INFUSED COSMETICS THAT DO DOUBLE DUTY

By Ayren Jackson-Cannady

## 1 Powder Play

### Colorscience Sunforgettable Mineral Sunscreen Brush SPF 50 (\$64)

"In addition to giving non-comedogenic cosmetic coverage, this contains high amounts of mineral sunscreen, which deflects UV rays while reducing skin grease and unwanted shine. Because it is a powder, you can easily reapply during the day to help ensure adequate and all-day sunscreen protection."

## 6 Laying the Foundation

### Shiseido Sun Protection Liquid Foundation Broad Spectrum SPF 42 (\$36)

"Thick and creamy, this face base contains titanium oxide, a common, non-irritating, broad-spectrum sunscreen."

## 5 Prime Time

### La Roche-Posay Anthelios AOX Daily Antioxidant Serum SPF 50 (\$42.50)

"With an SPF 50, this is the perfect base layer for your everyday look. It contains antioxidants as well as chemical sunscreens that block both UVA and UVB rays. It leaves a smooth skin canvas over which to apply your makeup."

## 2 Lip Lock

### Walgreens Sunscreen Lip Balm SPF 50 (\$1.89)

"Lips are an easy target for sun, and most of us tend to forget to protect them. Chronic sun damage to thin lip skin can increase risk of squamous cell skin cancers, which can spread and be very dangerous on the lip. For an everyday lip balm, swipe this on and go. But beware of shiny, glossy products; those attract sun like baby oil and can lead to sunburn."

## 3 Make a Correction

### Peter Thomas Roth CC Cream SPF 30 (\$48)

"CC creams (complexion-correcting creams) contain hydrating ingredients, sunscreen, and camouflaging color. This product uses mineral sunscreens, which deflect UV rays and keep skin cool. It also has anti-aging antioxidant vitamins C and E, which help reduce free radical damage to DNA and collagen in the skin."

## 4 BB Beautiful

### L'Oréal Advanced Suncare Silky Sheer BB Tinted Face Lotion SPF 50+ (\$10.99)

"Nothing could be simpler: Apply about a dime-size amount of this BB (beauty or blemish balm) cream to your face and neck for more broad-spectrum UV protection."



**Tsippora Shainhouse, MD**  
clinical instructor of pediatric dermatology,  
University of Southern California

Reviewed by  
**Karyn Grossman, MD**  
WebMD Medical Reviewer



## BEAUTY SMARTS

# Damage Control

DID THE SUN'S RAYS CATCH UP WITH YOU THIS SUMMER? HERE'S HOW TO REPAIR YOUR SKIN

*By Liesa Goins*



## SOOTHE THE BURN

DESPITE BEST INTENTIONS, SOMETIMES SUNBURN HAPPENS, SAYS S. MANJULA JEGASOTHY, MD, FOUNDER OF THE MIAMI SKIN INSTITUTE. SHE SHARES HER ADVICE FOR GETTING THE RED OUT, ASAP.

### Take ibuprofen .

A dose of 400 milligrams every eight hours can reduce redness, itching, burning, and fever—all forms of inflammation caused by UV rays.

### Cool down.

Apply a cold compress or cooling topical gel to reduce the heat. Avoid heavy, greasy ointments like Vaseline or coconut oil that trap heat. And keep the water temperature cool when showering or washing the area.

### Stop the swelling.

To help reduce swelling, apply a cortisone cream such as Cortizone 10, sold at most drugstores.

### See a doctor.

If your burn has blistered, seek medical attention. A dermatologist may also suggest a prescription for Biafine cream, a soothing anti-inflammatory topical containing a growth factor that makes skin heal faster.

● This summer's seaside vacations and park visits created plenty of memories—and your skin doesn't forget, either. Ultraviolet rays from the sun are the main source of skin damage and can lead to premature aging and skin cancer, says Katherine Holcomb, MD, a dermatologist in New Orleans.

Even if you're not a sun worshipper, your skin is vulnerable. "Aside from locking yourself in a windowless room, you're never 100% safe from sun damage," Holcomb says. "But we have medications and

procedures to treat skin cancer and reverse sun damage."

Here's how UV damage works: Any exposure to sunlight triggers reactive oxygen molecules that damage DNA, Holcomb explains. The UV rays also reduce immune system cells that act as watchdogs for irregular growths and infections.

Pigmentation, including a tan, is the skin's defense mechanism; that's how age spots develop. With repeated sun exposure, DNA is further damaged,



## The Scoop

**How can I prevent my hair color from fading?**

**Here's a quick explanation of how color works:**

The dye causes the cuticle, the outer layer of your hair, to open, allowing the pigment to penetrate. Your goal is to keep the cuticle sealed so the color doesn't have any opportunity to escape.

Your shampoo and conditioner can go a long way toward preserving your hair's vibrancy. Make sure you are using products formulated for color-treated hair. These tend to be less alkaline. The more alkaline a product, the more it causes your hair cuticle to open and allows color to escape. Conditioner helps to seal the cuticle, which is key to preventing the dye molecules from rinsing away.

Avoiding heat will also make your color last longer. Styling tools like blow-dryers, curling irons, and flatirons cause damage to the hair's outer layer, which leads to fading. For extra color security, visit a salon for a glaze. This is a clear treatment that can help seal the cuticle while adding shine.

**—Doug Macintosh,**

*senior colorist, Louise O'Connor Salon, New York City*

allowing the cells to send messages that cause irregular growth, which can result in tumors. Those reactive oxygen molecules also destroy proteins like collagen in the skin, leading to wrinkles.

While sun damage is avoidable if you wear and reapply sunscreen vigilantly, no sun protection completely blocks the entire spectrum of solar radiation capable of causing damage, says Vivian Bucay, MD, a dermatologist in San Antonio. Since you

can't guard against every last ray, be sure to bolster your skin's defenses with the right skin care, she says.

"Topical antioxidants have been shown to reduce the damage from UV rays. The most studied of these is vitamin C, but topical antioxidants work better when used in combination, for example vitamin C with vitamin E," Bucay says. She suggests using products containing niacinamide, green tea, phloretin, or ferulic acid on a daily basis,

*Sun damage is (mostly) avoidable if you wear sunscreen vigilantly.*



ideally as a serum or treatment before you apply your sun protection.

Retinols are another established ingredient for combating sun damage, Holcomb says. The form of vitamin A in these products helps stimulate collagen, improves skin thickness, and fights free-radical damage. Holcomb suggests some products containing growth factors can help limit the visible signs of aging that result from UV exposure.

"I think it's important to also pay attention to skin hydration," Holcomb says. "Older skin tends to be drier, and dehydrated skin is more prone to environmental damage. So keeping skin moisturized can provide an environment that mimics young skin and probably allows proper free-radical scavenging and immune function of the skin."

In-office procedures can erase some forms of sun damage, including uneven pigmentation and pre-cancers called actinic keratosis, says Jeremy Green, MD, a dermatologist in Miami. He often performs Fraxel (fractional laser) procedures and photodynamic therapy to treat scaly, rough patches of skin that have the potential to develop into cancer.

Before you consider converting to a nocturnal lifestyle, realize you can sustain sun exposure without disastrous consequences. "If you have a healthy immune system, don't fret [about] being outside," Green says. "Just like anything in life, moderation is key."



## Dirty Secret

**"I constantly apply lip balm with no long-term relief. Could my lips have developed a tolerance to it?"**

There's no scientific proof that your lips can develop a tolerance to a lip balm. If your lips remain dry or irritated *after* you've applied a lip balm it may be because the product does not contain the therapeutic moisturizers needed to hydrate your pout.

The best lip balms to look for are ones formulated with humectants (compounds that draw water to the skin), such as glycerin, and occlusives (compounds that prevent water from evaporating from the skin), such as petrolatum.

Petrolatum is by far the most effective occlusive on the market, preventing 98% of water loss from the skin. Others include ceresin (a wax), beeswax, shea butter, and dimethicone (a synthetic silicone-based occlusive.).

Be sure to choose a lip balm with sunscreen to protect your lips from the sun's damaging ultraviolet rays.

—**Fayne L. Frey, MD**, dermatologist, West Nyack, N.Y.,  
Dermatology & Dermatological Surgery

## AISLE DO

"We started using Neutrogena Makeup Remover Towelettes in my practice when we realized soap and water didn't always remove all makeup residue on patients, and we needed their faces clean before undergoing laser procedures. When I saw how effective the wipes were at breaking down oil-based makeup including foundation and mascara, I started using them. These do a phenomenal job at wiping away waterproof formulas while retaining the moisture of the skin—they're actually quite hydrating. After I wash with water and a cleanser, I use a wipe to remove any traces of makeup. I love that one towel cleans my entire face and I don't feel any tightness or stinging, which is common with other wipes. I have eczema, so my skin is sensitive to many topical products."



**PRODUCT PICK**  
**Neutrogena**  
**Makeup Remover**  
**Cleansing Towelettes**  
(\$6.99)

**EXPERT**  
**Sabrina Fabi, MD**  
assistant clinical professor  
of dermatology, University  
of California, San Diego

# Lighten the Load

Each school day, kids lug around backpacks heavy enough to cause back pain. David L. Skaggs, MD, chief of orthopaedic surgery at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and a professor at University of Southern California, offers tips for parents:

## **Weigh it.**

Backpacks shouldn't weigh more than 10% to 20% of a child's body weight. Skaggs says pain is a more accurate gauge; if your child's back is sore, the backpack is overloaded.

## **Pack right.**

Books and other heavy items should rest against your child's back. "Closer to the center of gravity, it's easier to balance."

## **Use lockers.**

Have kids carry only what they need to class and home.

## **Strap in.**

If the pack is too heavy, add waist straps. "They transfer the load from the shoulders onto the hips."

