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Actor **Kyra Sedgwick** might be best known for her award-winning role in TNT's *The Closer* and her longtime marriage to actor Kevin Bacon, but Hollywood is just one slice of life for this leading lady. Sedgwick tells WebMD contributing writer **Gina Shaw** why her marriage has lasted so long, how she's adjusting to her newly empty nest, what it was like being a working mom, and the impact her parents' divorce had on her own marriage. **PLUS:** Sedgwick shares her secrets to looking younger than her age.

COVER PHOTO BY ROBERT ASHCROFT/CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHERS, INC.

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR • Colleen Paretty

SENIOR EDITOR • Susan Davis

SENIOR DIRECTOR, EDITORIAL, WEBMD.COM • Stephanie Snipes

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LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR • Brunilda Nazario, MD

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MEDICAL EDITORS • Hansa Bhargava, MD, Laura J. Martin, MD

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Christina Boufis, Daniel J. DeNoon, Heather Hatfield, Katherine Kam, Lauren Paige Kennedy, Susan Kuchinskas, Matt McMillen, Erin O'Donnell, Monica Kass Rogers, Gina Shaw, Stephanie Watson



**EDITORIAL, DESIGN, PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT**

DEPUTY EDITOR • Kim Caviness

SENIOR EDITOR • Andrea Gabrick

ASSOCIATE EDITOR • Rebecca Scherr

ASSISTANT EDITOR • Chloe Thompson

BOOKINGS DIRECTOR • Wendy Zipes Hunter  
wendy@celebrity.concepts.com 954-344-0912

ART DIRECTORS • Glenn Pierce, Melissa H. Miller

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR • Connie Otto

PRODUCTION MANAGER • Jerry Parks

PHOTO EDITOR • Ali Heck Southworth

ADVERTISING TRAFFIC MANAGER • Jennifer Morgan

PRODUCTION ARTIST • Brenda M. Waugh

COPY EDITOR • Sharon Congdon

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GROUP VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES OPERATIONS • Jonathan Katz

BUSINESS MANAGER • John Krzeminski

BUSINESS & MARKETING SENIOR DIRECTOR • Jonathan Deaner

SALES OPERATIONS ANALYST • Kisha Jackson

**ADVERTISING SALES**

**NEW YORK**

Alisa Feiner • afeiner@webmd.net • 212-624-3897

Pete Holfelder • pholfelder@webmd.net • 646-674-6825

Patti Mrozowski • pmrozowski@webmd.net • 212-624-3750

Patria Rodriguez • prodriguez@webmd.net • 212-417-9542

**CHICAGO**

Carol Matthias • cmatthias@webmd.net • 312-416-9277

Meghan Rice • mrice@webmd.net • 312-416-9276

**WEST COAST**

Elise Perlmutter • eperlmutt@webmd.net • 424-248-0616



111 Eighth Ave., Suite 700, New York, N.Y. 10011

INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
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Be the first to know when the new issue is available. Sign up for *WebMD the Magazine* issue alerts!

Is there anything more delicious than a summer day? That lazy, do-nothing feel, ripe peaches and fresh corn, tall glasses of iced tea, getting out into the woods or onto a beach with your family, dunking your feet in cool, clear water.

Well, I hope you do enjoy such pleasures, maybe on a hard-earned vacation this month or next. But I don't have to tell you that in these hyper-speed times, summer doesn't really let up on life all that much—you still have work, errands, meal-planning, kids' activities, and chores to juggle, just like always. For parents especially, summer brings its own brand of hectic, and the slide into back-to-school mode gathers steam fast.

If it's any consolation, here at *WebMD the Magazine* we're spending our summer working even harder, reimagining and refreshing the design, layout, sections, and overall look and feel of the magazine for the first time since we launched the publication seven—seven!—years ago in May 2005.

"Refreshes" (or redesigns) are a big deal in the life of a magazine, a very conscious turn of the page to a new chapter. In our case, that embraces the profound changes in media since 2005. Not as many people had smartphones and of course no one had even heard of a tablet, much less owned one. Social media was more of a novelty than the ubiquitous presence in daily life it is today. And the magazine has long since grown beyond the print copy in your doctor's office. You can find each entire issue in digital form on [webmd.com](http://webmd.com) and as an interactive app on the iPad.

So with the September issue, you'll see a modernized, more engaging magazine, one that draws you in and invites you to stay (we hope), one that is even more relevant to your busy life. Because the one thing that isn't up for refreshing is the magazine's mission since Day One: to be your rock-solid partner in healthy living. We've always believed that every minute of every day is in some way about health and well-being, from brushing your teeth and packing your kids' lunch bags to getting a flu shot. We have a

360-degree view of healthy living in mind as we think about how to fill the new pages. And thanks to innovations like social media, we can bring you into those pages in ways we never imagined before. You'll see more people just like you, whose faces and stories, tips and support will be a big part of the new mix.

Really, we couldn't be more excited about the possibilities, and I hope I've whet your appetite for the September 2012 issue! Meanwhile, here's to your own refresh this summer, with days that are busy, yes, but also as fun, rewarding, and memorable as summer is meant to be. We both have an exciting fall to look forward to.

Enjoy,

Colleen Paretty  
Executive Editor, *WebMD the Magazine*

P.S. I invite you to send us your nominations for *WebMD the Magazine's* annual **Health Heroes awards** by **Friday, August 17**. Who is a Hero? Read about our stellar past winners at [webmd.com/healthheroes](http://webmd.com/healthheroes) and submit your nomination.

ROBERT HOUSER

# Hot Stuff

4 ways to keep your cool this summer

fit tip

## WATER WORKS

When you're working out in the great outdoors, how much H<sub>2</sub>O do you need? "You've got to drink up just to be able to replace the fluids that are lost each day," says Pamela Peeke, MD, WebMD fitness expert. The CDC recommends **16 to 32 ounces per hour when you do heavy exercise in hot weather**. For more than an hour at a higher intensity (think long-distance running or weight lifting), Peeke suggests reaching for a sports drink to replenish the minerals and sodium your body needs—just don't overdo it (see page 7).



## POOL CUES

Do cannonballs and contact lenses mix? "Swimming with your lenses is a definite no-no," says WebMD eye health expert Alan Kovarsky, MD. "The water you're swimming in is, at best, chlorinated and clean, but it's still not sterile." **Contact lenses become a reservoir for bacteria lurking in the pool**, he says, which could lead to eye infections. Even if you wear goggles, water can sneak in, so Kovarsky recommends taking contacts out before getting into the pool.



eye smarts

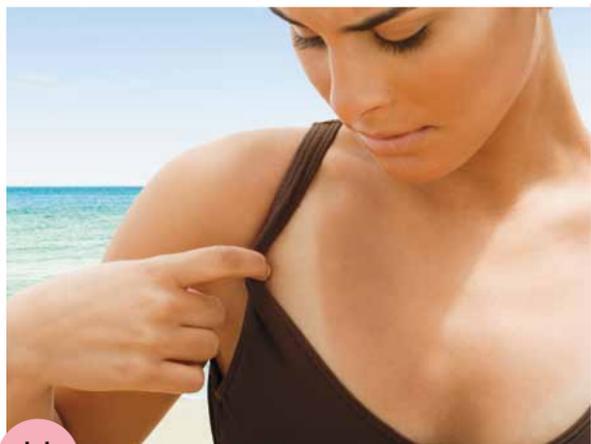


healthy eats

## GET THE SCOOP

Nothing beats escaping summer heat with cold treats, but don't let your ice cream breaks pack on the pounds. To satisfy your sweet tooth, WebMD director of nutrition Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD, LD, says she opts for a half cup of **slow-churned ice cream—the technique gives it a mouthfeel of fattier ice creams without adding extra calories**, she says—low-fat or fat-free sorbets, and protein-rich Greek yogurt stashed in the freezer. "When it comes to toppings, think small and think about fruit," she suggests. Use about two tablespoons roasted nuts, grilled fruit, or puréed berries for a sauce.

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.



skin care

## RED ALERT

Did you get a sunburn despite your best precautionary efforts? WebMD skin care expert Mohiba Tareen, MD, offers three steps for relief: Get out of the sun as soon as possible, take an anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen, and drink water to help your skin's cells renew. **"A lot of people forget to hydrate,"** Tareen says. To reduce pain and itching, use lotions with soothing or cooling agents such as camphor and menthol (Tareen likes Sarna Sensitive lotion, \$10.49; or Eucerin Calming Crème, \$7.99). Or, she says, make a paste with two crushed aspirin tablets mixed with cool water to apply directly to the burn.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: JOSE LUIS LELEZ/GETTY IMAGES; MASTERFILE; BRITT ERLANSON/CULTURA/GETTY IMAGES; ONEPOINTVEER

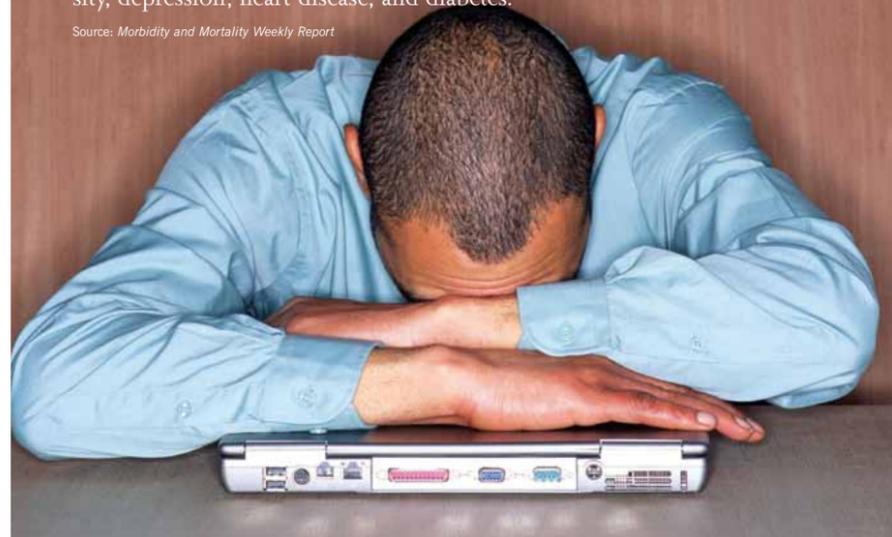
## Missing ZZZ's

Nodding off at your desk? You're not the only one. A CDC report says 30% of U.S. adults—40.6 million workers—sleep six or fewer hours a day, rather than the recommended seven to nine.

Most at risk for sleep loss are people who work the night shift, especially those in the transportation, warehouse, and health care industries. According to the report—based on data from a 2010 national survey—44% of night-shift workers are short-sleepers, compared with nearly 30% of daytime workers. Others who aren't getting enough sleep include people who work more than one job, widows, divorcees, and recently separated partners. People ages 30 to 44 are most likely to be sleep-deprived.

Sleep loss has consequences. Not only are the sleep-deprived more likely to be injured, which could endanger the public in the case of, say, commercial drivers, but chronic sleep loss increases the risk for conditions like obesity, depression, heart disease, and diabetes.

Source: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: ALPHACELLVEER; ANTON PRADOVEER; PETER DAZELVGETTY IMAGES



## LIVE LONG

If you're one of the 12 million American cancer survivors, eating right, exercising, and maintaining a healthy weight can help extend your life, say new guidelines from the American Cancer Society (ACS).

The ACS has long recommended these measures to help prevent some cancers, but this is the first time it has issued formal guidelines for cancer survivors. ACS officials say the evidence now shows a healthy lifestyle has a direct effect on cancer recurrence and survival.

For example, studies of breast cancer survivors show that diets including lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, poultry, and fish are associated with a lower risk of death than diets high in processed and red meat, refined grains, sugar, and high-fat dairy products.

A healthy diet low in red and processed meat appears to protect against cancer progression, risk of recurrence, and overall survival for a variety of cancers. Regular exercise appears to be linked with a lower risk for recurrence and improved survival after treatment for breast, prostate, ovarian, and colorectal cancers.

Source: CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians

## Good Sports?

You know soda is bad for your teeth, but what about sports and energy drinks? Recent research found that, like soda, the popular drinks can damage tooth enamel.

