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JUNE
2018

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On the Cover

PHOTOGRAPHY BY:
J.R. MANKOFF / AUGUST



FROM THE WEBMD TEAM

HOW DO YOU BOOST YOUR BRAIN?



Carrie Gann, WebMD Senior Health Editor

Exercise gives my **brain the biggest boost**—jogging, yoga, or even a quick afternoon walk at work. It gets **my blood pumping** and **lets me burn some energy**, which helps my mind reset. Plus, it's an excuse to just not think about anything for a while.

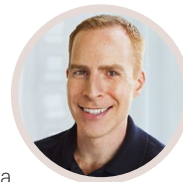


Neha Pathak, MD,
WebMD Medical Editor

My focus is on making sure that I **get enough sleep** at night so I wake up **feeling more refreshed** and **less stressed**. I've also added **deep breathing** when I'm walking from place to place, which has helped **improve my concentration**.

Robert Allen, WebMD Managing Editor

Besides ultra-strong coffee, my favorite brain booster is **playing board games**. Some of the simplest ones can have oodles of **depth and strategy, and they're social**—a huge bonus. Grab a game and a few friends and **make it a night while exercising your brain!**



Just as your muscles require exercise to build and maintain strength, your brain needs workouts to stay sharp. Research suggests that stimulating your mind can help prevent memory loss and improve mental abilities like planning tasks. Learning something new, changing your routine, eating right, sleeping enough, and even physical exercise can all keep your brain in shape. So how do you build mental fitness into your lifestyle? This month, we asked some of our WebMD staff to tell us what they do to boost their brain.

Kristy

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FACTS & STATS

Brain Power

The human brain is an incredible piece of living machinery. It stores more information than the Library of Congress and processes it faster than a computer. The better you treat your brain, the harder it will work for you.



1 petabyte

Amount of memory the human brain can hold, which is about the same storage capacity as 4.7 billion books or 230,000 DVDs.

20%

Percentage of your body's oxygen and calories the brain uses.

86 billion

Number of nerve cells in the brain.

268 mph

The speed impulses travel from one nerve cell to another—faster than a racecar.

IN THE NEWS

Essential Info



COLLEEN PARETTY
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The word *natural* seems to wield enormous sway in the minds of many people—sometimes to their detriment, as we report in **“Natural Doesn’t Mean Risk-Free” (page 40)**. We focus on the burgeoning popularity of essential oils, often sold on retail shelves but also directly to consumers via a network of distributors. Many essential oils are safe and effective—if used properly. And therein lies the rub. “There is definitely credible science behind certain benefits for certain essential oils,” says one of our experts. “But you have to choose wisely, and you cannot use them indiscriminately.” Some essential oils should be avoided in certain circumstances altogether. We unravel the contradictions and point out the pitfalls. Bottom line, as with so many things when it comes to your health: Do your homework! — *Colleen*



MOVE IT

Even in middle age, you can reverse some of the damage of sedentary living. When sedentary adults ages 45 to 64 completed a two-year, individualized exercise program, they improved respiratory fitness and reduced heart stiffness. A sedentary lifestyle is a risk factor for certain types of heart failure. Preventing stiffening of the heart can lower risk. If you are sedentary, ask your doctor about the best way to start exercising.

SOURCE: *Circulation*



You’ll Shoot Your Eye Out!

Parents: BB and paintball guns aren’t harmless. From 1990 to 2012, children’s ER visits for eye injuries related to non-powder guns increased by a whopping 169%. They accounted for almost half of all hospitalizations for pediatric eye injuries related to sports and recreation.

SOURCE: *Pediatrics*

90 million

NUMBER

of cases of gastrointestinal, respiratory, ear, eye, and skin-related illnesses from swimming, paddling, boating, and fishing in the U.S. every year.

SOURCE: *Environmental Health*



STICK TO IT

Thinking of going on a diet? You might do better to think of staying on a diet. In a study of 75 adults who completed a 12-week weight-loss program, which included daily weighing and sticking to a calorie-restricted diet, weight gain began immediately after the program ended. People who keep weight off, the study author noted, tend to continue weighing themselves and counting calories long-term.

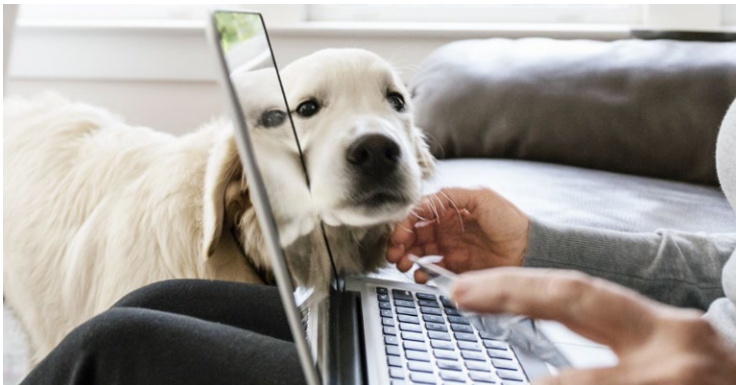
SOURCE: Obesity



RAW CAN BE WRONG

Many pet owners tout the virtues of raw meat diets for their four-legged friends. But raw meat isn't safe for pets and could pose risks for the humans who love them, too. When researchers analyzed 35 commercial frozen raw meat pet foods, they found E. coli in most of them, listeria in more than half, and salmonella in 20% along with other potentially harmful parasites.

SOURCE: Vet Record



PHONY MEDS FOR FIDO

Do you buy your pets' medications online to save time or money? That's OK, but be careful. Some pet meds available online are fake, expired, or sold without a prescription. If you want to buy online, ask your veterinarian to recommend a site or look for one that ends in ".pharmacy." And do not use websites that don't require a prescription for prescription drugs.

SOURCE: FDA



17

MINUTES

Amount of sleep per night that U.S. adults gained over the last 14 years. But one in three Americans still gets too little sleep.

SOURCE: SLEEP/Sleep Research Society

SEEK SUPPORT EARLY ON

Do you think you might be depressed? Don't ignore the signs. Get help. In a study of 3,410 adults spanning 60 years, people who had depression had shorter lives than those who didn't. Depression was associated with dying four to 18 years earlier. The risk of death was highest in the years following a major depressive episode—a few weeks of increased symptoms of depression. This suggests that treating and controlling depression could reduce the risk of early death.

SOURCE: Canadian Medical Association Journal

CROSS SLEEP OFF YOUR LIST

Does worrying keep you up at night? Writing a to-do list might help. In a study, a group of young adults completed a writing task before bed. Half recorded what they'd accomplished that day, and half made

a list of what they had to do in the next few days. The ones who made the to-do list fell asleep significantly faster. The more specific the list, the more quickly they drifted off.

SOURCE: Journal of Experimental Psychology



Keep Sweating

Get a little more bang for your buck at the gym: **HIT THE SAUNA AFTER YOUR WORKOUT.** A 30-minute sauna lowers blood pressure and reduces stiffness in the arteries, new research shows.

SOURCE: European Journal of Preventive Cardiology

BED TIME

Sleepy kids might be more prone to becoming overweight. In a study of 92 kids, those with the highest BMI slept the least, woke most often in the night, and had an inconsistent sleep schedule. Kids who slept later in the mornings were more likely to eat when they weren't hungry. Six- to 12-year-olds need nine to 12 hours of sleep each night. Kids age 12 and up need eight to 10 hours. To help kids fall asleep easier, pediatricians recommend that screen-time end 30 minutes before bedtime.

SOURCE: American Association for Cancer Research



ALL NATURAL

When they have a choice, 78% of Americans say they would prefer to try non-drug treatments for pain first.

SOURCE: Gallup



GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE

You and your besties: You really get each other. Sometimes it's as if you think alike. And maybe you do. Researchers studied the brains of a group of students from the same graduate program. First, they asked each student which classmates were their friends. Then, they showed each student the same series of video clips—to simulate channel surfing—while recording their brains' responses via MRI. The pairs that reported being friends with each other had similar neural responses to the videos. But the greater two peoples' distance across this social network, the less similar their brains' response to the videos.

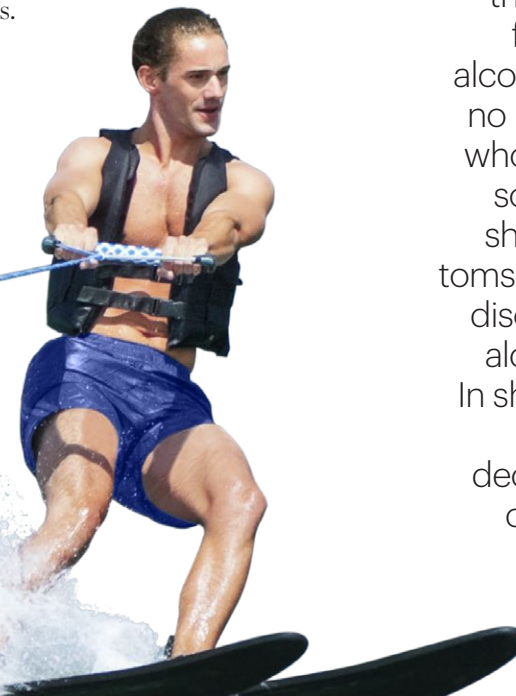
SOURCE: Nature Communications

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CALORIES

a 150-pound person burns in 60 minutes of water-skiing.

SOURCE: USDA



GETTY IMAGES

177 lbs.

WEIGHT

of the average American. That's up three pounds in the last 10 years.

SOURCE: Gallup

Bad Mixer: Teens & Alcohol

Some teens who drink do so at parties where parents are present. Parents who supply their kids with alcohol, and provide the place to drink it, tend to think it reduces the risks of underage drinking. But no evidence supports that view, a new study finds. Teens who get alcohol from parents are no less likely than those who get it from another source to binge drink, show signs and symptoms of an alcohol-abuse disorder, or suffer other alcohol-related harms. In short, providing teens with alcohol doesn't decrease, but rather increases, risk of harm.

SOURCE: The Lancet Public Health

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Brain vs. Brawn

Your brain and muscles both need fuel to work properly. When energy is in short supply, which one takes priority?

GLUCOSE (SUGAR) IS ONE OF your body's main energy sources. Though your brain makes up just 2% of your body weight, it eats up about half of your total glucose supply. Most of that powers impulse transmission from neuron to neuron. When brain and muscles have to compete for energy, the brain invariably wins. In one study, athletes who had to simultaneously row and perform a word-recall test lost more muscle power than memory. The authors say a "selfish brain" helps ensure survival when resources are limited because the brain always gets the energy it needs. Unfortunately, that self-preservation can come at a cost to the muscles, so prevalent is "brain power."

—STEPHANIE WATSON





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REVIEWED BY **Michael W. Smith, MD**
WebMD Chief Medical Director

MEN'S HEALTH

Men and Eating Disorders

Much of the public and many health professionals remain unaware that eating disorders affect men. In fact, as many as 10 million men in the U.S. will develop an eating disorder at some point in their lives.

→ Social Stigma

Men are less likely to talk about and seek help for eating disorders.



EATING DISORDERS TEND TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN, BUT PSYCHOLOGIST Tom Wooldridge, PsyD, ABPP, CEDS, says that perception needs to change. Men need help, too.

"You have to think of it as a possibility in order to know to look for it," says Wooldridge, a certified eating disorders specialist and author of *Understanding Anorexia Nervosa in Males*. "Just as many men as women want to change their weight."

Eating disorders have severe consequences. People with anorexia, for

example, dangerously reduce the amount of food they eat; the disease causes more deaths than any other mental disorder.

Binge eating disorder, the most common eating disorder, results in overweight and obesity. Men also may develop eating problems as a result of muscle dysmorphia, a body image disorder that compels them to pursue a muscular and lean body. They often consume excessive protein, take illicit steroids, and lift weights obsessively.

"These behaviors are both physically and psychologically damaging," says Wooldridge, who chairs the psychology department at Golden Gate University in San Francisco.

A man with an eating disorder will often cut himself off from friends and family as he tries to hide his behavior or because his exercise schedule does not allow him a social life. Wooldridge says that shame and stigma common to eating disorders amplify the problem. They make men more reluctant to acknowledge and talk about the problem and less likely to seek help.

Men, says Wooldridge, often worry they will appear weak if they acknowledge their feelings and the disorder that they struggle with. That's false. Instead, it takes courage and strength—twin pillars of masculinity—to confront the problem. And the sooner, the better.

"The earlier you seek help, the more likely you are to have a relatively quick and successful treatment," says Wooldridge. "If we can catch it before it has fully taken hold, that's very promising."

4 Tips

PSYCHOLOGIST **TOM WOOLDRIDGE, PsyD**, HAS ADVICE FOR MEN WHO MAY HAVE AN EATING DISORDER.

LISTEN TO LOVED ONES

If your friends and family tell you they're worried about your eating behaviors, take their concerns seriously and consult a doctor.

ASSEMBLE A TEAM

Engage with a psychologist, nutritionist, and physician to address the multiple ways that your eating disorder impacts you.

MAINTAIN MOTIVATION

Work closely with your health care team to stay focused on getting better. Know that it will take hard work.

ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS

Dig deep to determine what made you vulnerable to an eating disorder and what parts of yourself need work so it does not return.



Search for the slideshow
**Beyond the Blues: Types of
Depression** at WebMD.com.



WOMEN'S HEALTH

Low Blow

A nearly 60-year study reveals a rising connection between depression and shortened life expectancy in women.

Researchers work to understand why.

IN ONE OF THE LONGEST-RUNNING POPULATION-BASED STUDIES ON MENTAL health ever conducted, researchers followed thousands of Canadian adults with depression between 1952 and 2011. The findings are only now surfacing, and the news is unsettling for women.

"Early on in the study, increased mortality risk was just observed among depressed men," says Stephen A. Gilman, ScD, a researcher at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and lead author of a new observational study analyzing this trove of research. "However, when we look from the 1990s on, we see a higher mortality risk among depressed women. By end of the study, there is a convergence of higher risk for both genders."

In other words, women in the study showed a spike in shortened lifespan

some 40 years after the study launched. This increase then stabilized at the higher plateau. The question is why. Higher suicide rates do not explain the change. "Suicide rates were quite rare among participants," Gilman says.

Depression, which is statistically more common in women than men across populations, has long been associated with many health conditions, he adds, including "higher rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, some cancers, obesity, and stroke, plus a wide range of unhealthy behaviors such as smoking cigarettes, substance use disorders, and addiction."

Still, the increase is puzzling. "We don't have a conclusive answer," Gilman says. "We speculate that perhaps it's women's evolving roles in society, and how depression has affected them differently during this time. Labor force participation rates increased, and women took on roles both inside and outside of the household," he says, referring to "the second shift," when women work all day at paid jobs without much relief for childcare and housework when they get home.

"We need to do further work to test this theory. The reason we were drawn to it is the time trend. The explanation has to be something that changed over time," Gilman says. Other such factors to examine include the simultaneous rise in divorce rates and single motherhood.

What Gilman can report is that the more episodes of depression people of both genders had over the years, and the more severe these episodes were, the likelier they were to have shortened lifespans.

"Those with multiple bouts of depression, their risk continued to be elevated over time," Gilman says. "Whereas those who had a single episode, their increased risk lessened over time." Therefore, he says, "seeking treatment for depression, and achieving remission, is important."

