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With two highly anticipated movies-The Help, based on the best-selling book and co-starring Emma Stone, and the Seth Rogen co-produced dramedy 50/50—acting royalty **Bryce Dallas Howard** claims her place in the A-list spotlight. Howard talks to WebMD contributing writer Lauren Paige Kennedy about her struggles with postpartum depression and how she ditched the baby weight the healthy way.



wellness Hot Mess



Do you know the top seven summertime health hazards and how to avoid them? WebMD contributing writer Gina Shaw consults medical experts on how to prevent everything from dehydration disasters and sunburn snafus to picnic panics. AND: What's in your summer survival health kit?



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Actor **Mark Feuerstein** on returning home to film Royal Pains, the one food he refuses to eat, and why this dad of three has a new respect for doctors.

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Food, Move, Mood, and Recharge.

"I liked the fizzy drink," said one, referring to the Food station where a chef showed kids how to make their own healthy snacks and beverages, including using seltzer to cut the sugar content of juice. "I liked the yoga in Recharge," said another, who shared that sometimes it is hard to go to sleep and wake up feeling refreshed. "I get in weird moods and don't know what to do with what I'm feeling, like being stressed out," another said at the Mood station. And in Move, when the kids did jumping jacks and ran in place, they were giddy with how their heart could pump faster even in "an itty-bitty space of floor."

healthier ways was powerful. As I went to my next meeting, I could not wipe the smile from my face or be anything less than optimistic about fit from WebMD and the health experts at Sanford Health.

Chances are the kids you know will be spending time this summer on the computer and playing video games (even healthy ones!). We encourage you to suggest they spend some time with **fit** (**fit.WebMD.com**), where they will learn about their bodies and their health in ways that will be useful for a lifetime.

A WebMD colleague showed me this picture of his niece. I am sharing it here because (1) a picture of a cute baby on the beach is an easy way to get you to smile; (2) as a yoga enthusiast, I could not get over this natural downward dog pose-with a raised leg for extra credit; and (3) later on in her life, when she is running from meeting to meeting, I want this baby to remember how her body naturally took on such a position!

I send you the sweetest summertime thoughts as I write this, sweating and with my heart pumping, after moving into a new home—smaller, closer to work, and with lots of stairs to keep our family moving more. Sitting among the boxes and disarray with no televisions or computers or video games buzzing, we all got to breathe and know each other just a little bit better.

Var-Kirsten Forte

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

At this year's annual Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day, we decided to create a Fit Fair at the WebMD offices, using the curricula of our new fit websites. Children got to participate in four stations:

The energy we felt from simply showing our staff's children how

they could do things all by themselves to live in







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SUMMER **Quick Picks**

COME CLEAN

Did you know the National Park Service has more than 84 million acres of historic parks, monuments, and recreation areas across the country? Help preserve them this summer during volunteer park clean-ups. Find one near you at nps.gov; click on the "Get Involved" tab.

BOWLED OVER

give back

Hitting the lanes is a good way to "have a little fun while you're moving your muscles," says Pamela Peeke, MD, WebMD fitness expert. While you can easily burn up to 300 calories a game, Peeke suggests ramping up your routine by stretching and running in place while waiting for your turn. "You have plenty of time to consistently come back to the stretching" in between frames, she says. And **bowling is a** great way to get children in the fitness habit early. Kids Bowl Free (kidsbowlfree.com), now in its 4th

year, allows aspiring young bowlers to sign up for two free games a day at some bowling centers nationwide. See the full list of centers and corresponding

age limits online.

8





ISLAND FEVER The latest drink craze?

Potassium-rich coconut

water, says WebMD nutrition expert Carolyn O'Neil, MS, RD. The mineral is essential for good hydration, and one cup of coconut water packs 600 mg of potassium (more than a medium-sized banana) and is less than 50 calories. Plus, it definitely quenches thirst, O'Neil says. But don't confuse coconut water with its higher-calorie siblings, coconut milk or cream.

fit tip



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

Andi Gabrick Senior Editor, WebMD the Magazi



BRONZE BEAUTY

You've heard it before, but it's worth repeating: "There's no way to get a natural tan that's healthy," says WebMD skin care expert Karyn Grossman, MD. Self-tanner is the only way to go, but it is notoriously tricky to get right. For the best results, exfoliate a few days before you plan to start using a self-tanner. The morning of, Grossman suggests applying a skinsmoothing lotion with alpha hydroxyl

acids, such as Eucerin Smoothing Essentials Body Lotion (\$10) or Jergens Skin Smoothing Cellular Renewal Moisturizer (\$5), to ensure a more even application. After giving it some time to absorb, apply the sunless tanner.

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR SUMMER GLOW ON?

When it comes to getting bronzed every summer, we hit the bottle. But we're sometimes stymied when it comes to applying self-tanners. Take our Healthy Start Challenge: Post your best self-tanning tip in the magazine community at WebMD.com to enter to win a \$25 Whole Foods gift card.

WebMD.com

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23 The percentage by which women's "bad" cholesterol dropped after a year of eating two apples per day Source: Experimental Biology 2011 meeting



You may have hated the piano lessons you took as a kid—as well as the hours of practice your parents made you put in-but a new study suggests that childhood musical training may help keep your brain sharp.

In the study, University of Kansas Medical Center researchers found that older adults (ages 60 to 83) who took music lessons as children performed better on memory and brain function tests (including naming objects and managing time) than those who didn't have lessons. Even better: Those benefits were evident even if the adults hadn't continued to play music as adults. Still, the researchers note, the earlier individuals started their lessons and the longer they played, the bigger the anti-aging benefits in the brain appeared to be. The researchers theorize that the years-long challenge of learning to read and play music creates alternate connections in the brain that compensate for cognitive declines in later years. Source: Neuropsychology

survey reports. past year.

• 65% said they think people look more attractive with a tan (87.3% of indoor tanners gave that answer). Currently the rate at which people get melanoma, the deadliest form

of skin cancer, is increasing faster in 15- to 29-year-old females than in males in that age group. Moms take special note. The study found that a mother's tanning habits had a strong influence on her daughter's habits: Indoor tanners were four times as likely to say their mothers used a tanning bed, compared to outdoor tanners. Yet indoor tanning increases the risk of getting melanoma by 75%. Source: American Academy of Dermatology

JSIC



Despite strong warnings to the public about the dangers of UV light, droves of teen girls still sunbathe or use indoor tanning beds, a new

Of the 3,800 white girls and women ages 14 to 22 surveyed:

• 32% had used a tanning bed in the past year (and of those, one-fourth used a tanning bed at least once weekly).

• 81% had tanned outdoors either frequently or occasionally in the



HotSeat

If you've got a 6-year-old who's itching to get out of his booster seat, you may have to tell him to hold on to his socks. That's because the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued new, more conservative guidelines on child safety seats.

Under the old guidelines, last updated in 2002, infants were supposed to ride in rear-facing safety seats until they got too big for them-or were at least 1 year old and 20 pounds. Toddlers could ride in front-facing car seats until they were

40 pounds or 4 years old, and children were supposed to use booster seats until they weighed 60 pounds or were about 6 years old.

Under the new guidelines, babies and toddlers are supposed to stay in rear-facing seats until they're 2 years old or too big for the seat, because rear-facing seats provide more support for the child's head, neck, and spine. They should then be in a forwardfacing seat until they outgrow it, at which point they should use a booster seat until they're 4 feet 9 inches, 80 pounds, and



between 8 and 12 years. And no children should get in the front seat until they're 13.

Car crashes are still the leading cause of death for children older than 4. And the AAP says new research shows that waiting longer to use a front-facing seat is safer. One 2007 study showed, for instance, that children under age 2 are 75% less likely to die or be severely injured if they're in a rear-facing seat during a crash. And booster seats help seat belts fit children better. Source: Pediatrics



The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society® is the world's largest voluntary health agency dedicated to fighting blood cancers. Learn more at www.LLS.org.

Despite a national campaign to get people to eat more fruits and vegetables, Americans aren't even close to consuming the recommended amounts.

In 2005, the National Fruit & Vegetable Alliance, co-chaired by the CDC and the Produce for Better Health Foundation, created the National Action Plan

to Promote Health Through Increased Fruit and Vegetable Consumption. But six years later, only 6% of Americans eat enough vegetables, and just 8% get sufficient fruit in their diets. The group is now calling for changes at the federal, state, school, and family level to boost access to fruits and vegetables, such as by setting up salad bars at schools and adding more produce to restaurant and workplace cafeteria menus. The group notes that progress has been made in getting free fruits and vegetables into the schools, as well as in offering vouchers for produce as part of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. To increase fruit and veggie consumption at your home, try placing appetizing varieties on the table and kitchen counter, where they're readily available, and involve kids in growing, selecting, and preparing them. Source: National Fruit & Vegetable Alliance

SocialStudy

Social media is all the rage among the nation's youth, but few parents really understand the benefits and risks of this new way of communicating, a new report finds. And that could have serious consequences for kids' health and behavior.

Key benefits of social networking include nurturing friendships, enhancing creativity, increasing community engagement, fostering individual identity, providing homework support, and researching health issues that might be hard to discuss with adults face-to-face.

But social networking also carries significant risks, the report finds. Cyberbullying, for instance,

can lead to depression, anxiety, and even suicide. Sexting (posting sexually explicit messages or photos) can jeopardize teens' safety and have serious legal consequences. Posting inappropriate material can also lead to future problems with college and job applications.

The report's authors urge pediatricians to encourage parents to explore social media themselves, set firm boundaries on what kids can and can't do on social networking sites, talk to their children about online issues, and actively monitor kids' social media activities rather than relying on software to do so. Source Pediatrics







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WebMD WIPE

Smoke Out

Half of the states in this country have completely banned cigarette smoking in bars, restaurants, and work sites. And that, the CDC reports, means the rest need to pass laws to protect nonsmokers from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke is responsible for 46,000 heart disease deaths and 3,400 lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers annually, according to the CDC.

The federal government's Healthy People 2020 initiative calls for all states to have laws on smoke-free indoor air in public places and work sites. Yet 19 states have only partial bans on cigarette smoking in these places, and seven—Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming have no statewide smoking restrictions at all for private bars, restaurants, and work sites. Source: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

AIR UP THERE

The 10 most polluted cities in the United States have cleaned up their acts since last year, the American Lung Association's annual ranking has found. But the health of many Americans is still threatened by high levels of air pollution.

The ALA's "State of the Air" report ranks cities on three separate lists: most bouts of short-term particle pollution, most year-round particle pollution, and highest levels of ozone pollution.

- The cities with the highest levels of year-round particle pollution this year:
- 1. Bakersfield-Delano, Calif.
- 2. (tie) Los Angeles-Long Beach-Riverside, Calif. (tie) Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, Ariz.
- (tie) Visalia-Porterville, Calif. 3. Hanford-Corcoran, Calif.
- The cleanest cities in that category: 1. Cheyenne, Wyo. 2. Santa Fe-Española, N.M. 3. Tucson. Ariz.
- 4. (tie) Honolulu, Hawaii, and Great Falls, Mont.
- 5. Anchorage, Alaska
- Source: American Lung Association



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WINNING WORDS

Blogroll, please! You already turn to our experts for their winning advice, and now two are officially winners. The Heart Beat, by James Beckerman, MD, and Everyday Fitness with Pamela Peeke, MD, recently won 2011 Web Health Awards, which honor the best digital resources for health information. Congrats, and keep up the good work. You can see all of our stellar bloggers in our Community on WebMD.com.

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ne of the strangest things about being Ja magazine editor is thinking about November when July 4th fireworks have yet to go off. But that's exactly what I'm doing because our annual WebMD Health Heroes are announced in the November/ December issue of WebMD the Magazine each year, and we're looking for your nominations right now.

Do you know a health hero? Here's a sample of some past winners:

• A mother lost her two boys to a rare disease, then founded the Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy to spearhead research.

 A nurse turned her love of animals into a service organization to train companion dogs for kids and adults with autism and dementia.



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 A philanthropist built state-of-the-ar children's health centers and now funds type 1 diabetes and childhood obesity research.

• A girl ran marathons in memory of her father's death from prostate cancer and to raise research money.

• A doctor returned home after medical school to found health clinics for poor and underserved patients.

All are people who faced a serious health challenge, then gave back to others in an inspiring way. Remind you of anyone you know?

Tell us! Just go to WebMD.com, search "Health Heroes," and submit your nomination by Friday, August 12.

Thank you in advance. Now get back to your summer!

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Sound Idea Actor Alan Cumming tunes into music therapy for patients

Scottish actor Alan Cumming, who voices kilt-wearing, Braveheart-channeling Gutsy Smurf in the upcoming movie The Smurfs, made a special guest appearance this past April at the bedside of Sal, a patient undergoing chemotherapy at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. There, he performed songs as part of a music therapy program.

"It was humbling and intense," says Cumming, 46, also starring in the hit CBS series The Good Wife. He played an instrument called an ocean drum, which mimics the sound of crashing waves, as 52-year-old Sal sang gospel songs by Elvis Presley.

"His life had been turned upside down by his disease," says Cumming, "but here he was singing and chatting. For him, music therapy was a conduit to open up and look at things in a more inspirational way." Music therapy is used to ease patients' pain and anxiety and can also help reduce chemotherapy-related nausea and vomiting, according to the American Cancer Society. Over the past several decades, it has become a common part of comprehensive care at large cancer centers throughout the United States, including Memorial Sloan-Kettering.

Cumming and Sal were brought together by the N.Y.C.based Gabrielle's Angel Foundation for Cancer Research (www. gabriellesangels.org), founded in 1996 by Denise Rich, a Grammy-nominated songwriter, after the death of her daughter

from acute myelogenous leukemia. Gabrielle's Angel funds research for both conventional and integrative therapies for leukemia, lymphoma, and related cancers. Grant money from the foundation supports the music therapy program at Memorial Sloan-Kettering.

"I was really moved by what the organization was doing," says Cumming, who recently became an Angel Ambassador for the foundation. In that role, he will help raise awareness about the need for cancer research.

Cumming is looking forward to participating in music therapy again. "I didn't quite know what to expect," he says. "Lots of emotions well up at once. In a depressing place where people are so ill, here we were having a sing-along. It's the power of music on a basic level." -Matt McMillen

Take a Shot Amanda Peet campaigns for vaccine smarts

Amanda Peet and her husband, screenwriter David Benioff, weren't feeling very festive last Christmas. Their 10-month-old, Molly, had developed a horrible,

hacking cough that spasmed through her body.

"We didn't know what it was," recalls the 2012 and TheWhole Nine Yards star, 39, who's in Los Angeles to film the new NBC series Bent. "I would call my brother-in-law, who's an infectious disease specialist, and try to jam the phone up by her face as she was having a coughing fit." Finally, on Molly's fourth visit, her pediatrician decided to do a swab for pertussis (whooping cough), even though her symptoms didn't entirely fit the cold or flulike symptoms of this highly contagious respiratory tract infection.

The test came back positive. Baby Molly, who was too young to have received all the doses in the pertussis vaccine series, was the latest infant to develop the disease in what health experts call the largest whooping cough outbreak in California in decades. (A booster

vaccine is now available for teens and adults to avoid passing the disease on to babies who haven't yet had all the shots.) More than 9,000 people in the state got pertussis in 2010, and at least 10—all infants under 3 months—died.

"Don't listen to me. Listen to the science," says Amanda Peet.

That terrified Peet, which is why she's working to promote August as National Immunization Awareness Month in partnership with Every Child by Two (ECBT; www.vaccinateyourbaby.org), an

organization that works to improve childhood vaccination rates. Like many new parents, Peet had read news stories about controversies surrounding childhood vaccines and was initially anxious when it came time to immunize her first baby. Coming from a family of doctors, Peet researched her decision extensively. Ultimately, she became so convinced of the importance of vaccines that she signed on as a spokesperson for ECBT.