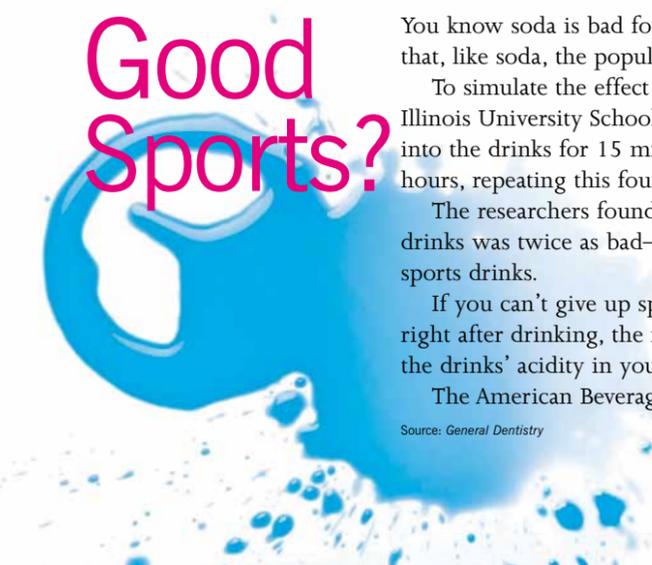
To simulate the effect of drinking several sports or energy drinks a day, researchers at the Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine immersed enamel samples from extracted human teeth into the drinks for 15 minutes at a time. They then transferred the enamel to artificial saliva for two hours, repeating this four times a day for five days. The beverages were replaced with fresh ones daily.

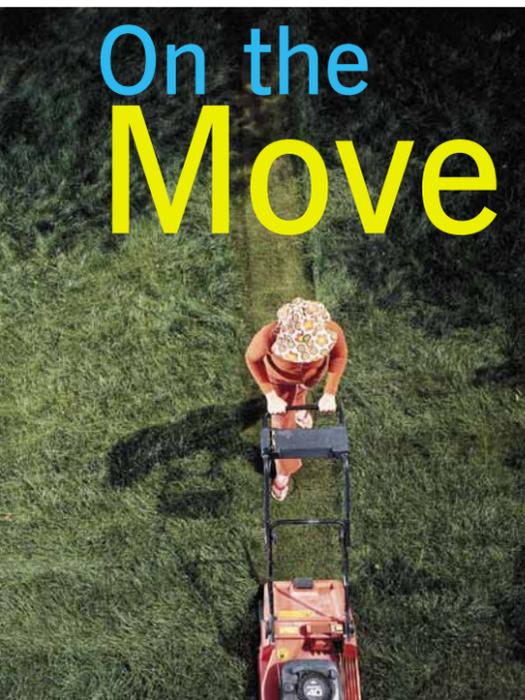
The researchers found that both energy and sports drinks harmed enamel. But the effect of energy drinks was twice as bad—causing on average a loss of 3% of the enamel, compared with 1.5% for sports drinks.

If you can't give up sports and energy drinks, try diluting them or rinsing your mouth with water right after drinking, the researchers suggest. Don't brush immediately afterward, as this could spread the drinks' acidity in your mouth, they say. Instead, wait about an hour, then brush.

The American Beverage Association said the study did not mirror real-life conditions.

Source: General Dentistry





Losing a little weight and adding just 25 minutes of daily exercise can help people with type 2 diabetes hold on to their mobility as they age, a study shows.

That's important because people with diabetes are twice as likely to have mobility problems as others the same age, says researcher W. Jack Rejeski, PhD, professor of health and exercise science at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. They may struggle to climb stairs or have trouble pushing a vacuum.

The study looked at about 5,000 people ages 45 to 74 with type 2 diabetes. Some were assigned to a program aimed at helping them lose weight by cutting calories and doing moderate exercise for 25 minutes a day. Others went to diabetes education and support classes.

After four years, people in the diet and exercise group had lost, on average, about 6% of body weight. (For someone who weighs 250 pounds, that's 15 pounds.) For every 1% weight reduction, researchers calculated people cut their loss-of-mobility risk by more than 7%. For every 1% improvement in fitness, the risk dropped by almost 1.5%.

Source: *New England Journal of Medicine*



People who live in the most polluted U.S. cities are breathing cleaner air than they have in more than a decade, according to a report from the American Lung Association. Still, more than 127 million people live in places with unhealthy air, the group says.

The group's annual *State of the Air* report ranks cities on ozone pollution as well as long-term and short-term particle pollution. Los Angeles remained the city with the worst ozone levels but is no longer leading for particle pollution (considered the most dangerous common type). On the list for worst year-round particle pollution were Bakersfield-Delano, Calif., and four other areas in the state: Hanford-Corcoran, Los Angeles-Long Beach-Riverside, Visalia-Porterville, and Fresno-Madera.

Santa Fe, N.M., topped the list of cities with the cleanest air, followed by Cheyenne, Wyo., and Prescott and Tucson, Ariz.

The ALA report credits the federal Clean Air Act for cleaning up coal-fired power plants and reducing emissions from diesel-engine vehicles and SUVs.

Source: *State of the Air 2012*

## TASK MASTER

Multitasking may make us less productive, but we do it anyway—both out of habit and because it makes us feel good, a study reports.

Researchers from Ohio State University gave 19 college students a cellphone-like device to report all their activities, three times a day, for four weeks. The students rated what needs the activities met, and what motivated them to do each activity.

The findings show that multitasking satisfied emotional needs for the students, even if learning and thinking skills were reduced. For example, if a student reads a chapter in a biology textbook while catching an episode of *Glee*, multitasking gives him an emotional boost even if he doesn't get as much out of the reading assignment.

"They are not being more productive—they just feel more emotionally satisfied from their work," says researcher Zheng Wang, PhD, an assistant professor of communication at Ohio State. In other words, multitasking made a dull but necessary task seem fun, less stressful, and more doable.

Media multitasking also appeared to be a habit for many students, the study finds.

Source: *Journal of Communication*



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NEW

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**WebMD wire**



**DANGER GAMES**

It's called Knock Out, Flatlining, and the Choking Game. By any name, the game can be deadly. Players apply pressure to the main artery in their neck with a belt, towel, or rope to limit oxygen and blood flow to the brain. They get a "high" when they release the pressure and oxygen rushes back in.

In a survey of nearly 5,400 Oregon eighth-graders, 6% said they'd tried the game (which is consistent with studies in other locales). Of those who reported participating, 64% said they'd done it more than once, and almost 27% said they'd done it more than five times.

From 1995 to 2007, the deaths of 82 children ages 6 to 19 were attributed to the game, the CDC says. But because that includes only deaths covered by the media, researchers say the real number is likely higher.

Talk to your kids about the game and listen to their responses, says researcher Robert Nystrom of the Oregon Public Health Division. Also, watch for warning signs, such as marks on the neck, or ropes and the like tied on doorknobs.

Source: Pediatrics

**Killer Commute**

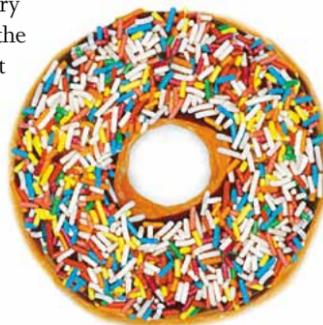
People with long commutes have more to worry about than traffic. Those who drive more than 15 miles to work are more likely to be obese and carry fat around the belly—especially bad for the heart—and less likely to get enough exercise, compared with other commuters, a study shows. Workers who drive more than 10 miles each day also may be more likely to have high blood pressure.

The study included 4,297 adults who drove to work in two Texas cities. Each took a treadmill test and was asked how much exercise he or she did each week. Researchers also checked indicators for heart disease and diabetes, including blood sugar levels, cholesterol, belly fat, and body mass index.

While the study doesn't prove commutes cause those problems, Suzanne Steinbaum, DO, a preventive cardiologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, says people with long commutes need to offset the sedentary

time spent in a car: "Forget the elevator. Take the stairs. Put a pedometer on. Do everything in your power to eat well and exercise," she says.

Source: American Journal of Preventive Medicine



TOP: ANDY RYAN/GETTY IMAGES; PETER DAZELEY/GETTY IMAGES



**DOG DAYS**

Rough days at the office? Bring your dog to work to help ease stress and improve job satisfaction for you and your co-workers, a study suggests.

The study looked at a service-manufacturing retail company with 550 employees in Greensboro, N.C. About 20 to 30 dogs are at the headquarters each day.

The researchers collected saliva samples in the morning to analyze them for the stress hormone cortisol and surveyed employees throughout the day. Cortisol levels were similar in the morning for all employees, but self-reported stress levels declined during the day for employees who had their dogs with them.

Researchers also found that dogs at work fostered unique dog-related communication between employees that may improve job performance and satisfaction. For example, employees without a dog would ask to take a co-worker's dog out on a break, resulting in positive exchanges between employees, as well as breaks involving exercise.

Source: International Journal of Workplace Health Management

**WEIGHT LIFTERS**

Here's what doesn't work well if you want to lose weight: "diet" foods, over-the-counter weight-loss supplements, and liquid or fad diets. So what does work? Eating less fat, exercising more, joining a weight-loss program, and asking your doctor about prescription weight-loss pills.

This wisdom comes from a study that looked at more than 4,000 obese people who took part in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Some 63% said they had tried to lose weight, 40% said they lost 5% or more of their body weight, and 20% said they lost 10% or more.

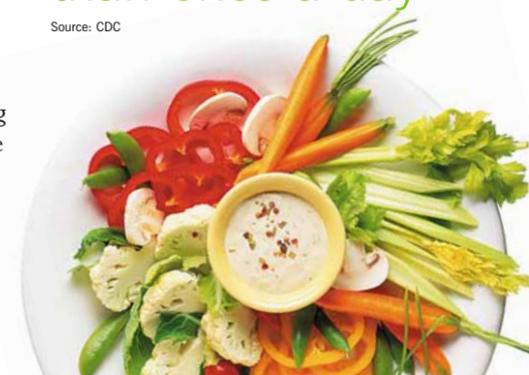
Several trends emerged among the biggest losers. Those who exercised more and ate less fat lost more weight. Those who joined weight-loss programs like Weight Watchers or Jenny Craig were more likely to lose 10% or more of body weight. Prescription diet medications were also linked to weight loss, but only a few people in the study used them.

Source: American Journal of Preventive Medicine



**1 in 3**  
 The number of teens who don't eat vegetables more than once a day

Source: CDC



**DID YOU KNOW?**

WebMD also provides tips and tools to keep your pet healthy!

**INSIDE**  
**WebMD HealthyPets**



For Dog Lovers

For Cat Lovers

## Must-See TV

When was your last eye exam?

Whether it was years ago or just last week, tune in to **WebMD Eye TV** for the facts about healthy vision and smart eye care for kids and adults.



eye TV  [WebMD SEARCH](#)

## Shot Clock

School will be starting again before you know it. Are your kids' shots up to date? Keep track of your entire family's vaccination history with the **WebMD Vaccine Tracker**. The easy-to-use tool sends email reminders and helps you manage everyone's shot records—including your own.



vaccine tracker  [WebMD SEARCH](#)

# TOP SEARCHES

Here's what's hot on WebMD.com right now!

1. What bug bit you?
2. Easy grilling recipes
3. How to calm sunburn pain
4. Lyme disease symptoms
5. Do you need a booster shot?
6. Healthy beauty: Anti-aging tricks
- 7. Foods your dog should never eat**
8. Is it the "blues" or depression?
9. Autism: Life after high school
10. The benefits of vitamin D

\*as of 6/1/2012

## Take Heart

Do something to take care of your ticker every day and track your heart-healthy achievements with **WebMD's Healthy Heart Checklist**.



healthy heart  [WebMD SEARCH](#)

## Contact Dermatitis

TOP SYMPTOMS INCLUDE

- ▶ Itching
- ▶ Burning or pain
- ▶ Red bumps

Contact dermatitis occurs when the skin (most often on the hands) comes in contact with something that causes either irritation or an allergic reaction. "Irritant" contact dermatitis is more common; exposure to a variety of materials is often the culprit, including acids, alkaline materials (such as soaps and detergents), solvents, rubber gloves, cement, hair dyes, pesticides, and various chemicals. It typically looks like a burn or red, rough skin, and may be itchy. "Allergic" contact dermatitis can show up immediately or months after exposure to things like adhesives, topical antibiotics, fabrics, fragrances, hair dyes, nickel, poisonous plants, and latex gloves. It may be a streaky, scaly, or patchy rash. Treatment for both types includes avoiding the irritant or allergen in question, then moisturizers to keep the skin moist (which cuts down on inflammation), and anti-itch, corticosteroid, or immune-suppressive skin creams.