4 Tips

ACCORDING TO THE **NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI)**, 25 MILLION AMERICAN WOMEN AND MEN STRUGGLE WITH DEPRESSION. IF YOU THINK YOU OR A FRIEND OR RELATIVE COULD BE ONE OF THEM, NAMI OFFERS GUIDANCE.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

If you have difficulty sleeping or getting out of bed, navigating daily life, making simple decisions, enjoying time with friends, or going to work, speak to your doctor. The cause could be depression.

DON'T WAIT

Without treatment, the severity of symptoms and frequency of episodes of depression tend to increase over time. Seek help. Major depression is treatable.

REALIZE NO ONE-SIZE APPROACH EXISTS

Antidepressants? Talk therapy? Both? No one method works for everyone. The key is to be medically evaluated to find the right approach for you.

REACH OUT

Many people silently endure the symptoms of depression. Find support. For help, call the NAMI hotline at **800-950-NAMI**, or email **info@nami.org**.



Search for the quiz
Cardio vs. Weights
at WebMD.com.

FITNESS SMARTS

High Five

With new health reports popping up regularly, sifting through the latest fitness advice can be tough. A fitness pro weighs in with five tried-and-true tips that never go out of style.

→ Get Some Fresh Air

Exercising outdoors may increase your energy and make your workouts seem easier.



WHETHER YOU'RE A FITNESS ENTHUSIAST OR JUST GETTING STARTED, smart strategies can bring you closer to your goals. Shelly Goldman, CES, director of health and wellness at the YMCA in Westport, Connecticut, reveals her favorite strategies for success.

NEVER SIT STILL

Waiting in line at the pharmacy? Taking a business call? It's a perfect chance to squeeze in a dash of exercise.

"Move your legs," says Goldman. "If you're standing, go up and down on your toes to strengthen your calves." Try two sets of 10, resting in between. If you're on

the phone, try walking. If you're sitting, clench your glutes for 10 seconds, then release.

GO AL FRESCO

Don't just smell sweat—smell the roses. Exercising outside boosts your energy, relieves stress, and improves your mood. "Even 15 to 20 minutes can help," says Goldman.

Studies suggest working out in nature also feels easier, so you may even work out longer and harder.

GET WET

Cool off and build strength by exercising in water. Swim laps, run underwater, try water aerobics, or use it for resistance training.

Bring kettlebells or hand-held paddles to the pool or beach. In 2-foot water, try squats with kettlebells in each hand. In chest-deep water, do bicep curls with paddles. "The resistance is killer," Goldman says.

CELEBRATE VICTORIES

Reward yourself when you accomplish a goal. Whether you stretched your cardio routine by 10 minutes or lost two pounds, celebrate the win. Treat yourself to a non-food reward like a massage.

BE KIND

We all fall off the wagon from time to time. It's OK. Being hard on yourself doesn't help and can lead to bigger lapses. "Drop the all-or-nothing thinking," says Goldman. "Simply recognize your lapse, forgive yourself, and start new."

Outside the Box

BEING CREATIVE MAKES EXERCISE FUN AND HELPS YOU STICK WITH IT. TRY THESE UNCONVENTIONAL EXERCISES FROM FITNESS PRO SHELLY GOLDMAN, CES.

LIFT YOUR PET

A small dog or cat can double as a free weight. Hold her with both arms across your chest and do squats or upper-body twists.

WHIP CREAM

Go old-school by whipping cream by hand. Alternate hands—and get ready for a major arm workout.

GO PARACHUTING

To dial up resistance, try running with a speed chute behind you at a local track or beach.

GET GROUP LOVE

When your motivation is low, try a group class or boot camp. The camaraderie may propel you forward.

Search for the video **7 Body Changes to Expect When You're Pregnant** at WebMD.com.

MIND MATTERS

Baby on the Brain

While an expectant mother prepares a home for the new arrival, her brain makes its own preparations for its new job



pregnant. Similarly, the remaining 25 had never been pregnant at the first brain scan, but by the second one, they had given birth to their first child.

According to the images, each of the new moms lost brain tissue between the first and second MRI. But “losing brain volume doesn’t imply a deficit,” says Susanna Carmona Cañabate, PhD, a professor of neuroscience at Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and co-author of the study. “It’s the brain’s way of pruning to become more efficient.”

GRAY THAT DOESN’T MATTER

In the study, the women who didn’t get pregnant showed no changes in their brains from one scan to the next. The researchers also took MRIs of the new dads’ brains to see whether parenthood and not pregnancy made the difference. But the men’s brains looked the same before and after the big life change. Only the new moms had less of a tissue called gray matter.

Gray matter is where synapses live. Those are the lines of communication between brain cells that allow them to send signals to each other. Adult brains have less gray matter than children’s brains do. During adolescence, for example, as hormones rise, the brain loses some of this tissue. That’s what happened in the new moms’ brains, too.

“It’s a kind of synaptic pruning,” says Cañabate. “You discard the branches that aren’t necessary for your new way of processing information and keep the connections that are efficient.” The pruning fine tunes parts of the brain related to social understanding, allowing for increased maturity that’s crucial in the life stages of

“It’s the brain’s way of pruning to become more efficient.”

adolescence and new motherhood.

The gray matter loss was so clear and consistent in the new moms, says Cañabate, “I could look at the images and predict with 100% accuracy whether or not the person had been pregnant between the two MRI sessions.”

The brain responded to pregnancy in the same way, no matter how the baby was conceived. The study included women who got pregnant without any medical help as well as women who used IVF, donor eggs, and artificial insemination. “Fertility treatment requires a lot of hormones, especially in the first trimester, but we found exactly the same pattern in the brain,” says Cañabate.

TISSUE LOSS, NOT MEMORY LOSS

The study findings don’t make the case for the so-called “baby brain” that some women use to describe the absentmindedness or memory loss that some believe goes along with pregnancy. While some research does support the idea that carrying a baby impedes short-term memory, that’s not what this study was about. In fact, the 45 women took several tests of their thinking and memory skills throughout the course of the research, and there was no difference between the new moms and their child-free counterparts.

Among the new mothers, some brains changed more than others. This helped researchers uncover what purpose the restructuring might serve. After they had given birth, the moms answered a questionnaire that many researchers use to measure maternal attachment, hostility towards their baby, and pleasure from interacting with the baby. The moms whose brains underwent the greatest transformation during pregnancy showed stronger attachment to their babies after birth.

MY BABY, MYSELF

The region of the brain transformed by pregnancy was not random. It was an area associated with empathy and also how one sees herself. It might seem counterintuitive that empathy and self-focused thinking live in the same part of the brain. But, Cañabate explains, empathy stems from the ability to put yourself in someone else’s shoes. When you empathize, you are also thinking of yourself.

Pruning this region could prepare the brain for motherhood in a couple of ways. Maybe motherhood requires a stronger sense of empathy. Or, Cañabate speculates, is it that a woman’s very definition of herself is changing? “‘Yourself’ now includes another part: your baby. It’s not an external thing. It’s an extension of yourself.”

HORMONES’ ROLE

AMONG THEIR MANY OTHER DUTIES DURING PREGNANCY, DELIVERY, AND NURSING, HORMONES TRIGGER CHANGES IN THE BRAIN OF A MOTHER-TO-BE TO ENSURE A HEALTHY PREGNANCY AND A SMOOTH DELIVERY. HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE THINGS THEY DO.



ESTROGEN

Estrogen and progesterone, besides maintaining the pregnancy and preparing the body for a safe delivery, interact with chemicals in the brain to regulate appetite, fluid balance, and the expectant mother’s stress response.

PROLACTIN

Prolactin, named for its job promoting milk production, also works in the reproductive system and the immune system. It influences maternal behavior.

OXYTOCIN

Oxytocin triggers contractions and controls bleeding during delivery. The brain slows production during pregnancy to prevent premature birth and to store up the hormone for labor and delivery. After delivery, oxytocin—often called the “love hormone” or “cuddle chemical”—aids in mother-infant bonding.



Search for the video **5 Ways Stress Affects Your Body** at WebMD.com.

WORK WISE

Heads Up, Workaholics

Do you toil long hours on the job? Maybe you're just trying to get ahead in your career. But will the gains be worth the risks to your health?



→ **Bad Habits**
People working long hours tend to pick up unhealthy habits, like smoking and drinking.

THINK WORKING ALL THOSE HOURS, DAY IN AND DAY OUT, IS NO BIG DEAL? Think again. Those long stretches can take a toll on your health. Studies show that people who regularly work more than 40 hours a week have a greater risk of heart disease, stroke, and heart palpitations.

In a study that tracked more than 600,000 people for eight-and-a-half years, those who worked more than 55 hours a week were 13% more likely to develop heart disease during

the study period than those who worked 35 to 40 hours. While that's just a slight increase for heart disease, the workhorses were 33% more likely to have a stroke. In another study, the same researchers found that a grueling work schedule raised risk for atrial fibrillation—heart palpitations that increase risk for stroke—by 40%.

While the link between working long hours and health problems is clear, less clear is exactly what about that schedule hurts your health, says Christine Jellis, MD, PhD, a cardiologist at Cleveland Clinic. "It could be the actual work, the stress of neglecting other responsibilities, or that the long hours prevent you from doing healthy things," she says, such as eating right, exercising, and getting enough sleep.

The stress of long work hours might push you to do some unhealthy things, too, the researchers noted. For example, smokers smoke more when they are under stress. Similarly, people who work long hours tend to drink more than those who clock out at 40 hours. They also spend less of their leisure time doing physical activities. In the study, people who worked more than 40 hours a week saw these health risks rise for each additional eight hours they put in.

If you're the one calling the shots, consider cutting back your hours. "It's important for physical and mental health, but also important for maintaining productivity at work," says Jellis.

But if you're like most people, you don't have total control over the hours you work—which makes it even more important to make healthy choices where you can elsewhere.

4 Lessons

YOU MIGHT NOT CHOOSE YOUR WORK HOURS, BUT YOU PROBABLY HAVE (AT LEAST A LITTLE) CHOICE IN WHAT HAPPENS DURING YOUR DOWNTIME. MAKE IT TIME HEALTHFULLY SPENT.

DON'T SPEND ALL YOUR DOWNTIME DOWN

"Schedule exercise on the calendar in your phone, if you have to," says cardiologist Christine Jellis.

STOCK THE KITCHEN WITH NUTRITIOUS FOODS

That way, you won't binge on junk when you finally get home. Choose healthy menu options when you have to eat on the go.

WHEN YOU'RE OFF THE CLOCK, BE OFF

"To maintain a work-life balance, you need to actually disconnect from the phone and the email," says Jellis.

DON'T SKIMP ON SLEEP

"Never underestimate just how important sleep is in our busy lives," Jellis says.

SKIN CARE

Dew You

Facing flakes? Learn about the secret skin-care ingredient you'll want to add to your beauty arsenal.

WHETHER THE WEATHER IS HOT or cold, humid or arid, skin dryness is always in season. But a moisturizing powerhouse that dermatologists—including Maral Skelsey, MD, clinical associate professor at Georgetown University—swear by comes to the rescue. Hyaluronic acid is a sugar molecule called polysaccharide that develops naturally in the body (especially in the joints, eyes, and skin). When applied topically, hyaluronic acid can hold up to 1,000 times its weight in water while temporarily plumping up the skin, helping to hydrate and improving skin firmness and elasticity. Skelsey recommends applying it in serum form directly onto damp skin. “It’s not that helpful if the skin doesn’t already have a little bit of moisture in it,” she says. Smooth the recommended amount onto skin twice a day after washing and before heavier moisturizers or sunscreen.

—AYREN JACKSON-CANNADY

BEAUTY SMARTS

Scarred for Life?
Not necessarily.

Three innovative scar treatments offer new approaches for fading marks that offer more effective results and address a wider range of injuries



WHILE TIME MAY HEAL ALL WOUNDS, THE SAME CAN'T BE SAID FOR SCARS. You're more likely than not to have at least one—approximately 100 million people a year develop scars—and while some wear them like a tribute or badge of honor, others look for ways to erase that damage.

Treating scars is notoriously difficult. "Skin is not in its natural state when it becomes a scar," says Robert Anolik, MD, a dermatologist and a clinical assistant professor of dermatology at New York University School of Medicine. "The skin becomes firm layers of collagen without natural elasticity. It becomes fixed in a state and is resistant to change." That's also why completely erasing a scar is nearly impossible.

That doesn't mean you're stuck with an unwanted scar. "There are many new, effective scar treatments now than even a couple years ago," says Katherine Holcomb, MD, a dermatologist at Pure

Dermatology in Metairie, Louisiana. "We have new options and more versatile approaches to improve the appearance of a scar."

Here are three of the latest and most trusted methods top dermatologists use for reducing the appearance of a scar.

PICOSURE LASER

How it works: Originally used to remove tattoos, this laser treatment has become a method for improving skin texture

"Of all the scar treatment options we have, microneedling has a low risk of hyperpigmentation as a side effect."

and pigment. The device uses ultrafast picosecond (one trillionth of a second) pulses of energy to vibrate the dermis, the deeper layer of the skin where collagen is produced, Anolik explains. That vibration stimulates new collagen production and remodels damaged fibers so skin looks more even textured.

Why it's unique: "This is a completely new way to approach acne scars," Anolik says. "In the past, laser resurfacing was the standard, but those procedures required days to weeks of downtime. Pico is innovative because it interacts with the skin differently, so it requires no downtime."

What it costs: Like other laser treatments, PicoSure requires several visits. Depending on the size and type of your scars, you may need five to six treatments that cost from \$200 to \$1,000 each session.

MICRONEEDLING

How it works: As the name suggests, the process involves tiny needles. A device,

usually a roller, creates microscopic punctures, Holcomb explains. These microscopic injuries stimulate collagen production in a controlled way, so scars can be repaired. In some cases, a doctor will also apply a topical hyalauronic acid, vitamin C, or other agent to further encourage healing since the treatments can easily penetrate the skin via the punctures.

Why it's unique: One of the risks of laser treatments is hyperpigmentation as a result of the skin reacting to the heat and resulting inflammation. "Of all the scar treatment options we have, microneedling has a low risk of hyperpigmentation as a side effect because there's no heat or energy waves involved," Holcomb says.

What it costs: "Microneedling is inexpensive, has a low incidence of adverse reactions, and you don't usually require more than a day of downtime," Holcomb explains. Most people need three to five treatments, starting at \$100 each.

THE SCOOP

Itch Fix

KICK THOSE ITCHY, RED BUMPS (AKA KP, SHORT FOR KERATOSIS PILARIS) TO THE CURB WITH THESE SIMPLE CARE STEPS FROM DERMATOLOGIST **NEAL SCHULTZ, MD.**



1. CLEANSE

Skip harsh soaps that can irritate the skin and trigger more KP. Instead, reach for a mild cleanser that hydrates and protects while it cleans.

2. EXFOLIATE

The hard little bumps are overgrowths of dead cells on the top of the hair follicle. Dissolve them away by using a chemical exfoliant like glycolic or lactic acid.

3. TREAT

Help prevent KP from the inside out. Regularly take skin-benefiting supplements like fish oil, zinc, and probiotics.

4. MOISTURIZE

As soon as you finish bathing, apply a super-rich body cream made with lanolin or glycerin onto your damp skin to help seal in moisture.