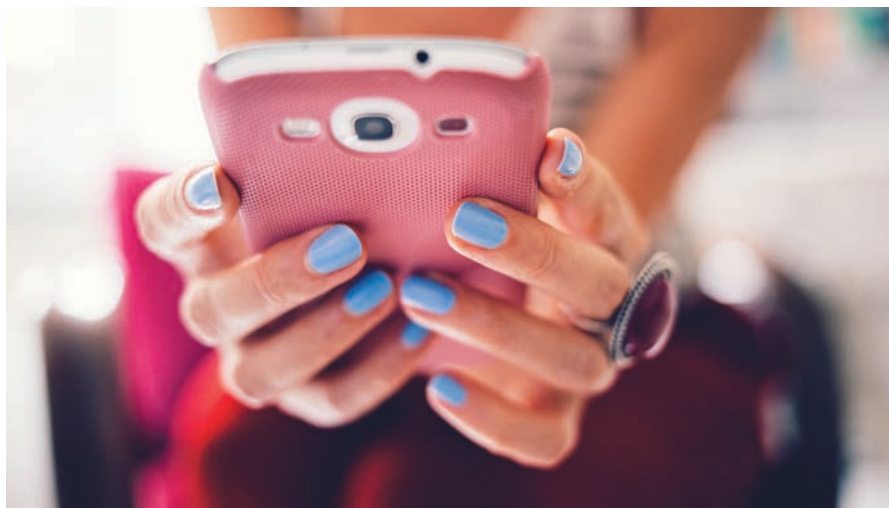
—Stephanie Watson

## PREGNANCY

# High-Tech Moms

WHETHER YOU'RE TRYING TO CONCEIVE, ARE ALREADY EXPECTING, OR HAVE A NEW BUNDLE OF BABY JOY...THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

By Colleen Oakley



For parents-to-be, pregnancy can be a time of wonder, joy—and anxiety. And if it's your first time, you probably have a million questions about the next nine months. Lucky for you, technology is on your side. A plethora of mobile apps can help guide you through every stage of pregnancy, from conception to new motherhood. Download via the App Store or Google Play, or at websites where noted. (Note, however, that no app should replace your doctor for medical advice.)



## Clue

If you're trying to conceive, it helps to know when you're ovulating. The Clue app (free, iPhone and Android, [helloclue.com](http://helloclue.com)) was recently rated as the top menstrual tracking app by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. You enter your average period and cycle length, and the app predicts your fertile window.



## Ovia Fertility

This app (free, iPhone and Android, [ovuline.com](http://ovuline.com)) was developed by Harvard scientists and claims to help women (even those with irregular periods) conceive up to three times faster than the national average.



## WebMD Pregnancy

Once you've conceived, download WebMD Pregnancy (free, iPhone, [webmd.com/pregnancyapp](http://webmd.com/pregnancyapp)) to learn about your developing baby, get organized for prenatal visits, and find doctor-approved advice for each step of your pregnancy.



## Pregnancy +

Pregnancy + (free, iPhone and Android) also keeps track of your pregnancy—from daily details about what your baby is up to in utero, to baby kick counters, to doctor appointment reminders.



SCAN HERE FOR MORE

Get the free **WebMD Pregnancy** app to keep track every day, until that special day.

[LEARN HOW ON PAGE 6](#)



## Positive Pregnancy

For a healthy mind, check out Positive Pregnancy (\$2.99, iPhone and Android), a guided meditation app with relaxation techniques, affirmations, and visualizations that can help relieve the stresses of pregnancy.



## Pregnant Eating

Looking for safety info? Pregnant Eating (free, iPhone) has a searchable database of more than 8,500 foods, plus a guide to what's safe and what's risky.



## MommyMeds

MommyMeds (\$3.99, iPhone and Android, [mommymeds.com](http://mommymeds.com)) features drug safety information.



## The Guys Guide to the Delivery Room

For the dad-to-be, The Guys Guide to the Delivery Room (\$0.99, iPhone) covers all things labor-related, plus suggestions for offering support and comfort.



## MammaBaby

After baby arrives, track first-year milestones and baby's growth, and get new-mom advice from MammaBaby (free, iPhone, [mammababy.lifenstats.com](http://mammababy.lifenstats.com)).



## Mommacise

Mommacise (\$2.99, iPhone, [mommacise.com](http://mommacise.com)) offers simple, detailed workout routines that help you bond with baby, drop extra weight, and fight off postpartum depression.



## WebMD Baby

With WebMD Baby (free, iPhone and Android, [webmd.com/webmdbabyapp](http://webmd.com/webmdbabyapp)), you can get diaper, feeding, and sleep trackers, plus doctor-approved advice for those middle-of-the-night questions.

Reviewed by **Nivin C.S. Todd, MD**  
WebMD Medical Reviewer





Get the **WebMD Baby App** to track your baby's sleeping, feeding, growth, and more.

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## BABY TALK

# Say Cheese

THE BEST ORAL CARE ACCESSORIES FOR BABY'S FIRST TEETH

*By Stephanie Watson*



Even before babies have teeth, their mouths need care to protect against damage and decay later in life. Here's some expert advice:

### Pacifiers

A pacifier won't hurt jaw development or tooth alignment, provided he doesn't use it constantly or stick to it for too long. Robert Delarosa, DDS, a pediatric dentist in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, says he prefers a pacifier to thumb sucking because children tend to stop using the pacifier sooner.

When shopping for a pacifier, safety is key. "You don't want any pieces com-

ing apart, and you don't want babies swallowing anything," Delarosa says. "I would look for something that's solid and in one piece."

Pacifier nipples come in a few different shapes, from the rounder bottle type to flattened orthodontic versions with a wider tip. Orthodontic pacifiers are supposed to keep your baby's jaws in proper alignment, but Delarosa says that the frequency, intensity, and duration of sucking are more likely to affect your child's bite than a pacifier type. Use whichever one your baby prefers.

Pacifiers are available in latex or silicone. The material probably doesn't

make much of a difference to your child's teeth, but latex nipples aren't dishwasher safe. You'll have to wash them by hand to prevent bacteria buildup.

### Tooth Care

You'll want to clean your baby's gums in the first few months. This is a low-tech operation; a dampened piece of gauze or washcloth works fine, Delarosa says.

Or you can buy finger cots, which you slip over your finger and rub along the gums. "That also helps with teething," he says. "It makes the gums feel a little better."

The dental care regimen needs to get more serious once tooth buds appear. "As soon as teeth come in they will be targets for plaque," Delarosa says. "You want to brush two times a day." Use any children's toothbrush with a small head and soft bristles. Once your child is a little older, a brush with a musical timer can help with learning how long to brush—two minutes at a time.

Toothpaste recommendations have changed in the last couple of years. Today, the American Dental Association advises using a fluoride paste as soon as the first tooth appears. Delarosa says any brand is OK. Use a smear of toothpaste about the size of a grain of rice until age 3, and then a pea-sized amount from ages 3 to 6.

Don't forget to floss, which you should start to do as soon as baby's first teeth come in side by side. Disposable dental floss holders will make the job easier on both of you. "Go in between the teeth gently," Delarosa suggests.



## ASK YOUR PEDIATRIC DENTIST

1. Are my baby's teeth erupting normally?
2. What signs of a tooth problem should I look out for?
3. What can I do to prevent tooth decay?
4. What foods can protect my baby's oral health?
5. Are fluoride drops needed in my water district?

Reviewed by **Eric Yabu, DDS**  
WebMD Medical Reviewer



## KIDS' HEALTH

# Weighty Matters

GET KIDS STARTED EARLY ON GOOD HABITS TO CURB OBESITY

By Lauren Paige Kennedy

● For school-age kids, ● maintaining a healthy weight is as important as earning good grades—maybe more so. That's because overweight children and teens may struggle with issues that are more stressful than pop quizzes and too much homework. Many develop poor self-esteem, negative body image, depression, and a lifetime of serious health problems, says Jill Castle, MS, a registered dietitian, author, and childhood nutrition expert.

As the school year begins, Castle advises parents to do their homework when it comes to establishing healthy eating routines and expectations.

She says one of the best practices parents can adopt is structure. "Encourage your kids to eat breakfast regardless of their age," she suggests. "Eating breakfast every morning sets hunger and fullness cycles into motion. Often, kids skip breakfast, and teens either skip or go very light on lunch, too—and then come



home starving. This leads to their eating everything in sight and making poor choices later on."

Regular meal and snack times keep children satiated, so they're less likely to overindulge when it truly is time to eat. "Make sure to

feed your kids a balance of lean proteins, carbohydrates, including whole grains, and healthy fats," Castle says.

No food should be off-limits, she believes, not even fast food or occasional sweets. "Instead, incorporate treats with balance. For

instance, allow fast food no more than once or twice per week." Kids who are overly controlled are not good at self-regulating; they simply seek out the banned items at friends' houses. "Your job is to teach them a healthy attitude toward food," Castle says. "Don't shame them."

In addition to structure and balance, Castle reminds parents to offer clear guidance. "I find that many parents aren't having 'the conversation' with their children. Many will pack a lunch. Few actually say, 'I expect you to eat your sandwich and fruit *before* you eat the cookies.'"

But eating right is only one part of maintaining a healthy weight. "Kids require a full hour of vigorous, sweaty exercise every day, with their heart rates up," Castle says. "It can accumulate across gym, recess, and sports," but make sure your children get the full 60 minutes, even on weekends.

Good sleep is key, too. "Children who average less than six hours at night tend to have difficulty managing their weight. Aim for seven hours, at a minimum," she advises. "Sleep is when children grow."



## FAST FACTS: CHILDHOOD OBESITY

### A growing issue.

About 1 in 3 American kids and teens is overweight or obese—nearly triple the childhood obesity rate in 1963.

### Complications.

Childhood obesity causes health problems that doctors didn't used to see until adulthood: type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and elevated cholesterol levels.

### Problems later.

Excess weight at young ages has been linked to higher rates of early death in adulthood.

Reviewed by  
Roy Benaroch, MD  
WebMD Medical Reviewer

## PARENTING

## Is Your Teen a Vaper?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NEW SMOKING DEVICES

By Lisa Marshall



● With youth cigarette use at an all-time low thanks to price hikes, smoking bans, and graphic public-service campaigns, today's parents may assume they don't have to worry much about their kids lighting up.

But are they “vaping”?

Every parent should broach this subject with their teenager, say public health experts, as the popularity of electronic cigarettes and other vaping devices grows exponentially among minors. In 2015, government surveys show, 16% of high schoolers and 5% of middle-schoolers used e-cigarettes (up from 1.5% and .6% in 2011), making them by far the most popular tobacco product among youth. To curb the trend, the FDA this summer banned

their sale to those under 18. But some fear they'll still be easily accessible online or via older friends, and much damage has already been done.

“They have normalized smoking again for a group of young people who had begun to see regular cigarettes as no longer cool,” says Karen Wilson, MD, MPH, head of Pediatric Hospital Medicine at Children's Hospital Colorado in Aurora.