## symptomchecker

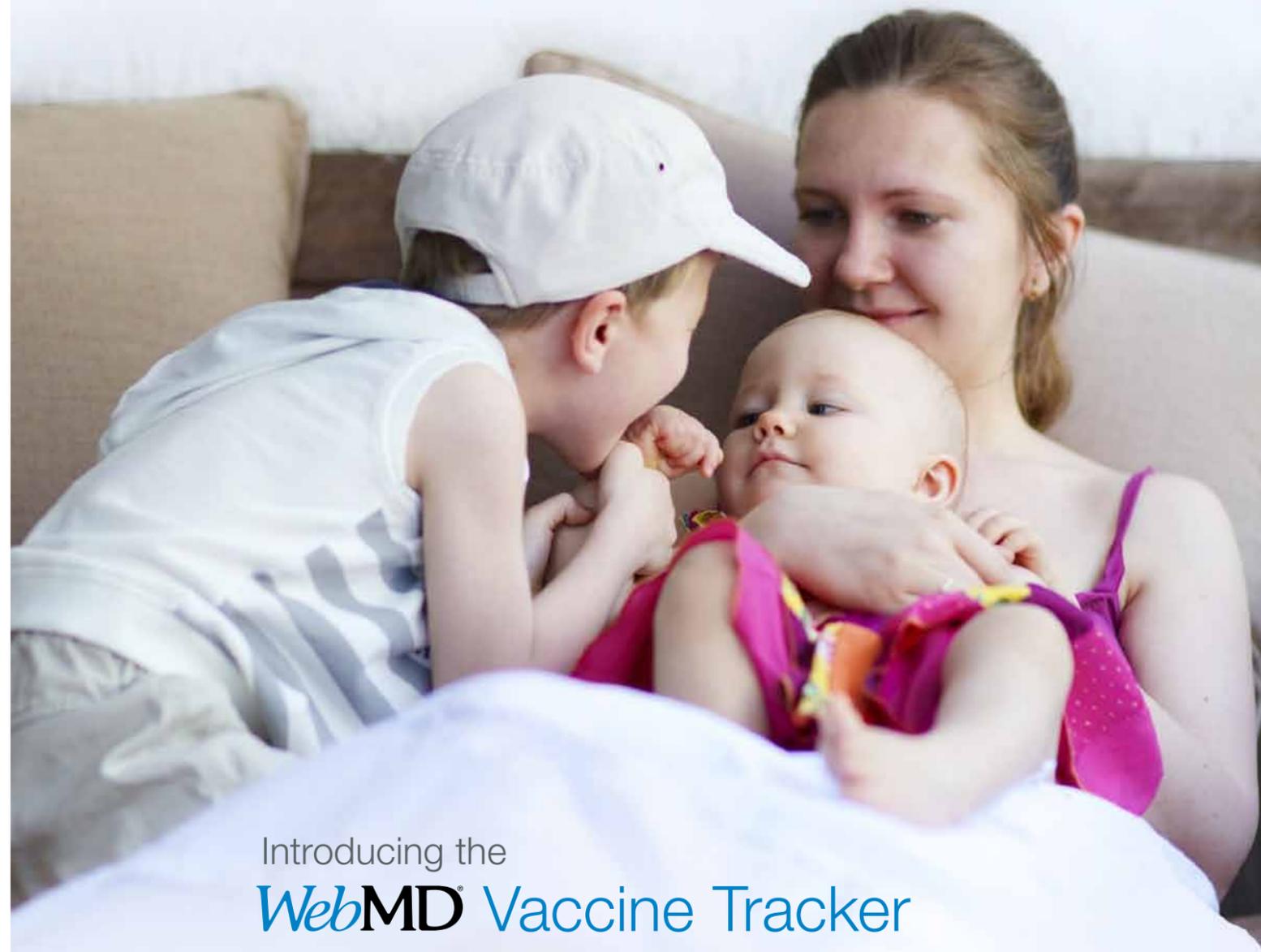


Key in your symptoms

[FIND THE ANSWER](#)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: FRED PHALUGUETTY/IMAGES; GLOWGETTY/IMAGES; BRANDX PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES; ROBERT KIRK/GETTY IMAGES

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# Net Worth

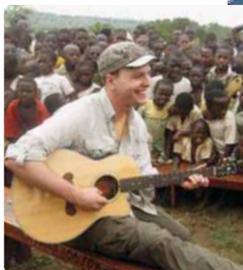
Singer Gavin DeGraw works to fight malaria

Singer/songwriter Gavin DeGraw, 35, has been atop the pop music world since his 2003 album *Chariot* went platinum. But three years ago, that world started to seem too small for him. "There's a time, when you're pop-culture oriented, that you think, 'I need to do something more important than this,'" DeGraw says.

One of the world's worst plagues caught his attention: malaria. Malaria is both preventable and curable. Yet it kills some 655,000 people a year, most of them children who have not yet developed enough immunity to the disease. Every minute of every day, an African child dies of malaria.

DeGraw says he "asked around" about malaria-related efforts and learned about a global grassroots campaign called Nothing But Nets (NBN; [nothingbutnets.net](http://nothingbutnets.net)). Created by the United Nations Foundation in 2006, the group gives away insecticide-coated bed nets to protect children from the nighttime-biting mosquitoes that spread malaria parasites. "One net costs about 10 bucks. Four kids can sleep under the net, and they are pretty much safe," DeGraw says.

But DeGraw did more than buy a few nets. He joined an NBN/U.N. mission that traveled to refugee camps in Uganda, where he helped distribute the nets to ramshackle camps housing more than 630,000 displaced people. "As a musician on the road, you think you see a lot," he says. "But when you see people living in huts made of leftover scraps of wood and old license plates, it reminds you that you ain't seen nothin' yet."



DeGraw's malaria-awareness work has changed his music.

The refugees' desperate situation wasn't all DeGraw saw. "As many horrific things as there are, you also have the opportunity to see there is something beautiful about the level of humanity that people carry," he says. "You see people doing their best to help others. You get to see the great elements of human nature."

The experience changed his music. "It finds its way into the songwriting," he says. "There is the sensibility of having had this rude awakening to a whole other level of suffering." That may be why some critics are finding more texture and grit in DeGraw's new album, *Sweeter*, than in his previous work.

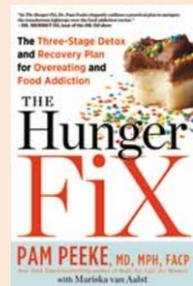
He recently raised \$5,000 for the charity through a project with *Billboard Magazine*, which in turn bought 500 bed nets.—Daniel J. DeNoon

## SNEAK PEEKE

Ever wonder why you overeat or obsess about certain foods? I mean really understand the biology behind the midnight refrigerator raids and the super-sized snack attacks? The reason appears to go all the way back to when the human body developed a built-in reward system driven largely by a chemical called dopamine. Our pleasure-seeking brains propelled us to reproduce, create, innovate, and yes, eat. But "certain facets of modern living have hijacked this system to get us to consume more and more," writes Pam Peeke, MD,

MPH, FACP, in her new book (out in September) *The Hunger Fix: The Three-Stage Detox and Recovery Plan for Overeating and Food Addiction*.

Peeke, author, assistant clinical professor of medicine at the University of Maryland, and WebMD's "Everyday Fitness" blogger, harnesses new neurochemistry research that reveals the inner workings of this reward system. She shows you how to kick unhealthy food



habits to the curb by "rewiring" your brain so that dopamine-bliss is used for "good rather than evil." "False Fixes" (like that afternoon candy bar) become "Healthy Fixes" (good-for-you foods, yes, but also activities like dancing). Your innate reward system wins, your health wins. "We will be looking for our fixes for the rest of our lives," Peeke writes, "but we have the ability to choose which fixes."—Colleen Parety

## HEALTHY READ

# On the Road

What to keep on hand for your summer travels

**Q** I worry that my car will break down somewhere when I'm alone or with my kids. What emergency supplies should I keep in my vehicle?

**A** Whether it's a blown tire, a broken-down engine, or a case of being just plain lost, having an emergency kit can reduce stress, keep you safe, and get you back on the road faster. Here's what to bring.

**Cellphone and charger** Being able to call for help can make the difference between life and death. Make sure your phone is charged at all times.

**Basic supplies** Pack a quart of water per person, plus energy bars and trail mix, which provide protein and carbs. Have at least one blanket in the car, too, in case you get stuck at night.

**Baby supplies** Extra formula, bottles, and diapers are crucial if you have an infant in the car. So is a spare set of clothes.

**Car tools** Every car should have a tire gauge, spare tire (with lug wrench and jack), jumper cables, and flares (make sure you know how to use them). Add a flashlight so you can see



what you're doing at night, plus gloves to protect your hands.

**First-aid kit** A basic kit will give you what you need to patch up wounds, wrap a sprain, or treat a headache.



Hansa Bhargava, MD  
WebMD CHILDREN'S HEALTH EXPERT

I've read that driving while talking on a cellphone is as bad as driving drunk. Is that true?

Many people can't imagine not chatting on the phone while driving. But the stories you've heard are TRUE. Cellphone use impairs driving just as much as alcohol.

That's just one of the conclusions by David Strayer, a professor of psychology at the University of Utah, who has published a series of articles that show driving while talking on a cellphone—hands-free or not—is the same as driving with a blood alcohol level of .08, the legal limit.

In one study he found that talking to a passenger improves driving, because "there is another set of eyes on the road, a person who knows to be quiet if the driving gets difficult."

In his most recent research, Strayer found that a conversation that triggers mental imagery—a description of a vacation, for instance—is most disruptive. "Driving and mental imagery both use the same part of the brain," Strayer says. "So the imagery will block out the driving environment. People literally won't see what they're looking at."



**Q** I'm traveling cross-country this summer and anticipating long hours in the car. What can I do to stay safe and sane?

**A** Driving long distance presents all sorts of potential hazards. The trick? Plan your trip carefully—where and when you'll go, and how you'll take care of yourself on the road.

**Don't get drowsy.** A 2010 study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that 16.5% of all fatal car accidents are caused by driver drowsiness. Get enough shut-eye before and during your trip. Watch for warning signs while you're driving: yawning repeatedly, having difficulty keeping your eyes open, or not being able to remember the past few miles. Find a safe place to take a nap if needed.

**Back up your spine.** To prevent lower-back pain on the road, use a lumbar support pillow. Make sure you're not sitting too far away from the pedals and steering wheel. Take lots of breaks from driving.

**Breathe deep.** Use "relaxation breathing" to counter stress. Simply breathe in through your nose, hold it for a count of five, and then breathe out through your mouth. Do this at least three times, drawing your attention to the position of your shoulders and ribs. If you still feel wound up, stop and rest.



Patricia A. Farrell, PhD  
WebMD MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT

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**Oral History**

In ancient times, toothpaste was made from ingredients such as crushed eggshells and powdered pumice or ash.

**It Takes Tube**

The first commercial toothpaste, in the 19th century, was sold in jars. In the 1890s, Colgate introduced toothpaste in a tube.

**Go With the Fluo**

Fluoride, which strengthens tooth enamel and helps reduce tooth decay, didn't become a popular addition to toothpaste until the 1950s.

**Plaque Attack**

Toothpaste's primary purpose is to help remove plaque buildup on teeth.



**Let There Be White**

The abrasive particles in whitening toothpastes are bigger than those in regular toothpastes, so surface stains are removed more effectively. Some whitening toothpastes also contain a small amount of peroxide.