Peet says many of the safety concerns have been addressed by the scientific community. "Don't listen to me," she says. "Listen to the science." -Gina Shaw





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How do I give my curls definition and hold without making them look and feel crunchy? Cindy Augustine, 33, freelance writer/edito New York City

Michelle Breyer says:

The key to defined curls without the crunch is product selection and application. Pick a styling cream such as Paul Mitchell Express Style Fast Form (\$17.50) and disperse it into damp hair in sections, making sure to put a little more on the ends than at the roots. Don't forget the underside of your curlsif they're not coated in product, your risk of puffiness and frizz is greater. After you've applied product, air-dry your tresses or use a blow dryer with a diffuser nozzle. If you still have a bit of crunch, rub a pea-size dab of John Frieda Frizz-Ease Secret Weapon Flawless Finishing Crème (\$5.99) between your hands and run them through your hair from roots to ends to break up the crinkly texture.

Curly and kinky hair types love natural butters and oils like shea butter, jojoba, avocado, coconut milk, aloe vera, and honey because they instantly boost moisture. In addition, mixing the right products can be a great way to reduce frizz. Combining a moisturizing leave-in conditioner like SheaMoisture Coconut & Hibiscus Curl & Style Milk (\$9.99) with a defining mousse like Herbal Essences **Totally Twisted Curl Boosting** Mousse (\$2.99) can foil frizz all day long.

Michelle Brever, president of NaturallyCurly.com

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



11:27AM

CHRONIC MIGRAINE LUNCH WITH JOAN EXERCISE CLASS PTA MEETING

Bounce Back Give your curls form with this foam: Herbal **Essences Totally Twisted** Curl Boosting Mousse.

4



Fast Form on the ends than at the roots.

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MY LIFE

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Ron Robinson says:

The crunchiness you have after using some hair products might be due to the polymers in the formula that provide hold and structure to curls, which means you may be treating your hair with the wrong product. The biggest mistake is not understanding there are different types of coils-loose, tight, kinky, wavy. Applying products designed for a curl type other than your own may leave your tresses feeling crispy.

Generally, women with fine, curly hair may require a little more firmness to maintain their curls; those with thick, curly hair may not need as much hold. Across the board, however, curly hair needs a ton of moisture. Look for ingredients like argan, jojoba, and macadamia oils, all natural emollients that hydrate hair.

Shampoo and conditioner are just as important to the styling process. I recommend John Frieda Frizz-Ease Smooth Start Shampoo and Conditioner (\$6.49 each), which contain silk proteins and olive oil that moisturize and detangle strands, prepping them for easy styling.

For a leave-in-conditioner. I like Mixed Chicks leave-in conditioner (\$16.99), which is pumped with jojoba oil, proteins, and amino acids that work to hydrate and protect the hair. For a gel, try Ouidad Climate Control Heat & Humidity Gel (\$22) with wheat protein, amino acids, and vitamin A, which work together to protect the hair from frizzinducing humidity.—Ayren Jackson-Cannady

Ron Robinson, cosmetic chemist and founder of BeautyStat.com



Type Cast

No two curls are the same, says Michelle Breyer, curly hair expert and president of NaturallyCurly. com. Read on to find out how to show your coil type some TLC.

TYPE 2

How it looks: The wave or curl forms the letter "s" and typically sits close to the scalp.

How to treat it: While this hair type has a tendency to frizz, it's particularly versatile-with the ability to quickly go from straight to curly.

TYPE 3

How it looks: The large, loopy "s" pattern is well defined and springy

How to treat it: In most cases this hair type is naturally super shiny, so you can skip the serums and spray sheens.

Ouidad

IMATE

3

Weather Tamer

Ouidad Climate

Control Heat &

Humidity Gel can

help you make friends

with Mother Nature.

TYPE 3C

How it looks: The fine curls are tight, with lots of strands densely packed together.

Power Couple

FRIZZ-EASE

Prep your strands for proper styling in

the shower with John Frieda Frizz-Ease

Smooth Start Shampoo and Conditioner

66

How to treat it: Since blowdrying this texture takes a little more time and patience, be sure to use a heat-protection spray beforehand.

TYPE 4

How it looks: Strands are verv tightly coiled and can be prone to breakage.

The biggest mistake

is not understanding

there are different

types of coils.

2 Curl's Best Friend

Hydrate your coils all day

long with Mixed Chicks leave-in conditioner.

How to treat it: This type has fewer cuticle layers than other textures, meaning it doesn't have as much natural protection from damage.

Bottom line: Always handle your curls with care.

Be a ring leader. Curl up with more expert hair tips.



THE MAKEUP OF MAKEUP

It's the Balm

Around the turn of the 20th century, Charles Browne Fleet, MD, began selling a handmade "chap-stick" from his storefront pharmacy in Lynchburg, Va.

Line of Defense

The purpose of all lip balms even those called salves or butters-is to protect the lips. They contain a moisturizing ingredient that forms an occlusive film on the lips, which prevents water loss, explains cosmetic chemist Ni'Kita Wilson, vice president of Cosmetech Laboratories in Fairfield, N.J.

Play the Shield

The most common occlusive ingredient is petroleum jelly. Natural lip balms use petroleumbased moisturizers, shea butter, or sunflower oil instead.

Good Shepherd

Lanolin, a thick emollient derived from the sebaceous

Reed Cromwell IV. director of product development for Anastasia Beverly Hills. offers this makeup artist's tip.

glands of sheep, helps heal parched, peeling lips.

Wax Works

The addition of waxes to help lip balm adhere to lips was an important innovation. Lip balm in a tin or pot has less wax than twist-up balms, but it's just as therapeutic, Wilson says.



Tingle All the Way Camphor and menthol in medicated lip balms act as a

When you're using a bold lipstick or bright gloss, lining the border of your lips with lip balm will keep the color from bleeding into the fine lines around your mouth. Use a lip brush to apply the balm just a slight bit beyond your natural lip line.









LIP BALM

mild topical anesthesia to soothe irritated lips. They're also the ingredients that give lip balm its cool tingle.

Sun Shade

Some balms contain sun protection

Pout Clout

Antiaging formulas add ingredients such as hyaluronic acid (a humectant that hydrates skin by pulling water from the environment, absorbing up to 100 times its weight), atelocollagen (a moisturizer), and dipalmitoyl hydroxyproline (a line filler) to help plump lips and reduce the furrows around the perimeter.

Color Blind

The wax that's essential to give lip balm its structure keeps even tinted versions from having the shine of a lip gloss or the color saturation of a lipstick.

Pocket Protector

The portable and inexpensive product is often used for other purposes like softening dry elbows, knees, and cuticles; grooming unruly eyebrows; and—in a pinch—freeing a stuck zipper.—Shelley Levitt

as high as SPF 30 and antioxidants such as coenzyme Q10. Other common ingredients are vitamins C and E, which neutralize free radicals that damage the skin's collagen and elastin.

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*American Journal of Preventive Medicine, August 2008



The Up Cell



Read more stories and share your own in our community.

By Amanda Jackson WebMD.com community member

MY PARENTS FIRST knew something was wrong with me when I was 3 months old. I was constantly in pain, constantly crying. They thought I had rheumatic fever or polio. The townspeople would come over and sit by my bed and pray.

After seeing local doctors, I was diagnosed with sickle cell anemia when I was 6. It's a disease that makes your red blood cells grow in a crescent moon shape, which means they can block blood vessels and stop oxygen from getting to the cells. That causes pain and anemia, and can hurt your muscles, joints, bones, and organs.

They told my mother it was a fatal disease (even though, as I later learned, it's not and treatment is available), and that I would only live to be 10. My mother just said, "Lord, let my little girl live." It was very challenging for my parents. They had other children they also had to take care of. (Eventually they had 16 children altogether.)

When I had an attack, what we call a crisis, the pain was so intense my arms and legs would draw up. They couldn't stretch. Everything was hurting. I had crises about every three months; I could stay home on bed rest but if the pain was too much, my parents would take me to the hospital so I could get painkillers.

I didn't want to be in the hospital, but I saw it as something I had to do to get back to school. As I got older, the attacks happened less often, maybe once a year. But my mother raised me to be normal, not to say, "Oh, I have this condition" or "I'm sick." Still, I didn't go to college. I was tired of school, tired of being absent.

Instead, I went to work at Baxter Laboratory, which was in our town. They were so good to me. When I had to go to the hospital, they would drive me and send me flowers. And then I ended up getting married, moving to Chicago, and having two children-despite the fact that my doctor said I could never get pregnant. I just always prayed that I would be blessed with having a normal life and I did.

Today, I'm 61, have seven grandchildren, and my own children are 34 and 36. They carry the gene for sickle cell anemia, but don't have the disease. I still have crises about three or four times a year, but I watch my diet-I don't eat a lot of meat or sugar. And I try not to overdo things. If I get too tired or anxious, I have a crisis. It's like tiptoeing around a monster and not wanting to alert it.

But I'm pretty active; I walk a lot. I lead women's retreats and conventions for churches. And I talk a lot to teens with sickle cell. I try to inspire them to have a life. I tell them not to worry about what they've missed, just look for what's coming next. I myself never gave up. I had no self-pity.

fitness matters

When she stepped into the pool in Janu-

ary 2009, Makeda Pennycooke didn't know how to

swim. The 38-year-old executive pastor from Char-

lotte, N.C., had signed up for lessons in hopes of get-

ting a workout and conquering her fear of the water.

During her first lesson, Pennycooke learned it was

WORKING OUT WHAT WILL WORK FOR YOU

Watery Workout

Low-impact and high in results, swimming tops the charts when it comes to best exercise

Reviewed by Pamela Peeke, MD, MPH, FACP WebMD FITNESS EXPERT



BEFORE YOU

a few essentials:

TAKE THE PLUNGE

To ensure your workout

goes swimmingly, swim

expert Jane Katz, EdD,

Swim cap A fitted cap

and helps protect your

keeps your hair in place,

reduces drag in the water,

hair from pool chemicals

more comfortable silicone

caps, while competitive

swimmers favor thinner,

tighter latex caps.

Goggles Protect your

inflammation while

seeing more clearly

eyes from irritation and

underwater. Transparent

lenses are best for indoor

swimming, and polarized

lenses with UV protection

are essential outdoors.

Sunscreen If you're

swimming outdoors,

sunscreen is a must.

The sun reflects off the

water, increasing your

risk of sunburn. "Apply

waterproof sunscreen

Water bottle Your body

still sweats while you're

in the pool. Katz advises

taking regular breaks

from swimming laps to

hydrate, just as if you were at the gym.

before you get in the

water," says Katz.

like chlorine. Beginners

should stick with the

suggests stocking up on

mind matters

A HEAD START ON EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

No Way Why do you always get lost, while others have an innate sense of direction? Ask your brain

Jessica Levin never gets lost. "I have a weirdly good sense of direction," says the 33-yearold president of a marketing company in Edison, N.J. "If I've been to a place before, even 10 or 20 years earlier, I can go back and know how to get around."

People like Levin don't have an innate sense of direction. What they do have is outstanding recognition and spatial memory: that is, the parts of the



memory that record aspects of their environment and where those aspects are in relation to each other.

The hippocampus, a structure in the brain that is also important for other types of memory, contains special neurons called grid cells and place cells that seem to create a cellular map of the places you've been and the routes you've taken.

Place cells identify where you are, while grid cells remind you of the spatial relationship of this place to other places you've been, according to S. Ausim Azizi,





I wasn't getting it," she says, "but after two months of lessons, it started to come together and I realized that I loved swimming."

workouts because it's both a low-impact exercise that puts minimal stress on the joints and a heartpumping cardiovascular workout that builds endurance and helps lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. As an added benefit, the resistance of the water forces your body to work harder to complete each movement, toning your biceps, triceps, back, chest, stomach, and leg muscles as you swim.

going to take some practice before she could swim a lap. "I was really discouraged at first because I felt like

and freestyle strokes, according to Katz. The trickiest part of learning to swim is mastering the art of breathing. Katz suggests practicing in the shallow end: Put your face underwater and exhale through your nose and mouth, lift your face out Hitting the water has long topped lists of best

of the water and inhale, go back under water and exhale. Keep practicing until it feels comfortable. Pennycooke's lessons lasted 30 minutes, and each week she was stronger, faster, and more confident in the pool. "The first time our class swam 10 laps, I was one of the last to finish, but I didn't care because

SWIMMING IS A

THAT BUILDS

ENDURANCE

LOWER BLOOD

CHOLESTEROL

PRESSURE AND

AND HELPS

LEVELS

HEART-PUMPING

CARDIO WORKOUT

I felt such a massive sense of accomplishment," she recalls. "To go from a nonswimmer to a swimmer is a huge item checked off my bucket list."-Jodi Helmer

"Swimming isn't about perfect strokes-at

least not at first," says Jane Katz, EdD, professor of

Criminal Justice, City University of New York, and

author of Swimming for Total Fitness: A Progressive Aerobic

Program. "New swimmers should just focus on get-

moving."

ting into the water and

Not all swimming

workouts are the same.

How you structure your

strokes you choose make

water routine and the

a difference. Beginners

often prefer the back-

stroke and sidestroke,

cult and don't require

ter. More experienced

swimmers who want a

demanding exercise ses-

sion favor the butterfly

breathing out underwa-

which are less diffi-

health and physical education at John Jay College of



Swimming burns 223 calories in 30 minutes, based on a 155-pound woman.

What's your workout challenge? Ask the fitness experts.



WebMD.com

Richard C. Senelick. MD WebMD MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT



MD, PhD, who chairs the department of neurology at Temple University School of Medicine.

Your brain can find your way using either or both of these aspects of spatial memory, Azizi explains. However, although we all rely on both kinds of memory, individuals' brains may tend to use one over the other. "Some people are really good at navigating by objects in the environment, the function of object

> memory," Azizi says. For example, they'll say, "I go to the gas station and make a right turn." People who tend to rely on spatial memory, on the other hand, might say, "I'll go 50 yards to the north, then 50 yards to the east."

You can improve your wayfinding ability specifically by practicing the skill, according to Azizi. "The more you get out and go places, the better," he says. Physical exercise improves the blood flow to the brain,

while mental exercise, such as doing puzzles or learning a new language, stimulates the development of new nerve cells and connections in your brain. Perhaps Levin has such a superb sense of direction because of those grid cells, or it may be that her brain integrates both kinds of navigation better than most people's. In any case, it serves her well.

"It's eliminated some fights on long car trips, for sure," she says. "We never have to pull over and ask for directions."-Susan Kuchinskas

FINDERS KEEPERS

You don't have to spend your life as a wanderer. Science shows you can improve your spatial memory.

Train the brain, S. Ausim Azizi, MD, PhD, says the best way to improve your spatial memory is to engage in activities that specifically involve both objects and coordinates. Practice combining these two skills by looking at a landmark and then locating it on a map.

Work out. "Exercise increases blood flow to active areas of the body, including the brain," Azizi says. Many studies have found increased volume in the hippocampi of older adults who increase their aerobic exercise, and one study showed that exercise could improve spatial memory.

Eat right. A study of grade school children found that eating oatmeal for breakfast improved spatial memory specifically. Numerous studies have shown that eating foods rich in antioxidants improves blood flow to the brain, which enhances memory skills.





Lost Cause

Is microchipping the best way to help you keep track of your wandering pet?

LESS THAN 2% OF CATS ARE EVER

RECLAIMED BY THEIR OWNERS.