Aisle Do

HAVE YOU VOWED TO KEEP YOUR SKIN SUN-SAFE WITH SPF BUT STILL YEARN FOR A BRONZE GLOW? ENTER SELF-TANNERS—THESE ARE THE ONES THE DERMATOLOGISTS SWEAR BY.



PRODUCT PICK

JERGEN'S Natural Glow Wet Skin Moisturizer (\$9)

"Affordable and easy to use (you apply it right in the shower on damp skin), this self-tanner gives a gradual/even tan while boosting hydration."

Fran Cook-Bolden, MD
dermatologist, Skin Specialty Dermatology, New York City

PRODUCT PICK

AVENE Moisturizing Self Tanner (\$26)

"This provides natural-looking color without the horrible smell that some self-tanners come with. Tip: Shave and exfoliate before using self-tanner. This helps give the active tanning ingredient dihydroxyacetone an even surface to adhere to."

Melanie Palm, MD
dermatologist, Art of Skin MD, San Diego

PRODUCT PICK

BRAZIL BRONZE Anti-Aging Tanning Mousse (\$40)

"I like that this self-tanner is a light and airy foam, making it very easy to apply and rub in from head to toe. Bonus: This is also infused with anti-aging ingredients like resveratrol, hyaluronic acid, vitamin C, and vitamin D."

Janet Prystowsky, MD
dermatologist and senior attending physician at Mount Sinai Roosevelt/St. Luke's Medical Center, New York City

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Continued from page 20

FRACTIONAL RADIOFREQUENCY

How it works: Another alternative to lasers, this treatment delivers a radiofrequency current to the deeper layers of the skin, which means a lower risk of surface discoloration. “The energy is focused and delivered precisely to the dermis where collagen is remodeled,” Anolik says. Over time, the collagen fibers grow and remodel the skin’s surface.

Why it’s unique: The results are similar to some laser treatments used to address acne scars, but the nature of the energy delivered makes this a good option for a wider range of skin tones, Anolik explains. “While nothing is completely risk-free, radiofrequency treatments are a safer way to treat darker skin.”

What it costs: Treatment can range from \$2,000 to \$4,000 for several sessions.

Dirty Secret

“I DON’T REPLACE MY LOOFAH—I JUST KEEP USING THE SAME ONE EVERY TIME I SHOWER.”



MICROBES LOVE LOOFAHS

“Your loofah or washcloth becomes a petri dish after a few days of use. As you shower, you scrape off dead skin cells that become trapped on the surface. Those cells and

body wash residue become a feast for bacteria and fungus that thrive in the warm, damp bathroom environment. Within a week, you’ll have a colony of microbes—even if you can’t see or smell them.”

—Barbara Reed, MD, clinical professor of dermatology, University of Colorado

CLEAN UP YOUR ACT

“Once a week you should clean any cloth, pouf, sponge, or loofah you use. Toss it in the washing machine or use a dilute solution of bleach to kill microbes.”

SAVE YOUR SKIN

“You likely won’t have much issue from a dirty loofah, as long as you have a healthy immune system. But if you’re sick, stressed, or have a compromised immune system, you’re at risk for an infection. If any bacteria or fungus is introduced to an open cut, you could end up with a serious infection.”



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DERM Q&A

Break It Down

The trick to acne-free skin may be as simple as tweaking a few of your daily habits



ACNE TENDS TO SNEAK UP AT THE WORST TIMES, LIKE THE NIGHT before a special occasion or a big job interview. What can you do? Dermatologist **David Lortscher, MD**, from San Diego, answers questions about why acne flares up—and how to get a grip on it.

Q Are greasy foods like potato chips to blame?

LORTSCHER It's not likely; no conclusive studies confirm a link.

Q What about dairy?

LORTSCHER It's not clear why, but dairy products like cheese, ice cream, and yogurt may make breakouts more likely. The answer may be related to hormones and growth factors in milk, which can spark a process that leads to clogged pores. The link seems to be stronger with milk—especially skim milk.

Q Why does acne worsen when seasons change?

LORTSCHER As environmental changes affect your skin, the products you use may no longer be compatible. For example, your glands secrete more oil in the summer. To avoid breakouts, cut back on oil by switching to a lighter moisturizer.

Q How can people tame back acne?

LORTSCHER Bacteria loves a warm, moist environment like the one on a sweaty back. To prevent “bacne,” minimize contributing factors. Look for non-comedogenic soaps,

washes, and moisturizers, which won't clog your pores. Rinse off after workouts.

Q Does working out clear up skin or cause breakouts?

LORTSCHER Sweat from exercise doesn't cause acne. But sweating and humidity can aggravate it by giving the bacteria on your skin a better environment to grow. Take a quick rinse after working out. Change out of sweaty clothes.

Q Can people treat acne and wrinkles at the same time?

LORTSCHER Yes. A gold standard is the prescription topical cream tretinoin, also known as Retin A. It treats and prevents wrinkles, stimulates collagen growth, and fights acne. You can also try over-the-counter retinol, which is similar but lower in strength, available at most drugstores. Avoid a high-sugar diet. Sugar damages elastin and collagen, which leads to wrinkles and sagging skin. It also boosts insulin production and inflammation, which can lead to acne.

4 Tips

TO WARD OFF BREAKOUTS, TRY THESE SIMPLE STRATEGIES FROM DERMATOLOGIST **DAVID LORTSCHER, MD**.

KEEP A FOOD DIARY

Jot down what you eat every day. Take note when your acne flares up. Look for triggers that make it worse, then avoid them.

BE GENTLE

Don't try to scrub your acne away—that will backfire. Friction causes irritation, and irritation leads to more acne.

DON'T PILE ON OVER-THE-COUNTER PRODUCTS

Start with one ingredient, like benzoyl peroxide, salicylic acid, or AHAs (alpha hydroxyl acids). Add another only after you know your skin can tolerate the first.

CURB SUGAR

Diets high in sugar or simple carbohydrates can make breakouts more likely. Eat sugary foods in moderation.

DERM Q&A

On the Nose

My 16-year-old daughter doesn't like her nose and thinks cosmetic surgery will improve her looks. What's involved in rhinoplasty? Is it safe for a teen?



RHINOPLASTY, ALSO KNOWN AS A NOSE JOB, IS A VERSATILE PROCEDURE. It can improve a person's appearance by restoring balance and harmony to facial features. It can also correct structural issues like a deviated septum to improve breathing problems.

"Rhinoplasty is not without its limitations, however," says Beverly Hills plastic surgeon **John Diaz, MD, FACS**. "The main disadvantage is the possibility that you may not be happy with the results." This is common with nose jobs for cosmetic reasons. Judging the outcome, Diaz says, can be very subjective.

It's also limited by your anatomy. "You should expect a better and more refined version of your existing nose, not a different nose entirely," Diaz says.

Q Is it OK for teens?

DIAZ "Although safe for teens, it's rare to be performed on anyone younger than 18 years old. Anyone younger should demonstrate maturity and an understanding of the risks, benefits, and alternatives. Cosmetic surgery should be avoided in any patient younger than 16."

Q What's involved?

DIAZ "Most rhinoplasties are performed under general anesthesia. It usually takes two to three hours. Small surgical tapes and a plastic splint are usually applied at the end. Most patients return home shortly after. Pain medications are usually given, but many people feel comfortable

without them. Often over-the-counter pain medications work well."

Q What's recovery like?

DIAZ "You may feel a heavy, congested feeling, similar to a bad cold or flu, for two to three days. Bruising and swelling peaks after about three days and typically resolves rapidly. Dressings are removed after six to eight days. Most people can go out in public and resume activities after six to seven days."

Q When do you see results?

DIAZ "Your nose may be very swollen and red immediately after the tapes and splint are removed. Most patients look very good after three to four weeks. It takes several months for all the swelling to go away and full definition of the shape of the nose to appear. The final result may take up to one year. Results should last a lifetime."

4 Tips

PAVE THE WAY FOR BETTER RESULTS WITH THESE TIPS FROM PLASTIC SURGEON **JOHN DIAZ, MD, FACS**.

HAVE A PLAN

Before surgery, think about what you'd like to change. Your profile? The tip of your nose? The width? The more you know, the better you can communicate with your doctor.

FIND AN EXPERT

Go to a qualified surgeon. He or she should be board-certified in plastic surgery or otolaryngology, which is ear, nose, and throat surgery.

DO SOME RESEARCH

Look at the surgeon's website. Has he or she performed enough rhinoplasties? Do you like the before-and-after pictures?

DON'T RUSH

After rhinoplasty, get plenty of rest and avoid strenuous activities. The first week of healing is critical. Avoid anything that may disturb this process.

BEAUTY

BY Ayren Jackson-Cannady

REVIEWED BY Karyn Grossman, MD
WebMD Medical Reviewer



1. RIGHT ON THE KISSER Kiehl's Butterstick Lip Treatment SPF 25 (\$20)

"With a lovely and light scent, this product goes on very smoothly and does not have a chalky appearance or feel to it, making it great for layering with color lipstick."

2. BARE NECESSITY Elta MD UV Lip Balm SPF 31 (\$10)

"Don't leave home without this broad-spectrum lip balm that moisturizes the skin and simultaneously effectively protects it from the sun."

3. PUCKER UP Shiseido Sun Protection Lip Treatment SPF 35 (\$24)

"This may feel soft and light on lips, but it's a heavy hitter when it comes to protecting your lips against UVA and UVB rays. Wear it alone or under lipstick—it won't have a filmy residue."

4. DRY SPELL Aquaphor Lip Pro- tectant + Sunscreen SPF 30 (\$4)

"Perfect for lips that are constantly dry and irritated, this effectively protects the skin from the sun while hydrating parched skin."

5. HIGHER POWER PAULA'S CHOICE Lip- screen SPF 50 (\$10)

"This is the perfect balm if you spend a majority of your time outdoors. Skin cancer of the lip tends to be more aggressive and invasive, so protecting the lips with a higher SPF like this is key."

EXPERT PICKS

Sun Kiss

Safeguard your lips from the sun with these pucker-protecting products recommended by Kristina Goldenberg, MD, a New York City dermatologist. Be sure to re-apply every one to two hours when you're outside.

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ANATOMY OF...

Makeup Remover

What goes into taking it off



CLEANING CREW

The basic makeup-removing formula includes water, surfactants, and emulsifiers to dissolve and lift makeup and skin conditioning agents like glycerin, allantoin, and propylene glycol.

TAP INTO OIL

The idea of using oil to clean may sound counterintuitive, but think back to high school chemistry: like dissolves like. A makeup-removing oil bonds with sebum and greasy products to remove makeup—and is especially effective on waterproof or long-wear makeup.

WATER WORKS

Despite its name, micellar water is not just a fancy bottled water. This type of makeup remover contains cleansing molecules that float in water. When they hit the surface of your skin, they grab oil and dirt to provide a quick clean.

GRECIAN FORMULA

Cold creams (the name comes from the sensation it leaves on your skin) are some of the oldest products used to remove cosmetics. They have been around since the second century AD. They rely on the go-to blend of oil and water to wipe away makeup.

PRESS FOR SUCCESS

To remove eye makeup—especially mascara—soak a cotton pad in remover and gently press it into your lids and lashes. Rubbing can irritate this sensitive area, and you risk pulling out lashes in the process.

WIPE RIGHT

Makeup-removing cloths can cause irritation for those with sensitive skin. They often contain alcohol, which can be drying, and some people may have an allergy to a preservative in the wipes. And the way towelettes are designed to be used—as a no-rinse wipe—they often smear oil and makeup without effectively cleaning. For the most thorough clean, you probably need to rinse.

FOCUSED PARENTING

Father-Baby Bonding

Dads, your presence and participation right from the start may boost your baby's brain power

RESEARCHERS RECRUITED 128 BRITISH DADS AND their newborn boys and girls to take part in a study. At three months, the researchers assessed the ways the father and child interacted—just dad talking and playing with baby, no toys allowed. After two years, they watched dad play with and read to his child. Then, the toddler took a standardized test that measures social and language skills as well as problem-solving and the ability to pay attention. Girls and boys both did better on the tests if their fathers encouraged them to explore their surroundings during play and reading time while he stayed engaged, encouraging, and positive. The takeaway for new fathers: Quality time with your new baby brings out her or his best, so make play a priority from day one.

—MATT McMILLEN





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PREGNANCY

Under Pressure

Stressed out? Pervasive worries during pregnancy could affect your unborn baby, so learn how to curb them.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BRINGING A HEALTHY BABY INTO THE WORLD IS WEIGHTY enough. Add chronic life pressures like a rocky marriage or a taxing job, and your stress levels can reach dangerous heights.

Severe stress in pregnancy isn't good for you—or your baby. “There's very strong evidence linking mom's distress to birth outcomes,” says Elysia Davis, PhD, psychology

professor at the University of Denver, who has extensively studied the effects of stress on pregnancy. “That includes increasing the risk that a baby will be born preterm or at a lower birth weight.”

Much of Davis' research has focused on cortisol, a hormone that plays a pivotal role in the body's stress response. Cortisol passes from mother to baby via the placenta. “In the fetus, cortisol plays a role in growth and development and the maturation of various organ systems. All of these are normal, typical processes during pregnancy,” Davis says. “Where it becomes tricky is when that exposure is too high.” In higher-than-usual amounts, cortisol can have a negative effect on the baby's growth and development—particularly early in pregnancy.

As cortisol-exposed babies move into childhood, they tend to produce more cortisol themselves. Davis has discovered they also have a larger amygdala—the part of the brain that controls the fear response. As a result, “Those kids tend to be more reactive and fearful,” she says.

Despite the research, she doesn't want expectant moms to stress over their stress. “Women are pregnant for nine months. That's a long time. There are obviously going to be moments of stress or challenge, and I don't think the data we have suggest women should be concerned about those experiences.”

That said, if your stress is overwhelming or impossible to control, consider seeing a mental health professional. Therapy can help give you the skills to handle pressures that arise during your pregnancy and beyond.

4 Lessons

LEARN HOW TO MANAGE YOUR STRESS DURING PREGNANCY WITH TIPS FROM **ELYSIA DAVIS, PhD**.

FOCUS YOUR MIND

A few minutes of daily focus on your breathing and thoughts is a powerful way to de-stress. Studies show mindfulness meditation relieves stress and anxiety during pregnancy.

STRIKE A POSE

Prenatal yoga classes will help you stay fit, plus the practice helps to lower cortisol levels and boost immune function during pregnancy.

GO FOR A WALK

Exercise is good for body, mind, and baby. Ask your OB/GYN what types of exercises are safe for you, but at least try to walk for 30 minutes each day.

GET ENOUGH REST

Poor sleep and stress intensify each other. If you get a good night's sleep, you'll be less stressed—and you'll sleep more soundly.



Search for the slideshow **What to Feed Your Baby in Year 1: Starting Solids** at WebMD.com.