**Dental Dollars**

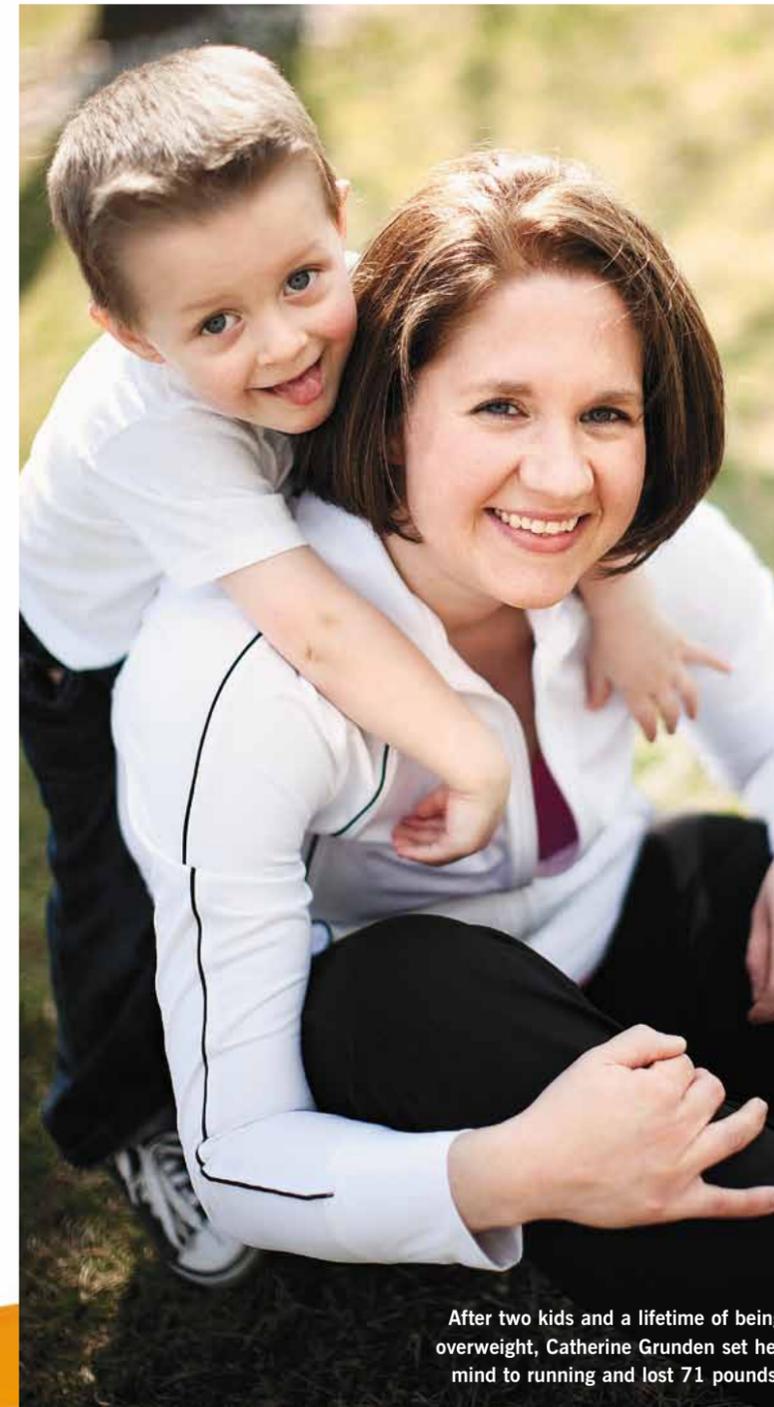
Toothpaste sales are expected to reach \$12.6 billion by 2015 (up from about \$7 billion in 2007).

**New Wave**

The wavy layer of toothpaste that sits on the head of a toothbrush is called a "nurdle."  
—Chloe Thompson

# On the Run

By Catherine Grunden  
WebMD.com community member



After two kids and a lifetime of being overweight, Catherine Grunden set her mind to running and lost 71 pounds.

I'VE BEEN HEAVY my entire life. Even in my kindergarten photos, I was chubby. In late high school, I gained more weight. In college, I reached 260 pounds—I think because I was on my own. I had a driver's license, a job. I could go out to dinner, eat when I wanted. Nobody was watching over me.

Being heavy didn't make me feel bad, though. I was pretty confident. I didn't realize I was as big as I was until I started looking at old photos a few months ago. It was pretty shocking.

About three and a half years ago, I lost 40 pounds. Then I got pregnant with my first child. I lost that pregnancy weight, then got pregnant again. After my second baby was born, I lost all but 10 pounds of that extra weight, so I weighed 230 pounds.

Two things pushed me to start seriously losing weight. First, I was done having kids, so I knew my body wouldn't be going through any more major changes. And second, my father had a heart attack at age 54, as had my grandfather. I knew I needed to take better care of myself.

My first step was to start the Couch to 5K program ([www.c25k.com](http://www.c25k.com)), which helps sedentary people work up to running a 5K race in just nine weeks. I always thought runners were so cool, but to be one seemed like an impossible goal. A friend and I decided to try it together.

I had to start inside on a treadmill because I was too embarrassed to be outside. I cried that first day because I could only run for three one-minute periods—and you're supposed to do it eight times. Eventually I worked through it, and we ran a 5K last October. Now I can run for more than an hour at a time. I'm hoping to train for a 10K soon, maybe even a half marathon some day.

Of course, diet is important, too. In the beginning, I didn't change what I was eating. I just changed how much I was eating. I didn't want to give up bad stuff. Then I got tired of being hungry all the time so I started making healthier choices. I started cooking more, rather than ordering in. I also learned about portion sizes and calories.

I have four children: a 16-year-old stepdaughter, a 10-year-old stepson, plus two sons, 3 and 1. I operate a day care in my home, and I sell shirts for little boys on the side. Running is my alone time. I'm outside. I'm getting fresh air. I'm not getting interrupted. I use it for my prayer time.

Right now I weigh 159 pounds, so I've lost 71 pounds since I set my mind to losing weight. A lot of people ask, "What's your secret?" like there's a pill or a program or a trick of some kind. But the truth is I did it on my own, with a lot of hard work and some online fitness tools. I know I've been good to myself, and I'm being a good role model to my children. That's what counts.

Read more stories and share your own in our [communities](#).  [WebMD.com](http://WebMD.com)

# Glow Getters

Skip the streaks with sunless tanning product picks and foolproof application tips



**Smooth Move**  
Olay Skin Smoothing Cream Scrub gently smooths and preps skin.

**Strike Gold**  
Fast-track a sunless tan with Jergens Natural Glow Express Body Moisturizer.

**Soft Sell**  
Smooth skin and boost moisture with PCA Skin Body Therapy.

**Mint Condition**  
Kiss dead skin goodbye with Kiss My Face So Refined Jojoba & Mint Facial Scrub.

## You asked!

**Q.** Whenever I use self-tanner, I always have at least one streaky, blotchy spot. What can I do?



Amber Hermann, 32, paralegal, Abingdon, Va.

**A.** Streaks and spots do happen, but you have a much greater chance today of achieving an even, natural-looking tan compared with decades ago. Then, as now, self-tanners used a colorless sugar called dihydroxyacetone (DHA), which interacts with surface skin cells to produce a tanned appearance within about an hour. Streaks develop because of uneven application or an excess of built-up cells on your skin.

To avoid a “blotched job,” exfoliate the areas you’re going to tan before applying self-tanner. My preference for face and body is a scrub with particles that are perfectly round so they glide over the skin, removing cell debris without irritation. Try **Olay Skin Smoothing Cream Scrub** (\$6.99) or **Kiss My Face So Refined Jojoba & Mint Facial Scrub** (\$15), a skin polisher with gentle jojoba beads.

After you exfoliate, mix your self-tanning product—I like **Jergens Natural Glow Express Body Moisturizer** (\$8.99) for a gradual, even tan—with a little body moisturizer so it spreads evenly. Allow the product to dry completely before topping your skin with another light layer of moisturizer. Try **PCA Skin Body Therapy** (\$44), a cream that provides therapeutic levels of moisture and helps keep skin free of cell debris.

I usually recommend self-tanning at night, so you can wake up, shower, and slather on your daily body moisturizer. Most self-tanners don’t protect you from UV rays, so a daily sunscreen with SPF of 30 or more is a must.

Jennifer Linder, MD, clinical instructor of dermatology, University of California, San Francisco



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CHUNG LEE

## You asked!

**A.** In addition to exfoliating your skin to even out the surface, my best advice is to use your hand to really blend the product in. Even distribution is key. Then moisturize, which keeps the cells that trap the self-tanner solution on the skin longer, making your faux tan last. Incidentally, it’s not a good idea to put moisturizer on right before you self-tan, because then the formula can’t stick to the skin cells. The exception to this is to apply a tiny bit first to knees, elbows, ankles, and feet to help the self-tanner go on evenly.

I am a fan of **Neutrogena Micro-Mist Airbrush Sunless Tan** (\$10.99), which provides just a hint of color with each application. If you’re prone to dryness before or after self-tanning, try **Avène Moisturizing Self-Tanning Lotion** (\$22), infused with thermal spring water, to soften and hydrate skin.

When I self-tan, I start by gently scrubbing my skin with a **loofah** or **mesh sponge** (\$2 to \$4) in the shower to remove dead skin cells so the tanner goes on more evenly and lasts longer. Then you should dry the skin thoroughly, apply self-tanner from head to toe, and rub it in well, avoiding heels and knuckles (where the skin is thick and will absorb too much of the self-tanner).

Smooth an extra layer of tanner onto your face. Since skin is thinner on the face, it often takes more product to get a head-to-toe match. Wash your hands afterward so the tanning cream doesn’t get stuck between your fingers and turn the skin unnaturally dark.

If you want a self-tanner and SPF in one product, try **L’Oreal Sublime Bronze Self-Tanning Lotion SPF 20** (\$9.99). But be sure to apply a lotion with an SPF of at least 30 before heading outdoors.—Ayren Jackson-Cannady

Carolyn Jacob, MD, founder and medical director, Chicago Cosmetic Surgery and Dermatology



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**Pouf Positive**  
Smooth skin with a loofah or mesh sponge in the shower.

**Mist Opportunity**  
See color build as you apply Neutrogena Micro-Mist Airbrush Sunless Tan.

**Water Works**  
Avène Moisturizing Self-Tanning Lotion is infused with hydrating spring water.

**Screen Play**  
L’Oreal Sublime Bronze Self-Tanning Lotion SPF 20 provides sun protection and a glow.

## Golden Rules

Ricky Croft, a self-tanning expert at Sunless Inc., a manufacturer of self-tanners, shares the do’s and don’ts of getting your glow from a bottle.

**DON’T go overboard.** If you start with a lighter tone, you can always build up to a darker shade—but you can’t go the other way!

**DON’T self-tan for the first time before a big event.** Plan ahead, and build up a tan in the weeks prior. This results in a less drastic, more even glow. It will also ensure your color isn’t streaky or blotchy for the event, as you’ll have time

to fix any imperfections yourself or get a pro to even things out.

**DO use sunless tanner sparingly** around rough, dry areas such as knees, elbows, and ankles, which tend to darken more quickly.

**DO avoid oil-based lotions and makeup** before sunless tanning. These prevent even application and can be hard to rinse off.

CHUNG LEE

➔ Bronze better with tips from the **Healthy Beauty** center.



# Happy Feet

Looking for a great exercise? Walking is one of the easiest and most effective ways to get fit

**Walking while listening** to podcasts and audiobooks makes it easy for Janet Zinn to stick to her daily exercise program. “I walk at least three miles, sometimes six or 10,” says Zinn, 52, a psychotherapist in New York City.

After one year of walking regularly, Zinn dropped more than 60 pounds. She has kept the weight off for a year and continues with her main form of exercise.