Up to 8 million animals end up in shelters every year. Unfortunately, only 15% to 20% of dogs and less than 2% of cats are ever reclaimed by their owners. One way to increase the chances of finding your lost pet is having a microchip implanted. Louise Murray, DVM, director of medicine for the ASPCA's

Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital in New York City,

Your Pet's Health, explains how microchipping works.

and author of Vet Confidential: An Insider's Guide to Protecting

What is microchipping? A needle is used to place a

little chip under the animal's skin, usually between the

shoulder blades. That chip has a unique number on it

Will the microchip help me get my pet back if he's

lost? Yes, but only if someone takes him to a shelter

people think chips are like a tracker or a GPS device,

or veterinarian's office to be scanned for a chip. Some

that can be picked up and read by a scanner.

but a microchip only works if it is scanned.

Once they get your pet's chip number and the name of the company that made the chip, the shelter staff or vet will contact that company to find the owner. And that's why you need to remember the chip is only as good as the registration. A lot of people think, "OK, I've got this in. I'm done." But if your

contact information isn't current, it's useless. ONLY 15% TO 20% OF DOGS AND

Do all shelters scan for microchips when they find a pet? All shelters should scan any pet, and they should do so with a universal scanner. But I can't guarantee that all shelters do that. Do all scanners used

by shelters pick up all microchips? No. There are more universal scanners now, but some work better than others. Not all shelters have universal scanners that work well.

And the personnel using the scanner need to know how and where to scan: Chips can migrate, so if they're scanning over the animal's back and the chip has migrated to the side, they may not find it.

If my pet is microchipped, does he need a tag, too? Yes. A microchip is only one part of your pet's identification system. Your pet should also have a collar with tags on it. You can't assume the person who finds your pet will know anything about microchips. But if your phone number is right there, everyone knows what to do with that. Make sure you use a number with voicemail or an answering machine.--Sandy Eckstein

CHIP SHEET

Louise Murray, DVM, spells out the basics of microchipping

It's quick. Implanting a chip can be done in seconds-as quickly as any injection. "It doesn't have to be done by a veterinarian," Murray says, "but it's recommended. It does matter where you put the chip and how you inject it."

It's (almost) painless. "It hurts about as much as having blood drawn." Murray says. "It's a large needle. There's a pinch. But I've seen a lot of animals not even flinch when it happens."

It's affordable. If you're going to a vet just for a microchip, the procedure is probably going to cost around \$50. Scheduling the procedure along with your pet's regular checkup or other treatment will probably cost a bit less because you've already paid for the office visit.

"People also can check with local animal shelters or rescue groups, which often do it for less," Murray notes.

DID YOU KNOW? WebMD also provides tips and tools to keep your pet healthy!

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 Information on pet symptoms and conditions

- Tried and tested solutions to pet behavior problems
- From recalls to new medications - the latest pet health news
- Ask a Vet: Access experts in our WebMD Pet Health Community

For Dog Lovers

For Cat Lovers



Most mammals, including horses, dogs, cats, and ferrets, can be microchipped.

Learn more ways to keep four-legged friends out of harm's way.

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Your dietary needs change as you age. Make sure your grocery list covers these food categories

Eating well is an essential part of a healthy life, and the older you get, the more important it becomes to make good food choices. It helps keep your body strong, your mind sharp, and your energy level up. Here's a quick guide to the types of healthy foods that should always be on your shopping list.

Fruits and vegetables. Look for the most colorful produce, says Diane Stadler, PhD, RD, research assistant professor of medicine at Oregon Health & Science University. "The darker the red, the deeper the green, the more yellow, the more orange—they're the foods that have function." That means they're loaded with vitamins and antioxidants. Stadler recommends blueberries, red raspberries, and dark cherries as ideal fruits, and she says you can't miss with any of the dark leafy vegetables like spinach, kale, or Swiss chard. And you can have them all year because, when it comes to nutrients, frozen is just as good as fresh.

Dairy. "This is an incredibly important food group for people as they get older," Stadler says. "Calcium needs are high and they stay



high, and you can't get any other foods with as much calcium as dairy." Milk, for example, gives you nearly all the calcium you need in three 8-ounce servings. Dairy's also a great source of vitamin D—it's essential for healthy bones, but people of a certain age are often deficient in D. Stick to low-fat or nonfat milk, yogurt, and cheese.

Whole grains. These powerhouse foods are pantry essentials. A good source of B vitamins, they are also loaded with some of the best-for-you fiber available. A recent study found the fiber in whole grains is better protection against cardiovascular disease, infections, and respiratory ailments than fiber from any other source. And whole-grain foods are much more widely available now. "There's a whole variety beyond oatmeal and whole wheat, such as quinoa, which is incredibly high in protein."

Meat. "If you choose it, choose wisely," Stadler says. Focus on lean meats such as By Matt McMillen, WebMD Contributing Writer

skinless chicken and turkey breasts, which supply protein and vitamin B-12 without heart-clogging fats. "If you can see a layer of fat, it is saturated fat and associated with bad cholesterol," she says. You want to avoid that as well as gargantuan proportions. Stadler recommends visualizing a deck of cards when choosing a portion of meat. If there's more than that on your plate, she says, box it up or take it off your plate before you start to eat to avoid temptation.

Fish. Oily fish like salmon provide an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, which help fight the bad cholesterol that tends to build up as we get older. Stadler says just two servings of fatty fish per week are enough to meet your requirements for this healthy fat. Canned salmon is a good choice because it is often packed with some edible fish bones, adding a calcium boost. If you don't eat fish at home, order it when you go out. "That's a perfect opportunity to meet the recommendations," she savs.

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healthy eats

NUTRITIOUS AND DELICIOUS



ANATOMY OF AN APRICOT

Globe Trotters

Apricots originated in Asia more than 4,000 years ago, migrating to Persia and the Mediterranean before Spanish explorers brought them to the United States

Child's Play

In China, apricots were called "moons of the faithful" and were thought to enhance women's fertility.

Value Added

Apricots are an excellent source of vitamin A and a good source of vitamin C, dietary fiber, and potassium

Time Is Ripe

In Latin, the apricot is called "praecocquum," which means "early-ripening peach."

healthy recipe

Apricot-Stuffed Grilled Pork Tenderloin

- Makes 8 servings Ingredients
 - 2 1-lb pork tenderloins
 - 1 cup (about 7 oz) dried apricots, diced
 - 1 tbsp grated orange rind
 - /2 cup crumbled goat cheese (can substitute blue or feta cheese)
 - 3 tbsp fresh thyme, divided ¹/₄ cup chopped walnuts, toasted 1/2 tsp salt
 - fresh ground pepper
 - cooking spray

 - 2 tbsp apricot jam
 - ¹/₄ cup orange juice
 - 1 tsp mustard

Light Bite One apricot has only 17 calories.

Peak Points

Fresh apricots are available year-round throughout North America. From May through August, varieties come primarily from California and Washington. The rest of the year they're likely from South America.

All in the Family

The fruit is a member of the Rosaceae or rose family and is closely related to similar-looking peaches and plums.

Perfect Pick

To select ripe apricots, look for fruit with a rich, orange color-not pale yellow or green-that's a little soft to the touch.-Chloe Thompson

Per serving: 252 calories, 27 g protein, 12 g carbohvdrate. 11 g fat (4 g saturated fat), 84 mg cholesterol 1 g fiber, 9 g sugar, 4. Secure stuffed pork with kitchen twine, sprinkle with 286 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 37%

How I Learned to Love Amanda Wurzbach,



35, Chicago marketing executive



But all that changed with one simple enhancement: "Vinegar!" she says. "I love vinegar, and once I tasted pickled beets, it was like the 'gateway' drug for loving beets in every form."

Wurzbach's beet conversion happened just a few years ago at a restaurant dinner. The chef had prepared house-pickled beets and served them on a salad. "I always loved the flavor of bread-and-butter pickles," she says, "so tasting something akin to that helped me get over my long-standing dislike for the texture of cooked beets."

Today, Wurzbach counts beets as one of her top 10 foods and has a hard time picking a favorite preparation. She loves that beets are a mainstay on many restaurant menus, and she's even learned to pickle them herself.

Her go-to home-cooked recipe for beets? Simply roasted with olive oil, salt, and onions. "I eat them warm the first night and then finish them up chilled with blue cheese, arugula, and maybe some toasted almonds the next day. Mmmmm!"-Monica Kass Rogers

Learn to love beets too with more recipes.

healthy recipe **Cooking With Beets**

Garden beets (beta vulgaris) are low in calories (58 per 1 cup serving, raw) but high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Beets are an excellent source of folate (providing 37% of recommended dietary allowance), a good source of vitamin C (11% of RDA), and also contain vitamin B-6 (5% of RDA), magnesium, copper, and iron. Beet tops (the greens) are even better for you—high in vitamin A (a 1-cup serving provides 15% of RDA), and C (19% of RDA).

→ Roasted Beets

Simple and quick to make, roasted beets have a rich, sweet flavor and can be eaten hot or chilled, on their own or as a salad topper. To roast, preheat oven to 400°F. Peel 8 to 10 small to medium-sized beets (wear protective gloves or you'll stain your hands) and cut into bite-sized pieces. Toss with 2 tbsp olive oil, ¹/₂ tsp salt, and ¹/₂ tsp fresh cracked black pepper. Spread on a cookie sheet and roast for 15 minutes. Toss. Roast another 5 minutes until tender.

→ Beet Salad

Make a salad of ¹/₂ cup roasted beets with 1 cup baby spinach, arugula, or mixed salad greens and 2 tsp crumbled goat cheese or blue cheese. To add tang to your roasted beets: Marinate 1 to 1¹/₂ cups beets in a vinaigrette of ¹/₂ finely minced clove of garlic, 1 tbsp unseasoned rice vinegar, 1 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tbsp pomegranate juice, 1 tbsp olive oil, 2 tsp good French Dijon mustard, 1 tsp brown sugar, ¹/₄ tsp pepper, and a pinch of salt.

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to 10 minutes, discard twine, and slice.

1. Preheat grill to medium-high heat and spray grill

2. Slice pork in half lengthwise but not all the way

through to create a flat piece of meat. Lightly pound

3. Combine apricots, orange rind, cheese, nuts, and 2

salt and pepper, and coat with cooking spray.

5. Combine apricot jam, orange juice, mustard, and

6. Grill pork for 25 to 30 minutes, basting occasionally

with apricot sauce and turning once. Let stand for 5

tbsp thyme for stuffing. Distribute stuffing on each

piece of pork and roll up jelly-roll style lengthwise.

Directions

rack with cooking spray.

pork to ½-inch thickness.

thyme to baste pork.





Beets



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healthyeats NUTRITIOUS AND DELICIOUS

Green Is Good

Way at the top of my list of kitchen pet peeves is fake food (such as carcinogenic add-ins and synthetic dyes). Also up there is the way some parents lie and sneak to get their kids to eat healthy food. I think it's one of the worst things we can do to our children.

The problem? Anything based on lying doesn't help kids develop a healthy and long-lasting relationship with food.

Instead, it seems to do the opposite, for three big reasons. First, if you put a cup of spinach in the brownie mix, the amount of nutrients your children will get from one serving is insignificant. Second, this switcheroo may encourage your kids to eat a few extra brownies to get to the spinach, thinking they are getting more servings of vegetables. And third, when they leave your house, there will be no spinach in brownies, so they will not know about good food's nutritional benefits and how to cook and eat delicious greens.

I get that parents are tired, and it's enticing to believe that grinding up carrots and veggies into your pasta sauce is "working." But believe me, there are ways to get kids to eat vegetables without hiding them. And it requires far less effort than the grind-andsneak method-and will teach your children about health, nutrition, cooking, and agriculture, all in one fell swoop. Here are some easy tips.

• Start serving veggies to your kids with every lunch and dinner while they are young.

• Offer all kinds of vegetables. If they spit out the spinach, try Romaine lettuce, Swiss chard, sweet potatoes, green beans, cucumbers, asparagus, red bell peppers, and so on.

• Don't overcook or "mushify" your veggies. And avoid canned vegetables. Kids like crunch and a good taste. Just like adults.

• Make sure you model eating and enjoying vegetables.



Makes 4 servings

crunchy chip.

Ingredients

4 cups Swiss chard, tough ribs removed and chopped into 1/2-inch strips (about 1 to 2 heads)

1 tsp extra virgin olive oil dash of kosher salt

Per serving: 17 calories, 1 g protein, 1 g fat, 1 g fiber, 101 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 50%.





Yes, children will eat this. When you roast chard and salt it, it is similar in flavor to a

Directions

- **1.** Preheat oven to 400°F.
- 2. Lay chopped chard out over one to two rimmed baking sheets. Do not overpack chard or it will steam and take longer to cook to crispiness.
- **3**. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil until the chard is lightly coated. Sprinkle with kosher salt. Roast for 5 to 7 minutes, or until several pieces are crispy. For an extra zip, splash with balsamic vinegar at the end.

WebMD.com

With two highly anticipated movies and baby No. 2 on the way, **Bryce Dallas Howard** claims her place in the A-list spotlight

Bryce Dallas Howard may be starring as the villain in two current films, but she's merely acting the part. Off-screen she comes across as the friendly, easygoing mom you might meet at the playground, coffee in hand. With a 4-year-old named Theo at home and another baby on the way, this isn't much of a stretch. But when it comes to her health. Howard is no stranger to taking a

But when it comes to her health, Howard is no stranger to taking a darkly dramatic turn. During her first pregnancy she gained 80 pounds (double her recommended amount), then battled a prolonged postnatal depression so severe she "felt like I was in a deep pit, and I couldn't get out of it." She credits her family with recognizing her stark emotional withdrawal during this painful period, then pushing her to seek professional help.

By Lauren Paige Kennedy, WebMD Contributing Writer



Reviewed by Louise Chang, MD WebMD MEDICAL EDITOR



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The rising star is, and always has been, tight with her parents. Her dad is the legendary Ron Howard, who was once known the world over as "Opie" and "Richie Cunningham" for his TV sitcom roles and went on to achieve Oscar greatness as the producer/director of such films as A Beautiful Mind and Apollo 13. Young Bryce grew up in Greenwich, Conn., far removed from Tinseltown's trappings. She was aware of her father's fame, she says, but was never snared in its spotlight.

Instead, she paid her dues on Broadway and for years shined in quieter films such as M. Night Shyamalan's spooky Lady in the Water and Clint Eastwood's reflective Hereafter. (Supporting roles in Spider-Man 3 and Eclipse, the third installment in the Twilight saga, are mega-budget exceptions.) Her early work is impressive, if a bit low-key, much like Howard herself. But get ready, because the flame-haired actress, 30, is about to cause a stir.

Bryce's Starring Roles

In addition to being named Kate Spade's latest muse for the designer's chic advertising campaign-now in the pages of fashion magazines everywhere-Howard's peaches-and-cream visage is also ubiquitous at the nation's cineplexes. First out is The Help, one of this summer's most anticipated movies. Based on Kathryn Stockett's best-selling novel about racial tensions in the South, it opens in August. Come September, Howard supports the bittersweet comedic stylings of A-listers Seth Rogen, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Anna Kendrick, and Anjelica Huston in 50/50.

Howard plays the bad guy in both movies. Or should we say, bad girl. "Honestly, for an actor it's fun," she tells WebMD of taking on polarizing characters. "I was initially hesitant to do The Help, because while it's a wonderful book, it's also rooted in a lot of painful truths...but I had the greatest time ever working with these women [co-stars Emma Stone and Viola Davis] and playing this character, even if she is a despicable human being."

The "despicable human being" is nasty Hilly Holbrook, the meanest creature of fiction to appear since race-baiting Bob Ewell ruined lives in To Kill a Mockingbird. Sweet-as-a-snake Hilly is a society princess

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and stalwart segregationist in 1960s Jackson, Miss. For her, the issue of civil rights isn't to be debated or advanced; it's to be halted altogether. And she's more than willing to do her part.

It's Howard's other new film, 50/50, that wrestles with 21st-century issues- examining how dizzying it can be to navigate our at-times unwieldy health care system.