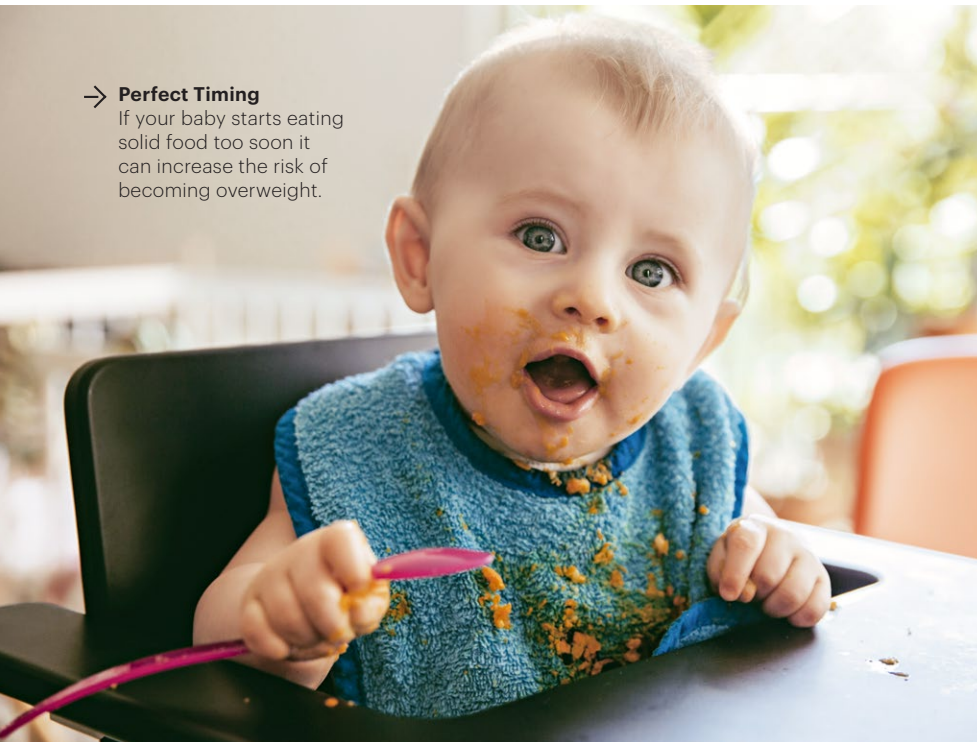
BABY

Solid Start

When should you switch your baby from breast or bottle to spoon? Some parents start solids too early, and that could lead to trouble.

→ Perfect Timing

If your baby starts eating solid food too soon it can increase the risk of becoming overweight.



MILESTONES ARE THE HIGH POINTS OF A BABY'S FIRST YEAR, ESPECIALLY for first-time parents. Every first merits a celebration: first tooth, first smile, first word, first meal.

Though you might anxiously await each of these steps, when it comes to introducing solid foods, patience is key. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises that you don't start solids until your baby's sixth month. Yet a study in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* found

that more than half of babies first eat solid foods before 6 months—and 16% start earlier than 4 months.

Before babies can eat real food, they need to be able to do three things: hold their head up while sitting in a high chair, open their mouth when a spoon comes their way, and push food from the spoon to the back of their throat. Starting solids before these three goals are met could increase your baby's risk of choking.

Another worry is obesity. "The sooner you start solid foods, the better chance kids are going to be overweight because they're getting more calories," says Robin Jacobson, MD, a pediatrician at NYU Langone Pediatric Associates at Irving Place. Research shows that babies who were introduced to solid foods before 4 months were more likely to be obese as toddlers.

Yet you also don't want to wait too long to start solids. "Some babies get so into either drinking from a bottle or breastfeeding that if you wait too long, they refuse to eat from a spoon," Jacobson says.

Most babies are ready to make the transition to cereal, vegetables, and fruits when they've doubled their birth weight and they weigh at least 13 pounds. That usually happens by the 6-month mark.

4 Tips

PEDIATRICIAN **ROBIN JACOBSON, MD**, SUGGESTS A FEW WAYS TO TRANSITION YOUR BABY TO SOLID FOODS.

INTRODUCE GRADUALLY

Get into solids slowly. Start your baby with one meal a day of solid foods the first month, two meals the second month, and three the third month.

BYPASS RICE

Rice cereal has traditionally been babies' first food. However, due to concerns over arsenic in rice cereal, consider starting with alternatives like oat, barley, or multigrain.

FRUITS OR VEGETABLES FIRST

Some pediatricians recommend babies try vegetables before fruits, so they don't get too used to the sweet taste. Yet there's no evidence infants get any nutritional advantage from starting with vegetables.

AVOID ALLERGIES

Give your baby one new food at a time—especially allergy-provoking foods like peanuts, eggs, and wheat. Wait three to five days and look for signs of an allergic reaction before you introduce another new food.

Search for the slideshow
Quick Tips to Feed a Picky Eater at WebMD.com.

PARENTING

Serene Suppers

Studies show families who dine together regularly see big benefits—if those meals aren't chaotic and cranky. Here's how to make your family dinner more peaceful and productive.



WANT TO DE-STRESS YOUR DINNER TABLE? ANNE FISHEL, PhD, FAMILY THERAPIST and associate clinical professor of psychology, Harvard Medical School, co-founder of The Family Dinner Project and author of *Home for Dinner* has advice for parents.

Q One goal of the nonprofit you cofounded, The Family Dinner Project, is to help families have better-quality family dinners. Why?

FISHEL We know from research that regular family dinners are good for the

body, the brain, and the mental health of families. But if the atmosphere at the table isn't warm and welcoming and enjoyable, the benefits are not going to follow. If everyone is yelling or sitting in stony silence, no great lasagna is going to do the trick.

Q What are common sources of stress at family meals?

FISHEL Fighting over table manners is one. My advice would be to go easy on manners and focus on encouraging good communication—not talking with your mouth full, not interrupting, taking turns speaking.

Q What about battles with picky eaters?

FISHEL The best advice for parents is to model their own gusto or enjoyment of food. Get kids involved in any part of the food preparation, including choosing the menu, stirring

the soup. These things make kids more likely to eat what's being offered.

Q How do electronic devices affect dinner stress?

FISHEL I did a survey about technology and found that parents were twice as likely to use gadgets at the table as kids were! A lot of families have a no-technology rule at the table. They put their phones in a basket, and the first person to reach for a phone has to do the dishes. If you're checking your phone, you're not focusing on the people who are present.

Q How can parents prevent arguments at the table?

FISHEL You can agree to keep topics off the table that usually spark conflict: grades or homework or college applications. Agree to discuss those things once everybody has a full stomach and a chance to connect about other things.

Table Games

ANNE FISHEL, PhD, SUGGESTS THESE SIMPLE MEALTIME GAMES TO EASE STRESS AND HELP FAMILIES RECONNECT.

ROSEBUD AND THORN

Ask each person to share a "thorn" from their day (something that was difficult) and a "rosebud" (something they hope happens tomorrow).

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Each person describes two events of their day that really happened and one that is total fiction. Family members have to guess the false event. The person who guesses correctly goes next.

FAMILY QUIZ

Without naming them, parents describe relatives, and kids have to guess the person in question. "Who in the family worked in a barn?" "Who had a dog named Nancy?" "Who broke an arm at age 7?"

AND MORE

For additional game ideas and other conversation starters, visit **thefamilydinnerproject.org**.

Search for the slideshow
Test Your Puberty IQ at
WebMD.com.

TEEN HEALTH

Arrested Development

Contrary to what you might expect in these fast-paced times, teens today grow up slower than their parents did. What exactly does that mean?



TEENS WHO CAME OF AGE IN THE 1970s, 1980s, AND 1990s OFTEN heard a common refrain from their parents: “You’re growing up too fast.” Today, as those Baby Boomers and Generation Xers raise their own adolescents, the trend has reversed, according to new research.

“Compared to a few decades ago, teens today are less likely to have a driver’s license, work at a paid job, go out without their parents, date, have sex, or drink alcohol,” says Jean Twenge, PhD, professor of psychology at San Diego State University. “Eighteen-year-olds are now content with acting like 15-year-olds once did.”

For years, research has shown that young adults are waiting longer to settle into marriage and careers. But Twenge’s research suggests

kids’ entire life trajectory is taking a slower pace. That’s positive news when it comes teen pregnancy and teen automobile crashes, which have both declined.

But societally, concerns abound. “Adolescents seem to be behaving in ways that are safer, and instinctively that sounds good,” says Julie Lythcott-Haims, a former dean of advising at Stanford University and author of *How to Raise an Adult*. “But we are not going to be well served if we have a society of 20- and 30-somethings who lack the impulse to be in charge of their own decisions or have a sense of obligation to work, pay their bills, and be productive.”

TEENS BY THE NUMBERS

In September, Twenge published a sweeping review looking at seven surveys asking 8.5 million teens from 1976 to 2016 when they first encountered key milestones. The contrast between today’s teens and previous generations was shocking, she says: “In all of my analyses of generational data—some of it reaching back to the 1930s—I had never seen anything like it.”

Twelfth-graders today go out without their parents less than 8th graders did in 2009, and half as many date, compared to their parents at that age. The average teen loses his or her virginity around the spring of 11th grade, while most Generation Xers lost it a year earlier. When it comes to alcohol, the percentage of 8th graders who have tried it has fallen by half, and use among 12th graders has fallen by one quarter since the 1990s.

Meanwhile, a full quarter of high-schoolers graduate without having a

driver’s license (a nearly unheard-of phenomenon in the 1980s, when films like *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off* equated coming of age with driving). Nearly half of today’s high-schoolers do not have a paying job. In 1970, four in five did.

“Most parents would agree that fewer teens drinking and having sex are good trends,” says Twenge. But the slow life trajectory has its downsides too.

SUPER-CONNECTED AND COMPLETELY UNPREPARED

In her book, *iGen: Why Today’s Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—And Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*, Twenge suggests that the generation (named after the iPhone they grew up with) is leaving the house less because they can now socialize via their phone. “Today, the party is on Snapchat,” she says.

Overdone, that lack of in-person interaction can prevent the development of key interpersonal skills, she argues. And, according to a report published in January 2018 by the American Psychological Association, it can also sap happiness. “Adolescents who spent more time on electronic

communication and screens and less time on non-screen activities, including in-person social interaction, had lower psychological well-being,” the report concluded.

Haines warns that well-meaning parents, eager to support their children and carve out time for them to excel at school and extracurricular activities so they can get into a good college, often inadvertently rob them of the life experience they’ll need when they get there. “Too many of my students at Stanford seemed to be delighted to be helped by their parents in ways that you and I would have been repulsed by at that age,” she says.

As today’s parents embrace the upside of having more cautious, less rebellious kids, they should also be helping usher them into adulthood. That means setting limits on technology use, encouraging in-person time with friends, requiring chores or a job, and talking candidly about the risks of unprotected sex and binge drinking, which—if they haven’t encountered in high school—they will certainly be exposed to in college.

“It’s great that kids don’t have to grow up before they are ready,” says Twenge. “But they do have to grow up eventually.”

5 Skills

Former college student advisor **Julie Lythcott-Haims** says every teenager should solidly possess certain skills by the time they’re a senior in high school. Here they are—and ways parents can nurture them early.

1. BE ABLE TO TALK TO STRANGERS

Periodically send your teen to ask the clerk at the grocery store where something is. Bring him to adult events and encourage him to introduce himself to people.

2. BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO RUNNING A HOUSEHOLD

Require your child to do chores as early as toddlerhood and don’t let up when they get to be busy teenagers. “Doing chores turns out to be really foundational to a kid’s development of a strong work ethic,” says Lythcott-Haims.

3. BE ABLE TO MANAGE DEADLINES AND SCHEDULES

Encourage your teen to use a scheduling app or calendar. Sit down once a week and have her tell you what’s coming up.

4. BE ABLE TO MANAGE INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS

When your teen comes to you with a problem, start by expressing compassion: “Wow, that must really be frustrating.” Then ask her what she plans to do about it. “That signals that you think she is capable of handling it herself and forces her to start thinking through her options or next steps on her own,” says Lythcott-Haims.

5. BE ABLE TO MANAGE MONEY

Provide a weekly allowance and ask your teen to use it when they want to go out with friends. Resist the urge to give them cash whenever they ask for it.

BY THE NUMBERS

41%

of 9th to 12th graders have had sex. That number was 54% in 1991.

60%

of 12th graders have tried alcohol. That number was 85% in the early 1990s.

58%

of 12th graders go out on dates. That number was 86% in the late 1970s.

43%

of teens have a summer job. That number was 70% in 1980.

GETTY IMAGES

Search for the slideshow **Surprising Things You Didn't Know About Dogs and Cats** at WebMD.com.

PETS

Be a Litter Quitter

Spaying your pet helps prevent overpopulation and offers significant health benefits. Now, thanks to minimally invasive surgery options, animals have less pain and recover faster.



PUPPIES AND KITTENS MIGHT BE ADORABLE, BUT NOT ALL PET owners want their four-legged friends to have litters. Sterilizing pets—spaying females and neutering males—prevents accidental pregnancies and reduces pet overpopulation. Unplanned litters are one of the biggest reasons pets end up in shelters.

Fortunately, it's a routine procedure. "Spaying is the most common abdominal operation performed in veterinary medicine," says Jeffrey J. Runge, DVM, DACVS, head of minimally invasive surgery at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine.

Sterilizing dogs and cats also offers health benefits. Research shows that spaying a female pet reduces the risk of breast and uterine cancers. In fact, spaying a dog before her first heat cycle (which occurs around 6 months of age) can reduce the risk of breast cancer to less than 1%; waiting until after the second heat cycle increases the risk to 26%.

Animals are often sterilized between 6 and 9 months of age, but healthy puppies and kittens can be spayed as early as 8 weeks old.

For female pets, the most common procedure involves making an incision and removing the ovaries and the uterus. The method is referred to as "open" surgery because the abdomen is opened up while the animal is under general anesthetic. The incision must be large enough for veterinarians to insert their tools and hands into the abdomen.

Although this open spay surgery is safe and effective, Runge notes that it comes with risks ranging from infection to post-operative pain. A new procedure cuts those risks.

Minimally invasive surgery is done through two small incisions called ports. The incisions can be as small as 5 millimeters, compared with 1 inch or larger incisions for open spays. Instruments are inserted through one port and a scope with a small high-definition camera is inserted through the other. Veterinarians use the images, which are broadcast to a video monitor, to help them remove only the ovaries.

Neutering male dogs and cats involves making a small incision in the scrotum

and removing the testicles. "There is no minimally invasive way to do that," explains Runge.

Runge believes minimally invasive spay surgery, also called laparoscopy or keyhole surgery, allows veterinarians to be more precise because the high-definition images on the monitors show the organs in greater detail. Magnification isn't possible in open surgeries.

He also notes that minimally invasive spay surgeries have lower rates of infection, faster healing times, and shorter hospital stays. A study published in *Veterinary Research Forum* found that female dogs that underwent minimally invasive spay surgery spent less time on the operating table, had smaller scars, and less blood loss than dogs that were spayed during traditional open spay surgeries.

A second study, published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, found that 90% of dogs that had open surgeries required additional pain medication during recovery, while none of the dogs that underwent a laparoscopic procedure did so. In the hours following their operations, levels of cortisol, the stress

hormone, were also higher among dogs that had open surgeries.

As a result, Runge says, "Dogs who have minimally invasive spay surgery return to their normal function faster."

Minimally invasive spays are not right for all animals. It might be more difficult to insert instruments and scopes in smaller animals. In obese animals, the extra fat might make it more difficult for veterinarians to see the ovaries on camera. Talk to your vet about whether your pet is a good candidate for a laparoscopic procedure.