Walking requires no equipment aside from a supportive pair of walking shoes. “Exercise doesn’t have to be hard to be effective,” says Julia Valentour, MS, exercise physiologist and program coordinator for the American Council on Exercise (ACE). “The recommended 30 minutes [five days a week] can be broken up into two 15-minute sessions or even three 10-minute sessions, making it easy to weave walking into a busy lifestyle.”

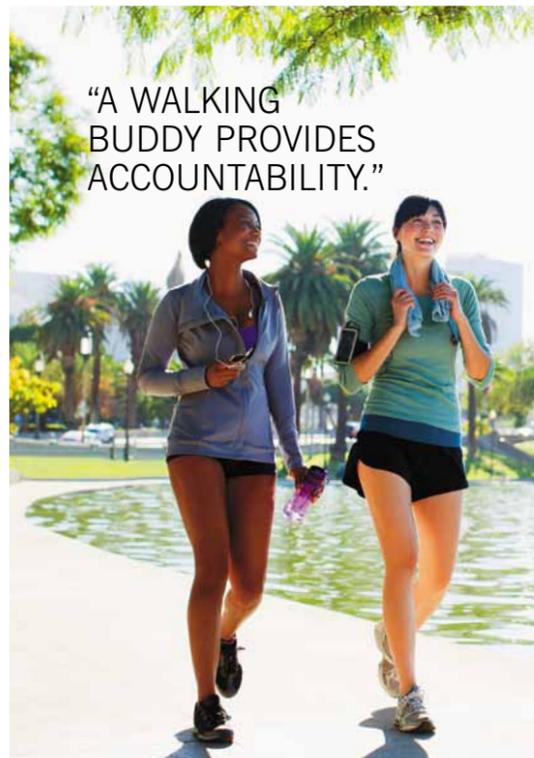
Weight loss isn’t the only benefit of a walking program. Regular walking helps lower cholesterol, reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes, increases bone strength, and improves circulation. Here are simple ways to keep your walks interesting and help you stay motivated.

**Use a pedometer.** Bit by bit, boost your daily steps. “Wear a pedometer for a week to see which days you do the most number of steps,” Valentour says. “Then try to repeat the activities of that day and add another 500 steps the following week.” Keep it up until you reach 10,000 steps a day.

**Keep a journal.** Record each day’s walk. It serves as a motivator by allowing you to see your progress, Valentour says.

**Get a partner.** “A walking buddy provides accountability. Neither wants to let the other person down,” Valentour says.

**Sign up for a race or charity walk.** Making the commitment gives you a goal to shoot for, which may motivate you to stick with a program.



**Find support online.** Programs such as the American Heart Association’s StartWalkingNow.org have helped thousands of people get started walking. Designed by ACE, the free online program includes a monthly newsletter with health tips and recipes, an online activity and nutrition tracker, and access to an online journal. It also allows you to connect with others for support and motivation, and a search option helps you find walking paths in your area.

Beginners start by walking five to 10 minutes, while advanced walkers start with more challenging options.—Linda Melone

## THE CLIMB

If you’re already fit, walking may seem too easy. Here’s how to kick up the intensity for a more challenging workout.

**Speed up.** “The easiest way to up the ante is to simply walk faster,” says Therese Iknoian, MS, author of *Fitness Walking*. You may even want to try race-walking, which uses more muscles and burns more calories.

**Head for the hills.** Walking up hills increases intensity. So does increasing the incline on a treadmill. But don’t hang on to the treadmill as you walk or you’ll negate the benefits, Iknoian says.

**Change the surface.** “Walking on trails and maneuvering around rocks increases muscular demand,” Iknoian says. Snow, sand, and even grass make walking more of a challenge.

**Use Nordic poles.** Walking poles get upper body muscles involved. “You increase the cardio workout when using poles, plus they take the stress off of knees when walking downhill,” Iknoian says.

**Add resistance.** Throw on a weighted backpack or weight vest.



# Harm’s Way

Some kids embed objects under their skin. What’s behind this disturbing behavior?

**A 17-year-old** girl jammed six metal staples into the soft skin near her wrist. A 15-year-old girl pushed a length of pencil lead under the skin of her forearm. One 18-year-old inserted 35 objects over a period of two years, including staples, a comb tooth, a fork tine, a cotter pin, and nail polish wands.

The dangerous practice of pushing objects directly into the flesh or inserting them into cuts is called

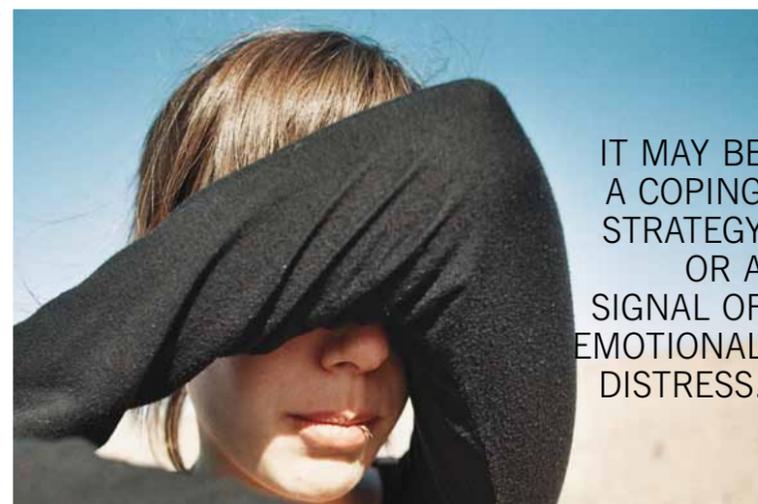
self-injury, or NSSI, says Peggy Andover, PhD, an assistant professor in the psychology department at Fordham University and a clinical psychologist. It’s most common among teenagers, but new research shows children as young as 7 self-injure. Andover has found a fairly even split between the genders.

Researchers have not given much attention to self-embedding, according to Andover, but psychologists have some theories about why people do it. It may be a coping strategy: a way to calm anger, anxiety, or stress. It may be a way to signal emotional distress, or it might be a behavior learned from others. Andover says many people who self-embed report that friends or family members also have done it.

While some researchers consider embedding and other forms of NSSI a symptom of borderline personality disorder, Andover says it happens in people with other disorders, as well as in people without another diagnosis. Her research has also discovered a troubling connection: Many people who report self-injury also report suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.

Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), which is used to treat borderline personality disorder, also seems to help reduce self-injury. DBT is a type of cognitive behavioral therapy that teaches patients skills to cope with and change unhealthy behaviors. Andover is developing a new cognitive behavioral treatment specifically for NSSI.

What can parents do? Talk to your teen. “Parents should realize that asking the question won’t start the behavior. It won’t put an idea into his or her head,” Andover says. “It will potentially open up the lines of communication.”—Susan Kuchinskas



self-embedding. While it’s not a new trend, it’s often misdiagnosed, ignored, or under-reported.

Doctors sometimes discover self-embedding by accident, most often when an embedded site becomes infected. Radiologists who reviewed three years of patient records at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, found that of 600 people treated to remove foreign bodies from soft tissue, 11 had inserted them deliberately.

Why do people do this? Self-embedding is a psychiatric disorder involving deliberate, non-suicidal



Brisk walking at 4 mph burns 334 calories, while strolling at 3 mph burns 221 calories.

Walk this way to find **more exercise ideas.**



As many as 6% of teenagers admit to inserting objects under their skin.

Get inside your kid’s head at the **Teen Health center.**





# Toll Road

Caregivers often pay a hefty price when it comes to their own health

Since **Jeanne Erdmann's** mother was diagnosed three years ago with dementia, she has taken on the daily responsibilities of bathing and dressing her mom, preparing her meals, making sure she takes her medicine, and managing her finances.

tremendous, they tend to get sick," says Jo McCord, MA, family consultant with the nonprofit Family Caregiver Alliance. "Caregivers go to the doctor so often with the care receiver that they are simply too tired to go to the doctor for themselves."

Caregivers who reach out for help can tap into information and resources to make their jobs less stressful. Yet the challenges of caregiving are often compounded by caregivers' tendency to become isolated, McCord says. "There's a lot of need for emotional support that goes unmet."

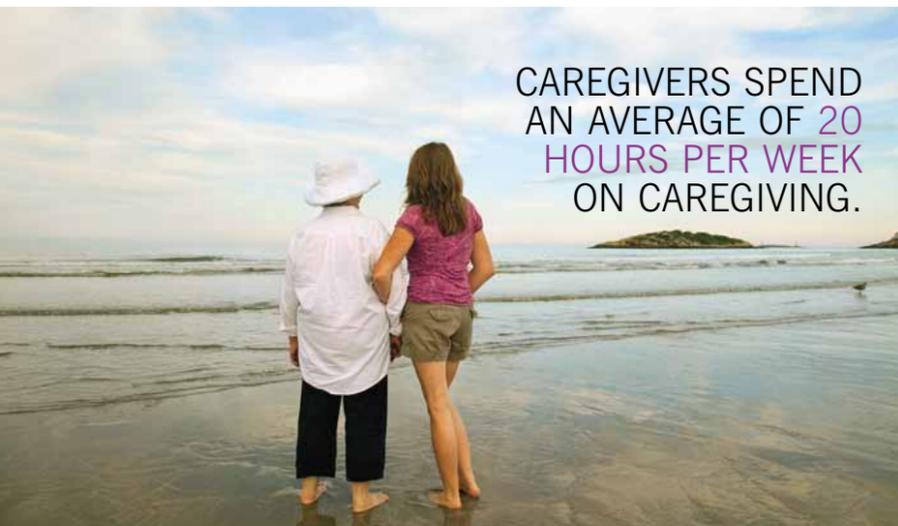
Support groups and caregiving classes, either in person or online, give caregivers a forum where they can connect with others going through the

same experience. They're also a great way to learn about legal, financial, and medical resources needed to best care for someone.

Although guilt comes with the caregiving territory, it's one emotion worth brushing aside. "Caregivers often feel they can't enjoy themselves because the person they're caring for is compromised," McCord says. But when caregivers fail to keep in touch with personal interests and friends, they lose connections they need more than ever.

Erdmann still tries to find ways to let off steam. "We laugh a lot. You have to find the humor and just hold on to the good times as long as you can." —Lisa Zamosky

CAREGIVERS SPEND AN AVERAGE OF 20 HOURS PER WEEK ON CAREGIVING.



"It wears you down. I think it's the grind of having someone there every day who needs more and more attention," says Erdmann, a medical journalist in Wentzville, Mo. Although she says she's happy to be there for her mom, Erdmann acknowledges the toll caregiving takes.

Caring for a friend or family member who is chronically ill, disabled, or aging can be emotionally and physically demanding. Caregivers, who are predominantly middle-aged women, spend an average of 20 hours per week on caregiving responsibilities, a commitment that interferes with work and can lead to health problems. "The stress they are under is so

## STRESS LESS

Family consultant Jo McCord, MA, explains how to ease some of the stress of caregiving.

**Call a family meeting.** Prevent strained family relationships by keeping all members informed about a loved one's condition. Bring in an outsider, such as a social worker, counselor, religious leader, or friend, to help smooth over contentious situations.

**Dole out tasks.** McCord says caregivers often feel they need to go it alone. But don't assume friends and family aren't willing to help. "Make it easier by giving them something specific to do," she says.

**Get outside help.** National, state, and local disease-specific organizations can put you in touch with day respite programs and in-home services that provide a much-needed break for caregivers. You can also hire a care manager, a professional who helps families plan and coordinate care. Call your local caregiver resource center, area agency on aging, senior center, or other community resource.



# Heavy Duty

Think your kid is overweight? Focus on creating healthy habits for the entire family

A **10-year-old** boy came into my office last week and promptly asked, "Am I too chubby?" His mother added, "I read about BMIs as a way to determine if someone is overweight. What is a BMI anyway? What does it mean?"

The body mass index, BMI for short, is a calculation that uses height and weight to estimate how much body fat a child has. The result is then compared with those of kids of the same age and gender to determine if the child falls within a healthy weight range. (You can use an online BMI tool to check your child.)

that more than half of kids ages 9 to 13 said they were stressed about their weight.