#### Not just “harmless vapor.”

Unlike conventional cigarettes, e-cigarettes use a battery to heat up an often nicotine-infused liquid and turn it into an inhalable vapor.

Because they contain fewer carcinogens and don't emit the carbon monoxide that comes with combustion,

they are probably less hazardous than conventional cigarettes, says Stanford University tobacco researcher Judith Prochaska, PhD, MPH. But e-cigarette vapor is not harmless. It's made from propylene glycol, a lung irritant that can affect behavior and the central nervous system with prolonged exposure. It also typically includes chemical flavoring, and with more than 7,000 largely unregulated varieties—from cotton candy to Katy Perry cherry—it's impossible to know if all are safe, she says. Animal studies show certain varieties can be toxic to cells. One recent study by Harvard University researchers found that 75% of flavored e-cigarette liquids contained diacetyl, a chemical linked to a debilitating respiratory disease known as popcorn lung.

While cases are rare, several dozen e-cigarette users have reported that their batteries overheated and exploded, either causing fire or burning their mouths or tongues. Meanwhile, roughly 4,000 calls have been made to poison control centers from parents whose children under 6 drank liquid nicotine intended for e-cigarette refills. Four went into a coma, two had a seizure, and one died.

#### A gateway to cigarette addiction?

Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, and young brains are particularly vulnerable to nicotine's addictive properties (90% of adult cigarette smokers started before age 18). One recent study found that ninth graders who use electronic cigarettes are about 2.5 times as likely to smoke traditional cigarettes, and many used e-cigarettes first.

“You are exposing young, developing brains to an addictive substance that alters its reward system and may set them up to be a long-term nicotine user,” Prochaska says. “It's just not worth the risk.”



## BY THE NUMBERS: TEENS AND SMOKING

**+900%**

E-cigarette use by high schoolers jumped from 1.5% to 16% in the last five years: a 900% increase.

**3 million**

Number of middle schoolers and high schoolers who use electronic cigarettes.

**28%**

Percentage of teens who smoked conventional cigarettes in 1996; 8% smoke them today.

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



Read **E-cigarettes 101**,  
an article at WebMD.com.

LEARN HOW ON PAGE 6





## PET HEALTH

# Back to Pet School

FROM PUPPY PRESCHOOL TO AGILITY CLASSES, TRAINING CAN TURN A DISOBEDIENT DOG INTO A MODEL STUDENT

By Jodi Helmer



*You can find a training class for every need, whether you have a new puppy or a dog that needs to correct bad habits.*

Fall is here, and kids aren't the only ones who need to go back to school. Education is also important for domestic animals. In fact, "behavior problems are the No. 1 reason people relinquish their pets," says Sandra Sawchuk, DVM, clinical instructor at the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine in Madison. "A well-trained dog makes life easier for him and his owners."

You can find a training class for every need, whether you have a puppy that needs to learn the basics, a well-trained dog that loves learning new things, or a dog that requires remedial education to correct bad habits. With classes that range from group programs at pet stores to one-on-one sessions at home, how do you choose which one is right for your pooch? Sawchuk offers some guidance:

**If your dog needs to:** *Learn the basics*

**Sign up for:** *Puppy preschool*

These group lessons are designed for puppies under 6 months old. Dog parents, with the guidance of trainers, help their four-legged charges learn basic commands like "sit," "stay," "come," and "leave it." As Sawchuk explains, "These classes are structured opportunities for puppies to learn obedience, get mental stimulation, and provide an outlet for their energy."

Look for small classes (five dogs or fewer per trainer) where trainers use positive reinforcement such as treats and praise. Make sure all "students" are required to have their first series of vaccinations before coming to class.

**If your dog needs to:** *Burn off energy*

**Sign up for:** *Agility classes*

Dogs learn to navigate obstacle courses, weave through poles, run through tunnels, and jump over hurdles. All are done off-leash, so Sawchuk recommends agility training only for dogs that already know basic obedience commands. "It's a great activity for dogs with a lot of energy because it requires both mental

and physical focus,” she says. While border collies and Australian shepherds are known for their agility skills, even energetic small dogs can participate. “You see dogs of every size and shape doing agility,” Sawchuk says.

**If your dog needs to:** *Work on a specific skill*

**Sign up for:** *One-on-one training*

For dogs that did well in obedience classes but still need help with breaking bad habits like pulling on a leash or jumping on people, one-on-one training is a good option. And, unlike group classes that follow a training curriculum, these sessions are based on your dog’s specific needs.

“It’s also good for dogs that need some in-home training to get ready for group classes,” Sawchuk says. “It can set the tone and get the dog on the right track.” One-on-one training is also a good choice for dogs that tend to be aggressive or anxious and may not do well in a group setting.

**If your dog needs to:** *Correct a behavioral issue*

**Sign up for:** *A session with a behaviorist*

Sometimes it’s not just a simple lack of manners that causes dogs to jump, bark, or act out. For dogs with issues like aggression, fear, or separation anxiety, calling in a veterinary behaviorist—a board-certified vet with specialized knowledge in animal behavior—to diagnose the issue can help.

“Some dogs need medical management as well as behavior management,” Sawchuk says.

Veterinary behaviorists are trained to determine whether the problem is caused by a lack of training or another cause (like past abuse) and provide solutions to correct the problem.

Reviewed by **Will Draper, DVM**  
WebMD Medical Reviewer



## CAT COLLEGE

YOU WON'T FIND A LOT OF GROUP TRAINING SESSIONS FOR CATS, SAYS SANDRA SAWCHUK, DVM. NOT SURPRISED?

“Cats don’t do well in structured group environments,” says Sawchuk. “Dogs do well in training because they want to please their owners,” she explains. “Cats learn new behaviors for their own reasons, not because we want them to.”

When it comes to training cats, homeschooling is the best option. Sawchuk suggests clicker training, a form of positive reinforcement that rewards cats for good behavior with a “click” from a miniature noisemaker, followed by a treat. Over time, cats learn which behaviors are reinforced and continue to model them.

Since cats are stubborn, using non-physical negative reinforcement often works well. For example, placing cans of compressed air outfitted with motion detectors in places cats aren’t welcome, such as countertops and furniture, will startle misbehaving felines, teaching them to avoid those areas.

And remember, cats need mental and physical stimulation. “Providing cat trees, scratching posts, and toys will help keep cats occupied and out of trouble.”



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**SOLEDAD O'BRIEN** cares deeply about health and well-being—especially that of her family and, finally, herself.

BY GINA SHAW | PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN DERBALA

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# SO LE DAD STRONG

**WHEN SOLEDAD O'BRIEN'S SON JACKSON**, now 11, was in kindergarten, his teacher asked the class to write a story about something that had happened to them after school the day before. But for some reason, Jackson instead wrote a vivid tale about aliens coming down from space. "Everyone in the class was laughing at him," O'Brien recalls.

Things like that happened to Jackson a lot. He'd be playing ball with his friends and when someone said, "Throw the ball to Jackson," he'd be looking in another direction and get hit by the ball. He wouldn't notice when conversations changed, or when the group decided to





play a new game. His twin brother, Charles, didn't seem to have the same issues, and O'Brien and her husband, investment banker Bradley Raymond, struggled to figure out what to do. "He kept getting really upset at school and having these meltdowns, and we didn't know what was going on," O'Brien says.

Then a schoolwide hearing test when Jackson was in first grade solved the mystery. "Most of the other kids in his class passed the hearing test, but he failed," O'Brien says. "We took him to an audiologist for further testing, and it turned out that he had lost about 80% of his hearing." Instead of being devastated, O'Brien says her initial reaction was "absolute pure relief. It finally made sense. We were so happy to now be able to help him in a thoughtful way. It was such a struggle for him, and now we could start getting educated and find out what to do for him."

### Kids and Hearing Loss

As a newborn, Jackson had passed the hospital's standard hearing screening test. But many children who pass that screening develop hearing impairment later on. "One or two of every 1,000 children shows some level of hearing impairment in the newborn hearing screening. But by the time children reach school age, the number is about five to 10 per thousand," says Ryan McCreery, PhD, a pediatric audiologist and director of the Center for Audiology at Boys Town National Research Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska.

"Usually, the first signs of hearing loss in that age range are exactly the types of things that Soledad is describing," McCreery says. "When parents and teachers talk to the child one on one, they seem to hear fine. But in the classroom or on the playground, there's a lot of noise and reverberation, and the child can't hear well, so they fall apart."

Jackson's hearing has continued to decline since his initial diagnosis. O'Brien says that he's now lost about 95% of his hearing and wears two very strong hearing aids. "[They] work very well, but he's also now being worked up for a cochlear implant," she adds. Cochlear implants are surgically implanted electronic devices that bypass the normal hearing process to give a sense of sound to people who are deaf or severely hard of hearing.

Meanwhile, the family has developed strategies to help Jackson build confidence and participate at school. "He likes to contribute in class, but the teacher doesn't just call on him," O'Brien says.

"Instead, she'll tell him, 'When we're on the carpet later, I'm going to ask you for your two ideas about X.' It allows him to know that when you call on him, he's understood what you've said. We're also educating the school every step of the way."

### Teens and Stress

Kids' health issues, not just her son's, are particularly important to O'Brien, who anchored CNN's *American Morning* and *Starting Point* before launching her own production company, Starfish Media Group, in 2013. She has won three Emmys and two George Foster Peabody Awards for her reporting, and earned the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Goodermote Humanitarian Award for her reporting on Hurricane Katrina and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Recently, she partnered with WebMD to interview high school students for a three-part video series on teens and stress. The topic is something she says she understands all too personally.

"My daughter Cecilia, who just turned 14 the other day, was putting in four hours a day on homework. And she's very focused—it wasn't two hours of homework and two hours FaceTiming her friends. We asked the school what to do, and they said, 'Have her stop after an hour.' But that didn't seem to address the bigger problem. The final straw was getting a call from her at 1 a.m. when I was in Los Angeles—so it was 4 a.m. in New York—and she was still working on a lab report and crying. I told her, 'Go to bed. Write a note to your teacher that you're not turning it in today. This is ridiculous.' So when WebMD asked me to cover the teens and stress story, I thought, 'This is the life I'm leading right now!'"

What's the solution? "I think there's a healthy medium between making sure kids are learning and not stressing them out," she says. "Scientific evidence shows that stress interferes with your ability to learn. Practical teaching hasn't caught up to neuroscience, and it has to. We know that kids need to work in teams, to be collaborative, to have their ideas nurtured, and not just have piles of homework."