Powerful and authentic, the film was written by TV producer Will Reiser, who was diagnosed with a rare spinal cancer six years ago at age 25 and was given a 50/50chance of surviving. Gordon-Levitt plays a character who finds himself in a similar situation, with Rogen going for laughs and getting them as the best friend who's enraged by Howard's character, the girlfriend who's rather lukewarm about becoming the caretaker of a chemotherapy patient.

Asked what drew her to the part, Howard says: "First and foremost, I wanted to work with those boys [Rogen's team]. And I wanted the experience of being part of this incredible story."

The film explores how falling into the rabbit hole of illness redefines not just life

expectancy, but relationships. Tough questions drive the plot: Who takes you to and from treatments when you're in no shape to do it yourself? Pushes for the best treatment? And is unquestionably there for you when the going gets tough?

"I don't respect her choices, but I can empathize with her," says Howard of her character, who cheats on Gordon-Levitt's character, eventually dumping him to face his fate alone. "Can you imagine being in a relationship, dating casually, and suddenly something like this happens? It encapsulates how life-and-death circumstances leave a person so very vulnerable, not only to the illness, but also to the people all around him."

In real life, newly diagnosed patients need a team of supporters, says Karen Mercereau, RN, founder and executive director of RN Patient Advocates in Tucson, Ariz. This team should include family members, a social network, and top doctorsand if possible an independent advocate who understands how hospitals work and where to find the most relevant information regarding insurance, support groups, and leading-edge research.

"When a person is first diagnosed, he hears very little," explains Mercereau, a scene played out in 50/50 when Gordon-Levitt's character suddenly turns oblivious to all around him as his doctor's voice drones into gibberish the moment he utters the word cancer. "The patient is having his own internal dialogue and is fighting fear. That's why it's so important to have someone who can explain procedures not just once, but six times if necessary. New patients don't have that kind of head space to take it all in."

Postpartum Struggle

Thankfully Howard has never faced such a diagnosis, although she has "lost two grandparents to cancer, and I've definitely had many people in my life who've dealt with it, including a close friend who's as a major depression that can develop fighting a rare form of it now."

Instead, her greatest personal health challenge was her crippling bout with

Her early work is impressive, if a bit low-key, much like Howard herself. But get ready, because the flame-haired actor, 30, is about to cause a stir.



postpartum depression after her son was born in 2007. It lasted 18 long, distressing months.

"I was 25 years old, and I had this idea of the kind of mother I wanted to be," Howard tells WebMD. "I held onto that vision and completely stopped checking in with myself. My feelings were the complete opposite of what I wanted or expected to feel, and that was so overwhelming. Circumstances around the birth were challenging...my husband [actor Seth Gabel] had to return to work just five days after Theo was born. I felt awful. But I didn't know to say: 'I have postpartum depression.' I didn't recognize I was in it. I just felt like I was a bad person or that I wasn't dealing well with everything."

"Postpartum depression is defined after giving birth," says Dorothy Sit, MD, assistant professor of psychiatry at Women's Behavioral HealthCare of Western



Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in Pittsburgh. "Generally it's identified within 12 weeks of delivery and is accompanied by two or more consecutive weeks of low mood, loss of interest in daily activities, change in appetite and sleep patterns, weight loss or gain, a feeling of worthlessness, plus guilt over not being a 'good mom,' and sometimes hopelessness and suicidal thoughts."

"I was incredibly sleep-deprived for months," Howard continues. "My milk wasn't coming in, and Theo was jaundiced, and I was trying to feed constantly and not use formula...when he slept I pumped. It felt like the most insane kind of torture....Now that I'm pregnant again, I'm going to do my best to anticipate those kinds of needs-to reach out to friends and family and allow myself to fully recover [from labor]."

Research shows a connection between extended sleep deprivation and postpartum depression, says Sit. She also lists "other environmental factors, such as poor social support and financial stressors"-conditions Howard did not face-as possible catalysts. PPD "may also be related to hormonal shifts, when a woman loses a lot of estrogen after giving birth. In addition, having past episodes of depression before the pregnancy predicts an increased risk for experiencing it after."

Howard says she found her sense of alienation from her son most distressing.

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"We're doing great now," she says of Theo, whom she reportedly called "it" during her darkest days. "It's become the most miraculously balanced relationship in my life—the total opposite of how it was in the beginning," she adds. "And I'm so grateful for that."

While she declines to elaborate on what specific combination of medications and/ or therapy worked for her, she says: "It's so important to find the right doctor and have the right relationship with that person...I do feel like [my postpartum depression] was a chemical imbalance. Because when I did seek help, [my symptoms] just stopped. It was like night and day."

Balancing Act

Bryce Dallas Howard juggles motherhood, professional life, and body image much like any American woman: "I take it day by day. And I'm always questioning if what I'm doing is right, being a working mom," the busy actor admits. Below, what works for this rising star:

Expect the unexpected.

Howard admits to a preconceived notion of what motherhood would bring. Instead she had a rough delivery, refused all pain medications after it, had difficulty breastfeeding, and stayed silent when she needed help—a recipe for a health crisis. Now, she says: "I know I'll be the first one to ask my family or friends if I need a hand."

Don't forget you.

Going back to work was part of her return to health. "I stopped checking in with myself," she tells WebMD, referring to her own needs and wants. "I am so fortunate to have really great child care now," she adds, so she can take on the occasional juicy role.

Be kind to your body.

"I will never wear a bikini again," Howard says. "But I say that with a twinkle in the eye, because I feel really proud! My body expanded to that degree to carry a life. And, you know, bikini or no bikini, I feel pretty good about it."—L.P.K.

Body After Baby

Despite her battle with depression, Howard refused to get down about her excessive weight gain during her first pregnancy or her inability to squeeze into tiny sample sizes within months—or even a year after Theo's birth.

After finally losing that stubborn 80 pounds, is Howard daunted by the prospect of having to shed unwanted baby weight all over again? Howard is blithe about it: "I will never again be depressed about being 5, 10, or 15 pounds overweight," she insists. "Gaining the amount of weight I did during [my first] pregnancy—and I got up to 210 pounds—you just learn to relax about it. It took me so long to lose the baby weight, I got adjusted [to being heavier], and I said: 'I refuse to associate who I am with the shape of my body.' I was able to be generous with myself. I had a baby. I'm not some reckless human being ... and when I finally lost it all I felt like I had really achieved something."

Howard is making sleep, nutrition, and prenatal exercise a priority: "I was in much better condition overall when I got pregnant this time around. When the morning sickness started and all I could stomach was bagels, I felt a little bummed since I'd been so mindful about my nutrition previously. But I'm promising myself that the moment I can tolerate healthier foods I'll shift gears back to a well-rounded nutrition plan."

While *The Help* and *50/50* may already be causing advance box-office buzz, Theo's new sibling (due later this year) is the production Howard is most excited about.

Connect with other moms in the parenting community.



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She's also more disciplined about getting the rest she needs and maintains her exercise routine from before she was pregnant. (However, women should talk to their doctor about exercise; some women should not exercise the same way or at the same level when they are pregnant.)

"It feels wonderful to get outside as often as possible, especially with my family. Ultimately I hope these efforts will add up to make for a strong labor and healthy recovery."

So make that three major projects in the works for Howard. And while The Help and 50/50 may already be causing advance boxoffice buzz, Theo's new sibling (who's due later this year) is the production Howard is most excited about. And the only reviews she cares about come from her firstborn:

"He's been an incredible help and very understanding!" she says of his reaction to her pregnancy. Will his positive attitude carry on after the birth? "I'm crossing my fingers!" she says, laughing.

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Do you know the top 7 summertime health hazards and how you can prevent them?

By Gina Shaw WebMD Contributing Writer





hideous injuries." They're also hard to repair, because not only can whirling blades cause complex lacerations and fractures, but they can bury

Stanton.

Hansa Bhargava, MD WebMD MEDICAL ED



Mower Maladies

Every homeowner loves the sight of a pristine, neatly mowed yard. But in their haste to get that lawn in shape, some people forget to take precautions. "In the warmer months we see lots of mower injuries-toes, hands, and fingers getting caught in blades, and things like rocks

"People start tinkering with the mower and reach under it to unclog it, and forget there's a spinning blade there. Those are

contaminants like grass and dirt in the wound. To be safe:

* Wear closed-toed shoes—preferably with a steel toe-when you mow, along with goggles or sunglasses, gloves, and long pants that will protect you from flying debris.

and sticks getting flung out of them," says 🛛 🖊 Keep kids away from the push mower and off the riding mower. Riding mowers are not just another ride-on toy.

> * Get a professional to service your mower or learn how to do it properly. Important: Disconnect the spark plug to prevent it from accidentally starting. Turning a push mower's blade manually can ignite the engine.

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Watery Wipeouts 2 Stanton has lost track of how many

boating accidents he's seen as an ER physician. "People's biggest mistake by far is drinking and boating. People get out there and drink alcohol all day in the sun, and you end up with the same accidents you have with driving—with the added risks of falling out of boats, getting hit by propellers, and drowning."

It's also easy to get lax about life jackets. "Kids need to have them on all the time," he says. "Even if having them under the seat fulfills the law, in an accident, chances are anyone who doesn't know how to swim won't be able to get to them in time."

When you are going to be out on a boat or at the beach with a child, basic lifesaving skills are a must, not a luxury. "The courses are easy, usually just one day or half a day," Stanton says. "There's no mouth-to-mouth [resuscitation] anymore if you are not trained—just chest compressions."

You can find first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and other emergency lifesaving courses near you with the American Heart Association's ECC (Emergency Cardiovascular Care) Class Connector tool online at americanheart.org.

3 Dehvdration Disasters You've romped outdoors with the kids all day, and your water bottle ran dry long ago. Suddenly you feel dizzy and lightheaded, and your mouth tastes like cotton. You're dehydrated—meaning you haven't taken in enough fluids to replace those you've been sweating out.

People can get dehydrated any time of year, but it's much more common in the summer months, when they are active outdoors in the warm sun. Heatstroke is the most severe form of dehydration. That's when your internal temperature rises to dangerously high levels. Your skin gets hot, but you stop sweating. Someone with heatstroke may pass out, have hallucinations, or suffer seizures.

Preventing dehydration and heatstroke couldn't be easier: Drink plenty of fluids—especially water—take regular breaks in the shade, and try to schedule your most vigorous outdoor activities for times when the heat isn't so strong, such as early morning or late afternoon.



For persons suffering more serious dehydration or heatstroke, get them indoors, have them lie down, and cool them off with ice packs and cool cloths. Someone who is seriously affected by the heat may need intravenous fluids in the ER.

A Sunburn Snafus

With all the skin cancer warnings. you'd think Americans would be getting fewer sunburns, not more. But you'd be wrong. The percentage of adults nationwide who got at least one sunburn during the preceding year rose from 31.8% in 1999 to 33.7% in 2004, according to the CDC.

Your risk for melanoma doubles if you've had just five sunburns in your life. "A sunburn is a first-degree burn, right up there with thermal burns," says Stanton. "And we even see some second-degree thermal burns, often when people are out drinking or falling asleep in the sun and don't realize how long they've been out there."

In addition to practicing "safe sun"wearing sunscreen that protects against both UVB and UVA rays, long-sleeved shirts, and wide-brimmed hats, and staying out of blistering midday rays-there are things you can do to treat a severe sunburn, Stanton says:

* Drink water or juice to replace fluids you lost while sweating in the hot sun.

★ Soak the burn in cool water for a few minutes or put a cool, wet cloth on it.

★ Take an over-thecounter pain reliever, such as acetaminophen.

★ Treat itching with an OTC antihistamine cream or a spray like diphenhydramine (such as Benadryl), which helps block the inflammatory reaction.

★ Apply an antibiotic ointment or an aloe cream with emollients that soften and soothe the skin directly to the burned area.

"You're going to have a pretty miserable 12 to 24 hours with the initial symptoms no matter what you do," Stanton warns.

5 Picnic Panics

Food poisoning puts about 300,000 people in the hospital every year, hitting its peak in the summer months. You don't want diarrhea to be the souvenir of your family's annual summer picnic.

"Anything that has mayonnaise, dairy, or eggs in it and any meat products can develop some pretty nasty bacteria after only a couple of hours unrefrigerated," says Stanton. "Every summer we'll have five or six people coming in from the same reunion or family picnic with food poisoning symptoms."

To prevent food poisoning, follow the U.S. Department of Agriculture's advice to:

Clean. Wash your hands as well as the surfaces where you'll be preparing foods.

Separate. Wrap raw meat securely and keep it stored away from other food items.

Cook. Bring along a meat thermometer. Grilling meat browns it very fast on the outside, but that doesn't mean it's safe on the inside. Steaks should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145°F, ground beef and pork to 160°F, and poultry to 165°F.

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* Chill. Keep everything refrigerated as long as possible. Store perishable picnic items in an insulated cooler packed with ice, and follow the "last in, first out" rule-whatever you're going to eat first should go at the top of the cooler.

Mild cases of food poisoning can be cared for at home, Stanton says. Avoid solid foods, and stick with small, frequent drinks of clear liquid to stay hydrated. Once the nausea and vomiting have eased, you can try bringing food back into your diet-slowly and in small, bland portions (Grandma knew what she was talking about when she recommended tea and toast to settle an upset stomach). If symptoms persist for more than a couple days (or more than 24 hours in small kids), see a doctor.



6 Fireworks Failures

You start to hear the booms, pops, and snaps in mid-June, long before Independence Day arrives. Many people love fireworks, but fireworks don't necessarily love them back. Nearly 9,000 individuals were injured by fireworks in 2009, according to the U.S. Fire Administration, and two were killed. "We see pretty significant hand and eye injuries from fireworks every summer," Stanton says. The safest way to watch fireworks is at a professionally sponsored display. At least six states ban all consumer fireworks, and several more allow them only with limitations. But if you can buy fireworks legally and want to set off a few at home, take these precautions:

* Keep a hose or fire extinguisher handy to put out small fires.

Never allow children of any age to handle fireworks. "Everybody loves to give sparklers to kids, but they burn very hot and can cause significant eye injuries," Stanton says. In fact, a sparkler can burn as hot as 2,000°F—hot enough to melt some types of metals.

* Never hold fireworks of any kind in your hand. "They're not made for that. Some fuses are faster than others," Stanton says. "They can go off quickly and cause burns or just explode in your hand."

To care for a fireworks burn, wrap it in a clean towel or T-shirt saturated with cool water and get to an emergency room to have the injury checked out.

What's in your summer first-aid kit?



Sting Slipups

You're out for a pleasant day of working in the yard and you dig up a hornet's nest—literally. For most people, a bee or wasp sting is just painful, but for a few, it can be life-threatening. You may not know you're one of them until after you've been stung—sometimes more than once. Three in 100 adults in the United States—or nearly 7 million people have life-threatening allergies to insect stings, according to the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

To stay free of bees (and other stinging insects, including mosquitoes) when outdoors, avoid heavy perfumes and scents (especially florals), wear light-colored clothing with no floral patterns (stinging insects are attracted to dark colors and flowers), and guard food and sugary drinks like sodas. Most people who get stung will just have pain, tenderness, itchiness, and swelling at the sting site on the skin. But see a doctor or go to the ER immediately when you have:

- * Hives, itchiness, and swelling over large areas of your body
- ***** Tightness in the chest or trouble breathing
- ***** Swelling of the tongue or face
- * Dizziness or feeling you will pass out

Stanton advises keeping an epinephrine auto-injector with you. The pen holds a prescription medication designed to treat severe allergic reactions by tightening the blood vessels and relaxing the airway muscles. One quick jab to the thigh helps slow down a life-threatening allergic response.

But don't assume that using the pen is enough. "In the vast majority of people, the reaction will outlast the pen, so once you've used it, you should still go to the ER for observation or further treatment," Stanton says. "The pen buys time."