Watch your child for signs of distress. Perhaps your daughter is overly attentive to how she looks, saying things like "My tummy looks big" or asking "Are my thighs fat?" Maybe your son avoids clothing that exposes his body, such as swim trunks, or wants to skip school activities.

Take these cues seriously. Whether it's you or your child who is concerned, see your doctor. She can calculate your child's BMI

and screen him for illnesses that are linked to being overweight. She can also help you find ways to make lifestyle changes that improve your whole family's health.

Then, refocus the conversation. Tell your child it's not about how he looks or his body shape but about being healthy. Explain that a person with a healthy body can run faster, be a stronger soccer player, do well at school, and feel better and happier—and how good eating habits,

physical activity, and enough sleep all help.

The boy in my office did turn out to be overweight. I said this just meant he needed to have healthier habits. We talked about what he and his family could do to improve their health and fitness. It worked—when I saw him several months later, he was a happier, healthier boy.

## KID STUFF

What can you do if your child is overweight? These simple tips can help.

**Lead by example.** Studies show that if parents eat well and exercise, kids are likely to follow suit.

**Cook more often.** If you eat out three times a week, try going one less time. On Sunday, spend an hour cooking food you can eat later in the week—grill enough chicken breasts for two meals, or make a big pot of chili.

**Get your family moving.** Take just 30 minutes on Saturday and Sunday to do an activity with your kids. Play Frisbee in the park or take a nature walk. During the week, take after-dinner walks.

**Keep TV out of bedrooms.** Many studies show that kids with TVs in their bedrooms tend to be overweight.

**Get enough sleep.** Seven- to 12-year-olds need 10 to 11 hours of sleep a night, and teens need eight to nine. Make sure your child powers down an hour to 30 minutes before bedtime.



TELL YOUR CHILD IT'S NOT ABOUT HOW HE LOOKS OR HIS BODY SHAPE BUT ABOUT BEING HEALTHY.



It's worth doing, because a child who is overweight is not only at higher risk for diabetes, hip fractures, and other health problems, but his happiness is in jeopardy as well—as my young patient illustrates. You might think a child doesn't worry about body size until he reaches his teens, but I've noticed younger children are also concerned. In fact, a recent KidsHealth poll found



More than 15 million Americans provide unpaid care for a person with Alzheimer's or dementia.

Get support in the **Caregiving** community. WebMD.com



Children who are obese have a nearly 80% likelihood of being obese adults.

Get healthy, family-fun tips in the **Raising Fit Kids** center. WebMD.com

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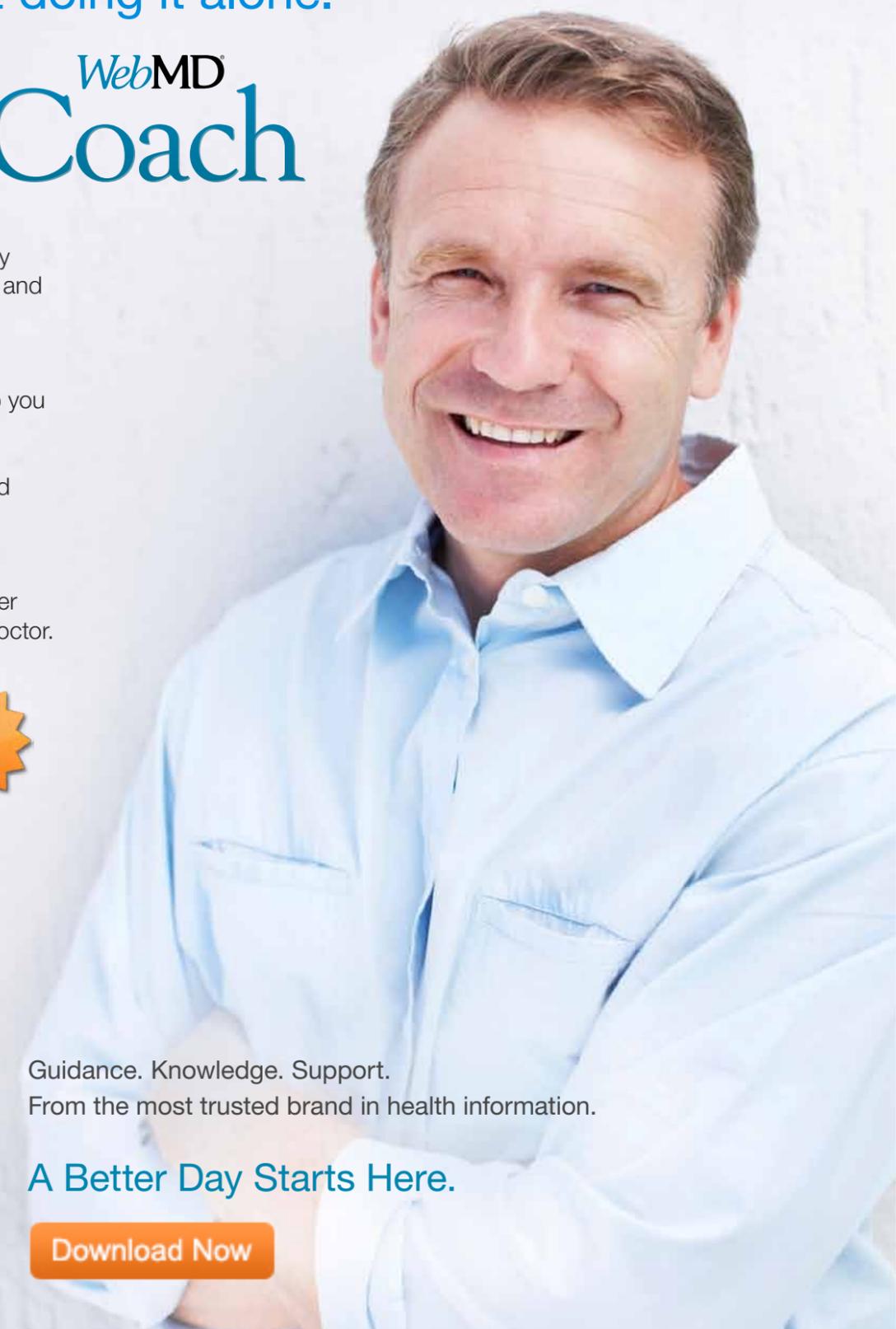


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## parenting matters

EXPERT ADVICE FOR KIDS' SAKE

Reviewed by  
Laura J. Martin, MD  
WebMD MEDICAL EDITOR



# Test Drive

Are your teens road-ready? Steer them in the right direction with one-on-one lessons

When Welmoed Sisson registered her teens for classes at a local driving school, she learned their lessons would include a mere six hours behind the wheel. Sisson knew her kids, Ian and Diana, wouldn't develop safe driving habits without more practice, so she supplemented their drivers education with one-on-one lessons with mom.

Car accidents are the leading cause of death for teenagers in the United States and sent 350,000 teens to emergency rooms in 2009. Newly licensed drivers have the highest risk of accidents, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

"Driving isn't just about knowledge. It's a skill that needs to be learned," says Laurence Steinberg, PhD, psychology professor at Temple University and author of *You and Your Adolescent: The Essential Guide for Ages 10-25*. "Parents need to take an active role in teaching their kids to drive."

Build on the skills they learned in driving school and teach them how to drive well in bad weather, nighttime, and bumper-to-bumper traffic. But don't stop there. "A lot of parents think that once their teenagers get their licenses, it's the end of their involvement, when it's just the

"I wanted them to have a good start," recalls Sisson, 51, a marketing director in Boyds, Md. "I let them progress at their own pace to help them feel more confident behind the wheel."

Sisson spent 10 months offering instruction and encouragement from the passenger seat. The extra time behind the wheel helped: Both kids have been ticket- and accident-free.

beginning," Steinberg says. He advises parents to set clear expectations for new drivers, including no cellphones or other teens in the car. If your teen doesn't follow the rules, suspend privileges.

Sisson believes that modeling good driving behaviors and insisting her teens follow her lead has helped them stay safe behind the wheel. "I feel really secure about giving them the keys."—Jodi Helmer



### DRIVERS ED

Budget cuts have forced many school districts to eliminate drivers education programs, leaving parents no option but to pay for private training. Find a good program with these tips from Laurence Steinberg, PhD.

**Request referrals.** Ask neighbors and co-workers with licensed teens to recommend driving schools and instructors. "Other parents can tell you about good teachers—and about those who haven't been so good," Steinberg says.

**Research the options.** The local AAA office and your insurance company may also have recommendations. Call a few driving schools to compare. Steinberg advises focusing on programs that offer in-car lessons. And check with the Better Business Bureau about complaints.

**Take a road trip.** Visit the schools and inquire about the training. "Ask about the instructors' credentials and how much practice students get behind the wheel," Steinberg advises. More practice time means more experienced drivers.

ANDERSEN ROSS/GETTY IMAGES



Per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are four times more likely to crash than older drivers.

Are your teens driving you crazy? Share in the Parenting community.



WebMD.com



# ANATOMY OF A CUCUMBER



## Family Ties

Cucumbers belong to the plant family *Cucurbitaceae*, which includes melons, squash, and pumpkins.

## Garden Variety

Cucumbers come in many sizes, shapes, textures, and colors, including white, yellow, and even orange.

## Skin Type

Two common kinds of cucumbers grown in the U.S. include slicing and pickling. Slicing cucumbers are usually large with a thick skin, while pickling cucumbers are smaller with a thin skin.

## Salt of the Earth

Pickles are cucumbers that have been soaked in a brining solution made of salt, vinegar, and water.

## Fit Fruit

A half cup of sliced cucumbers has 8 calories and contains more than 10% of the recommended daily intake of vitamin K.

## Water Weight

A cucumber is more than 95% water.

## Cool It

Cucumber slices over the eyes may help reduce puffiness, thanks to a combination of the fruit's water content and caffeic acid.

## For the Record

The world's largest cucumber, grown in southern China, was 67 inches long and weighed 154 pounds.

## Under the Sea

Sea cucumbers are not related to the produce variety. They are just named after its oblong shape.—*Chloe Thompson*

## healthy recipe

### Cold Creamy Cucumber Soup With Avocado



Makes 6 servings

#### Ingredients

- 1 tsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 leeks, washed and sliced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 cups (about 3 large) cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cubed
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh dill, divided
- 2 tsp sherry or red wine vinegar
- ½ tsp salt
- freshly ground pepper
- 8 oz fat-free plain Greek yogurt
- 1 ripe avocado, peeled and cubed

#### Directions

1. In a heavy-bottom 4-quart pot, heat butter and olive oil over medium heat. Sauté leeks 5–7 minutes until tender. Add garlic and continue sautéing 2 more minutes.
2. Add cucumber and chicken stock. Simmer until cucumber is softened (about 6–8 minutes).
3. Pour small batches of cucumber soup into a blender and purée until smooth.
4. Return puréed soup to pot and add 1 tsp of dill, sherry or vinegar, salt, pepper, and yogurt. Whisk to thoroughly blend.
5. Cover and refrigerate soup until chilled, about 2–3 hours.
6. To serve, ladle soup into bowls and garnish with avocado and the remaining dill.

**Per serving:** 112 calories, 3.4 g protein, 13.5 g carbohydrate, 6.2 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 2 mg cholesterol, 3 g fiber, 6 g sugar, 254 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 50%

TOP: RICK LEWIS/GETTY IMAGES; JESSICA DIXON/STOCKFOOD; CREATIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Cool off with more [cucumber recipe](#) ideas. WebMD.com

# Stock Up

Summer is supposed to be a carefree time, with barbecue dinners, pool parties, and fireflies. But for parents, even summertime is often hectic. It can be a recipe for family dinner disaster—grabbing burgers at the drive-through or running down the supermarket's freezer aisle looking for precooked meals.

Here's a better way: Keep your freezer and pantry stocked with a few basics so you're always ready for a quick dinner—one you can make in 30 minutes or less. This is what I like to have on hand.