### A Wake-up Call

While she was focusing so intently on her family's health and on reporting public health issues, O'Brien spared little time for her own health. In 2013, during her last year at CNN, the pace finally caught up with her. She found herself becoming forgetful. And exhaustion was overwhelming her.

#### NOW HEAR THIS

If you suspect your child has hearing loss, what should you do?

Trust your instincts. "A normal newborn hearing screening can sometimes lead parents to discount their intuition," says pediatric audiologist Ryan McCreery, PhD. If you think your toddler or preschooler isn't hearing things as they should, "a hearing test is inexpensive and not time-consuming, and can give you peace of mind."

See a certified audiologist, preferably one who works with an ENT (ear, nose, and throat) physician. Look for a practice that has experience working with children, McCreery says. Search online for the EHDI-PALS (Early Hearing Detection & Intervention—Pediatric Audiology Links to Services) system, run by the CDC.

Connect with Hands & Voices, an online parent-run organization dedicated to supporting families of children who are hard of hearing. "Other parents who've had the same experiences can be amazing resources for families on what to expect, what works, and what doesn't work," McCreery says.





**SOLEDAD'S RULES TO LIVE BY**

On one recent day, Soledad O'Brien traveled to four states within 24 hours. With hectic days more common than not on her calendar, how does she stay healthy?

**"Don't eat like a 14-year-old boy."**

Simply aiming for a more balanced diet has improved her health dramatically, she says. She goes light on carbohydrates, and since she isn't a big red-meat eater, dials up other proteins, like beans and eggs. "I'm Cuban. The black bean is the greatest thing in the history of forever."

**Keep fueled on the go.**

In her "messy" hand-bag at all times are a single-serving pouch of almond butter and a chewy fruit and veggie snack called Veggie-Go's. "They sound disgusting but they're actually great—and I'm very picky," she says.

**Protect your sleep.**

"After all the reporting I've done on sleep, I finally realized that I need to get more sleep myself!" she says. "My kids are now old enough to put themselves to bed, and I'm putting myself to bed at 9:30."

**Exercise your way.**

For O'Brien, the key to keeping up with exercise was finding something she really wanted to do. "I try to get on the treadmill or elliptical every day, but my favorite thing is my Bikram yoga class three days a week," she says.

**Just say no.**

TV producer Shonda Rhimes "wrote a book about her 'year of yes,' saying yes to things she was afraid of," O'Brien says. "I turn 50 this year, and I'm giving myself a year of no: Turning down those things that are not integral to what's important to me."

"I was just crazy tired. We had these glass tables on the set and I would put my head down and not be able to pick it back up, the glass felt so cool and such a relief."

She finally sought a doctor's advice. "One of the things he did was measure my thyroid levels. On my anti-thyroid antibodies, I was told a high level is 50. My number was something like 2,450! It was crazy." O'Brien found out that she had Hashimoto's thyroiditis, an autoimmune disorder in which the body attacks and destroys the thyroid gland over time. "It turns out that my dad also had it, and there are apparently genetic links with the disease."

O'Brien began taking daily doses of Synthroid and Cytomel, synthetic versions of two hormones normally made by the thyroid. "Within two weeks, I felt 100 times better. Obviously, I was still tired, working on an early morning show, but I didn't feel like I had been hit by a truck anymore," she says.

As many as 20% of women O'Brien's age (she turns 50 this month) have the elevated anti-thyroid antibodies that can signal Hashimoto's thyroiditis, but not all will have symptoms—like exhaustion and foggy brain function. Other conditions, like perimenopausal changes, sleep disturbances, or prediabetes could be to be blame, says Jennifer Mammen, MD, PhD, an endocrinologist at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore.

As it happened, O'Brien also found out from additional testing that her blood sugar was elevated, putting her at risk of developing diabetes. "I wasn't diabetic yet, but my levels were way at the upper end of normal," she says. She began working with a nutritionist and reforming her admittedly unhealthy ways of eating. "For a year and a half now, my blood sugar has been well within the normal range again."

Getting her health back on track has given O'Brien renewed energy and drive for the many projects she's pursuing through her Starfish Media Group, like *The War Comes Home: The New Battlefield*, a documentary that follows two veterans of the Iraq War who are on the brink of suicide. The film was screened at several hundred theaters in May, followed by O'Brien's taped discussion with community leaders, veterans' affairs experts, and advocates about how the country serves—or does not serve—veterans facing post-traumatic stress disorder.

"I find incredible satisfaction and joy in doing things for other people, and in bringing attention to things that don't get a lot of coverage," she says.

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

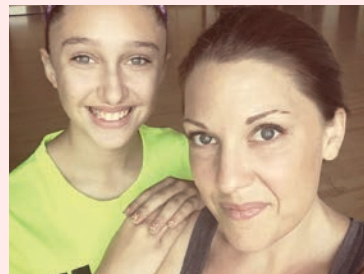
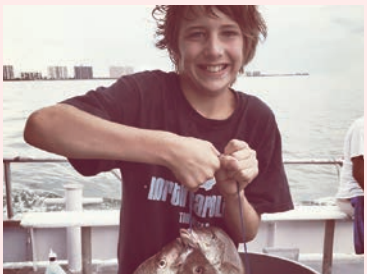
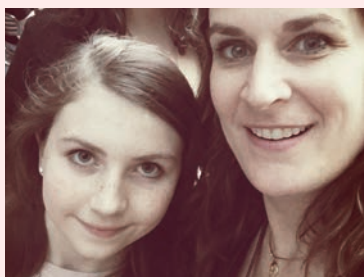
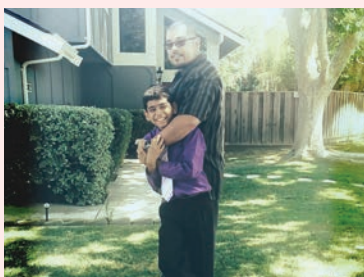


Check out **Help for Parents of Children With Hearing Loss** at WebMD.com.

[LEARN HOW ON PAGE 6](#)

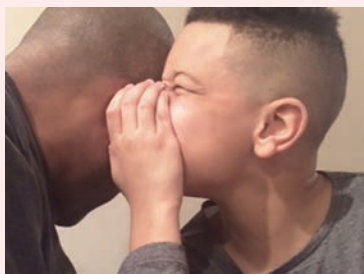
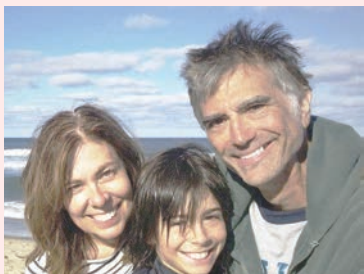
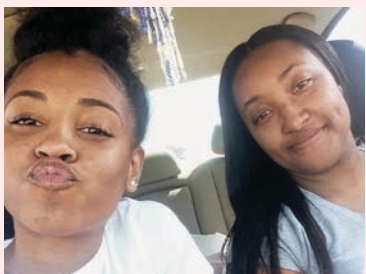




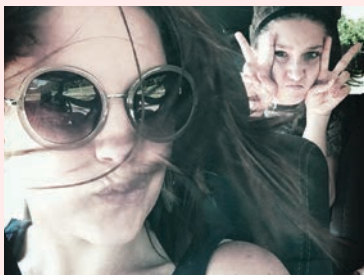
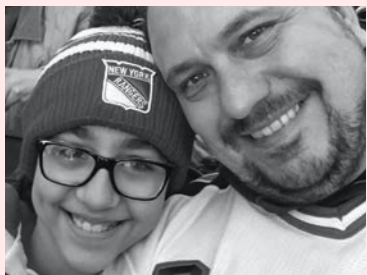
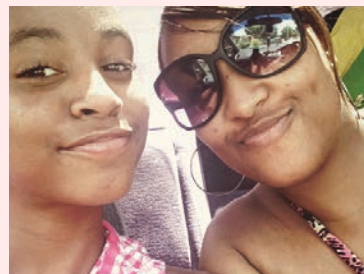


# F T

## FACE TIME



**How to talk with  
your teens—even  
when they try  
to shut you out**  
**BY GINA SHAW**





**IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY** that you had a bubbly third-grader, bouncing into the house with news of her day. But then the teen years hit (or the tweens), and now she comes in, heads straight to her room, and shuts the door, not to be seen or heard from until dinner.

Don't take it personally. She's not mad at you (probably), and she doesn't hate you (almost certainly). In fact, she's doing exactly what she's supposed to be doing—learning how to separate herself from you.

"When kids are little, they want to be like their parents, and very close to them," says Diana Divecha, PhD, a developmental psychologist at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. "But puberty triggers a lot of changes in the brain, signaling that it's time to work on becoming an individual, not dependent on parents."

To parents, it can feel like they're being pushed away, but that's not true. "Kids want to stay connected. They want to stay in conversation with the adults that matter to them about really important things," Divecha says.

When she asked her graduate students to write essays about their adolescence, she says she was surprised at how many wrote about how painful it was that their parents became more distant as they became teenagers. "It's so important that we talk to our kids and stay connected with them during these transitions," Divecha says.

But how? Talking to a teenager can sometimes feel like interrogating an undercover agent. Try these six strategies:

## 1 Avoid the appointment.

Don't make your teen feel pressured with a "sit down" conversation. Instead, approach important topics when you're both engaged in a parallel activity, like washing dishes or walking the dog. "In the car is another good time," says Laura Markham, PhD, a clinical psychologist and author of *Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How to Stop Yelling and Start Connecting*. "You aren't looking right at each other so it's less intense."

## 2 Take advantage of transitions.

Teens are so busy, it's hard to get one-on-one time with them. But when soccer season ends, or the school musical has just wrapped up, your child may have a short break in the frenzy of activity. "That's a great opportunity to connect," says Markham. "Take your child out to lunch, or shopping for new shoes, or to work out together. Look for opportunities to fit in that protected time, just the two of you, where you can casually chat about whatever they're thinking about."

## 3 Make it fun.

"Lay down enjoyable pathways of connection that aren't all about intensity and problem solving," Divecha recommends. For her family, that's music: they share their favorite music and bands, talk about them, and go to concerts together. For your family, it may be hiking, skiing, or board games. Many of the best conversations arise naturally when you're absorbed in doing something together.