To treat a milder reaction, take acetaminophen for the pain and an antihistamine for hives and swelling. (This works for mild reactions to mosquito bites as well.) "Icing the wound can help too," Stanton says.

Aaron Michelfelder, MD, FAAFP, a family physician at Loyola University Health System and a professor at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine, offers tips on what to stock in your summer survival kit.

BUG OFF

Repellent, \$8 Bugs hate rosemary, citronella, and lemongrass, so Burt's Bees combined these and five other natural oils into an insect repellent. Because it's non-toxic, you can use it even on young kids.

TAKE COVER

Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Body Mist Sunblock SPF 100+, \$10.99 This spray contains avobenzone to nix the sun's rays, but isn't thick and goopy like sunblock creams. It's easy to cover a large area of skin with a small amount, making it less likely you'll miss spots.

WELL HEALED

Your good old-fashioned bandage only better: This product includes two antibiotics, polymyxin B sulfate and bacitracin zinc, to help protect and heal superficial cuts and scrapes.

SCRATCH THAT

Benadryl Extra Strength Itch Relief Stick, \$3.49 When you get a bee sting or a poison ivy rash, some of your body's cells release histamine, which is what causes

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HOTPICKS Expert choices for your summer survival kit

Burt's Bees All Natural Herbal Insect

Band-Aid Plus Antibiotic, \$2.99

the telltale itching, swelling, and redness. The diphenhydramine in this product blocks the histamine and keeps it from bugging you. If you have an allover itch, such as from sunburn, opt for Benadryl in oral form instead.

CUT RATE

Neosporin Neo to Go First Aid Antiseptic/Pain Relieving Spray, \$4.50 This non-aerosol spray is pocket-sized and eases discomfort with pramoxine hydrochloride, a topical anesthetic that works especially well on painful abrasions.

BURNING QUESTION **Banana Boat Aloe After** Sun Lotion, \$5.99

The aloe in this lotion is an antiprostaglandin, meaning it's an anti-inflammatory that helps reduce pain and swelling.

Ultra Shee

BODY MIST

DITCH THE ITCH

IvyBlock Lotion, \$13.99 Nip poison ivy in the bud (or the leaf) by rubbing this on your skin before hitting the trail.—Linda Formichelli

SI FFP

THE PRICE OF TOO LITTLE PILLOW TIME

Sleep deprivation can take a terrible toll on those who suffer from it. Busa4, for instance, a member of the WebMD sleep disorders community, has had trouble sleeping for years. "It's been getting so I've had to take a nap during lunch. Otherwise I can't function the rest of my work day," she writes. "Even [then] my body wakes me up consistently after 30 minutes. I am at a loss here and I'm afraid this is going to catch up to me." Do you know how much you can lose when you don't snooze?

1 Too little sleep may raise your risk of high blood pressure.

O True • False

2 Too little sleep suppresses your appetite.

O True O False

- **3** Sleep problems have been linked to type 2 diabetes. O True • False
- 4 Too little sleep can prompt personality changes as well as depression.
 - False O True

Answers: 1. True. Research shows that 24% of middle-aged adults who slept less than five hours a night developed high blood pressure (HBP), compared with 12% of their peers who slept seven or eight hours a night. HBP is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. 2. False. How much one sleeps profoundly affects hormones that regulate hunger. Sleep loss has been linked to bigger appetite, which can lead to extra pounds. **3.** True. Sleep problems such as sleep apnea have been linked to diabetes. Sleep deprivation may impair your body's ability to control blood sugar. 4. True. Besides these problems, sleep loss also impairs thinking and memory.

Source: American Heart Association, University of Chicago, National Sleep Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and the WebMD Sleep Disorders Health Center

DID YOU KNOW?

43% of Americans between the ages of 13 and 64 say they rarely or never get a good night's sleep on weeknights.



FOR YOUR DOCTOR

Am I sabotaging a good night's sleep with caffeine, alcohol, or other habits?

• What are some strategies I can try to get **L** more sleep?

O Should I try a sleep medication? Are these meds Odangerous or habit-forming?

Do I need to make an appointment with a sleep specialist about a possible sleep disorder?

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sleep deprivation	WebMD SEARC

TEST YOUR NUTRITION IQ

For **Mark1961**, the trick to maintaining a healthy weight and good nutrition is in the size of his plate. "I feel it all boils down to portion size," he posts to a conversation about home cooking in the WebMD diet and nutrition community. "You can cook every meal you eat and still be eating unhealthy due to what you are eating or the quantity." How much thought do you put into healthy eating habits?

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), and the WebMD Diet and Nutrition Health Center







Answers: 1. Breakfast provides energy and aids thinking. People who eat breakfast also tend to eat healthier foods-with less fat and more minerals and vitamins—throughout the day. Choose fruits, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products to start your day well. 2. Eating three meals a day is a healthy approach, but people who eat four or five small meals throughout the day, instead of a lower number of large meals, may stay slimmer and more energized by better managing their appetites. **3.** Knowing standard serving sizes helps you judge how much you're eating. For example: A standard serving of cheese is the size of four dice. 4. It's a myth that eating after 8 p.m. will make you fat. Your weight is determined by your total caloric intake and calories burned for the day-no matter what time you eat.

ALLERGIES

IS YOUR HOME ALLERGY-PROOF?

Pollen, dust mites, and mold spores invade many homes this time of year, making life miserable for inhabitants. But there are ways to fight back. **"I'm assuming you are doing standard avoidance tactics, like keeping house and car windows closed, using A/C, and using a HEPA vacuum," Aqua14**, a regular in our Allergies community, told the parent of a boy with severe allergies. **"If not, those should be done, too."** How well have you allergy-proofed your home?

1 Do you shut windows and run the air conditioner when pollen counts are high?

O Yes O No

Do you use a dehumidifier in humid areas?
Yes
No

- 3 Do you use allergy-proof covers for your bed?• Yes• No
- Do you launder bedding weekly in hot water?YesNo
- Do you get help with your yard work?YesNo

Answers: 1. Using air conditioning and keeping windows closed during allergy season helps cut down on hay fever attacks by keeping out pollen.
2. Running a dehumidifier in high-humidity areas, such as basements and bathrooms, inhibits mold growth. 3. Allergy-proof covers cut down your exposure to dust mites and other allergens. 4. Weekly laundering in hot water helps control dust mites. 5. If grass pollen is your trigger, hire someone to mow your lawn so your exposure is minimized.

Source: WebMD Allergies Health Center

DID YOU KNOW?

Besides bedding, **dust mites** can also thrive in stuffed animals, overstuffed furniture, rugs and window blinds.



FOR YOUR DOCTOR

Should I be tested to find out what's causing my allergies?

 $2^{What steps can I take to reduce my exposure to allergens?}$

Should I take allergy medicines? Do I need a prescription or can I use the over-the-counter kind?

What about allergy shots—how do they work? How often might I need to get them?

GET THE 411: ALLERGIES	Allergies	2
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allergy-proof	WebMD SEARCH	

HEART

HEART ATTACK SMARTS

While movie depictions of heart attacks involve people falling over and grasping their chest, a real heart attack can be more subtle—and more confusing. **"Last night I awoke with intense chest pain," Longing2BSvelte** posted on the WebMD Heart Disease board a while back. **"The pain was in my chest with some going up the sides of my neck. I was also sweating. [I] woke this morning and wondered if I survived a heart attack."** Only her doctor would know for sure. How much do you know about heart attacks?

Most heart attacks occur suddenly, without warning.
 True
 False
 The medical term for heart attack—myocardial infarction—means "death of heart muscle."
 True
 False
 Women rarely have heart attacks.
 True
 False

4 You can have a "silent" heart attack. • True • False

Answers: 1. False. Most heart attacks begin with mild discomfort; half of all people who are having a heart attack delay more than two hours before seeking attention. 2. True. When an artery that supplies fresh, oxygenated blood to the heart becomes blocked, the starved heart muscle can die—and this defines a heart attack. The longer the blockage lasts, the more damage done. The sooner the blockage can be opened, the less damage occurs.
3. False. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women older than 40. Women tend to get heart attacks later in life than men. 4. True. "Silent" heart attacks, which most often affect the elderly, women, and people with diabetes, tend to go unrecognized because they cause subtle pain or no pain. But they can still damage the heart muscle.

Source: National Institutes of Health, the American Heart Association, and the $\ensuremath{\textit{Web}}MD$ Heart Disease Health Center

DID YOU KNOW?

Women are six times more likely to die of heart disease than breast cancer.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR

How do I know if I am at risk for a heart attack?

 $2^{\rm What}$ are the heart attack warning signs I should watch for?

3 Do I need any tests? If so, what kind will I need and what will they show?

4 What diet and lifestyle changes will improve my heart health?

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heart disease

WebMD SEARCH

PAIN

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CHRONIC PAIN?

Millions of people suffer from chronic pain in this country, and it's not just the pain that hurts them. "Living with chronic pain can be so lonely at times," Anon 153921 told the WebMD back pain community recently, "because if you have not suffered pain you really don't understand." How much do you know about chronic pain? Take our guiz to find out.

1 Migraines and severe headaches are most common among postmenopausal women.

O True • False

(2) The shoulder is the most common site of joint pain. O True • False

3 People with recent lower back pain are twice as likely to be psychologically distressed as those without back pain.

O False O True

4 Diabetes can cause chronic pain.

O True • False

Answers: 1. False. These headaches are most common during women's childbearing years. Migraines and severe headaches affect twice as many women as men—21% compared to 10%. 2. False. Knees top the joint pain list, followed by the shoulder, fingers, and hips. **3**. False. The true number is higher. People with recent back pain are more than four times as likely to report serious psychological distress as those without back pain, according to a 2006 U.S. government survey on the nation's health. Back pain also disrupts daily life. In the same survey, 28% of adults who reported low back pain said a chronic condition limited their activity, compared with only 10% of adults who did not report low back pain. 4. True. Diabetes can cause nerve damage that leads to chronic pain in hands, arms, feet, legs, and other areas.

Source: Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, and the WebMD Pain Management Health Center

DID YOU KNOW?



FOR YOUR DOCTOR

1 What is causing my chronic pain? Should I see L a specialist?

• Will medication, steroid injections, or surgery Left help my type of pain?

Are there alternative therapies that can help me? • What about exercise?

Can counseling help me address pain-related emotional issues?

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WebMD SEARCH pain relief

WebMD checkup

10 QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND WELL-BEING

MARK FEUERSTEIN ACTOR

My mother invites me in for a salad after a long day of shooting, and my father wakes me up every morning to see how I want my eggs.

You're not a doctor, but you play one on TV. How did you prepare for this role? We have an amazing emergency doctor on set, Dr. Irving Danesh, who not only supervises, with vigilance, the medical accuracy of the show, but who actually comes up with all of the completely credible yet insane medical scenarios my character has to address. To research the role, I met with Dr. Keith Black, chair of neurosurgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, and was invited to watch the removal of a brain tumor. To watch as a doctor fiddles around in the epicenter of who that man is—his brain, his emotions—it's beyond cool.

What's your favorite mystery ailment you've solved on the show? I've relieved the pressure in a man's brain by drilling into his head, performed a tracheotomy on a dog, and saved a woman from drowning by securing her neck and spine to a surfboard with a life jacket. And what's most insane is that all these situations really happened, and the protocols have been performed by emergency doctors in the field.

You're 40 now. What's your best health habit? Your worst? Best: jogging, mountain climbing, biking, yoga, and meditation. Worst is that I drink coffee twice a day, but I recently quit Diet Coke, so I've got that going for me.

What are your guilty-pleasure foods?

Black-and-white cookies at Pick A Bagel, Crumbs cupcakes, and Reese's Big Cup and Fast Break, which is a phenomenal candy bar by any standard.

Is there one food you absolutely refuse to eat?

Liver! Though in its chopped, more Jewish incarnation, I quite enjoy it—particularly on a piece of wellbaked, heavily seeded rye bread. And cilantro—hate it!

On Sex and the City, you infamously played a guy who couldn't satisfy Miranda. Luckily, life doesn't imitate art-you've been married for six years. What's your secret to making it work? Apologizing Whatever negative energy, stress, and blame you can absorb without running the risk of imploding from resentment, do it and then pretend it's all good until it actually is-because it always gets back to good if you're patient. I believe in honest, open communication-the more angry and uncomfortable, the more it probably needs to get out. You won't know what challenges your relationship can handle until you put it out there.

You have three kids, ages 5, 3, and 1. What's the most important lesson you're trying to instill in them? The Dalai Lama said, "My religion is kindness," and that's a good one, but I think Pinkalicious' [a popular kids' book character] mom said it best: "You get what you get, and you don't get upset."

How do you unwind when you're not working?

My favorite way to unwind is watching TV with my best friend from fourth grade, Eric Diamond. Once a week we get together, talk about life, and watch our favorite shows.

You solve medical mysteries on your show. In your personal life, your youngest daughter, Addie, has a rare heart condition. Did your TV character help you when you were working with her doctors? Not at all; it simply made me realize how far I am from an actual doctor. Addie recently underwent two open-heart surgeries, and she's doing great today. All those surgeons, doctors, and nurses who knew how to navigate the intricate highways of the human heart to save her life remind me what an honor it is to pretend to be one of them.—Andrea Gabrick



In Royal Pains, which kicked off its new season June 29 on the USA Network, you play Dr. Hank Lawson with a boutique practice in the Hamptons. And you film on location. Tough gig! But you grew up in New York. Was it a homecoming for you? A huge homecoming. And by that I mean I've literally come to the home I grew up in. I sleep in the crash pad next door to my parents.



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ggie Q taps into her animal instincts on-screen and off 53



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Road rules Tips for traveling with your pooch

Kitty checkup

Vet tips for your next well-cat visit

Oh, Baby How to introduce your pooch to your newborn



 $\mathbf{Q} \triangleright$ I'm expecting a baby this fall. What's the best way to introduce my dog to her?

A > You're smart to start planning early. While most dogs will do fine with a new baby, your best bet is not to count on it. Pets and babies can both be unpredictable, and accidents do happen.

Before your baby is even born, you can gradually put your dog on a schedule that you will be able to continue after the birth, especially with petting and exercise. You may not notice how much you interact with your pet, but he is very aware and will notice if you start giving less attention.

Once the baby is born, don't introduce her directly to the dog. Start by letting him sniff some of her clothes instead so he gets used to the smell. When you play with your dog, make sure the human interaction baby is near. That way he associates

with the presence of the baby instead of dreading abandonment every time she is near. You can also drop little pieces of dog treats while you're holding the baby, as if the baby is doing so herself, to keep the dog interested in her in a good way.

Finally, never let the dog and child be together unsupervised. The cry of an infant is very stressful to a dog, and little hands can pinch and poke.



Bonnie Beaver, DVM, DAVCM, MS VebMD PFT FXPFRT

Q > My 4-month-old kitten is up and about and plays all night long. How can I get her to sleep, so I can sleep?

A Nighttime kitty play is a common problem. Cats are crepuscular (meaning they're most active at dawn and dusk). Many new kitten owners find themselves sleep-deprived because their little fur balls are crashing around the room, trying to snuggle under the blankets, and honing their hunting skills by attacking their humans' feet or hair in the middle of the night. But there are tried and proven ways of coping with kittens who don't sleep through the night.

First, have faith that as your kitten gets older, she'll settle down a bit and start sleeping more.

Second, be sure your kitten has food, water, and a clean litter box before you go to bed, so she doesn't wake you to get her needs met.

And third, try to tire her out during the day. Catnip might work—although cats often don't start reacting to it until about 6 months of age (and some cats never react to it at all). You can also set her up with toys that she can play with herself. Inexpensive ones hang from doors, and fancy ones have timers that can turn on or off while you're at work.