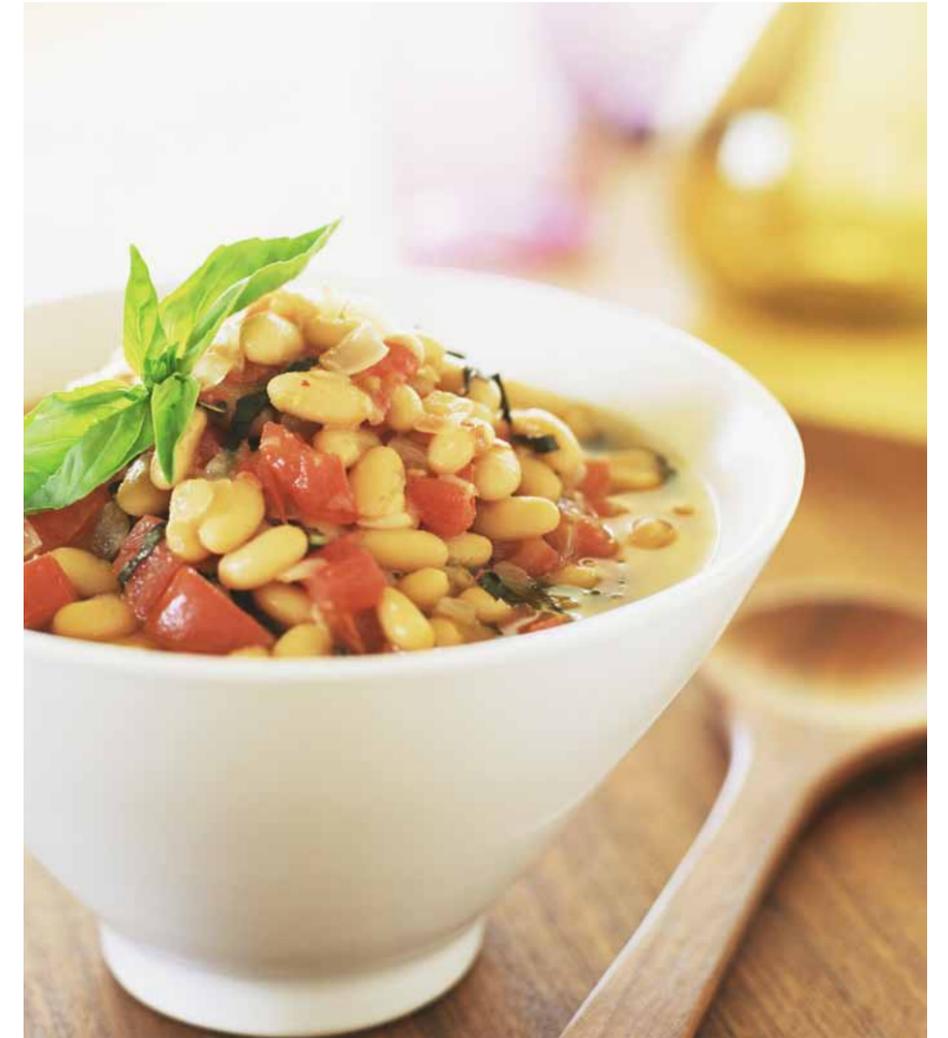
**Chicken breasts** Pound boneless, skinless breasts until they're thin, then freeze them. They thaw in under 30 minutes. Or throw them, still frozen, onto a hot grill pan, where (depending on thickness) they can cook in about 10 minutes. Add a big salad and rice, and you've got a full meal.

**Pasta** Keep several whole grain or vegetable-based (like spinach) varieties on hand, including spaghetti, penne, and egg noodles. For a super-nutritious quick meal, add sautéed or roasted veggies (think asparagus, zucchini, green beans, or broccoli), olive oil, and some grated cheese.

**Canned beans** They're inexpensive, tasty, and packed with protein and fiber, and they're key to many last-minute dishes. Just rinse them well to remove salt (or buy the no-salt variety). Try adding a bit of chopped garlic and tomato to white or cannellini beans for a delicious side dish with lamb, chicken, or beef.

Simmer garbanzo beans (also called chickpeas) with Indian spices (like garlic, coriander, and cumin), sprinkle with chopped fresh cilantro, and serve with rice. Red kidney or black beans are a classic base for chili, burritos, or tacos.

**Spices and other flavors** Flavoring is the trick to quick meals that taste like something you cooked for hours. Red chili flakes, black pepper, balsamic vinegar, fresh lemon, and garlic can spice up a last-minute dinner.



## healthy recipe Pot o' Beans

Makes 6 servings

#### Ingredients

- 1½ tsp extra virgin olive oil
- ½ small onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme, sage, or combination, finely chopped (or 1½ tsp dried)
- 1 pinch chili flakes
- 1 tsp garlic, finely chopped
- 3 15-oz cans Italian white (cannellini) beans, drained and thoroughly rinsed
- ¼ cup canned tomato purée
- ½ cup chicken broth, low-sodium
- handful chopped parsley
- cracked black pepper
- dash of salt

#### Directions

1. Drizzle bottom of heavy-bottomed pot with extra virgin olive oil.
2. Stir in onion, herbs, and chili flakes. Cook until onions are soft, about 5 minutes, then add garlic.
3. Sauté 2 more minutes. Add beans, tomatoes, and chicken broth.
4. Cook 5 minutes. Serve with chopped parsley, pepper to taste, and a dash of salt.

**Per serving:** 270 calories, 17 g protein, 48 g carbohydrate, 2 g fat, 11 g fiber, 1 g sugar, 80 mg sodium. Calories from fat: .06%

Spill the beans in the [Food & Cooking](#) community. WebMD.com

spotlight

hepatitis

# In the Shadows

Hepatitis C is alive and well—but many people who have it don't know it



As many as 4 million people in the United States have hepatitis C, according to new research, and about 15,000 people die of hepatitis C-related liver failure or liver cancer every year. In fact, more Americans now die from hepatitis C each year than from HIV, according to a recent study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Even more startling: 75% don't know they have the virus—and they might have had it for decades. How is this possible?

"In general, it's relatively asymptomatic," that is, with few, if any, symptoms, says Eugene Schiff, MD, professor of medicine and director of the Schiff Center for

Liver Diseases at the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine.

"Most people who have chronic hepatitis C—that means they've had it for some time—are disproportionately between ages 45 and 65," Schiff explains. Indeed, one in 30 baby boomers has been infected with hepatitis C, accounting for 75% of those who have this "silent killer," according to the CDC. Typically, their only symptom is fatigue, which often flies under the radar. "Many people say, 'Well, I've been feeling tired for some time, and I thought, I'm getting older, and [that's] probably the reason,'" Schiff says.

In June, the CDC issued new guidelines recommending people ages 45 to 65 be routinely screened for the hepatitis C virus (HCV) with a blood test. "It's going to be test and treat, and that's very good," Schiff says.

## Starting Point

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, usually caused by a virus. You've probably heard of the most common types: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. While you can get vaccinated against hepatitis A (caused primarily by ingesting contaminated food or water) and hepatitis B (predominantly spread through sexual contact and from mother to newborn), there is no vaccination for hepatitis C. Transmitted through contact with the blood of an infected person, it is the most common blood-borne infection in the United States, the CDC says.

Transmission occurs by contaminated blood transfusions, blood products, and organ transplants. Hepatitis C is also spread through injections given with contaminated syringes, needle-stick injuries in health care settings, use of injected drugs, or being born to an HCV-infected mother. Less commonly, it can be transmitted through sex with an infected person or by sharing personal items contaminated with infectious blood.

## Who Gets It

Why do so many middle-aged adults have hepatitis C?

First, anyone who received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992 might have contracted the virus without knowing it. "We didn't have any way of detecting the virus in the blood supply until then," Schiff says.

In addition, baby boomers who came of age during the 1960s and '70s might have experimented with intravenous drugs, putting them at risk for contracting the virus. "We're not talking about hardcore addicts," explains Schiff. "They may have done [IV drugs] four or five times. They shared needles."

## How It Progresses

For every 100 people infected with HCV, 75 to 85 will develop a chronic form of the disease—meaning it persists indefinitely (or until treated), attacking the liver and causing liver cells to die. Though the liver is able to regenerate or grow back, it can form scar tissue as it attempts to repair itself. As decades go by, the disease can progress to cirrhosis, where so much scar tissue has built up that the liver can no longer function properly.

Your chance of developing cirrhosis roughly correlates with the number of years you've had hepatitis C, Schiff says. Anywhere from 5% to 20% of those chronically infected with the disease develop cirrhosis after 20 to 30 years, according to the CDC. The progression to cirrhosis occurs more quickly in men, those who are HIV positive, and those who drink alcohol. Once you have cirrhosis, you're at risk for developing liver cancer. "About 1% to 5% of chronic hepatitis C patients [in the United States] with cirrhosis will get a primary cancer of the liver," says Schiff.

But, mysteriously, not everyone who becomes infected with HCV develops a chronic form of the disease. Anywhere from 15% to 25% of infected people "will spontaneously clear it right off the bat without any medication," Schiff says. Others can be cured with antiviral drugs, which can eliminate the virus from the body and thus prevent liver problems. ●

## C the Signs

Should you be tested for hepatitis C? Talk with your doctor if you answer "yes" to any of the following, advises Eugene Schiff, MD.

**Have you ever injected yourself with a needle or shared needles?** This might be an uncomfortable conversation to have with your physician, but a one-time sharing of a needle during drug use experimentation decades ago could mean you're infected.

**Before 1992, did you receive a blood transfusion, organ transplant, or any blood product?**

**Have you had a sexual partner who had or has hepatitis C?** Though sexual transmission of the virus is low, it occurs more frequently in those who have multiple sexual partners and in people with HIV, according to the CDC.

**Have you ever had jaundice?** Jaundice—yellowing of your skin and the whites of your eyes—is an obvious sign of hepatitis.

**Are you between the ages of 45 and 65?** "Ask your doctor to test you," says Schiff. "That's in keeping with the new CDC guidelines."

By Christina Boufis, WebMD Contributing Writer

Reviewed by  
Brunilda Nazario, MD  
WebMD LEAD MEDICAL EDITOR



TYLER CAMPBELL PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES

STEVE WRUBEL/GETTY IMAGES

Get all the facts about hep C at the [Hepatitis Health center](#).  [WebMD.com](#)