Unlike open spay surgeries, which do not require additional training or specialized instruments, veterinarians must purchase expensive equipment—and learn to use it—to perform minimally invasive surgeries. For these reasons, not all veterinary clinics offer the procedure. You may need to seek a specialist.

Minimally invasive spay surgeries may offer significant advantages, but Runge stresses that traditional open spays are safe and effective. Spaying your pet, he believes, is more important than the specific surgical procedure.

Four Questions

BEFORE MAKING AN APPOINTMENT TO HAVE YOUR DOG OR CAT SPAYED—OR DECIDING TO LEAVE A PET INTACT—VETERINARY SURGEON **JEFFREY J. RUNGE DVM, DACVS**, SUGGESTS ASKING YOUR VETERINARIAN THESE QUESTIONS.



WHY SHOULD I SPAY MY PET?

Understanding the health implications and practical reasons for sterilizing your dog or cat can help you make an informed decision.

WHAT OPTIONS DO I HAVE?

Ask for information about the availability and cost of open and minimally invasive surgeries and decide which one is best for your pet.

WHERE CAN I FIND A PROVIDER?

Not all veterinarians perform minimally invasive spay surgeries. Ask your vet for a referral or check with the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.

HOW DO I PREPARE MY PET FOR SURGERY?

Your veterinarian will have specific instructions for what to do—or not do—before your pet is spayed. Follow the guidelines before dropping them off for surgery.

BY THE NUMBERS

6.5 million
Number of companion animals that end up in shelters every year, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

51%
Percentage of unaltered cats surrendered to shelters. For dogs, the percentage is 42.8%.

\$200
Average cost of conventional spay/neuter surgeries. Low-cost options are often available through nonprofit groups, including local humane societies.



ACTOR AND HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE
ANNETTE BENING OPENS UP ABOUT
**HER CRAFT, HER FAMILY, AND
LIVING A LONG, HAPPY LIFE**

ART: STREIBER / AUGUST

BY LAUREN PAIGE KENNEDY | REVIEWED BY AREFA CASSOOBHOY, MD, MPH, WEBMD SENIOR MEDICAL DIRECTOR

A

nnette Bening is not just famous as a four-time Oscar nominee and longtime spouse of Hollywood legend Warren Beatty. She's also known for being politely—if firmly—guarded

about her personal life, even as she quietly works without fanfare to raise funds and further research for cancer and reproductive health.

Her reticence clearly benefits her craft, so successfully does she disappear into the skin of her many memorable characters. From her breakout film role in 1990's *The Grifters* to her latest star turn in *The Seagull*, which opened in U.S. theaters last month, she conjures women on screen who crackle with life, wit, rage, humor, and, yes, drama.

Bening's own character, however, is best revealed not through her acting but her actions. When the cameras aren't rolling she's a doting daughter to her elderly father and mother, who at 91 and 89, respectively, still lead active, independent lives in San Diego. She's a devoted wife and mom, too, protective of both her enduring marriage to Beatty and their four kids ranging in age from 18 to 26. And she's an advocate for health-focused organizations such as The Entertainment Industry Foundation and Planned Parenthood.

CAUSE CÉLÈBRE

"I've been put into the public eye because of my craft, which has given me the ability to shine a spotlight on issues," Bening says. "It's a great luxury

and honor to be able to do that. I try to do it judiciously."

Supporting fundraising efforts over the years for breast cancer research is one such judicious choice. "We all have friends, relatives, and people close to us who have gone through breast cancer. That's certainly the case for me," she says before adding: "All of the issues around women's health and reproductive rights are ones I feel very strongly about."

Family planning—when and whether to have children, having a safe pregnancy and birth, and receiving good postnatal care—is central to reproductive health, yet this umbrella term covers a wide range of health issues that can affect both genders. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), reproductive health refers to the diseases, disorders, and conditions that affect the functioning of the male and female reproductive systems during all stages of life. They include the diagnosis and treatment of birth defects, developmental disorders, low birth weight, preterm birth, reduced fertility, impotence, menstrual disorders, vaccinations, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), patient education, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) services, and more.

Bening has long supported Planned Parenthood, a nonprofit reproductive health organization with nearly 650 health centers across the U.S. In fact, the creative team behind her acclaimed 2016 film *20th Century Women*—whose storyline depicts two central characters visiting a Planned Parenthood clinic for a pregnancy test and a cervical cancer screening—partnered with the organization during script development to accurately portray these scenes, and they even donated a portion of opening weekend ticket sales to the group.

According to Planned Parenthood, its health centers have provided reproductive health care for more than 2.8 million American men, women, and young people—and Bening has disclosed how she was once one of them, relying upon Planned Parenthood as a young woman back in San Diego, before she hit it big.

"Reproductive health is a very important thing for us all to stand up for—not just women, but men, too," Bening says.

AGING WELL

Bening, who just turned 60, embraces her age, even as she acknowledges the obvious pressures in and out of Hollywood to combat it. "Aging right now, in the culture we're in? There are some crazy ideas out there, and a lot of pressure is put on women, and men, too," she says. "So everyone has to handle it in his or her own way. Certainly, as a public person it can be tricky sometimes. I don't think there's any moral high ground for anyone who does, or doesn't do, plastic surgery or fillers."

For her, acting trumps vanity: "I start and end with the craft—working on roles in the most authentic way I can. I've always been interested in trying to get across whatever is going on in the story through my own lens, at whatever age that I am. I want to be that age, and serve that creative purpose. That feels good to me."

Her performance in *The Seagull*, a period drama based on the classic Anton Chekhov play about a fading Russian actress who feels threatened by an ambitious ingenue (played by Saoirse

"AGING RIGHT NOW, IN THE CULTURE WE'RE IN? THERE ARE SOME CRAZY IDEAS OUT THERE, AND A LOT OF PRESSURE IS PUT ON WOMEN, AND MEN, TOO. SO EVERYONE HAS TO HANDLE IT IN HIS OR HER OWN WAY."



LONGEVITY LESSONS

Annette Bening, 60, doesn't fear aging. Perhaps she's so blithe about growing older because her **maternal grandfather made it to 100**, and her own active, healthy parents are just a decade away from achieving this same centenarian milestone.

Thomas Perls, MD, founder and director of the New England Centenarian Study, the largest study of centenarians and their families in the world, is also a principal investigator of the National Institute of Aging-funded Long Life Family Study. **He shares some of his pivotal findings on exceptional longevity.**

Healthy inheritance

Children of centenarians have approximately 60% reduced rates of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and hypertension, and 80% reduced overall mortality in their early 70s compared to their average birth cohort.

All relative

Siblings of centenarians have markedly increased rates of reaching age 100, compared to other people born in their birth cohort.

Pregnant after 40

Close to 20% of female centenarians had children after the age of 40, compared with 5% of women born in their same year, which suggests women who have children after the age of 40 have a four times greater chance of living to 100 or older.

Delayed menopause

The average age of menopause is 51. Women who enter menopause later than this average may have a decreased risk for developing age-related diseases.

Female factor

Women who live to be 100 greatly outnumber male centenarians. Perls' research suggests women may be better at living longer with chronic illnesses that men don't generally survive.

Mentally sharp

Alzheimer's becomes less common among centenarians relative to octogenarians (people ages 80 to 89 years old) and nonagenarians (people ages 90 to 99 years old). Centenarians, it seems, have a resistance to developing the disease.

GETTY IMAGES

Ronan), underscores this assertion; only a middle-aged woman—who truly looks middle-aged—could authentically inhabit the part on screen. “It was a dream come true,” she says of the opportunity.

Bening may not outwardly resist the years, but she does wear them well. The star attributes her slim physique and glowing smile to eating healthfully (with “a glass or two of wine in the evenings”), maintaining a positive attitude, doing lots of yoga (“I was lucky enough to be introduced to it when I was in acting class; its practice and study have been a huge gift in my life”), and inheriting a good set of genes.

And, boy, did she ever: “My mother’s father lived to be 100,” she says. With her own parents, Arnett and Shirley, both in or quickly approaching their 10th decade of life, it seems centenarians may run in her family. And Bening claims she’s learned many lessons about longevity from them.

“My parents are decent, loving, very good people,” she says. “They have a circle of friends and everyone takes care of each other. Both have a positive outlook. When health issues come up, they consult their doctors, get good care, follow instructions—and then they get on with enjoying their lives. They tend not to complain. They focus on the good.”

Bening’s odds of reaching a similar marker are increased because of her genetic inheritance, says Thomas T. Perls, MD, professor of medicine, Boston University’s School of Medicine, and international expert on epidemiology, the genetics of aging, and exceptional longevity.

“Most of us have the genetic blueprint to make it to almost 90 if we adopt good health behaviors,”

he says. “If you want to live beyond 90, there’s evidence from our study, and from other studies, that genes do play a role. There are many mechanisms that either slow aging or make someone age faster; so far, we’ve found more than 130 gene variations and combinations—called genetic signatures—that affect how we age, especially after 90. These signatures play an even stronger role in subjects age 105 and older.”

To increase your own chance of becoming a centenarian, Perls points to research done on a cloistered group of Seventh Day Adventists who shared marked longevity. “Smoking is the very worst thing you can do,” he advises. “Don’t drink much alcohol. Eat a vegetarian diet. Exercise your mind and body every day. Maintain a healthy weight with a body mass index [BMI] no higher than 27. Manage your stress levels. Create a strong social network. And, if you’re a woman, having your babies at age 40 or older, and without the help of fertility technology, is likely a marker of your reproductive system aging very slowly and not getting age-related diseases that impair fertility.”

Another longevity bonus, perhaps, for Bening? She gave birth to her youngest child, daughter Ella, who is now 18, at age 41.

THE BENING-BEATTY BROOD

When it comes to motherhood, the private star finally lets down her famous guard.

“It’s taught me everything about life and most of the things I value,” she says of rearing the Beatty clan. “I always wanted to have children, even as a little girl.

I was just baby- and kid-obsessed. I wanted five—and I came close! I feel lucky and blessed. A friend once said to me, ‘When you have children, the light goes on in the attic of your life and it never goes out. They’re always a part of you, your orientation to your world.’ And that is true.”

Her oldest child, Stephen Ira, a transgender man now in his mid-20s, is a vocal activist for LGBTQ rights and a blogger who publicly chronicled his transition during his college years. When asked how his journey of gender identity transformed not only her son physically and emotionally but also her own outlook and ideas about parenting, Bening both answers the question while demurring it in the name of privacy.

“I value it deeply,” she says. “As I value each of my kids’ journeys. When we start out we think we’re the ones who are teaching our kids. But you learn pretty quickly they’re the ones who are teaching you; they’re the ones who understand the world. I protect my children; I don’t talk a lot about specifics. If they want to speak about anything, well, that’s their right.”

With this gentle pivot, Bening shifts back to discussing acting. She names another upcoming project she’s excited about that comes out in September: *Life Itself*, a new film from the creators of the mega-hit TV series “This Is Us,” costarring Oscar Isaac, Olivia Wilde, Samuel L. Jackson, and Antonio Banderas. The story spans multiple generations and follows a tribe of interconnected characters in New York and Spain; she plays a doctor. And with the focus back on her reel life, her real life remains safely behind the scenes.

Search for the slideshow
18 Secrets to a Longer Life
at WebMD.com.



TOP: GETTY IMAGES; MIDDLE LEFT: PICTORIAL PRESS LTD. / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; MIDDLE RIGHT: UNITED ARCHIVES GMBH / ALAMY STOCK; PHOTO BOTTOM: GETTY IMAGES

Top left: Bening accepts the best actress award for *Don’t Die in Liverpool* at AARP The Magazine’s Annual Movies for Grownups Awards in 2018.

Middle left: Bening, Elle Fanning, and Greta Gerwig in *20th Century Women*.

Middle right: John Cusack and Bening in *The Grifters*.

Bottom: Bening with husband Warren Beatty at the 2017 Film Independent Spirit Awards.



“[MOTHERHOOD HAS] TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING ABOUT LIFE AND MOST OF THE THINGS I VALUE.”





PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK LOZIER

BY **LISA MARSHALL** REVIEWED BY **BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD** WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL DIRECTOR

AS **ESSENTIAL OILS** GAIN POPULARITY, DOCTORS, AROMATHERAPISTS, AND OTHER **EXPERTS** **WARN THAT DOWNSIDES** GO ALONG WITH THE **BENEFITS**

When Rachael Armstrong first used essential oils in 2016, she “dove right in,” as she puts it. Each morning, she placed a drop of frankincense oil, which some say is an immune booster, under her tongue. If her head hurt, she dabbed calming peppermint oil on her temples. At night, she massaged the bottoms of her feet with grapefruit oil, often billed as an appetite suppressant. By day, she slathered her arms with antibacterial bergamot oil and dropped fragrant lemon oil into her detergent and water bottle.

Then one night after sitting in the sun at a baseball game, she spotted a rash on her neck and arms. By morning, her eyes were swollen shut, and the oozing welts on her neck burned. Although the rash cleared, for weeks, each time the sun hit her skin even briefly, it returned. Ultimately, the rash got so gruesome that doctors had to inject her with steroids. The suspected culprit: a toxic reaction to essential oils.

“I admit I was probably overusing them,” says the 44-year-old mother of five from Omaha, Nebraska. “But I don’t think people are aware that even though they’re natural products, they can do real damage.”

Armstrong is among a small but growing number of people turning up with chemical burns, allergic reactions, respiratory issues, and other side effects from the popular aromatic plant extracts. Consumers now spend more than \$1 billion annually on oils and accessories, according to market research firm SPINS. That’s not including tens of millions in sales from companies that bypass retail shelves and sell directly to people via a growing network of independent distributors.

Those distributors—and an increased demand for over-the-counter “natural” remedies free of the side effects that can come with prescription drugs—has fueled a surge of interest in essential oils.

But as their do-it-yourself use



explodes, concerns abound. “There is definitely credible science behind certain benefits for certain essential oils,” says Cynthia Bailey, MD, a dermatologist in Sebastopol, California. “But you have to choose wisely, and you cannot use them indiscriminately.”

HOW ESSENTIAL OILS WORK

As far back as 1000 A.D., healers used mechanical presses or steam to extract essential oils from aromatic plants. Today, practitioners can rub oil-infused lotions on the skin, where the compounds are absorbed into the bloodstream. Or they can diffuse them into the air where, once inhaled, they bind to smell receptors and stimulate the central nervous system, says Joie Power, PhD, a neuropsychologist and aromatherapist who has taught nurses how to use the oils for decades.

Research behind them remains fairly scarce, with scientists only recently using controlled human trials. But thanks to a growing number of studies showing how they work, hospitals and clinics now use the oils more and more for stress, pain, and nausea relief and even to prevent bedsores.

One recent study of 300 people found that those who breathed a mixture of

ginger, spearmint, peppermint, and cardamom had much less nausea after surgery. Other research shows that lavender oil can lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol, and inhaling lemongrass aroma before a stressful event can prevent anxiety. Studies also show that tea tree and oregano oils can fight microbes, making them popular treatments for dandruff and toe fungus. Others can be used as anti-inflammatories.

The trouble, say critics (including long-time aromatherapists), is that companies overstate their potential. In 2014, the FDA sent warning letters to two direct-selling companies—doTERRA and Young Living—for making unsubstantiated claims that their oils could treat everything from herpes to Ebola.