Of course, playing directly with your kitten is a great way of bonding. Try laser lights, toys on strings, and squeaky toys that you can throw. The harder she plays during the day, the better she'll sleep at night.

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adine Cruz. DVM

Get expert answers to your pet questions.



Expert tips for hitting the road with your canine companion

By Matt McMillen, WebMD Contributing Writer

It wouldn't be a family car trip without Fido, but if you want everyone who's along for the ride—two-legged and four-legged—to have fun, you need to do some prep work.

"People just jump in the car and think they are prepared," says animal behaviorist Kristen Collins, MS, CPDT, with the ASPCA Animal Behavior Center. "But preparation needs to start as far in advance as you know you are going on a trip."

Before You Go

Acclimate your pooch to the car in the weeks leading up to your trip. Collins recommends taking your dog on short car rides around town. It will help him get used to the doggy seat belt or carrier-a must for safe travels-and it will reveal any tendencies to get overly nervous or carsick. Ask your vet about motion sickness and sedation medications. If your dog gets in your vehicle only for

dreaded trips to the vet, take him somewhere fun, like a park where he can run, Collins says. That way, he'll begin to associate getting get some fresh air. in the car with receiving a reward.

Many dogs, Collins says, only feel comfortable eliminating at home, so it's also

Road Rules

- Pet tags with your cell phone number in case he gets lost
- **Favorite toys** that will help your dog feel at home
- **Your dog's meds**, if applicable
- Hit the road safely with more expert pet-travel tips.

Make sure you don't leave home without these dog-travel essentials:

- Medical and vaccine records, in the event an emergency trip to the vet is needed

Katherine Scott, DVM, DACVIN WebMD PET HEALTH EXPERT



essential to train your dog to go to the bathroom in unfamiliar places. "The poor dog could be near exploding because it doesn't feel right to go elsewhere," she says.

Before you leave on vacation, spend a few weeks developing a potty cue. Whenever your dog is on the verge of eliminating, say a phrase like, "Time to go!" Then, when he's done, praise him and give him a treat. By the time you hit the road, saying your cue should get him to do his business on demand.

Research where you will stay along your route. Not every hotel is dog-friendly. If you reserve online, don't take a website's word for it; pick up the phone. "You don't want to show up in the middle of the night and find they don't accept pets," says A. Chea Hall, DVM, of the Murrayhill Veterinary Hospital in Beaverton, Ore. "You need to sit down and plan where you will be each night."

On the Road

Most dogs are like their humans-they can't go too long without a potty break. Plan to stop every few hours. Look for places where your dog can get some relief but also enjoy some exercise, which will help your pet relax in the car. So will chew toys.

Stick to your dog's feeding schedule. If he eats at 8 a.m., feed him then. And keep plenty of bottled water handy. Another rule of the road: Dogs should not be left alone in the car. Cold and hot weather can be deadly to animals. If you absolutely have to leave your dog for a short while, park somewhere where he can see you, and crack a window so he can

Finally, make sure your dog's head stays in the car window. You want to make sure everyone arrives in one piece.

- Food, bowl, and scooper
- Leash—should always be worn out of the car
- **Doggie harness** or travel seat



animal rights

Champ

By Melanie D.G. Kaplan, WebMD Contributing Writer

magine a world in which none of us hid our Nikita star flaws, and all it took to see others' souls was a deep look into their eyes. When actor Maggie Q (Maggie Quigley), star of the CW spy drama Nikita, gets going on her favorite topic—dogs she wonders why we can't all be more like her four-legged best friends.

"If I have a pimple, I don't want to leave the house," says the former model, 32. "But my son Cesar [her 9-year-old shepherd mix, one of three dogs she rescued while living in Hong Kong] has this deformity that was so bad they were going to put him down before I adopted him. And the minute he meets you, the first thing he does is stick out his handicapped leg so you can shake it, saying, 'Look, here's my flaw!' And you love him even more because of it. Why don't we all understand that it's OK we're not perfect?"

Born in Hawaii to an American father and Vietnamese mother, Q now lives in Los Angeles. When she's not learning life lessons from her dogs, she splits her time between Nikita and a broad range of film roles-credits include Mission Impossible III (2006, her first leading action role in an American film), Live Free or Die Hard (2007, with Bruce Willis), and Balls of Fury (2007, starring opposite George Lopez).

Most recently, she played a priestess in the post-apocalyptic sci-fi thriller Priest, trying to track down a murderous band of vampires. Before it hit the theaters in May, Q did some promotional interviews at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills. Cesar was at her feet, greeting reporters while his siblings, Lady, a shepherd mix, and Pedro, a chihuahua, both 13, were at home.

"These are dogs I used to not be able to take into public," Q says. "I always go for the large-breed aggressive dogs that people won't adopt, but you can't just adopt them-you also have to rehabilitate them." At one point, Q had eight rescue Maggie Q fights for the rights of all animals

dogs and says the pups were constantly fighting, getting hurt, and heading to the vet. "People say, 'You're so tough in your movies.' Well, you have no idea. I have broken up like five dog brawls. Girlfriend is tough!"

In a short session with world-renowned dog behavior specialist Cesar Millan, she learned everything she was doing wrong with her dogs, she says. After a good cry, she went on to find Los Angeles trainer Tyson Kilmer. Kilmer worked with the dogs but also trained Q to be a dog trainer, which she says has completely changed her life-and the dogs'. She calls Kilmer her hero.

But while Q has mastered dog issues on the domestic front, there remains an infinite amount of work to be done on a local, national, and global scale. She has "It's important to me that, while I'm alive, I don't create the kind of [animal] suffering that would be created if I didn't care."





been vocal in supporting animal rescue and the proposed Los Angeles legislation that would outlaw puppy mills, which gained momentum last month.

Earlier this year, she reluctantly started using Twitter and has found it an effective vehicle for sharing her views and learning from her followers about new animal issues that need to be addressed. She posts puppy pictures from the local shelter, expresses revulsion toward circuses' use of animals, and urges adoption (one recent tweet: "Go to a shelter and show the ones 'nobody' wants that they are GOLD!").

Q is also the spokesperson for Best Friends Animal Society's (bestfriends.org) "Saving America's Dogs" campaign, which educates people about the good in pit bulls, and once a year she volunteers for a week at the organization's sanctuary in Kanab, Utah. "They think I'm giving them something with my time," she says, "but it does so much for me as a human being. I go up there to recharge. It's soul food."

Internationally, she's involved with bear rescue in Vietnam and an elephant orphanage in Nairobi, Kenya, through Animals Asia (www.animalsasia.org). She also coproduced Earthlings, a documentary narrated by Joaquin Phoenix that explores society's treatment of animals, which Q admits is tough to watch for its graphic truth about animal abuse.

In the course of her animal rights work, Q sometimes thinks back to an article she read in VegNews, a vegetarian lifestyle magazine, about activist burnout. "At the time I didn't really feel burnt out, but I read it anyway," she says. "It's like world hunger or the environment-they're all big issues." She says thinking she can "win" and conquer these issues leads to feeling overwhelmed and defeated, so instead, she finds positive ways to contribute.

"It's important to me that, while I'm alive, I don't create the kind of [animal] suffering that would be created if I didn't care," she says. "When I die, my physical body will be gone. But I do believe my energy will stay here, and the decisions I've made will matter."

SPIKE THINKS HIS STUFF DOESN'T STINK.



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pet care



Feline FAQs about going to the vet

By Christina Boufis, WebMD Contributing Writer

Although people in the United States keep more cats than dogs as pets—82 million versus 72 million—cats see a veterinarian only about half as frequently as their canine counterparts do. Why is that?

"I think people sometimes don't go [to the vet] because they think their cat's shots aren't due. But cats should be seen at least once a year," says veterinarian Brian Collins, DVM, lecturer at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine's Companion Animal Hospital. "I like to check them every six months if possible," he adds.

What happens during a well-cat visit? Probably the most important thing is the "nose to tail" physical exam, says Collins. During the appointment, which can last from 15 to 30 minutes, your veterinarian will check all over your cat's body, looking for signs of disease or anything unusual. For

example, he will examine the cat's ears for parasites, such as ear mites. He'll look at the eves for general retinal health, peer inside your cat's mouth to look for signs of tartar or gum disease, listen to the cat's heart and lungs, and survey the skin for any lesions or bumps. "Basically, we're just looking to see if everything is normal," explains Collins.

The vet will also weigh the cat and assign a body conditioning number from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 5 depending on the scale your vet uses). "The higher the number, the fatter the cat," Collins says. Ideally, you want your cat to score in the middle range, or a 5 on the 1 to 9 scale, which means the cat is at the

D. West Hamryka, DVN WebMD PET HEALTH EXPERT



appropriate weight. "The problems we tend to see most with cats are obesity and dental disease," explains Collins, who notes that obesity is usually more of a problem with older, indoor cats.

Cat Vaccinations

Will your cat get vaccinations during the visit? That depends partly on age, Collins says. Kittens usually receive a series of vaccinations for distemper, upper respiratory disease, and rabies. But cats are not necessarily routinely vaccinated for other infectious diseases, such as feline leukemia. "It sort of depends on the lifestyle of the cat," Collins says. Even cats that go outdoors are not necessarily at greater risk for the disease. "They have to have pretty much direct prolonged contact with other cats to get leukemia," explains Collins.

Note, however, that outdoor cats are at a higher risk of disease in general, including viral and parasitic infections, and indoor cats that occasionally get outdoors are often unprotected from infectious diseases as well.

Vaccines for other diseases can vary from annually to every three years, depending on the type of vaccine and your vet's philosophy, says Collins. "When we're trying to determine what vaccinations a cat gets, we always look at each one as an individual rather than as one recommendation for all cats."

Vet Visit Do's

Are there ways to make the well-cat visit less stressful for your pet? "The best thing is starting early," says Collins. Ideally, it's best to take your cat for car rides as a kitten and get the cat accustomed to a carrier. Buy a carrier that's comfortable for your cat. Take it out of storage a few days before the visit and make it a safe, fun place, filled with treats or toys, to help make the trip to the vet less stressful. Once at the office, putting a blanket or towel over the carrier may keep the cat calm.

The best part of a well-cat visit? "It's so important to have a relationship [with your veterinarian]," says Collins. "We really focus on preventive care," which can help keep your pet healthy for years to come. "It's not uncommon to see cats approaching 20," he adds. "Many live into their late teens," particularly with good care.

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BABY STEPS

FIT FORM

Can't always make it to your regular aerobics class now that you're expecting? Take a brisk walk instead, says WebMD prenatal expert Sarah McMoyler, RN, BSN. "Just go out 10 minutes and back 10 minutes," she says. "Most women find that 10 minutes out turns into 15 and then 20 and then becomes part of their regular pregnancy routine." McMoyler suggests aiming for a good walk at least three times a week.

JAVA JOY

No need to ditch the joe, says WebMD prenatal expert Sara DuMond, MD. "Recommenda-

tions about caffeine state that moderate intake during pregnancy is fine," she says. "Moderate" means up to 200 mg per day—think one 8-ounce cup of brewed coffee (about 130 mg) or one or two sodas, depending on type (about 50 to 80 mg each).

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BABY BUDGET

Babies are expensive. But there are two things parents-to-be can't

skimp on: cribs and car seats, says

and WebMD prenatal expert. "Safety

guidelines for these change periodi-

cally, and out-of-date and extremely

pose safety risks," DuMond cautions. Things like clothes and diapers, she says, don't have to be expensive to

old or used cribs or car seats can

Sara DuMond, MD, an OB/GYN





DIAPER BAG DO'S

While packing your diaper bag, don't forget these key items:

- Hand sanitizer to help keep germs at bay and for when you can't wash your hands
- **Diaper pad** so you can change your baby on any surface
- **Disinfecting wipes** to wipe down shopping carts, high chairs, and other things baby touches
- Extra pacifiers and toys to keep baby happy
- Empty plastic bags for stashing trash
- Change of clothes for when baby's clothes are soiled



SMALL WONDER

In week seven of your pregnancy, your baby is just bigger than the top of a pencil eraser, his nostrils are visible, and his brain is developing rapidly.

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ask the experts your questions answered

Food Fight How to manage morning sickness

True or

False?

Although it's

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for cutting off

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and fetus.

to the placenta



$\mathbf{Q} \ge \mathbf{I}$ am eight weeks pregnant and so nauseated that just the sight of food makes me queasy. Is there anything I can do?

A > So-called morning sickness affects about three-quarters of all pregnant women in their first trimester-and, unfortunately, most women who get it have it all or much of the day, not just in the morning. Women with multiples are more at risk than women carrying a single baby, and those who've had feelings of nausea is unsafe in one pregnancy are more likely to suffer them again in a subsequent pregnancy. But for most pregnant women, the nausea and vomiting stop around the end of the third month of pregnancy.

you'll probably In the meantime, you can try eating small meals throughout the day so your stomach is never empty and keeping simple snacks such as crackers by your bed to nibble on before you get up in the morning. Say no to dishes that are steaming hot-they give off stronger smells than cold or room-temperature foods. And concern with stay clear of fatty foods, which take longer than carbohydrates to digest, as well as spicy, acidic, and fried foods, which can upset your stomach.

Try to drink plenty of fluids, since dehydration can also make you feel ill. And call your doctor if you are vomiting constantly, cannot keep liquids down, feel dizzy when you stand up, or are urinating infrequently. These are all signs of dehydration that require medical attention.



Hansa Bhargava, MD WebMD MEDICAL EXPERT

$\mathbf{Q} \ge \mathbf{I}$ 'm six months pregnant, and my husband and I still want to have sex. Is it safe?

A > Yes, it is safe to have sex unless your pregnancy is high-risk—for example, if you have placenta previa (when the placenta blocks the cervix), your doctor has placed a cerclage or surgical stitch to keep your cervix closed, or you are in preterm labor. Your baby is in a protected environment inside the amniotic sac and is buoyant from the amniotic fluid. Also, your cervix is blocked by a mucus plug, so there's no risk of the penis "bumping" the baby.

The main issues around sex for expectant women are usually desire and/or comfort. Some women feel voluptuous and enjoy their growing breasts and new curves; others take awhile to come to terms with the dramatic physical changes their bodies are undergoing. A pregnant woman's partner can help her feel more attractive and receptive to romance by reassuring her that she looks beautiful and her body is exciting.

That said, pregnant women shouldn't spend too much time flat on their back. So consider lying on your side, getting on your hands and knees, or being on top during intercourse.

RN, BSN

MD PREGNANCY EXPERT

If a woman doesn't feel like having intercourse, there are other options for connecting with each other: Exchange foot massages, cuddle. or take a bath. Just have fun the baby is coming soon!

Fantastic Four

The must-have nutrients every pregnant woman needs

By Stephanie Watson, WebMD Contributing Writer

A heaping bowl of rocky road ice cream—possibly topped with pickles—might sound pretty good to you right now, but while you're indulging your pregnancy cravings, you also need to be mindful of your baby's growing body during these oh-so-important nine months. We've honed in on the four nutrients your baby-and you-can't do without during your pregnancy.

B Healthy

One of the absolute pregnancy essentials is the B vitamin, folic acid. Taken early in your pregnancy when your baby's brain and spinal cord are developing, folic acid can help prevent-yes, prevent-neural tube birth defects such as spina bifida and anencephaly.

"It's critical for those first few weeks of cell division and, in particular, closure of the spinal cord and completion of the brain," says prenatal nutrition specialist Melinda Johnson, MS, RD, a lecturer at Arizona State University's College of Nursing & Health Innovation.

Ideally, you should have been taking 400 micrograms (mcg) of daily folic acid throughout your childbearing years-long before your baby was even a glimmer in your mind. Once your baby bump starts growing, boost your intake to 600 to 800 mcg. Fortified breakfast cereals, spinach, and black beans are all excellent sources, but you'll probably need to take a prenatal vitamin to make sure you're getting all the B you need.