## 4 Manage your reactions.

If you're talking about a weighty topic, like drugs or sexting, overreacting is a surefire way to shut your teen down. "Kids will tune into what you feel as much as what you say, so get hold of your emotions and relax," Divecha says. Turn off the "alarm" mode (even if you're freaking out inside) and actively listen. Let them know you heard what they're saying: "That sounds like it was embarrassing," or "I hear how frustrated you are."

## 5 Practice with light topics.

Don't introduce a big topic every time you have a one-on-one encounter with your child. "They'll start avoiding you like the plague," Markham says. Ask questions about less-serious things. "That was a lot of work, the play you were just in. I never did a play like that. How did you end up feeling about it?" And don't be invested in the answer. Use these "low investment" conversations to teach them they can trust you not to overreact.

## 6 Try the magic words.

Hint: They're not "please" and "thank you." Markham says the magic words for talking with your child are "I wonder." If your teen is telling you about getting bullied at school, or fears he can't handle his AP chemistry workload, resist the temptation to jump in and solve problems for him. Instead, try saying, "I wonder what you could do about that?" or "I wonder how you could handle that?"

## CURTAIL RISKY BEHAVIORS

What about risky behaviors like coming home drunk or attending a party with drugs and alcohol present without your permission? Divecha advises approaching these issues preventively and proactively. "Give them freedom where they can have it, and be clear what the non-negotiables are," she says.

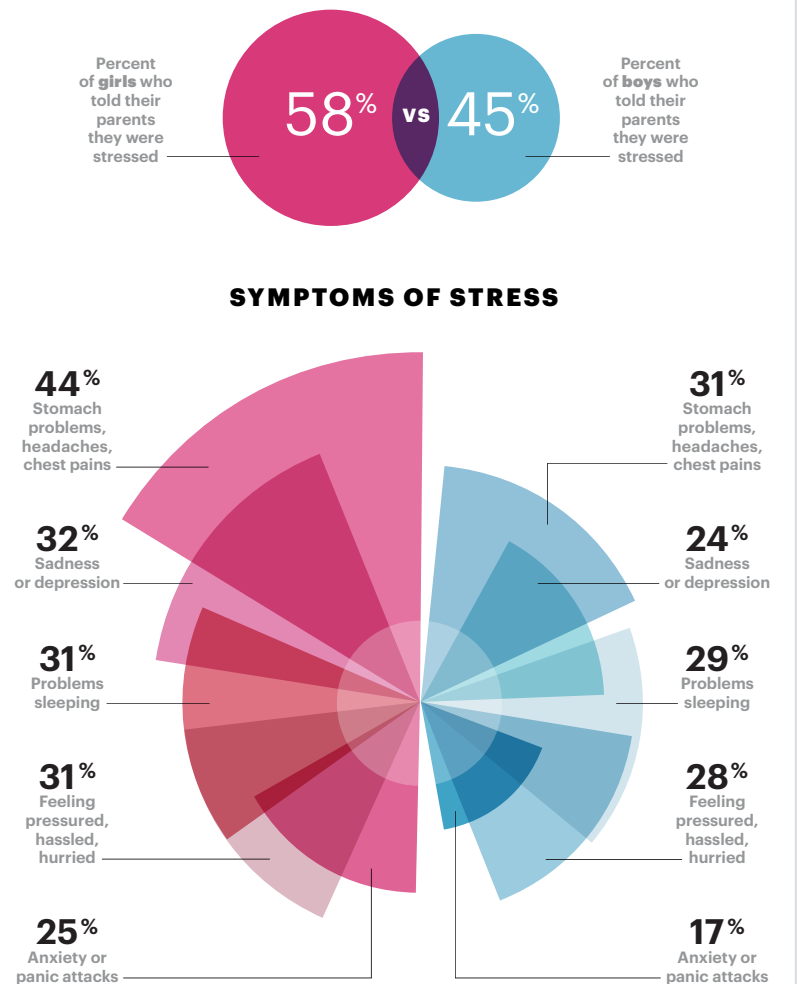
For example, one non-negotiable might be that your teen can never get into a car if the driver has been drinking, and will face enormous consequences (whatever your family's brand of consequences may be) if that happens. But offer teens a contract: If they ever find themselves in that situation, they can call you and you will get them home safely, anywhere, anytime, without argument or question.

"Provide them safe paths like this where they can get around your 'non-negotiables,'" Divecha advises.

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

# STRESSED OUT!

According to a WebMD survey of 579 parents of kids ages 13 to 17 years old, more than half report that their teens are dealing with moderate to high levels of stress. Girls were more likely than boys to tell their parents they were stressed.



The top reported culprit of teen stress is homework, by a wide margin. The next-biggest stressors, according to the survey, are conflicts with parents, friends, getting into a good college, poor body image, and dating/relationships.

What's a concerned parent to do? Talking to your teens is the most important thing. Just remember: "Telling kids what to do is a small part of the battle. Prepare kids to know what to do to manage stress," says Kenneth Ginsburg, MD, MSEd, author of *Raising Kids to Thrive*. Ginsburg suggests practicing positive habits around them, helping them solve or avoid problems, and showing them how to use things like exercise, nutrition, and relaxation to manage their emotions. After all, stress continues into adulthood, and so can healthy coping behaviors.

KEY: **GIRLS** ● **BOYS** ●



Check out the WebMD.com special report **Teens and Stress** for more about this common problem and what parents can do.  
[LEARN HOW ON PAGE 6](#)



## TABLE TOPICS

One way to explore tough topics is through lively discussion at the dinner table. "Family dinners need to be a place where there are interesting discussions," says psychologist Laura Markham, PhD. Pick one or two topics and use them to launch a real conversation. It's fine to express your opinions, as long as you don't lecture. "Your kids want to know what you think," Markham says. "But be sure to listen to what they have to say, with an open mind." A few possibilities include:

**1** "You know what? I saw a story in the newspaper about a lawsuit against some kids who were sending around a text with a photo of one of their friends naked. What do you think about that?"

**2** "How do you think ordinary peoples' bodies compare to the models and actors on TV? How does it make you feel to watch them?"

**3** "Do you think many kids cheat at your school? Is it ever OK to cheat in school, or sports, or business? What about if nobody ever finds out?"

**4** "What would you do if you were at a party and someone passed out from drinking too much? Have you ever thought that I drank too much or acted differently after drinking?"



# Better With Basil

*By Erin O'Donnell*

*Recipes by  
Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD, LD*

If the herb garden held a popularity contest, basil would likely win first place. This aromatic herb is a late-summer favorite, especially when paired with ripe tomatoes or blended into pesto. These lovely leaves are surprisingly wholesome too.

“We sometimes forget about herbs and the punch they pack from a health perspective,” says Candice Candelaria, MS, RDN, a nutritionist at the University of Arizona Integrative Health Center in Phoenix. “Basil not only enhances the flavor of foods, but you’re getting some nutritive benefit as well.” The herb contains small amounts of vitamin A (good for vision), vitamin C (important for wound healing), and vitamin K (key to blood clotting), as well as flavonoids, plant compounds that counter the oxidative damage implicated in heart disease and aging.

Researchers also report that volatile oils in basil have antibacterial effects, and early studies suggest one volatile oil, eugenol, may also fight inflammation.





Store basil in a plastic bag with a damp paper towel, and keep it in the refrigerator.

## That's a Wrap

These refreshing, Asian-inspired wraps feature amazing crunch and flavor. The recipe calls for cellophane noodles, also known as bean thread vermicelli, which are made of bean paste or sweet potato starch and sold in Asian groceries or the ethnic section of large supermarkets.

### Basil Lettuce Wraps with Grilled Shrimp and Avocado

Makes 4 servings

#### Ingredients

- 1 lb large shrimp, shelled and deveined
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 large avocado, peeled, seeded, and diced
- ½ cup shredded carrots
- ½ cup shredded jicama
- 6 oz cellophane noodles, cooked and drained
- ½ cup fresh basil, cut into thin ribbons
- 8 large Bibb lettuce leaves, washed, dried
- ¼ cup chopped, unsalted peanuts

#### Sauce:

- 3 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely minced
- 1 tsp honey

#### Directions

1. Preheat grill to medium high. Thread shrimp onto wooden skewers that have been soaked in water; spray both sides with cooking spray. Grill shrimp 2–4 minutes per side until they turn pink and opaque. Set aside.
2. Make sauce: In a small bowl, combine lime juice, olive oil, rice vinegar, green onions, garlic, and honey. Set aside.
3. To assemble wraps, lay 4 lettuce leaves flat and fill with shrimp, carrots, jicama, cellophane noodles, basil, and avocado. Sprinkle with peanuts and drizzle with sauce. Roll up lettuce leaves burrito style and serve.

#### Per serving

413 calories, 27 g protein, 44 g carbohydrate, 15 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 170 mg cholesterol, 5 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 331 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 30%

## Salad Days

The addition of basil and walnuts provides a tasty twist on traditional chicken salad. Serve the chicken salad on whole grain bread, or use it to top salad greens.

### Basil Walnut Chicken Salad

Makes 4 servings

#### Ingredients

- ½ cup light mayonnaise
- ¼ cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 4 tbsp chopped fresh basil
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- Dash of sea salt
- Fresh ground pepper
- 4 (4-oz) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
- ½ cup chopped, toasted walnuts
- 2 large celery stalks, chopped

#### Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine mayonnaise, yogurt, basil, lemon juice and zest, salt, and pepper.
2. Add chicken, walnuts, and celery and stir until all ingredients are well combined.
3. Refrigerate at least 1 hour. Serve on a bed of baby spinach or lettuce, or on whole grain bread.

#### Per serving

325 calories, 30 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 20 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 75 mg cholesterol, 1 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 310 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 54%





## Package Deal

Cooking salmon in foil packets keeps it moist and minimizes mess. To save time, you can also prepare the packets up to a day in advance and store them in the refrigerator until you're ready to cook them.

### Lemon Basil Salmon Packets

*Makes 4 servings*

#### Ingredients

- 4 (12-inch-long) pieces aluminum foil
- 1 medium lemon, sliced into 8 disks
- 4 (5-oz) salmon filets
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp sea salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 16 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tbsp capers, drained
- 16 basil leaves, sliced into thin ribbons
- 1 tbsp olive oil

#### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F, or heat grill to medium high.
2. On each sheet of foil, place 2 slices of lemon and one piece of salmon. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Top with cherry tomatoes, capers, and basil, and drizzle with olive oil.
3. Fold and crimp foil to seal the packet. Leave space for steam. May be prepared in advance and refrigerated.
4. Bake 20–25 minutes on a baking tray or grill 11–14 minutes.
5. Place each packet on a plate. Cut packets open and serve.