Meanwhile, ill-informed at-home users tend to misuse them. One group of concerned aromatherapists began collecting injury reports online. Since the fall of 2013, it has received 247, ranging from mild rashes and anaphylactic shock to internal chemical burns from using oils to treat vaginal yeast infections.

“Essential oils are very safe and effective if used properly for addressing routine health challenges. But there is so much misinformation out there right now, it really concerns me,” Power says.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Contrary to what several essential oil companies recommend, the oils generally should not be swallowed, Power says. The body absorbs more this way, boosting the chance that they will interact with medications or cause an allergic or toxic reaction. Even continued exposure to small amounts (a few drops a day in a water bottle) can lead to fatigue and headaches. Taking in larger amounts of certain oils—like tea tree oil, wintergreen, and camphor—can lead to throat swelling, a racing heart, vomiting, and even seizures, says the Tennessee Poison Center, which saw the number of toxic

“I WOULD CERTAINLY ADVISE TEENS AND CHILDREN NOT TO USE ESSENTIAL OILS.”

essential oil exposures double from 2011 to 2015.

Meanwhile, some essential oils, like eucalyptus, contain compounds called phenol that can irritate the respiratory tract if inhaled, particularly for babies. And some have hormone-like properties that studies suggest could harm children and pregnant women.

“I would certainly advise teens and children not to use essential oils,” says Jessica Krant, MD, an assistant

clinical professor of dermatology at State University of New York Downstate Medical Center in New York City.

For pregnant women, even some oils used on the skin can cross the placental barrier and have an impact on an unborn baby. And swallowing some rare oils, including pennyroyal, can lead to miscarriage. The safest bet during pregnancy: Work with a professional who knows how to use them or skip them altogether, Power says.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN

Many citrus oils contain furocoumarins, which can cause chemical burns when exposed to the sun’s UV rays. In March 2017, Elise Nguyen of Wisconsin shared a Facebook post showing the third-degree burns she got after applying doTERRA citrus essential oils and then going to a hot yoga session and a tanning bed. In a statement, doTERRA said it was saddened by the woman’s ordeal, that safety is a top priority for the company, and that its rate of bad reactions is “almost negligible,” with .0072 percent of users reporting bad reactions.

The company added: “doTERRA labels its products to help customers avoid any potential issues, no matter how rare, and provides a great deal of education on our website.”

Dermatologists say they frequently see patients who have contact reactions, including large blisters, after putting 100% essential oils directly onto their skin.

Allergic reactions are also com-

mon. Bailey has seen rashes on eyelids from essential oil droplets emitted by diffusers and around mouths from peppermint oil-infused mouthwash or lip balm.

Overuse can also lead to an allergy over time, Bailey says. (That’s likely what happened to Armstrong, who still can’t go anywhere near lemon without breaking out in hives.) “Once you become sensitized, you will forever be allergic to it,” Bailey says.

Because the FDA does not test oils for how well they work and safety before they’re sold, it’s critical for consumers to go with a trusted brand. Consumers can report bad reactions to the agency.

“There is always a concern that unlisted or hidden ingredients, or

dangerous processing techniques leading to contamination, could be lurking,” Krant says. With all these risks involved, are they still worth a try? Absolutely, say doctors and aromatherapists. Just do your homework first.

Pick up a book outlining the different oils and their risks and benefits, and always read the fine print on the bottle and on the pamphlet. And, as Armstrong cautions, don’t take too much comfort in the term *natural*.



Search for the slideshow
**Dos and Don'ts of Essential
Oils** at WebMD.com.

ESSENTIAL OILS

ARE HIGHLY CONCENTRATED.

BE AWARE OF THESE IN PARTICULAR:

+Clary sage oil: Often used for calming properties and skin benefits, this oil should be avoided entirely by pregnant women; some evidence suggests it can induce contractions.

+Eucalyptus: If you are on medications, ask your doctor before using this aromatic oil. Some research in animals indicates it may cause certain drugs used for narcolepsy and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to be less effective. Also, asthma attacks in children may occur when this oil is applied to their face. Doctors advise people with epilepsy to avoid this oil; some people have had seizures after inhaling it.

+Bergamot: Often used as a natural antiseptic, bergamot is among the biggest culprits for making the skin particularly sensitive to the sun. Avoid sunlight for 12 hours after using topically, even if it's diluted.

+Peppermint: A classic stomach soother when taken by mouth, this oil should never be applied to the skin of infants or small children; it can cause serious breathing problems when the menthol in the oil is inhaled.

+Cinnamon bark: Sometimes used in shampoos and lotions, it is also one of the more irritating oils to the skin. Research shows that some people with seasonal allergies are more prone to adverse reactions to it; health professionals advise avoiding it.

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PETS ON PLANES

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT OR SHAM?

BY BRENDA GOODMAN
REVIEWED BY BRUNILDA NAZARIO, MD
WEBMD LEAD MEDICAL DIRECTOR

While some seek solace from flying with pets, other see it as a nuisance—or worse

More and more people are flying with pets they say are necessary for emotional support. Sharon Giovinazzo goes so far as to call them something else: four-legged terrorists.

That may seem harsh. But Giovinazzo, who is visually impaired and travels at least once a week in her job as president and CEO of World Services for the Blind, says she was recently walking through an airport with her service dog Watson when a small dog came running out of a gate waiting area and lunged at them, biting Watson under the chin.

Luckily, the bite wasn't serious. But Giovinazzo says she was horrified and rattled. She talked to the dog's owner, who quickly apologized. "I said, 'Apology accepted, but your dog should have been secured.' The owner said, 'But this is my service dog.' And I said, 'No, no, no. That's your dog that you don't want to put in a kennel, and you went out and bought the equipment you need off Amazon, and you're getting away with it.'"

Giovinazzo suspects there was a big difference between Watson—bred and trained to be a service dog that performs a task for someone with a disability—and the dog that attacked him.

Airlines report more and more people are taking pets on planes by calling them emotional-support animals. Such animals don't have to perform any tasks or services for their owners. Instead, a licensed therapist writes a letter certifying that the person traveling with the animal has a mental illness—like PTSD or anxiety—that the animal soothes by its presence.

In 2015, one major airline carried more than 24,000 emotional-support animals, compared with about 14,000 service animals, according to the International Air Travel Association. Thanks to a federal law, emotional-support animals are allowed to board a flight at no extra charge. They can sit on the floor at their owner's feet, or in their laps, if they are small enough.

Not everyone is happy about that.

Statistics kept by the U.S. Department of Transportation show that complaints related to animals for people with "unspecified" disabilities have surged by 500% in the last 5 years—increasing from 411 in 2012 to 2,041 in 2016. In contrast, complaints related to service animals for people

with visual impairments have remained relatively steady, about 13 each year for U.S. airlines.

Sometimes the incidents are annoyances—an emotional-support pig was kicked off a U.S. Airways flight in 2014 after it defecated in the aisle, for instance. In other cases, emotional-support animals have injured people. In February, a dog nipped a young girl who was boarding a Southwest Airlines flight in Phoenix, breaking the skin on her forehead and causing a minor injury.

In November, Brittany Langlois of Southbridge, Massachusetts, said she was bitten in the leg by an emotional-support dog at Orlando International Airport while she waited to check in for her JetBlue flight to Boston. In June, Marlin Jackson of Daphne, Alabama, was bitten in the face by an emotional-support dog as he boarded a Delta flight from Atlanta to San Diego. Jackson was taken to the hospital. He needed 28 stitches.

On Twitter, a frequent flier who is allergic to dogs has started logging these incidents under the hashtag #esaofftheday. He's gathered stories of emotional-support pigs, horses, ducks, and turkeys. He recently snapped an image of a passenger in Miami International Airport with three animals—two cats and a dog.

A woman who recently tried to travel with an emotional-support peacock also recently made headlines. (United Airlines didn't allow the bird to fly.)

"It is a concern," says Perry Flint, head of corporate communications, North America, for the International Air Transport Association, a trade group for the world's airlines.

PROVIDING COMFORT OR ABUSING THE SYSTEM?

On a recent Tuesday at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Cheryl (she declined to give her last name) was getting ready to board a Delta flight with her emotional-support dog Ali. She says they've flown four to five times together and never had a problem or a complaint. Ali wore a red vest that said "Service Dog."

"I have a mental problem," Cheryl says. "She keeps me calm. She licks me if I start to get anxious." Cheryl had a note from her doctor—a general practitioner—saying she needs Ali with her. She also had an official-looking certificate from the United States Service Dog Registry. The registration was free, but the certificate Cheryl got in the mail cost



ILLUSTRATIONS BY: ROBERT NEUBECKER

\$55. In the fine print on the website, the company is careful to say that registration is voluntary and that no certificates are needed to have a service animal.

“There is no such thing as a service dog registry,” says Cathy Zemaitis, director of development for National Education for Assistance Dog Services in Princeton, Massachusetts, which runs the oldest service dog training program in the U.S. Zemaitis calls the kind of certificate Cheryl has a “total scam.”

“A big red light should go off the minute someone says their service dog is registered,” Zemaitis says. “There are also websites that promise a doctor’s note with no need to actually see the doctor. The whole thing is so very disconcerting and horribly dishonest on all sides.”

A federal law—the Air Carrier Access Act—requires airlines to accept emotional-support animals with a note from a doctor or licensed therapist.

The letters aren’t difficult to get. A cottage industry has sprung up online of companies that offer them for \$50 to \$200. They may also throw in an official-looking vest, leash, or certificate that identifies the pet as a service animal.

Another law, the Americans with Disabilities Act, protects people from having to produce any documents if they say they have a service dog.

The laws don’t require proof because they were meant to protect people with disabilities who need service animals from harassment when they take their animals into public spaces. But more and more travelers are abusing what is basically an honor system so they can fly with pets.

Jessica Payne, 23, recently flew from Phoenix to Atlanta with her 4-year-old dog Daisy. Payne says Daisy started out as a pet, but now comforts her when she’s stressed. “I have anxiety,” Payne says.



Payne took her first flight on a plane about a year and half ago. She says it was nerve wracking. “I was crying my eyes out the first time. I can have anxiety about anything—heights, being out of control . . . and she comes and comforts me,” Payne says.

She says most of the time, Daisy flies without any problem. But this trip, Payne says the people seated around her were hesitant. “I actually got a little bit of a pushback,” she says. Fellow passengers wanted to know where Daisy was going to sit. “She stayed right between my feet the whole flight.”

Payne says she got a letter from a therapist she’s in touch with regularly that states she needs Daisy for anxiety. She knows that some people lie to get those letters so they can travel with their pets for free. She agrees that the system can be easily abused. “If the animal isn’t servicing you, they shouldn’t be with you,” she says.

THE EMOTIONAL-SUPPORT ANIMAL LETTER

Certapet.com is one of the internet companies providing letters to people who want to travel with animals for emotional support. For \$149, the company will evaluate you for a travel or housing letter. For \$199, it will send both to people who qualify. The company promises the letters within 48 hours of screening. If a person doesn’t qualify for an emotional-support letter, Certapet says, it will refund everything but a \$25 fee.

The process involves a questionnaire, a second screening questionnaire, then a chat with a therapist, says Haley Neidich, a licensed professional social worker who is the company’s director of clinical development.

Neidich says she turns down people every day who want letters, but she wasn’t immediately able to give numbers on what percentage of people are turned away.

“I find a lot of people who maybe are just trying to come through to get their animal certified because they think it will be convenient are pretty deterred by the fact that they need to speak with a therapist and answer really specific questions about their medical history,” she says.

She says there’s nothing to stop people from lying about their mental state. And it’s not possible for the company to evaluate an animal’s fitness or training.



An influx of emotional-support animals on planes creates problems for travelers with service animals.

The company tries to educate its customers about the important differences between an emotional-support animal and a service animal. “There are many, many folks out there who really, really rely on their emotional-support animal,” Neidich says. “We have every interest in legitimizing this process as much as possible.”

SEEKING NEW RULES

Airlines and members of the disability community began conversations with the Department of Transportation in 2016 to tighten the rules that pertain to service and emotional-support animals.

“Airlines and most of the disability community agreed that changes were needed to the system, because of the abuse by travelers who purchase emotional-support animal certifications online,” Flint says. He said it also makes it harder for people who need to bring on their service animals because airlines can only accommodate so many requests per flight.

But the parties involved failed to reach an agreement, stalling any crackdown. Flint say he hopes the Trump administration will issue new rules that prevent abuse of the system.



Some airlines decided not to wait on tougher federal regulations. Delta and United Airlines have announced that people who want to travel with service or emotional-support animals must now submit signed documents that their companions are trained, necessary for their well-being, and fully vaccinated 48 hours before their flights.

States are also trying to crack down. As of July 2017, 21 states had passed laws against the use of fake service dogs. These laws make it a crime to dress a pet as a service dog when it doesn’t have any special training or to lie to a therapist about a health need for a service animal, according to the Animal Legal & Historical Center at Michigan State University.

These laws are tough to enforce, however, says David Favre, a professor at Michigan State and an expert on animal law. He says he doesn’t know of anyone who’s been prosecuted for violating these laws, though clearly it happens all the time. “It’s a mess,” Favre says.

It’s also becoming a risk for therapists who vouch for these animals. Zemaitis says she recently spoke to a psychologist in Massachusetts who was asked by his patient to sign a letter so she could bring her pet on an airplane as an emotional-support dog. “That dog bit someone. And that person sued the doctor who signed the letter,” Zemaitis says.

Zemaitis says she understands why

people try to bring their pets aboard as emotional-support animals. “I wouldn’t put my dog in the belly of an airplane,” she says, referring to cases in which dogs have died or been harmed in transit. “That’s part of the problem. Airlines need to address that with pet-friendly flights or something.”

But she says it’s critical that airlines do something because legitimate service dog teams like Sharon Giovinazzo and Watson are being impacted. “It happens every time we travel, and it’s getting worse and worse,” says Giovinazzo. She says emotional-support dogs routinely lunge and bark at Watson as they travel through airports, in addition to his recent bite. “They’re just little terrorists is what they are. How a terrorist functions is by scaring you,” she says.

It can cost \$40,000 to get a dog as highly trained as Watson. His training involved about 18 months of intensive education. Watson not only steers Giovinazzo around obstacles and keeps her from walking into dangerous situations, he’s conditioned to be almost invisible in public spaces. He doesn’t react to loud noises or to other animals.

FACTS ABOUT FURRY FLYING COMPANIONS

- + In 2015, one major airline carried more than **24,000 emotional-support** animals, compared with about **14,000 service animals**.
- + Complaints related to animals for people with “unspecified” disabilities have **surged by 500% in the last 5 years**—increasing from 411 in 2012 to 2,041 in 2016.
- + As of July 2017, **21 states** have laws against the fraudulent use of service animals.
- + Two airlines—United and Delta—**now require additional proof** of an emotional-support animal’s health and training before they can fly.
- + **Service animals are highly trained** to perform a service for someone with a disability; **emotional-support animals require no special training**. They provide comfort by their presence alone.



Giovinazzo has even taught him some special skills that come in handy for frequent fliers. He can steer her to the nearest ladies’ room, for example. He knows the smell of Starbucks. He can even take her to an electrical outlet if she needs to charge her phone.