The D List

"You are building a whole new skeleton, which takes a whole lot of calcium," Johnson says. "To prevent your body from dipping into its own calcium store, which is your bones, you need to make sure you're getting it from your diet."

Supply your baby with enough bone-building raw materials-and keep your own bones strong-by getting at least 1,000 milligrams (mg) of calcium a day. Three daily dairy servings will supply the calcium you both need. Not a big fan of milk? Johnson suggests drinking calcium-fortified orange juice or soy milk. You can also take a calcium supplement, but because your body



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Reviewed by Hansa Bhargava, MD WebMD MEDICAL EDITOR



can absorb only a small amount at a time, divide your total dose into two 500-mg doses twice a day instead of taking the whole 1,000 mg at once. Pair calcium with vitamin D to improve your body's absorption.



Brain Builder

You need to eat a lot of fat right

now, but we're not talking cheeseburgers and fries. The kind of fat your baby requires is the healthy, omega-3 variety-polyunsaturated fatty acids called DHA, ARA, and EPA. "Omega-3 is the ideal fat for the baby's brain," Johnson says. "It's critical for the baby's brain development and also the nervous system."

Go heavy on the omega-3s during your pregnancy, and you might improve your child's cognitive ability, vision, and motor skills. Your health may benefit, too. A recent study of new moms shows omega-3s may lower the risk of postpartum depression.

Because your body can't make omega-3 fatty acids, the only way to get them is from your diet. Here's the problem: Fatty fish is a top omega-3 source, yet mercury worries make many moms-to-be think there's something fishy about seafood. But Johnson says you can have fish twice a week by eating low-mercury varieties, such as canned light tuna, salmon, and pollock.

Pumping Iron

There's a good reason iron is high on your prenatal vitamin's ingredient list. This important mineral helps your blood carry oxygen to your body, and you need it even more now that your heart is pumping for two. "The burden of pregnancy on a woman's iron stores is huge," Johnson says. If you're low on iron your baby will be, too, and you'll both be at risk for anemia.

Three servings of iron-rich foods such as lean meat,

chicken, dried beans and peas, and green leafy vegetables should give you most of the 27 mg you need each day. Eggs are another great source of iron, and they're also high in two other important nutrients for pregnant women-protein and choline. "Choline is essential for brain development. A lack of it can actually cause birth defects," Johnson says.

Watch what you eat during pregnancy, but don't beat yourself up for splurging on rocky road ice cream-or any other treat—once in a while. After all, you've got nine whole months to eat healthy.

baby care

Supply Demands

By Katherine Kam, WebMD Contributing Writer

When you're pregnant, it's a delight to browse the baby stores for those adorable outfits, colorful playthings, and stylish strollers. You might be tempted to scoop up lots of baby gear all at once, but so much shopping can be overwhelming, not to mention expensive.

Relax. Realistically, you'll have plenty of time before your baby needs sippy cups, a high chair, or a potty. In the early months, your baby requires only a few essentials. For example, you can't take your baby from the hospital unless you have an infant car seat. And once you get home, your baby will need diapers, clothing, and a safe place to sleep.

As you prepare to welcome your baby home, make sure you have these important items on hand.

HOT SEAT This one's a biggie. Every state requires parents to have a proper car seat before they can leave the hospital with their baby. Your baby must be in a rear-facing seat until he or she is age 2. If you borrow a car seat, make sure it's not damaged and has not been recalled.

seat properly, ask your pediatrician where you can find expert help, says Benjamin S. Danielson, MD, medical director of the Odessa Brown Children's Clinic at Seattle Children's Hospital. He says his hospital recommends a car seat-fitting specialist to parents. You can also call your local AAA chapter to find out whether it runs a car seat safety inspection station near your home. Many fire stations and police stations offer free car seat inspection on a drop-in basis, too.

CRIB NOTES A stable bassinet or crib offers your newborn a safe, comfortable place to sleep. If you start with a bassinet

or cradle, follow the manufacturer's instructions on safe use, taking into account the weight and size of your baby.

As for cribs, look for one with slats that are no more than 2 ³/₈ inches apart, and make sure the mattress fits snugly into the crib so your baby can't slip into any gaps on the sides. Avoid If you're not sure how to install a car headboards and footboards with cut-outs, which could trap a baby's head.

> Keep your baby's crib clear. While it's tempting to spruce it up with stuffed animals, pillows, or heavy quilts, these things can impair your baby's breathing or pose a suffocation hazard.

Some doctors even caution against using any blankets in the crib. As an alternative, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests using baby sleeper clothing—no covers needed.

SOFT SELL Newborns need only a few baby couture basics: four to six onepiece gowns (called onesies), two to three one-piece, footed sleepers, four to six

need to bring home baby can seem overwhelming. We break it down to the essentials

undershirts, one blanket sleeper (according

to the season), two to three pairs of

socks or booties, a few bibs, a hat with a

As for linens, you should have on hand

Although your newborn won't be ready

brim, and a sweater or outerwear for cold

three to four crib sheets, two waterproof

crib pads, and three to six receiving blan-

for a bath until the umbilical stump falls

off, prepare by getting a small bathtub.

You'll also need four to six baby wash-

kets for swaddling your baby.

weather.



cloths, two to four hooded bath towels, mild soap, and baby shampoo.

> FEED BACK If you plan to breastfeed, consider buying nursing bras and bringing them to wear at the hospital. A breast pump is useful, too; it can stimulate more milk if you pump right after a feeding, according to Danielson. "If breast milk production is a little bit slow, which can happen with first babies especially, a breast pump is sometimes a good way to help deal with that," he says. Pumping breast milk also

allows Dad to help feed the baby during the night, he adds.

If you go the formula route, ask your pediatrician for a recommendation. Be sure to have several baby bottles and nipples on hand. Stock up on about six small 4-ounce bottles for your newborn. When your infant reaches 4 to 6 months, you'll want to switch to larger 8-ounce bottles.

certified BPA-free models, the American Academy of Pediatrics advises. While most U.S. manufacturers stopped using BPA in

Reviewed by Sara DuMond, MD WebMD BABY CARE EXPERT



baby bottles in 2009, it's still smart to stay away from clear plastic baby bottles with the recycling number "7" and the imprinted letters "PC," according to the AAP. They might contain BPA, a controversial chemical researchers are studying for possible effects on human health.

But you can still go with plastic. Just look for opaque plastic bottles made of polyethylene or polypropylene, which contain no BPA. Disposable bottle liners also tend to be BPA-free. You can buy glass bottles, although they're heavier and break more easily.

BOTTOM LINE For disposable diapers, buy newborn sizes, as well as the next size larger to prepare for your growing baby. For the first few weeks, you'll need about 10 to 11 disposable diapers per day, so buy accordingly. For cloth diapers, have about 48 on hand, as well as three to five diaper covers and a diaper pail.

Don't forget diaper wipes and a diaper bag, too.

WALK TALK Pick a sturdy. conventional stroller with brakes that lock the wheels firmly and a seat belt and crotch strap that are attached securely to the frame. Steer away from umbrella strollers. They're light and handy for toddlers, but they're not a good choice for babies who can't sit up yet.

A front or back carrier is a good way to keep your baby snuggled close to you as you move about.

SAFETY FIRST Before your baby starts to crawl, you'll want to baby-proof your home with cabinet locks, safety gates, covers for electrical outlets, and other safety products.

But in the earliest months, you'll need to stock only a few key first-aid items: a rectal (not ear) thermometer (rectal thermometers more accurately take a baby's core body temperature), infant acetaminophen to relieve pain and fever, and a dia-If you choose plastic bottles, look for per rash cream or ointment. "You'll want something that's soothing and protective," Danielson says. "It's nice to have something on hand for a rash that shows up."

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<u>pregnancv</u>

Congratulations—you're pregnant! And you're probably curious and a little anxious about what's going to happen with your body and your baby over the next nine months. Here are some highlights.

THE FIRST TRIMESTER You've Got a Secret

For most women—especially first-time moms—it's almost impossible for anyone to tell they're pregnant during the first trimester. As a brand-new expectant mother, you're not showing much, if at all, and the only telltale outward sign might be that smile you just can't suppress.

But inside, both your baby and your body are already working at top speed, like the Apple factory before a new iPad launches. During the next 13 weeks, your baby will:

• Grow from a tiny cluster of cells called a blastocyst (about the size of the head of



A trimester-by-trimester look at how you and your baby are growing

By Gina Shaw, WebMD Contributing Writer



a carpenter's nail) at week three of pregnancy to about 3 inches long (think the length of your car key) by week 12.

• Develop pigment in her eyes (still hidden behind sealed lids), form a tiny tongue with taste buds, and build a full fourchambered heart beating at about 180 beats per minute.

• Form all of her major organs and body systems—a critical time of structural development. The period between eight and 10 weeks' gestation is perhaps the single most crucial time for fetal development, says Annette Perez-Delboy, MD, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Columbia University Medical Center and a maternal-fetal medicine specialist.

Meanwhile, there's a lot going on with you, too:

• Your heart is rerouting much of its effort toward baby's temporary digs, your uterus. By the end of the first trimester, a significant amount of your cardiac output goes to the uterus.

• Your uterus is expanding from the size of a closed fist at conception to about the size of a small melon at 13 to 14 weeks.

• You may be noticing some of the first physical signs of pregnancy: breasts that are sore or tingle at the slightest touch, skin that's drier or oilier than usual, and "morning sickness"—which may or may not restrict itself to the a.m. hours. As many as 70% to 80% of pregnant women have it, but not feeling morning sickness



doesn't mean there's anything wrong with the baby.

THE SECOND TRIMESTER Pregnancy Honeymoon

Doctors often call this the "honeymoon trimester." Many women have put the nausea, sore breasts, and fatigue of the first trimester in the rear-view mirror. You're big enough to proudly show off a growing belly but not yet so ungainly that turning over in bed requires help.

During this trimester, your baby will:

• Triple in length—more or less—from about 6 inches at week 14 or 15 to about 14 inches at 27 weeks. At the start of this trimester, she'll be about the size of a peach. By the end, she'll be more like an eggplant.

• Begin to hear the cacophony of sounds inside your uterus—your pounding heart, swooshing blood as it rushes through your veins, and the gurgles of your stomach digesting lunch.

• Develop fine downy hair called lanugo, which usually shows up first around the eyebrows and upper lip.

You re changing, to

• Most pregnant women begin to "show" during the second trimester. You likely gained less than 5 pounds during your first trimester, but now the number on the scale is edging relentlessly upward. As your second trimester proceeds, you'll gain an average of 1 to 2 pounds per week.

• Your internal organs will relocate to accommodate your growing uterus. Your rib cage will move upward by as much as two inches.

THE THIRD TRIMESTER Nearing the Finish Line

During the third trimester, Perez-Delboy says, "It's all about weight gain—for baby and mom." As delivery day nears, you may be feeling fatigued, ungainly, and short of breath, but you may also be enjoying the beauty of your rounded belly. Meanwhile, inside that belly, your baby:

• Is becoming "safer for the outside" with every passing day. In a high-level neonatal intensive care unit like Perez-Delboy's, a fetus born at 24 weeks has about a 50-50 chance of survival. By 28 weeks—just four short weeks later—about nine in every 10 babies born survive.

• Is beginning to "practice breathe"—not air, but amniotic fluid.

• Is active enough that you might detect a hand, foot, or elbow poking at you through your abdomen.

• Has grown from the size of an eggplant or large papaya at the beginning of the trimester to about the size of a small pumpkin by the time those first contractions start.

Your body's getting ready, too:

• As the baby's head moves lower—a process called "engagement"—you may be feeling



Reviewed by Hansa Bhargava, MD WebMD MEDICAL EDITOR



You're changing, too—inside and out:

more pressure on your bladder but less up near your ribs. It's a mixed blessing. You'll have to go to the bathroom more often, but breathing and eating will be easier.

• Some women find a clear or yellowish substance known as colostrum leaking from their nipples, while others don't produce a drop until after baby is born.

• Your weight gain is probably slowing down, but your feet and hands may look as if someone inflated them with a bike pump. This common condition, called edema, goes away quickly after birth—but if you notice very sudden swelling, especially in your hands or face, call your doctor.

During the first few weeks of gestation, it might be hard to believe you'll ever reach the fabled 40-week mark, when you finally get to meet your baby. But after giving birth, women sometimes look back at their pregnancy with feelings of nostalgia. So enjoy these brief months when your baby lives nestled under your heart as you anticipate the moment when he's snuggled in your arms instead.



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pregnancy

Former Spice Girl Melanie Brown, aka Mel B, adds to her own all-girl group and sings the joys of motherhood the third time around

By Jenna Bergen, WebMD Contributing Writer

And then, there's a new baby about to arrive. Brown's due to give birth to her first baby with husband Stephen Belafonte in August and, now in her third trimester, sees here-and-there indulgences as one of the best parts of pregnancy. "I was like this with my last two pregnancies, too," says Brown, already the proud mom of daughters Phoenix, 12, and Angel, 4 (both from previous relationships) as well as stepmom to Belafonte's 7-year-old daughter, Giselle. "When I'm really into my fitness routine, I eat super clean, super protein, super organicsuper, super healthy. But since I've been pregnant, I kind of indulge in the things I wouldn't usually indulge in," she says, like the occasional burger or pizza.



've been eating a lot. All day long," Melanie Brown says. The singer-songwriter who shot to international stardom in the mid-'90s as "Scary Spice," the edgy, big-haired member of the best-selling, award-winning British pop group the Spice Girls, is expecting her third child and sharing a common mom-to-be confession. "I don't stop. I eat when I want and what I want."

Stopping is something the 35-year-old Brown, commonly referred to as Mel B, seems nearly incapable of doing. Since embarking on a solo career in 2001, she has released two albums, written a best-selling autobiography, appeared as Mimi in the Broadway production of Rent, won the hearts of fans on the fifth season of Dancing With the Stars, hosted the second season of Oxygen's hit weight-loss show Dance Your Ass Off, and starred in her own reality series, Mel B: It's a Scary World, on the Style Network. Her next big venture, set to start this August: appearing as a judge on the pop-star search competition The X Factor Australia.

What the Los Angeles resident has been eating a lot of: Belafonte's homecooked meals. "I'm married to a good cook who cooks really healthy-well, mainly healthy-food," says Brown, laughing. "Yesterday, he came home and whipped up chicken and vegetables in this amazing curry sauce. I've got my own gourmet chef on hand, so I'm very lucky."

Body Knowledge

The devout fitness enthusiast was working out an hour a day prior to her pregnancy. But the high-energy cardio junkie hasn't had a single date with the treadmill since revealing her newest baby bump.

"For the first four months, I felt really sick-I was just trying to get through the day without actually throwing up, so I haven't really worked out since I've been pregnant," says Brown, who normally gravitates toward a mix of heart-pumping workouts like spinning, boot camp, and hiking. "It was strange because, with my last two pregnancies, I never had morning sickness. So it was a bit shocking, to say the least. But I'm finally getting out of that phase and starting to feel good."

Despite being a little more curvaceous than she's used to, Brown, who tantalized audiences with her burlesque act, Peep Show, at the Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino in Las Vegas in 2009 and who's currently the face of the U.K. negligee line Ultimo Lingerie, hasn't lost her body confidence. the kickin'.... "I don't mind if sometimes I'm curvier and sometimes I'm more ripped. I enjoy all the different phases," Brown says. "Don't get me wrong: Sometimes it can get uncomfortable when you're pregnant and you don't feel sexy because everything is swollen and a bit tender. Everyone has her up and down days. But it's just about making the most of the situation that you're in. Being pregnant is a beautiful thing."