Basil grows in home gardens from late spring till mid-autumn.

#### Per serving

359 calories, 31 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 24 g fat (5 g saturated fat), 82 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 2 g sugar, 300 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 59%

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

WebMD.com

### What's Cooking!

Thousands of people turn to WebMD.com for meal inspiration every day. Here are the most-clicked recipes.\*

**Blueberry Crumble**

**Zesty Dill Potato Salad**

**Lemon Dill Chicken**

**Mini Pavlovas**

**Portabella Tacos**

\*as of July 1, 2016

### PANCAKES YOU'LL FLIP FOR

TWO-INGREDIENT PANCAKES YOU CAN MAKE ANY DAY

Think there's no way a pancake breakfast can be part of a (healthy) weekday morning? Say hello to your new favorite recipe. It's only two ingredients—eggs and bananas—and you can make it in minutes. As an added bonus, it's way more satiating than regular pancakes,

### BREAKFAST 411



thanks to the protein and fat from the eggs.

**Here's what you do:** Mash a banana, add two eggs, and whisk together. Heat a large skillet over medium heat; add a bit of oil or cooking spray to prevent sticking.

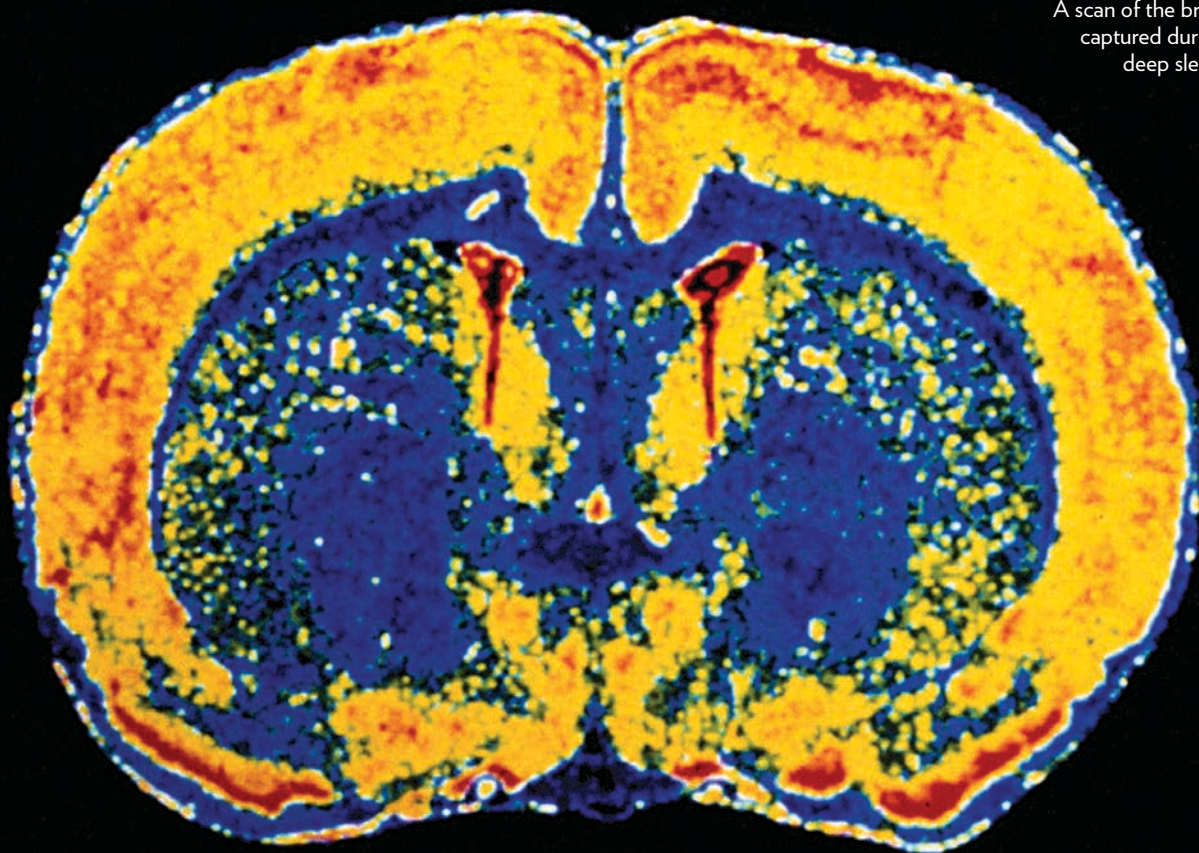
Drop the batter in heaping tablespoons onto the pan, and cook until the edges begin to set and the bottom is brown (about a minute). And...you're done.

Feel free to gussy up your pancakes with extra ingredients. Add to the batter: vanilla extract, cinnamon, or cocoa powder. Sprinkle on top while they're cooking: chopped nuts, chia or flax seeds, unsweetened shredded coconut, blueberries, or raspberries. —*Kerri-Ann Jennings*

# WebMD<sup>®</sup> Checkup

TAKING CARE, LIVING WELL

A scan of the brain captured during deep sleep.



## Sleep Your Way to Better Health

Back to school means back to early bedtimes and early rising. And what are you staying up so late for anyway? Sure, you have your reasons—to finish a movie, cram for a test, or wait for the kids to get home. But it's not natural. Human beings are the only mammals that intentionally stay awake when they feel like sleeping.

Getting to bed early does your body good. A recent study found that earlier bedtimes lead to healthier eating and more physical activity during the day. Night owls, even when they got plenty of sleep, ate more fast food and got less exercise.

And once you get to sleep, it's best to stay asleep for seven to nine hours if you're older than 18. Newborns up to 3 months old need 14 to 17 hours of sleep. Infants up to 11 months need 12 to 15. Toddlers should get 11 to 14 hours. Preschoolers should snooze for 10 to 13. School-age kids up to age 13 need nine to 11 hours of shut-eye. Teenagers up to age 17 need eight to 10.

In a study of more than 22,000 adults, those who slept the longest each night were more likely to be in excellent health, free from depression, obesity, and heart disease.

Put simply, more sleep equals better health. —Sonya Collins



Reviewed by **Brunilda Nazario, MD**, WebMD Lead Medical Editor

## BY THE NUMBERS

# MENOPAUSE

FACTS AND STATS ABOUT TOP HEALTH ISSUES

By *Heather Hatfield*

## 12 MONTHS

Women **reach menopause** after this long without a menstrual period



## 55%

Percentage of **women who don't treat menopause symptoms**, including vaginal dryness, night sweats, and hot flashes

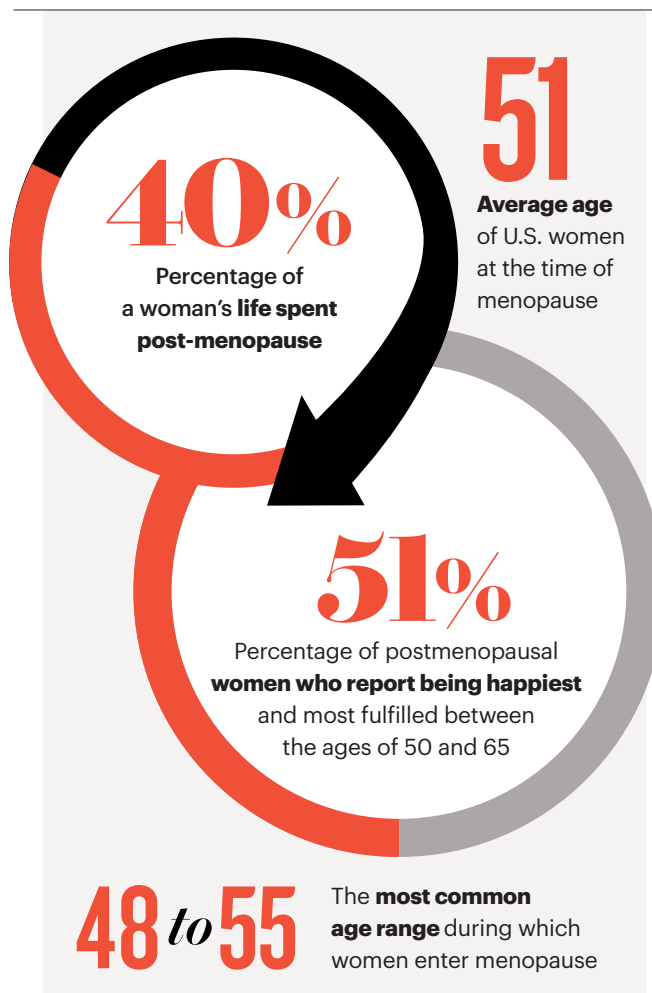


## 6,000

Number of women who reach menopause **each day** in the U.S.

## >42 million

Number of **women in the U.S.** who have reached menopause



## 2 million

Number of women who reach menopause **each year** in the U.S.

## 3 to 5 YEARS

Average period of time **hot flashes** can occur—but every woman is different and length of time varies



## 75%

Percentage of women who have **hot flashes or night sweats** during the transition to menopause, called perimenopause



## 30 SECONDS to 10 MINUTES

Length of a single hot flash

SOURCES: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Menopause Journal*, National Institute on Aging, North American Menopause Society, U.S. Census Bureau

# Health Happenings

Products, Ideas  
& Promotions  
for Healthy  
Living



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Adding Chocolate Sweet Drops™ to your child's lunchbox can make any snack a guilt-free, sweet treat. Squeeze into milk, yogurt, and more. It's sugar-free deliciousness.

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All-natural formula helps to keep your metabolism active, burn fat while retaining muscle mass, and maintain healthy blood sugar and thyroid levels.