Asked if she’s ever considered cutting back her travel to protect her dog, she says she can’t. Her job requires her to show companies that blind people are as capable as those who aren’t visually impaired. Watson helps her do that.

“My dog is a solid dog. He can stand next to a bomb that goes off, and he wouldn’t flinch. But other service dogs, other guide dogs that people use, something like that might rattle them, and they would have to retire. Then you’d have to apply for another one,” she says.

In her mind, there needs to be tougher requirements for traveling with pets. “The problem is that nothing is happening to the people who are breaking the law. For anything else, crime equals punishment. That isn’t happening here,” she says.

Search for the slideshow **The Truth About Pets and Personality** at **WebMD.com**.

GOOD FOR YOU

Berry Best

Time to hit the farmer's market or you-pick field. Don't miss your chance for beautifully ripe berries, which combine candy-sweet flavor with super-food nutrition.

LOCALLY GROWN STRAWBERRIES are ripening now, offering a welcome break from the bland, underripe strawberries available the rest of the year. A half-cup of halved strawberries provides almost 150% of your daily value of antioxidant vitamin C (key for wound healing), 9% of the daily value for folate (which may lower stroke risk), and 12% of the daily value for fiber (beneficial for digestion). Research suggests that anthocyanins—responsible for the strawberry's bright hue—may minimize inflammation and boost insulin sensitivity in overweight adults. When you've had your fill, buy an extra pint or two, clean and slice them, and pop them in the freezer for smoothies and more this winter. —ERIN O'DONNELL

Search for the video
7 Tasty Ways to Use
Avocado at WebMD.com.

3 WAYS

Avocado Toast

Start your day in a tasty, heart-healthy way. The velvety avocado brims with monounsaturated fat (which helps reduce “bad” LDL cholesterol), filling fiber, and high-blood-pressure-beating potassium.

→ **Chipotle Avocado Toast**
Find chipotle chili powder in the spice section of your supermarket.

PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK LOZIER; FOOD STYLING: CHARLIE WORTHINGTON

1

THE SOUTHWEST STARTER

Chipotle Avocado Toast

Give your morning a sweet kick by adding mango and peppers to your avocado toast. This recipe calls for chipotle chili powder, which is moderately hot and made from dried, smoked jalapeño peppers.

→ THE MIX

Avocado and whole-grain toast + black beans, onion, red sweet pepper, jalapeño pepper, chipotle chili powder, lime juice, cilantro, mango



MAKE IT Sauté rinsed black beans with chopped onion, diced red sweet pepper and jalapeño pepper, 1 tsp cumin, 1 tsp chipotle chili powder, a squeeze of lime juice, and chopped cilantro. Top 4 slices of whole-grain toast with sliced avocado, bean mixture, mango, and 2 tbsp shredded Monterey jack cheese. Add a dollop of crema made with nonfat Greek yogurt, a splash of lime juice, and cilantro. **SERVES 4**

PER SERVING (1 SLICE OF TOAST WITH TOPPINGS) | 392 calories, 18 g protein, 47 g carbohydrate, 16 g fat (4 g saturated fat), 9 mg cholesterol, 14 g fiber, 13 g sugar, 235 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 35%

2

VEGGIES FOR BREAKFAST

Garden Delight Toast

Eating vegetables at breakfast gives your day an extra-smart start. You'll feel especially virtuous munching on this hearty avocado toast, which features a mix of produce and a shot of protein from hummus. This recipe works best with a sturdy whole-grain bread.

→ THE MIX

Avocado and whole-grain toast + hummus, baby spinach, cucumber, carrots, red onion, alfalfa sprouts, sundried tomatoes



MAKE IT Spread 4 slices of whole-grain toast with hummus. Top with baby spinach leaves, thin cucumber slices, grated carrots, avocado slices, a few rings of red onion, alfalfa sprouts, and fresh ground pepper. Drizzle with olive oil and vinegar. Garnish with a few chopped sundried tomatoes. **SERVES 4**

PER SERVING (1 SLICE OF TOAST WITH TOPPINGS) | 290 calories, 9 g protein, 28 g carbohydrate, 18 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 10 g fiber, 5 g sugar, 412 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 52%

3

THE NEW EGG SANDWICH

Avocado Toast with Arugula and Egg

Simple, flavorful, and pretty, this delectable recipe uses peppery arugula, but you can use any tender greens in its place. And this dish is not just for breakfast; the avocado, arugula, and egg combo also makes a super supper.

→ THE MIX

Avocado and whole-grain toast + lime juice, Roma tomatoes, arugula, egg, salt, green onions



MAKE IT In a small bowl toss diced avocado with lime juice and chopped Roma tomatoes. Spoon this mixture onto 4 slices of whole-grain toast. Top each toast with arugula leaves followed by a fried egg fresh from the pan. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and garnish with green onions. **SERVES 4**

PER SERVING (1 SLICE OF TOAST WITH TOPPINGS) | 269 calories, 12 g protein, 21 g carbohydrate, 17 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 185 mg cholesterol, 8 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 359 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 52%



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REVIEWED BY Hansa Bhargava, MD
WebMD Senior Medical Director



MAKE IT

- Use unbleached all-purpose flour. Any flour will work fine, but a higher gluten variety, like King Arthur's, will add a nice springiness to your pancakes. Or blend bread flour with all-purpose.
- Whisk the batter gently. Overdo it, and your pancakes will be tough.
- Once mixed, let the batter sit for at least 15 minutes so the flour fully hydrates. Leftover batter will last a day.
- Fruit, like blueberries, belongs on the side rather than in the batter. The fruit's juices will alter the texture of the batter.
- Cast iron and non-stick skillets work well, but electric skillets are even better. You can precisely control the temperature.
- Heat the cold pan with butter. Let it bubble and steam, then, when the foam starts to settle, pour in some batter. Alternately, use canola or another neutral-flavored oil.
- Test the heat: Pour a little batter in. It should set quickly. If the batter keeps spreading, heat your pan some more.
- The ideal pancake size is about 8 inches.
- Get ready to flip when bubbles start to form and pop. Flip only once to keep your pancakes light and airy.
- To test doneness, nudge the pancake from side to side. If the top moves but the bottom does not, give it more time.
- Use a top-quality maple syrup. B-grade has more flavor. That allows you to use less, which means less sugar.
- Serve with fresh berries. Sliced peaches make a great summer side. In the fall, try sautéed apples.

BUILD A BETTER

Pancake

This sweet and simple breakfast treat requires few steps to master

"PANCAKES ARE AN EXTREMELY COMFORTING FOOD," SAYS GEORGE WELD, CHEF/OWNER OF Brooklyn's acclaimed breakfast spot, Egg, and the author of *Breakfast: Recipes to Wake Up For*. An occasional indulgence ready to cook in a matter of minutes, pancakes transport you right back to childhood, says Weld: "And they're so easy to make." Follow Weld's tips to make yours the best they can be.

Healthy Cereals

TO START YOUR DAY, CEREAL IS FILLING AND DELICIOUS. TRY THESE FIVE FAVORITES FROM DIETITIAN KAREN ANSEL, MS, RDN, AUTHOR OF *HEALING SUPERFOODS FOR ANTI-AGING: STAY YOUNGER, LIVE LONGER*.



WHOLE FOODS 365 ORGANIC BRAN FLAKES

"Just 75 calories per serving, for when you want a big breakfast without loads of calories. Bonus: Its 5 grams of fiber will help keep you feeling full all morning."



VAN'S CINNAMON HEAVEN GLUTEN-FREE CEREAL

"The rare gluten-free cereal that contains a meaningful amount of fiber: 4 grams per serving. Plus, it's loaded with gluten-free grains like oats, brown rice, millet, quinoa, and amaranth."



NATURE'S PATH ORGANIC PUMPKIN AND FLAXSEED GRANOLA

"A granola that's not weighed down with fat and sugar, an exception to the rule. It's not low-calorie, but it does boast healthy omega 3s and plenty of crunch."



KASHI GOLEAN CLUSTERS VANILLA PEPITA CEREAL

"This flavorful cereal delivers a whopping 9 grams of protein per serving (17 grams with a cup of milk) thanks to out-of-the-box ingredients like red bean flakes and pea protein."



CHEERIOS

"A classic for good reason, especially if you're concerned about heart health. This tasty favorite goes light on sugar, and the main ingredient—whole oats—will help control your cholesterol."

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS SECTION ARE OF THE EXPERTS AND ARE NOT THE OPINIONS OF WEBMD; WEBMD DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY SPECIFIC PRODUCT, SERVICE, OR TREATMENT.

Search for the article **Health Benefits of Coffee and Tea** at WebMD.com.

FOOD 101

Tea Time

A cup of tea boasts myriad flavors plus components that may provide a health boost

BLACK TEA'S ANTIOXIDANTS MAY help prevent heart attacks, while green tea appears to fight cholesterol. But don't sip it simply for its health benefits. Relax, savor, and share tea's often subtle tastes, says James Norwood Pratt, author of the classic *Tea Lover's Treasury*: "More people drink tea than anything else in this world, and we have our reasons. It's a social beverage, and it makes us feel good." Start your tea journey with these varieties.

**1. ASSAM**

A very strong black tea from India with a malty taste that takes well to milk and sugar. Its abundant caffeine will set you up for the morning.

2. TIE KWAN YIN

An oolong tea from China, with soft, bright flavors that assert themselves less than those of Assam; an altogether different experience, it's best without milk or sugar.

3. PU'ER

From China's Yunan Province, this is the earthiest tea possible. Its sweet and pleasant barnyard aroma may be an acquired taste, but anyone drawn to tea should give it a try.

4. SENCHA

The most widely produced and popular tea in Japan, it's an herbaceous green tea with hints of a very appetizing fishiness. More than other teas, it's best steeped briefly in cooler water.

5. DARJEELING

Grown in India at elevations high above Assam—the elevation determines its taste—this tea offers complex, multi-layered, and rather delicate flavors that require careful steeping and experimentation.

1 EGG, 5 WAYS

Breakfast Star

EGGS REIGN SUPREME: THEY'RE A HIGH-QUALITY SOURCE OF PROTEIN THAT COOK UP IN MINUTES AND CAN BE USED IN SO MANY WAYS. HERE ARE FIVE EASY RECIPES THAT GO BEYOND SCRAMBLED.

MONDAY

EASY SHAKSHUKA

Heat marinara sauce in a small sauté pan, make divots with the back of a wooden spoon, and crack an egg or two into the divots. Cover with a lid and simmer until eggs are cooked. Drizzle with olive oil and a sprinkle each of crumbled feta and chopped parsley.

TUESDAY

BREAKFAST SALAD

Simply dress your favorite bagged salad mix with 2 tsp olive oil, 1 tsp balsamic vinegar, and a small pinch each of salt, sugar, and pepper, and top it with a serving of cooked whole grains, such as farro, and a hard-boiled (or semi-soft-yolk) egg.



WEDNESDAY

AVOCADO-BAKED EGG

Cut an avocado in half, remove the pit, and scoop out a bit of avocado so that it's large enough to hold a cracked egg. Place on a baking sheet and crack an egg into each half. Bake at 450°F for 10 to 12 minutes or until whites are set. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and cilantro and serve with tortillas.

THURSDAY

HIGH-PROTEIN FRENCH TOAST

In a shallow baking dish, thoroughly whisk 1 egg, ¼ cup milk, a couple drops of vanilla extract, and a sprinkle each of cinnamon and nutmeg. Place a 1-inch slice of challah in the mixture and let it fully soak up the egg mixture, turning at least once. In a lightly oiled nonstick pan cook over medium heat until lightly browned, about 2 minutes per side.

FRIDAY

GREENS, EGGS, AND HAM

Heat a small sauté pan over medium heat, drizzle with olive oil, and add a couple slices of chopped ham. Heat for 1 to 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, then add 1 to 2 handfuls of arugula and a small clove of garlic, minced. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until arugula wilts. Crack an egg on top of the mixture, cover, and cook until the egg is set, about 5 minutes.



BREAKFAST BOX

Sneaky Smoothies



Green smoothies aren't the only veggie-loaded breakfast bevies in town. Across Instagram, brightly colored smoothies pop up, hiding vegetables of every stripe. Some (like leafy greens) work well raw, while others—cauliflower, sweet potatoes—blend more smoothly when cooked, unless you have a high-speed blender. Make it super easy by using frozen veggies—they're precooked, chopped, chilled, and ready to go. (Think of them like veggie-powered ice cubes.) Keep colors intense by pairing fruits and vegetables of the same color family. And since the formula for smoothies is still "toss it all in a blender and push a button," you should be able to jump on this trend without too much difficulty. Try any of these combos by adding a liquid (milk of choice, coconut water, or simply water) and any other add-ins (think yogurt, nut butters, bee pollen, chia seeds, etc.):

- Purple sweet potatoes + blackberries + tahini
- Spinach + kiwi + matcha
- Carrot + ginger + turmeric + banana + pineapple
- Pumpkin + banana + pumpkin pie spice
- Cauliflower + strawberries + orange
- Zucchini + avocado + green apple

CUTTING EDGE

When scientists discovered HIV in 1983, the outlook was grim for people who were infected with the virus.

Today, daily medications called antiretrovirals allow people to live a long life with HIV. The drugs can put the virus in remission—reducing it to an undetectable level in the bloodstream—and practically eliminate the risk of passing it to another person. What's more, people who do not have HIV but who could be exposed to it (for example, through their partner) can take anti-HIV medications to avoid contracting the virus.

With these advances, annual HIV infections and AIDS deaths have declined. Still, the CDC estimates that 1.1 million people live with HIV in the U.S. and that one in seven don't know it. Nearly 40,000 people received a diagnosis in 2016.

RESEARCHERS ARE

exploring different approaches that could lead to a cure. One is medication-free remission. In a few cases around the world, people who started antiretroviral medication within weeks of infection with HIV eventually went into remission and stayed in remission even after stopping the drugs. Researchers want to learn exactly how people can achieve medication-free remission.

ANOTHER APPROACH

explores cell therapies as a path to a cure. When a Berlin man living with HIV needed a stem-cell transplant for leukemia in 2007, his doctor chose cells from a donor who has a gene mutation that causes immunity to HIV. The transplant cured the man of HIV. There aren't enough people with this gene mutation to be donors for everyone with HIV, so scientists are exploring ways to genetically engineer a person's own cells to contain this protective mutation.

—SONYA COLLINS

→ Path to a Cure

Scientists studying HIV cells (like the ones illustrated here) are exploring ways to put those who are infected into remission or treat them with stem cells.



Need a specialist?
Use **WebMD's Physician Finder**.
Go to webmd.com/findadoctor.

→ **Make an Appointment**
Sessions with a psychologist can take many forms, including family or group sessions.



WHO'S WHO

Psychologist

What does this mental health professional do?

OFTEN CALLED COUNSELORS, THERAPISTS, OR SHRINKS, PSYCHOLOGISTS ARE experts in human behavior and the brain. What does it take to become a psychologist and who benefits from treatment? You might be surprised.

Therapy is not one-size-fits-all

Psychologists may work in hospitals, schools, or private practice to diagnose and treat everything from learning disabilities, eating disorders, psychiatric research, and substance abuse to diseases like depression and anxiety. They can also help people with issues like grief, negative thinking, or relationship issues.