Modern Mom

There are many reasons Brown, who does everything from cooking and playing Scrabble with her little ones to carting them to the Kids' Choice Awards, loves being a mom. "It teaches you not to focus on yourself. And you have an instant, built-in 'truth panel,'" she says. "Your kids will tell you exactly what they think of you or if they're upset. It's a big responsibility, but fantastic. It sort of makes you grow up and appreciate what you have and where you are in your life."

Have the responsibilities of motherhood slowed the jet-setting star? "I have a 12-year-old, so I really can't imagine life

without kids," says Brown, who compares the last Spice Girls tour in 2007 to a "traveling circus." "I had Angel and Phoenix with us and all of the other girls had their kids with us, too." She laughs, then turns serious. "I guess, before kids, I could just pick up and leave whenever I wanted to,

but now I pretty much do that anyway: I just bring my kids."

Brown does, however, admit that kids make life more stable. "With Phoenix in school, you can't just take off for a month at a time without considering school and homework, and you want to make sure

Simply being able to have a baby growing inside you, to feel all that joy and the flickerin' and you're able to really wrap your head around how great Mother Nature can actually be.

Share your pregnancy tales with other moms-to-be.

your kids have a certain amount of consis-

tency. But I've always said that kids should

enhance your life, not hinder your life. So I just try to make the most out of being

with my kids. You have to have a life for

yourself somewhere in the mix of being a

"It's a juggling act," Brown adds."I

juggle stuff on a weekly basis, between

time by myself, time with my husband,

and good, well-spent time with the kids.

I do that every single week and if I didn't,

I think I would go insane. I just do it

week-by-week, and it somehow manages

As for whether she's having a boy or girl,

Brown is letting herself enjoy the anticipa-

tion. "I didn't know with Phoenix or An-

gel, and I don't know with this baby. There

are so many things you have to be prepared

for that I think it's nice to have a little bit

of surprise. As long as the baby is healthy, I

hasn't always been so happy-go-lucky.

Like most moms, she's mellowed over the

years. "With your first baby, you watch all

the shows, you read all the books-you

kind of terrify yourself because you realize

how many things can go wrong. You over

research it. It isn't a bad thing, but it makes

you a little bit nervous, which is what I

did with Phoenix. But with the second and

third baby, you're a bit more of an old hat.

pressure to embrace more natural birth

options, Brown is content to take the

comfortable route and isn't afraid to say

so. "I experienced a lot of pain with my

first delivery 12 years ago, so I'm going to

opt for as little pain as possible and have

The same goes for breastfeeding. If she

can do it, as she did with her first two

babies, great. If not, well, life will go on. "It

is extra-special to breastfeed and it is really

healthy [for the baby], but not every woman

can do it. I hope I'm able to, but if you can't

you can still get that connection by feeding

While many women are feeling the

You're more relaxed about everything."

Brown's attitude toward pregnancy

Attitude Adjustment

wife and mum.

to get done."

mean, who cares?"

an epidural."

the time goes."

Wear vibrant colors and comfy dresses. "Bright colors just set your day off [right] and make you feel a little more relaxed and a little happier," says the impeccably posh fashionista. "I've also been living in these silky, flowy dresses from [Danish designer] Charlotte Sparre that are just perfect for being pregnant."

Relax about workouts. Missing a few sweat sessions doesn't mean you'll be cursed with a post-baby bod forever. "Because I'm not working out during my pregnancy, I can't wait to do it," says Brown. "Once the baby is born, I've got the baby into a routine, and my body is somewhat back into sync—I'll get right back on that running machine."

Keep your due date on the down-low. To dodge future stress, keep your baby's proposed b-day quiet. "I don't like to put dates out there because there is so much pressure leading up to it," says Brown. "And then, if you're overdue, there's the whole stress of having to say you're five days overdue or you're a week overdue...and that can get really frightening."

Carve out couch time. While Brown is often busy running to meetings and carting around the kids, she also spends many evenings with her feet propped up in front of the TV. "I think it's important to have the best of both worlds [while you're pregnant]," she says. "If you work during the week, make sure to relax on the weekends."—J.B.

your baby with a bottle. It's not as intimate, Girls' Broadway musical, Viva Forever, which but you can still get that bonding."

Present Dav

As for what's next: In addition to prepping the nursery and preparing for her trip Down Under, Brown's currently working on her third solo album. "I like to stay creative," she says. "I like working." She's also looking forward to the debut of the Spice

Spice of Life

Mel B's Top 5 Tips for Enjoying Pregnancy

Write it down. "Keep a diary and try to enjoy your pregnancy as much as possible," says former Spice Girl and expectant mom Melanie Brown, who's kept a journal since she was young. "You won't believe how quickly

will feature many of the group's songs.

For now, appreciating the moment is front and center. The mere state of being pregnant brings her great happiness. "Simply being able to have a baby growing inside you, to feel all that joy and the flickerin' and the kickin'...you're able to really wrap your head around how great Mother Nature can actually be," she says fondly.

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pregnancy

Labor Day

It's perfectly normal to feel a bit nervous, but knowing what to expect during each stage of labor can make delivery go that much smoother

By Christina Boufis, WebMD Contributing Writer

Unlike in the movies, labor and delivery aren't always scripted. No one knows exactly what triggers labor, though hormones are suspected to play a role. And though labor is divided into three stages, each woman may not go through it the same way. For first-time moms, labor can last 12 to 24 hours, on average. For some women it will be faster and for others slower. Here's what you need to know.

Stage One: Latent Phase

What to expect: This stage of labor is the longest, and can range from 12 to 20 hours for women having their first baby. Labor begins when you have uterine contractions—which may be mild at first, occurring every 15 or 20 minutes-and when your cervix begins slowly dilating and effacing (thinning). It ends when your cervix is dilated 3 or 4 centimeters (about 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches).

Contractions last anywhere from 30 to Simas. 70 seconds and can feel like a backache or menstrual cramps. As labor progresses, contractions become more regular, frequent, and intense, increasing to every seven to 10 minutes, then every five to seven minutes.

What to watch for: You may notice a "bloody show," pink or brown-tinged mucus—a normal discharge as your cervix opens. This discharge may happen days before or at the start of labor.

The rupturing of amniotic membranes can occur spontaneously in stage one labor or later on in the process and feel like an obvious gush or just a feeling of wetnessor your water may not break until a doctor does this for you, says Tiffany A. Moore-Simas, MD, MPH, MEd, FACOG, director of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Research Division at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

How to manage: It's good to call your physician when you begin contractions, but you may not need to go to the hospital yet. Healthy, first-time moms can usually go through this stage of labor at home, says Moore-Simas.

When should you go to the hospital? "When you're contracting every five minutes, that's a good time to come in," says Moore-Simas. "If you're leaking fluid, that might [also] be the time to come in."

Meanwhile, rest and make yourself as comfortable as possible, perhaps by listening to music or soaking in a warm bath.

Stage One: Active Phase

What to expect: At this stage, contractions are stronger and more painful, occurring about three minutes apart and lasting approximately 45 to 60 seconds. Your cervix is dilating much more rapidly, about 1.2 centimeters an hour, says Moore-

When your cervix dilates from 8 to 10 to swell. centimeters, you are in "transition stage," the last part of stage one labor; contractions now come approximately every two to three minutes and last for a minute or more. You may feel nauseous and have increased back pain.

How to manage: At the hospital, your vital signs (temperature, blood pressure, pulse) will be taken. External monitors to check the baby's heart rate and your contractions will usually be placed on your abdomen. A nurse or doctor will do an require episiotomies. internal exam to check dilation.

You may be offered various pain management options, including an epidural, an anesthesia that blocks pain.

Practical tips: Warm showers, particularly with a hand-held showerhead, can help reduce lower back pain. Gently bouncing on a birthing ball, receiving massage from a partner, listening to soothing music, and practicing deep breathing exercises can also help. Some women find relief by changing positions, walking, or getting down on their hands and knees.

Stage Two

What to expect: Often called the pushing stage, this part can last up to three hours if you've had an epidural—up to two ful experience."

Louise Chang, MI WebMD MEDICAL EDITO



hours without it. At 10 centimeters (about 4 inches), you're fully dilated. Contractions may last longer than a minute and will usually occur every two to three minutes. As the baby's head descends into the pelvis/vagina area, you may feel pressure in your rectum (like the need to have a bowel movement) and the urge to push.

How to manage: "You don't ever want to push until somebody has told you you're fully dilated," says Moore-Simas. Otherwise, pushing can cause the cervix

"Often the pushing happens in spurts of three over the course of one contraction," she says. "You take a big, deep breath, and you want to push like you're really constipated," says Moore-Simas, "with all your effort in your bottom."

If necessary, you may have an episiotomy, a small incision in the area between the vagina and the rectum to ease delivery. This practice isn't done as much as it once was, says Moore-Simas, who estimates only 5% of her patients

The progress of the baby's descent through the pelvis is measured in numbers called stations, until the baby crowns (when the top of baby's head becomes clearly visible at the opening of the vagina).

Stage Three

What to expect: The shortest stage of labor can take moments or last for 30 minutes. Contractions won't be as strong as you deliver the placenta (or afterbirth). If you have an episiotomy or you've torn tissue during delivery, you will be stitched up now.

Labor may be different for every woman, says Moore-Simas. But "at the end of the day, the goal is a healthy mom and baby. It's such a beautiful day and such a beautispotlight

pregnancy

Going back to the office after baby? Start planning now

By Linda Formichelli, WebMD Contributing Writer

The nursery is painted and the cabinets are stocked with newborn-size onesies. Now, it's time to think about how you'll get back to work after the baby's here. Linda Glass, an executive coach and career strategist, mom, and former director of Global Talent Strategies for Starbucks, shares her top four tips for transitioning back to the office.

Call for help. Arranging reliable care for your baby can help you get back into the work mindset while feeling reassured that your baby is being well cared for in your absence. Ask any candidates for referrals, and use Facebook to ask your local mom friends whether they've used the person or service and what their experiences have been. And start the search early, says Glass. "You can always get a car seat last minute, but a decision on what type of care you'll need for your child takes some research and time."

Start slow. Jumping from maternity leave to full-time work can be a shock, so if possible, ask your employer to let you start off with a part-time schedule for as long as you feel your workplace culture will allow—from a few weeks to a couple of months, says Glass. Alternatively, you can find out if your boss will be willing to let you schedule your first day back later in the week, say, on a Thursday.

That way, you have only two days of work and then you get the weekend with your baby. "You're not diving into the deep end with the schedule, but easing yourself back into it," Glass says.

Write it down. Before going back to the office, write down your family's priorities and take a look at the big picture. Where can you compromise? For example, how important is it for you to have the house sparkling clean? To eat home-cooked dinners every night? "There are so many needs and only so much time, so it's about using the hours most effectively," says Glass.

Connect with the boss. To help get your head back in the game, schedule time with your boss a few weeks before your return to familiarize yourself with projects you'll be working on, says Glass. Also, ask your boss whether she has any concerns about your return so you can reassure her that you're ready to get back to work. Some bosses worry that you won't be able to focus on work, that you'll be arriving late or leaving early, or that you'll soon quit to stay at home with your baby.



Brunilda Nazario, MD WebMD SENIOR MEDICAL EDITOR

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Class Act

Study up on the different types of birthing methods

By Annie Stuart, WebMD Contributing Writer

Are childbirth classes for everyone? Two Columbia University childbirth experts-Mary Lake Polan, MD, PhD, MPH, an adjunct professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Jeanne M. Coulehan, CNM, MPH, clinical practice manager and midwife in the Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine—offer a resounding "yes." But the thing to know, they say, is that "one size doesn't fit all." Childbirth classes vary in duration, curriculum, and approach, so do your homework before class begins. Find a class and instructor that match your personal philosophy of pregnancy and delivery, especially when it comes to the use of pain medications or medical intervention.

Polan favors a comprehensive approach, which many classes offer. They cover the gamut, from pregnancy to labor and delivery and beyond. "The more you know about what's going on, the better you're able to not be frightened and to deal with the pain," Polan says. You also need to know about alternatives for pain relief or what happens if a problem suddenly develops during labor.

"Everybody should go to a childbirth class, even if you know you're having a cesarean," Coulehan adds. (Yes, there are childbirth classes tailored for this kind of delivery.)

> Where should you begin? You can start with your obstetrician, midwife, or hospital for suggestions. Or ask friends and family members or search online for classes in your area.

you hunt for options, As remember this: "The goal is to have a healthy baby, not to have a peak experience," says Polan. Labor and delivery may seem endless when you're in it. But it's really only a day in this lengthy parenting affair.

Lamaze

Lamaze was one of the pioneers in childbirth education. Today, it remains the most widely used approach in the United States.

"With Lamaze, you're taught breathing exercises to help you breathe through the pain and not tense up," Polan says. You also learn other relaxation and distraction techniques, massage and communication skills, and positioning for labor and birth. And your childbirth partner or coach learns ways to support you throughout labor.

Use of medication and medical intervention isn't considered verboten in Lamaze. Instead, you're informed about your range of options. "It's important not to feel that you're a failure if you decide you want pain medicine," says Polan.

In addition to guidance on labor and birth, Lamaze provides information about a healthy lifestyle, early postpartum care, and breastfeeding.

Bradley Childbirth Method

The Bradley approach strongly encourages the active involvement of the baby's father. "Getting pregnant is a couple's event, and I think having a baby is, too," Polan says. "So it's helpful if your husband or significant other understands what's happening and can coach you through it." There's plenty of opportunity for labor rehearsals.

Bradley emphasizes what Coulehan calls an important life skill: progressive relaxation. "I tell patients, you'll use it during the labor process, but you'll also use it in life...to bring inner tranquility or calmness in times of stress." (Stressful parenting, perhaps?)

Like Lamaze, Bradley informs you about wellness issues and natural approaches to birth along with how to handle worst-case scenarios. But it stresses trying to avoid medications and cesareans. Even so, Polan reminds prospective parents, "If your doctor says, 'I know you wanted x, y, or z, but you can't because there's a problem here,' you need to listen to whoever is delivering that baby."



Doulas and midwives are two professionals you may want to add to your childbirth team. "But it's not how many people you have with you," says Columbia University childbirth expert Mary Lake Polan, MD, PhD, MPH. "It's that they have a consistent and flexible approach to delivery."

Doulas The training of doulas varies somewhat in scope, but they're not certified to perform medical tasks. They provide emotional and physical support, as well as information to help you make knowledgeable decisions before, during, and after delivery. "They're more commonly used when a partner is not available," says Jeanne M. Coulehan, CNM, MPH, a nurse-midwife also with Columbia University. Or a woman might enlist a doula's support when her partner is less than comfortable in the role of coach.

"I support patients who want doulas," Coulehan says. But she doesn't typically work with one, given that she provides similar advocacy services in her role as midwife.

Midwives With two to three years of training in midwifery school, midwives can deliver babies in most settings—home, birthing center, or hospital. Most have also completed nursing training and passed national and state licensing exams. Midwives can request an epidural, give narcotics, and do episiotomies (a small cut in the skin between the vagina and the rectum), Coulehan says. They have obstetricians as backups in the event of an emergency.

HypnoBirthing and Beyond

A range of other classes and offshoots can also aid your pregnancy and delivery.

HypnoBirthing is a natural childbirth approach that uses self-hypnosis and deep relaxation, Coulehan says. It encourages women to use their natural instincts to enhance the birthing process.

Birthing From Within focuses on staying aware throughout the birth, not focusing on a particular birth outcome.



Coach Class

The Alexander Technique can be used by anyone to promote ease of movement, flexibility, and coordination. These principles are great for improving comfort during pregnancy, easing delivery, and aiding recovery following birth.

Likewise, special pregnancy yoga classes can prepare you for labor and delivery. And if you'd rather not take a class with others, you can find instructors who teach one-onone classes in your own home.

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