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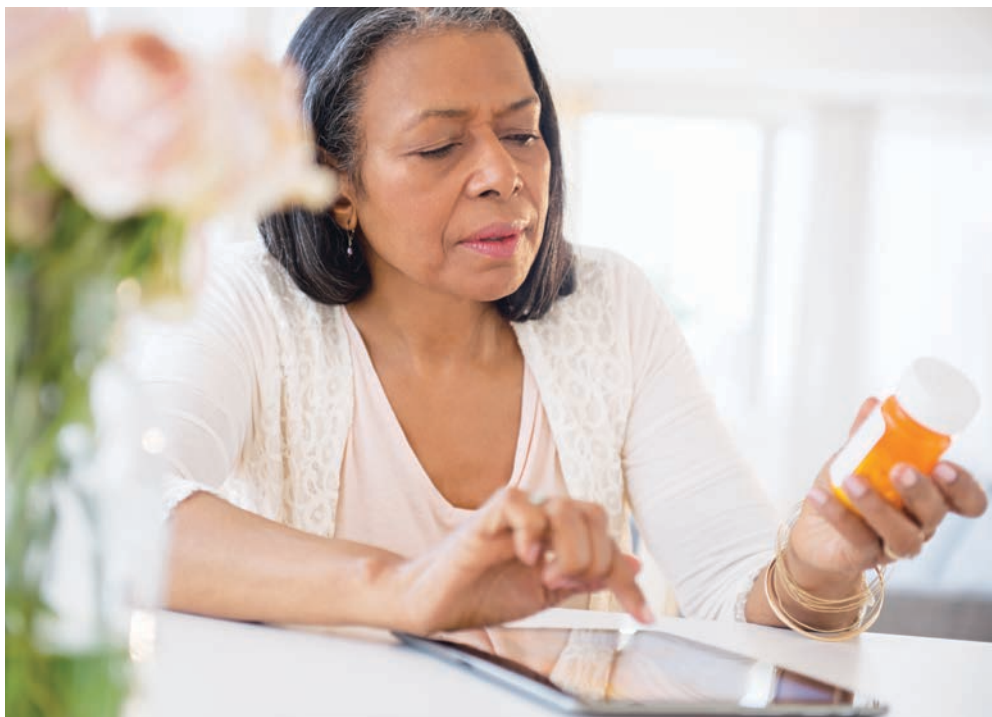


## HEALTH SMARTS

# NEVER MISS A DOSE

NEW TRACKING SYSTEMS REMIND YOU WHEN IT'S TIME TO TAKE YOUR MEDS

*By Matt McMillen*



● If you have a daily drug regimen, especially one that includes several different prescriptions, you know all about the burden of keeping track of what to take and when. You likely also know how risky it can be to miss a dose of an important drug. An estimated 125,000 people die each year because they don't take their prescribed drugs, according to the CDC. High-tech pill trackers can help you manage your medications. Here are a few of the best, listed from least to most expensive.

### Medisafe iConnect:

This tracker couples a free app with your choice of two devices: the \$20 iCap, a Bluetooth-enabled cap that you swap for the cap that came with your pill bottle, or the \$50 iSort, a weekly pill organizer that also features Bluetooth. Both devices track when you open your pill container, and they transmit

that info to the Medisafe app on your smartphone.

If you can't remember whether you've taken a pill, the app will tell you the date and time you last took a dose. You can program the app to send you reminders for each of your medications. The app also allows you to send your data to your caregivers and your doctor. Starting this

month, you can pre-order either device on Medisafe's website ([medisafeconnect.com](http://medisafeconnect.com)) for home delivery.

### Tricella Pillbox:

The \$74.99 Tricella Pillbox tracker offers many of the same features as the iSort version of Medisafe iConnect. Bluetooth connects the Pillbox to a free app, which

tracks when you pop open the container and shares that info with your caregivers and physician. Pillbox's creators say that it will also send alerts if the device detects you may have taken the wrong dose.

Science writer Elizabeth Palermo of the website LiveScience says that it was "definitely designed with caretakers in mind, and it might help ease the stress of adults who care for elderly family members, or parents trying to monitor their college kids' medications from afar."

**PillDrill:** This device tracks your pill-taking habits, alerts you when it's time for a dose, and keeps those involved in managing your medications informed. But instead of relying only on an app that some people might find tricky to use, the PillDrill uses a Wi-Fi-enabled hub that tracks your drug usage through sensors you stick on your medicine containers. Whenever you take a pill, you wave the container over the hub, and it records your action.

The PillDrill also comes with something called a "mood cube." Each of its six sides has a different emoji meant to indicate how you feel. Scan it just as you do the pill container so you can track when you feel good and when you don't. Liz Stinson of Wired.com writes, "This allows someone who is, say, an ocean away to get a sense of what's happening with their loved one." At \$199, however, it's quite a bit pricier than the other two options.

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## HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

# DRY EYE

FIND RELIEF WITH THESE 10 TIPS

By **Matt McMillen**

**1 Shop around**  
Artificial tears may help, but you might need to try several brands before you find the right one for you.

**2 Avoid smoke**  
Cigarette smoke irritates your eyes and may cause dry eye. Do not smoke and steer clear of secondhand smoke.

**3 Keep clear**  
Gels and ointments for dry eye can blur your vision. Use them only at bedtime.

**4 Don't stare**  
TVs, computer monitors, tablets, and phones can cause or worsen dry eye, so limit screen time.

**5 Cut back**  
Reduce or quit alcohol and caffeine. Both may contribute to dry eye.



**6 Go natural**  
Using makeup around the eyes can make dry eye worse. You may want to apply less or avoid it altogether.

**7 Don't wait**  
Use artificial tears often, even if your eyes don't yet feel dry.

**8 Keep clean**  
Try an over-the-counter eyelid cleanser to reduce inflammation, which can cause dry eye.

**9 Snooze more**  
Lack of sleep makes dry eye worse. Aim to sleep for 7 to 9 hours a night.

**10 Go fish**  
Add a fish oil supplement to your diet. The omega-3 fatty acids may ease your symptoms.

## EXPERT TIPS



**Natasha Herz, MD**  
ophthalmologist, Rockville, Maryland

"Try 'mindful blinking' when you're idle (like waiting for something to download on the computer). Count until four, blink, then repeat. Also, use artificial tears up to four times a day when doing any visually intensive task, such as reading."



**Mark Fromer, MD**  
ophthalmologist, New York City;  
eye surgeon for the  
New York Rangers hockey team

"Avoid high altitudes and areas that have high levels of air pollution. Both can irritate the surface of your cornea and cause or worsen dry eye syndrome."



**John D. Bartlett, MD**  
assistant clinical professor in ophthalmology,  
Jules Stein Eye Institute, UCLA

"If you've tried simple solutions, like artificial tears, and haven't found relief, see your eye doctor. He or she may suggest other prescription medications or procedures that can help you."





## SLEEP SAVVY

## WAKE UP REFRESHED

5 SIMPLE TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR SLUMBER

*By Matt McMillen*

● Healthy diet? Check. Regular exercise? Check. Sufficient sleep? Not so much. “People have not yet learned to prioritize sleep in their daily routines,” says internist and sleep specialist Neil Kline, DO, of Lititz, Pennsylvania. Lack of sleep has been linked to many chronic illnesses, like heart disease, diabetes, and depression. It also ups the risk of potentially fatal accidents, and it chips away at your ability to focus at work and elsewhere. Here’s what you can do to get more and better quality shut-eye.

**Exercise before evening**

Research suggests that morning and afternoon exercise, even in small amounts, reward you with better sleep. But rigorous exercise in the evening may be counterproductive. When you work out, Kline says, your body produces endorphins, brain chemicals that make you feel good but which also boost wakefulness. These chemicals can take hours to clear from your body. Kline’s prescription: “Don’t exercise in the three to four hours before sleep.”

**Turn off the lights**

At night, the light from TVs, tablets, smartphones, computer screens, and other brightly lit devices can trick

your brain into believing that it’s not time for sleep. “Light,” Kline says, “is one of the most powerful time cues for our body.” Kline’s prescription: “If you have problems with sleep, avoid bright screens in the hours before sleep.”

**Relax before bedtime**

When your day overflows with stress, that stress can be hard to turn off, and it can keep you awake. Don’t let it. “You don’t want to be stressed out before sleep, thinking about bills or other life stressors,” Kline says. Meditation, warm baths, guided imagery, and breathing exercises can help you wind down before you get into bed. Kline’s prescription: “Get into a routine that promotes relaxation.”

**Stick to a schedule**

Your body clock, which tells you when it’s time to sleep and when it’s time to wake up, works best when you stick to a routine. If you tend to have trouble sleeping at night, afternoon naps that are too long and an erratic sleep schedule can worsen your insomnia and rob you of even more quality rest. Kline’s prescription: “Go to bed and get up at the same time each day, even on the weekends.”

**Skip the caffeine after hours**

If you like to sip coffee or tea, limit yourself to the morning and afternoon. Caffeine is a stimulant that remains in your system for several hours, so that evening cup could be what’s keeping you up at night. Kline’s prescription: “Avoid caffeine five to six hours before bed, especially if you are prone to insomnia.”

Reviewed by **Arefa Cassoobhoy, MD, MPH**  
WebMD Medical Editor

# The Bed Clinically Proven to Relieve Back Pain



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## LIVING WELL

# STOP THE SNEEZING

EXPERT TIPS TO OUTSMART FALL ALLERGY SYMPTOMS

*By Christina Boufis*



“I’m 49 years old and have had seasonal allergies ever since puberty,” says Bernice Mirrilees, who lives in Wheaton, Illinois. “I’d get itchy, watery eyes, a terrible runny nose, and a scratchy throat that felt like a cat was clawing the back of it.”

An estimated 50 million Americans have nasal allergies. Like Mirrilees, many are allergic to pollen in general and ragweed (which blooms in the fall) in particular. What can you do if fall allergies make you miserable?

**See an allergist** to find out exactly what you’re allergic to, says David Hong, MD, a staff physician in the division of rheumatology,

immunology, and allergy at Boston’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

Once you know what causes your allergies—weeds, grasses, trees, or all three—your allergist may have you take an over-the-counter allergy medication when pollen levels are peaking in your area.

Let your symptoms be your guide for taking OTC allergy medication, which can be very effective, Hong says. “If you have a lot of nasal congestion or runny nose, a nasal steroid, such as fluticasone (Flonase), triamcinolone (Nasacort), or budesonide (Rhinocort) would be best, or a combination of antihistamine and nasal spray,” Hong says.

“If you have a lot of sneezing or itchy skin, an antihistamine is probably going to be the best medication for that,” he explains. Look for long-acting antihistamines, such as fexofenadine (Allegra), cetirizine (Zyrtec), or loratadine (Claritin) that won’t make you drowsy, he adds.