You don't need to be diagnosed with a mental health issue to make an appointment with a psychologist. Sessions can range from problem solving via "talk therapy" to conducting aptitude tests to diagnose emotional or behavioral issues. You may meet with a psychologist one-on-one or in family or group sessions. Some people see a psychologist for a few sessions, while others engage in long-term therapy.

Training is intense

According to the American Psychological Association, all psychologists must have doctoral degrees in psychology to practice, typically a PhD or PsyD. States also have individual licensure requirements such as background checks, continuing education, and supervised training. Unlike psychiatrists, who are medical doctors specializing in mental health and licensed to prescribe medications, psychologists cannot write prescriptions in most states.

Not all psychologists see patients

While many psychologists offer counseling sessions, they may also apply their expertise to researching mental health issues, developing new diagnostic tools, or teaching the next generation of psychologists. Forensic psychologists consult on criminal cases to provide insights into the psychological aspects of a case.

BY THE NUMBERS

106,500

Number of licensed psychologists in the United States, according to the American Psychological Association.

71%

Percentage of those who hold doctoral degrees in psychology who are women.

7

Average number of years psychologists spend in graduate school.

16 million

Number of adults in the U.S. who had at least one major depressive episode in the last year.



Search for the slideshow
**Celebrities with Bipolar
Disorder** at WebMD.com.

REVIEWED BY *Neha Pathak, MD*
WebMD Medical Editor

Bipolar Disorder

BY THE NUMBERS: Facts and Stats on Trending Health Topics

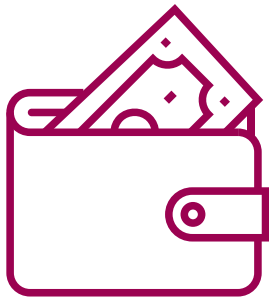
60 MILLION
ESTIMATED NUMBER of people with bipolar disorder worldwide

2/3 Portion of U.S. patients **diagnosed with bipolar before age 19**

8 TO 12 YEARS
Average drop in lifespan for people with bipolar disorder



1 in 3
Number of teens with bipolar disorder **who also have substance abuse problems**



\$202 BILLION

Annual U.S. costs associated with the **most severe form of bipolar**

>50%

WORLDWIDE percentage of people with bipolar disorder who have **three or more other mental health problems**



80%
Percentage of **people with bipolar disorder who will contemplate suicide**; some 50% will make an attempt

2.6%

Estimated percentage of **U.S. adults with bipolar disorder** (about 3 million new cases are diagnosed each year)

1

U.S. RANK in per capita cases of bipolar disorder, **compared to 11 other countries**



<50%

WORLDWIDE percentage of people with bipolar disorder **who receive treatment**

6

Average number of years **between the beginning of symptoms and diagnosis**

BETWEEN 15 AND 30

Age range when **bipolar develops** (the average age is 25)

LIVING WELL

Shingles 101

What can you do to lower your odds of developing this painful disease?



NEARLY ONE IN THREE AMERICANS WILL DEVELOP THE SHINGLES RASH AT SOME point in their life. Vanderbilt University infectious disease specialist, **William Schaffner, MD**, explains why this illness is so debilitating and how to prevent it.

How do you get shingles?

SCHAFFNER The virus that causes shingles is the chickenpox virus (varicella-zoster). Unless you were vaccinated against chickenpox, there's a good chance you caught it in childhood. It's spread through close contact. You get over chickenpox, but the virus lives within you in hibernation. It hides in the body and then comes out years later as shingles, in part because our immunity wanes as we age.

What are the symptoms?

SCHAFFNER The virus spreads down a nerve and begins to multiply, damaging

the nerve. The first symptom you'll usually get is an itchy or tingling sensation. When the virus gets to the surface of the body it creates a rash that looks very much like chickenpox, with a red, inflamed area and a cluster of clear blisters. The rash usually occurs in a stripe on one side of your body. It looks like a shingle on a roof, hence the name.

The rash lasts for one to two weeks. In addition to being disfiguring, it can be painful. If it involves your eye, it can cause partial or total vision loss in that eye.

What is postherpetic neuralgia?

SCHAFFNER After the rash has cleared, the damaged nerve can be so sensitive that you still get pain. This pain can continue for months. It's called postherpetic neuralgia, or post shingles pain. This can be life-changing in some people because the pain is often severe. It's been described as knife-like. The pain can be triggered by even minor stimuli, such as the wind or a shirt brushing against the skin.

How do doctors treat shingles?

SCHAFFNER Antiviral drugs can help you heal faster, and medicines can help with pain. But postherpetic neuralgia is very difficult to treat, so prevention is critical.

How can you prevent shingles?

SCHAFFNER Vaccination is far and away the best thing you can do to prevent shingles. A new vaccine, called Shingrix, is more effective than the earlier Zostavax vaccine. Its protection rate is more than 90%, even among people older than 70. After vaccination, it's likely that you will be protected for a very long time.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Q Am I at risk for shingles?

If you had chickenpox as a child, you can get shingles. Your risk increases as you get older, and if you have a weakened immune system.

Q Should I get the new shingles vaccine?

You should get vaccinated with Shingrix if you're age 50 or older and you have a healthy immune system. You'll need two doses of the vaccine given two to six months apart.

Q What can I do to prevent shingles complications?

Antiviral drugs can make shingles shorter and less severe and reduce your risk of complications. These drugs work best if you start taking them as soon as the rash appears.

Q When should I call you?

Call if your symptoms don't improve after a week or two, or if the rash is near your eye.



Search for the slideshow
**Home Remedies for
Migraine** at WebMD.com.

QUIZ

Migraine Myths

A lot of misconceptions still surround this complex condition that affects more than 37 million Americans. Can you separate the facts from common myths?



1

Extra sleep will prevent migraine.

☐ MYTH

☐ FACT

2

Migraine is usually preceded by a warning sign known as an aura.

☐ MYTH

☐ FACT

3

It is rare for a migraine attack to last longer than an hour.

☐ MYTH

☐ FACT

4

Most people have migraine in the late afternoon or early evening.

☐ MYTH

☐ FACT

5

Caffeine can be a source of migraine relief.

☐ MYTH

☐ FACT

6

Migraine becomes less frequent and less severe as you get older.

☐ MYTH

☐ FACT

7

Most people with migraine feel well enough to resume normal activity as soon as the pain subsides.

☐ MYTH

☐ FACT

Answers

1. Myth

Although lack of sleep has been linked to migraine, too much sleep can also bring on an attack. Aim to get seven to eight hours per night and go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.

2. Myth

Only about 20% of people with migraine have an aura, which is a warning sign that an attack is about to begin. The symptoms usually last less than an hour and may include flashing lights, wavy lines, ringing in the ears, or changes in smell, taste, or touch.

3. Myth

Most migraine attacks last between four and 72 hours, but they can last longer. If a single migraine lasts more than 72 hours, call your doctor.

4. Myth

You can have migraine at any time of the day, though nearly half occur between 4 a.m. and 9 a.m. Researchers believe that's because the body tends to produce less of its natural painkillers such as endorphins in the early morning hours.

5. Fact

For some, caffeine can provide migraine relief. For others, it can be a trigger. During a migraine attack, blood vessels in the brain dilate, causing pain. Since caffeine narrows blood vessels, a strong cup of coffee may help stop migraine. However, this only seems to work for occasional caffeine users. If you're a regular caffeine user, your brain can become dependent on it. If you don't get enough caffeine, you have withdrawal symptoms—including migraine.

6. Fact

Migraine tends to peak between ages 35 and 40. Most people report fewer attacks that are less painful as they age.

7. Myth

Many people with migraine feel sluggish and have difficulty concentrating for up to 24 hours after the pain stops. During this recovery phase, stay hydrated and allow yourself time to ease back into your routine gradually.



Need a specialist? Use
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REVIEWED BY *Brunilda Nazario, MD*
WebMD Lead Medical Director

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

Alzheimer's Disease

You and your caregiver can follow these tips to better live with the disease



→ **Slow It Down**
Keep moving to curtail your cognitive decline.

10 Tips to Cope

1. WRITE IT DOWN

Keep paper and pen handy to note info you need to remember: phone numbers, appointments, etc.

2. KNOW YOUR LIMIT

As a caregiver, pay attention to your own health and stress. Give yourself a break when you need one.

3. KEEP WATCH

When bathing someone with Alzheimer's, don't leave him or her alone in the shower or tub.

4. SLEEP WELL

Set a relaxing evening routine and establish a regular bedtime to help reduce sleep problems.

5. STAY ACTIVE

Get regular exercise to maintain your health and possibly slow your cognitive decline.

6. KEEP CALM

Identify what causes your stress and find ways to avoid those triggers.

7. GET INVOLVED

Volunteer for Alzheimer's research to help scientists defeat this disease.

8. JOIN A GROUP

Get involved with online or in-person support groups, either as caregiver or a patient.

9. WATCH YOUR MOOD

Address feelings of sadness and other signs of depression with your doctor.

10. FIND WHAT WORKS

Be flexible as you develop coping strategies—your needs can change frequently.



Search for the slideshow
ADHD in Adults at
WebMD.com.

5 THINGS

Adult ADHD

How this disorder can linger past childhood



ABOUT 10 MILLION AMERICAN ADULTS CONTINUE TO HAVE TROUBLE WITH attention, memory, and organization beyond childhood. Lenard Adler, MD, professor of psychiatry at NYU Langone Health, explains five ways attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can disrupt your work and relationships—and what to do about it.

1. ADHD GROWS WITH YOU

Very rarely does ADHD pop up for the first time in adulthood. “The roots of the disorder lie in childhood,” Adler says, even if you were never diagnosed. The more severe your symptoms were when you were young, the more likely ADHD will continue as you get older, he adds. Adult-onset ADHD does exist, but often the cause of the symptoms is a substance abuse disorder or other mental health issue masquerading as inattentiveness.

2. THE SYMPTOMS EVOLVE AS YOU GET OLDER

If you were hyperactive as a child, it’s likely you’ve grown out of it. “Adults

don’t climb on top of their desks,” Adler says. “The inattentive symptoms are more prominent in adulthood.” Adult ADHD often shows up as poor time management, procrastination, difficulty concentrating, and trouble planning and organizing.

3. DEPRESSION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE CAN LOOK LIKE ADHD

Mood disorders like depression and anxiety, as well as substance abuse, can mimic ADHD or co-exist with it, but they tend to be different. “ADHD symptoms will be a thread throughout the individual’s life, whereas the mood symptoms come and go,” Adler says. “Substance abuse disorder has a definite start and stop.”

4. ADHD CAN IMPACT YOUR HOME AND WORK LIFE

People with untreated ADHD are twice as likely to be separated or divorced. They’re also more likely to lose their job or change jobs often, earn less money, and abuse drugs and alcohol. “This really speaks to the burden of ADHD, and it shows the importance of getting treatment,” Adler says.

5. MOST ADULTS WITH ADHD ARE UNTREATED

Many adults with this condition haven’t been diagnosed or treated. “Most people don’t recognize the symptoms. They see it as they’re just underperforming and lazy, but they have a real condition,” Adler says. If you have symptoms, he suggests that you talk to your primary care doctor or a mental health professional, who can diagnose you with a screening test. Then you can start on medicines and/or cognitive behavioral therapy to manage your symptoms. Mindfulness exercises like yoga and deep breathing can also help you cope.

BY THE NUMBERS

5.4%

Percentage of men in the United States who have ADHD. Some 3.2% of women have the condition.

Up to 60%
Percentage of children with ADHD who continue to have the disorder in adulthood.

less than
20%
Percentage of adults with ADHD who have been diagnosed or treated.

56%

Percentage of adults with ADHD who say it interferes with their work.

Craig T. Nelson

Actor, 74, Los Angeles

1

What has it been like to revisit the role of Bob Parr/Mr. Incredible in *The Incredibles 2*?

It's been a while since we did the first one, and it was a lot of fun going in and doing the work, watching the animation, seeing how the technology has improved. It's all so creative and such a different experience.

2

What did you most relate to about your onscreen family of superheroes?

It touches a lot of different elements of family life, but the thing I like about it the most is the family's cohesiveness and how they're willing to sacrifice for each other.

3

Did you ever wish for a superpower when raising your own children?

That would have been as unattainable as getting any discipline from my kids was. I had no control over anybody!

4

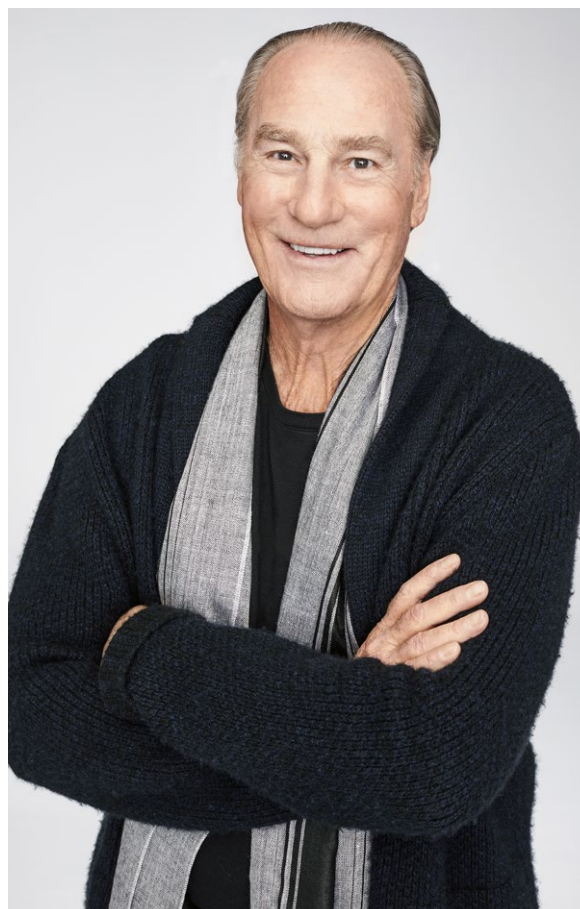
What's it like to act in an animated film?

It's a different form of work, a different intensity. It's much more concentrated, and it can be exhausting. You go over the dialog quite a bit, doing lots of different versions. It's kind of like searching.

5

What do you look for when you consider a role?

The quality of the script and the story. I ask myself, "What can I bring to it that might be different from somebody else?"



7

You support the Drug Education Council's work. What do you hope to accomplish?

I want to raise awareness and help addicts and alcoholics find programs that offer them a chance for recovery, a chance to have a new life.

8

You are also involved with groups that aid veterans and their families. What drew you to that cause?

How can you not support the kind of emotional and monetary commitment to vets shown by groups like Folds of Honor and others, especially when it's lacking elsewhere? We need to step in.

9

Do you have a personal health philosophy?

Yes, my wife, Doria Cook Nelson. She's a martial arts instructor and very up on diet and nutrition. She's very aware of and present in what we should be doing, so I look to her for a lot of guidance.

10

What's the best health advice you've ever received?

The best advice is also what I ignored the most: stretching. I never felt that I needed it. My body at first resisted it, but now I really work at it. It keeps you limber. It makes me feel like I'm lubricated.

—MATT McMILLEN

"The best advice is also what I ignored the most: stretching. It keeps you limber."

6

How do you stay passionate about your work?

I just love the form. I love the variety of people that I get to work with. And I love the thrill of doing it. As an actor, you don't always realize the impact that you can have on people. That's really fulfilling.