If itchy, watery eyes are bothersome, try an antihistamine eye drop, like ketotifen (Zaditor), also available over the counter.

**Keep allergens out**, especially from your bedroom, where you spend a third of your day, Hong says.

“Sleep with your windows closed even if it’s really nice outside,” he advises. “Take a shower when you come inside or before you go to sleep, so you can wash off any pollens you might have picked up on your hair or skin.” If your allergies are very bad, you might even ask your sleeping partner to shower before bed, too.

And if you have a pet, ban it from your bedroom, since your dog or cat may be tracking pollen into the house, Hong says.

For Mirrilees, the changing season is no longer cause for worry. After years of ineffective treatments, she found what works for her.

“I run a HEPA air filter to clean the air in my home,” she says. “I use a steroid nasal spray and a neti pot. But more than anything else, I take an over-the-counter, non-sedating allergy medication every day. And that has made all the difference.”

## ? ASK YOUR DOCTOR

1. What am I allergic to?
2. What can be done about my allergies?
3. How can I reduce exposure to allergens?
4. What allergy medications are best for me?
5. Are allergy shots right for me?



## YOUR SMILE

# DON'T IGNORE BLEEDING GUMS

IT COULD BE A TELLTALE SIGN OF SERIOUS DENTAL ISSUES

*By Jodi Helmer*



### ASK YOUR DENTIST

IF YOUR GUMS BLEED WHEN YOU BRUSH OR FLOSS, PERIODONTIST ANDREW SULLIVAN, DDS, SUGGESTS ASKING YOUR DENTIST:

#### What can I do at home?

"Sometimes, if you're diligent about oral hygiene at home, the bleeding stops," Sullivan says. He suggests brushing with a soft-bristled toothbrush and flossing at least twice a day, which will remove plaque and end the inflammation that can cause bleeding gums.

#### Could bleeding gums be a sign of something more serious?

Bleeding gums can be linked to health issues such as uncontrolled diabetes, a vitamin K deficiency or, in extreme cases, leukemia. A dental exam will give your dentist clues about underlying causes.

#### How much damage has been done?

Left untreated, bleeding gums can cause irreversible damage, including bone loss. So you'll want to establish a treatment plan to prevent further problems. "With bleeding gums, an ounce of prevention is the best approach," Sullivan says.

● Plaque buildup is the most common cause of bleeding gums. Bacteria collect along the gum line, leading to inflammation, tenderness, and bleeding, symptoms of a condition called gingivitis.

Left untreated, gingivitis can turn into a more serious condition called periodontitis, which is linked to cavities, tooth sensitivity, painful chewing, and, in extreme cases, tooth and bone loss. The CDC estimates that more than 47% of adults have some form of periodontal disease.

"Gingivitis is reversible; most periodontitis is not reversible," says Andrew Sullivan, DDS, interim chair

of the department of periodontics at Rutgers School of Dental Medicine. "The sooner you seek help for bleeding gums, the less the length and cost of treatment will be and the better the outcome."

Treating bleeding gums—and reducing plaque buildup—could be as simple as practicing good oral hygiene. Regular brushing and flossing help remove plaque. You should also see your dentist for routine cleanings.

Sometimes the culprit isn't poor oral hygiene; it's overzealous brushing. Brushing too aggressively with a hard-bristled brush can damage the gums. Unlike gingivitis, which is a disease,

"bleeding caused by brushing too hard is an injury," Sullivan notes.

Getting too rough with dental floss can also cause gums to bleed. Instead of snapping floss upward or downward toward the gum line, Sullivan recommends wrapping floss around each tooth and using a gentle motion to move it up and down between teeth.

The bottom line, according to Sullivan, is that bleeding gums warrant a trip to the dentist. "Proper home care, coupled with going to the dentist on a regular basis, can dramatically reduce the likelihood of bleeding gums turning into a big problem," he says.



## HEALTH CHECK

# IS YOUR DIET CHOLESTEROL-SMART?



Are you eating the right foods to keep your cholesterol in a healthy range? Take this quiz to find out.

**1. I've cut back on saturated fat from red meat, whole milk, and palm and coconut oils.**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**2. I eat foods rich in plant sterols and stanols.**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**3. Nuts are a part of my daily diet.**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**4. Fish is on my plate at least twice a week.**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

## ANSWERS

**1.** Saturated fat is a major dietary contributor to high cholesterol. Foods like red meat, coconut and palm oils, and whole-fat dairy directly raise LDL (unhealthy cholesterol) levels. If you struggle with high cholesterol, this unhealthy fat should make up no more than 6% of your daily calories (if you're on a 2,000-calorie diet, that's 11 to 13 grams of saturated fat). Eat lean cuts of meat,

trim visible fat, use vegetable or olive oil to cook, and lighten your milk to skim.

**2.** Sterols and stanols help block the absorption of cholesterol in your intestines. The result? A potential cholesterol drop of up to 15%. Find them in fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and vegetable oils, and in some fortified foods such as orange juice.

**3.** A handful of nuts is a power snack that can also boost your healthy cholesterol levels. One study found that people who ate just over 2 ounces of nuts daily lowered their total cholesterol by about 5%, and their LDL cholesterol by more than 7%. Any type of nut seemed to do the trick.

**4.** Fatty fish like salmon, tuna, and sardines boost levels of HDL (good) cholesterol, which helps sweep your arteries free of cholesterol buildup.



## ASK YOUR DOCTOR

1. What is my cholesterol goal?
2. Which types of foods should I avoid? Which foods should I eat more?
3. Which foods can help lower LDL cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol?
4. Do I need to lose weight? If so, how much?

Sources: American Heart Association, Cleveland Clinic, *Archives of Internal Medicine*, WebMD Cholesterol Management Health Center



## MY STORY

# A NEW LOOK AT LIFE

EARLY PROSTATE CANCER DETECTION HELPED ONE SELF-DESCRIBED 'REGULAR GUY' CHANGE HIS HEALTH HABITS

*By Daryl Halencak*

● My father died at 54  
● from prostate cancer, and his brother had prostate cancer at the same time. I have several cousins who also have this problem, so I knew that I needed to get screened since prostate cancer runs in my family. I was also having certain symptoms—incontinence, pain in my groin, and ED [erectile dysfunction].

I had a PSA test, and it came out negative. My doctor thought the symptoms might be stress, as I had many jobs, including taking care of my mother's farm. But even though the doctors could not find anything, I knew something was wrong. I was 55, and there was no reason to have ED or problems going to the bathroom.

I was sent to another doctor, and he did 10 biopsies and found the cancer. In 2008, I had surgery, a radical prostatectomy. The surgeon removed my prostate, fatty tissue surrounding it that might be cancerous, and several lymph nodes.

## DARYL'S LIFE LESSONS

*"Be an advocate for your own health. If you feel something is wrong and your doctor doesn't find anything, get another opinion."*

*"If you have symptoms, run, do not walk, to your doctor."*

*"I believe that men should get screened for prostate cancer, especially if they have a family history."*

The road to recovery after surgery was very hard. The incontinence was still there for a bit but then it abated. I was worried before the surgery about sexual issues, but even though I had a radical procedure, my surgeon saved my nerves, and eventually I didn't have ED problems any more.

After my cancer, I changed my ways. I was just a regular guy in rural Texas. We eat a



lot of meat, go to a lot of parties, drink a lot of beer, and that's what I was doing. I wasn't exercising. After my surgery, I quit smoking, and I cut back on drinking. I started going to the track to exercise for at least 35 to 40 minutes a day, even in bad weather. I started eating lots of vegetables and salads. Now I rarely eat meat, except occasionally at family barbecues.

Having cancer also made me rethink my life. I started working less and spending more time with my family. I'm a prose poet and wrote a book about my journey, talking about my fears and experience.

Today, I feel great. I still go every six months for checkups. Early detection saved my life. I feel very blessed.



# Charles Esten

Actor/Musician



*"We're all trying to be the better halves of ourselves."*

**1** **When ABC announced Nashville's cancellation [the show has been picked up by CMT], fans campaigned to bring it back. Why do you think the show has resonated with viewers?** I think a lot of it has to do with the character [writer] Callie Khouri conceived. Deacon is a guy who's been through it all, and who is always fighting to be the better part of himself. And that's a story that resonates with a lot of people, 'cause we're all trying to be the better halves of ourselves.

**2** **What has playing Deacon over the last four seasons meant to you?** This role wasn't just a dream. It was a whole bunch of dreams come true at the same time. Since I was very young, my passion has been music, and writing music and performing it.

**3** **You're the 2016 national honorary chair for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Light the Night walk. Why is this cause so important to you?** My personal connection is through my daughter Addie. Fourteen years ago, when she was 2½, she was diagnosed with leukemia. So we've been down that extremely tough path, and we're very blessed to be able to say that she is completely healthy. We understood perfectly well that that didn't come out of thin air. It came out of research. And that research didn't just happen either. It came out of fundraising.

**4** **What disease would you most like to see eradicated in your lifetime?** I hope I'm around long enough, or at least Addie is, to see leukemia as a thing of the past, and lymphoma as well. So many of the cures and discoveries relating to blood cancers are easily applicable to other cancers.

**5** **What quality do you value most in a health care provider?** Whenever I see somebody who has resisted the urge to self-protect and has stayed warm and kind and open, and at the same time real—telling people the real truths they're facing—that moves me.

**6** **What is your health philosophy?** I think it's moderation. I'm not, by nature, a terribly disciplined person, so I always know that I'm going to fall off whatever wagon I'm on in terms of eating well or exercise. Because I know that, it's more about correcting slightly. No beating myself up if I had too big a meal or if I suddenly realize it's been a long time since I went to the gym.

**7** **What type of health program has been most effective for you?** I have to admit one of the most effective diets I've ever been on is the "they might make you take your shirt off on TV next week" diet. That's incredibly inspiring.

**8** **How do you get in shape for those shirtless scenes?** It's more about not waiting until then...trying to be smart along the way. I only watch the scale enough to say, "OK, that's enough. Take it easy." I use it as inspiration, not recrimination.

**9** **What exercise program do you most enjoy?** There's a certain Zen to swimming. There's a certain peacefulness...I kind of go away to another place when I'm swimming.

**10** **What's the best health advice anyone has ever given you?** My mother was always a big proponent of rest...I've become a bit of a nap ninja. I can sleep anywhere, at any time, for any amount of time. I find it very helpful.  
—Matt McMillen