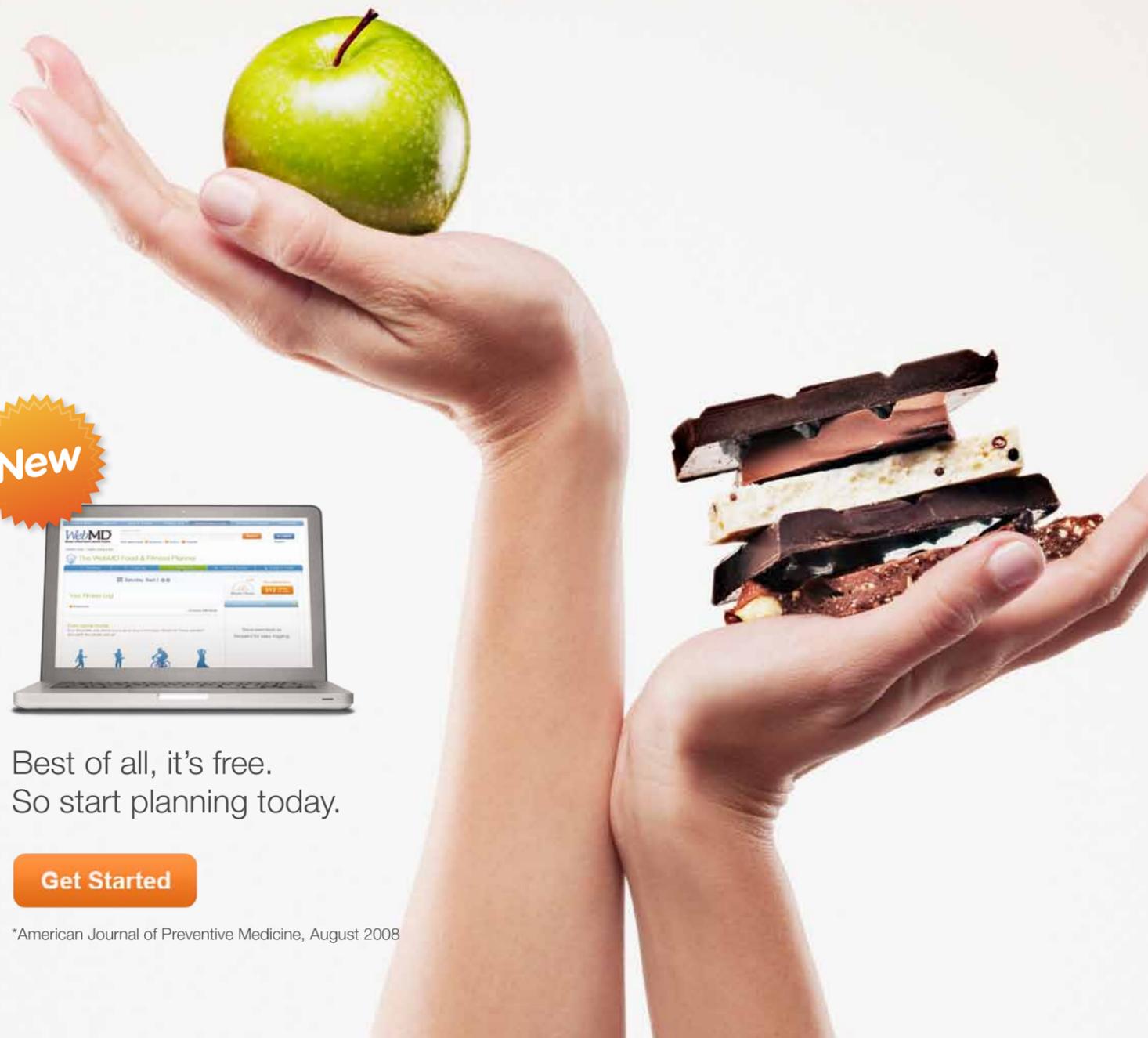
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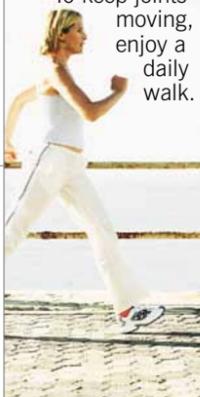
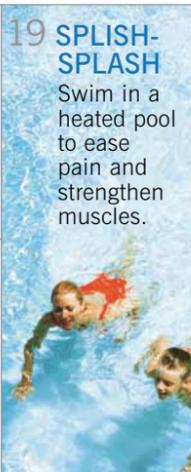
\*American Journal of Preventive Medicine, August 2008



**Pain & Arthritis**

**July**

**A month of tips**  
to boost your arthritis  
and pain smarts

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			4	5 <b>WARM UP</b> Ease morning stiffness with a relaxing, warm shower.		
	<b>Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month</b> begins July 1. Discover why arthritis isn't just an older person's disease at <a href="http://www.arthritis.org">www.arthritis.org</a> .					
	<b>8 LEAN ON ME</b> If hips, knees, or feet hurt when you walk, try a cane. 	<b>10 WALK ON</b> To keep joints moving, enjoy a daily walk. 	<b>11 FIGHT PAIN</b> Ask your doctor about using acetaminophen or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to curb pain. 	13	14	
	<b>16 MORE SALSA</b> This range-of-motion exercise helps keep you flexible. 		18	<b>19 SPLISH-SPLASH</b> Swim in a heated pool to ease pain and strengthen muscles. 	<b>20 HAND SAVERS</b> Buy helpful gadgets for opening jars and turning doorknobs. 	
	<b>23 WEIGHT WATCHER</b> Maintaining your ideal weight relieves stress and pain in your knees and hips. 		25		<b>27 SLEEP SUPPORT</b> Need support during slumber? Try a full-length body pillow.	
	<b>30 HOT OR COLD</b> Use a cold pack to reduce swelling and numb pain.	31	<b>TO YOUR HEALTH</b> Read up on the latest treatment news and expert tips for dealing with pain. Check out the <b>Pain Management</b> center at <a href="http://WebMD.com">WebMD.com</a> .			

CANE: STOCKBYGETTY IMAGES; DANCING: ANTOINE ROULEAU/GETTY IMAGES; MAN IN PAIN: STOCKBYGETTY IMAGES

Ease the pain with tips from the **Arthritis** center.  **WebMD.com**

Kyra Sedgwick  
opens up about her  
long-lived marriage,  
her recently empty  
nest, and life as a  
working mom



# get closer

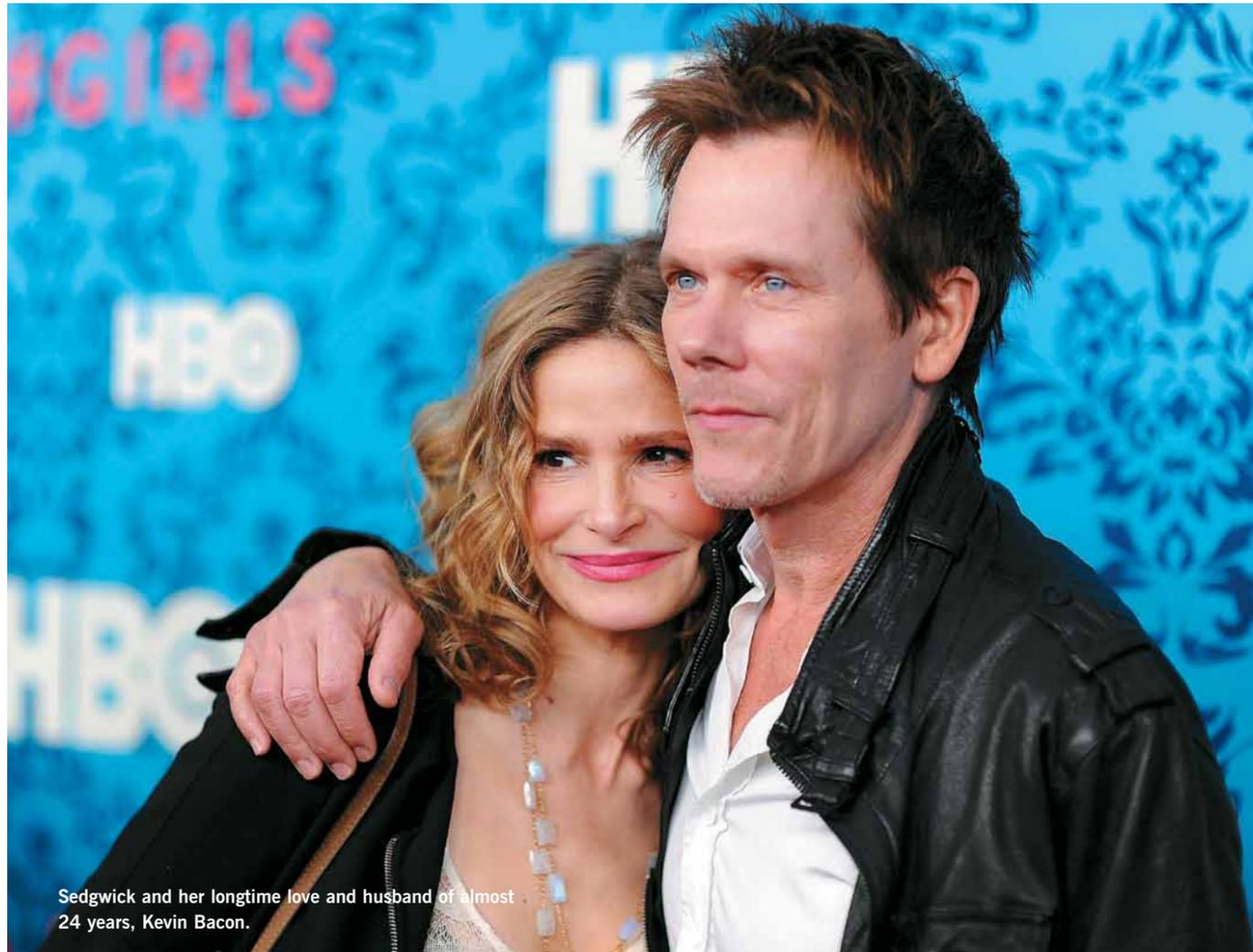
Kyra Sedgwick has to jump on another phone. It's her husband calling. She and actor Kevin Bacon will celebrate their 24th wedding anniversary this September, and there's a melty tenderness in her voice when she says, "Hi, honey...is everything OK?" There's a pause, and you can hear the smile—that screen-illuminating Sedgwick smile—in her voice as she says, "OK, I love you, bye."

Right there is a clue as to just why Sedgwick and Bacon are one of Hollywood's admired veteran couples. Though they married young and, some might say, hastily—she was just 22 when they met on the set of the PBS adaptation of the play *Lemon Sky*; they married within less than a year and conceived their son on their honeymoon—they are still going strong nearly a quarter-century later.

By Gina Shaw, WebMD Contributing Writer

Reviewed by  
Louise Chang, MD  
WebMD SENIOR MEDICAL EDITOR





Sedgwick and her longtime love and husband of almost 24 years, Kevin Bacon.

As a parent, you have such a great job, and you feel like you're pretty good at it—then you kinda get fired. But it's also the exact right nature of things, and I take solace in that.

"We don't take each other for granted," says Sedgwick, who will be 47 in August. As most two-career couples with kids can attest, that's an easy trap to fall into. "So many other things seem to be much more urgent. You're feeling comfortable and safe in your marriage, and you think you can put it on the back burner and go, well, that's OK, because this other thing is much more urgent: kids, work, Hollywood, whatever."

"And all of a sudden you realize that the thing you've taken for granted hasn't been nurtured and it's not healthy. I try to take care of my marriage like a precious garden."

Sedgwick pauses, clearly thinking she's just said something really sappy. "I'm a terrible gardener, by the way," she declares. "I managed to kill a ficus in my house! They're, like, indestructible."

### Nest Test

Since 2005, Sedgwick's marriage—and her relationship with kids Travis, now 23, and Sosie, who just turned 20—has weathered frequent separations required by her starring role as deputy chief Brenda Leigh Johnson in TNT's *The Closer*, a part that netted her both an Emmy and a Golden Globe Award. The Bacon-Sedgwick household is

firmly rooted in New York City, but the show was produced in Los Angeles. A few months ago, she wrapped up filming the last season of the series, which starts July 9. Now, she's looking forward to the release of one of the first films she's starred in since *The Closer* began, an Exorcist-type drama called *The Possession*, with Jeffrey Dean Morgan, due out at the end of August.

Much as she loved playing Brenda, Sedgwick says it was time for her to move on. "I miss the people and the camaraderie and making something like that, but I don't miss doing it," she explains. "I gave 150% every day, and I was definitely ready to be

done. On this visit"—she's calling during a jaunt back to Los Angeles—"I was seeing some folks from the show who are filming [TNT's upcoming series] *Major Crimes*, and I was thinking that I really didn't miss it. I love Brenda so much, but maybe it will take me a few years to feel nostalgic and miss her."

Something she is feeling a bit nostalgic for these days: her kids' time at home. Both Travis and Sosie are out on their own now, although Sedgwick says she and Bacon don't feel like empty nesters quite yet. "The kids are still around, but it's different. I think I grieved an entire year over the process, and I still get boo-hooy sometimes, but I'm so grateful that they're still talking to me and they want me to be part of their lives," she says. "I do miss that level of need and intimacy we once had. As a parent, you have such a great job, and you feel like you're pretty good at it—then you kinda get fired. But it's also the exact right nature of things, and I take solace in that."

In her wistful but comfortable acceptance of her new, less-urgent role in her

children's lives, Sedgwick reflects the reality of most parents after their nest empties, says Christine Proulx, PhD, an assistant professor in the human development and family studies department at the University of Missouri, whose research seems to demonstrate that the loneliness of the "empty nest" is largely a myth.

For a study published in the *Journal of Family Issues*, she interviewed 142 couples who were at the same stage of life as Sedgwick and Bacon—watching the youngest of two or three children leaving home. A majority, she says, found themselves truly enjoying their changed roles.

"They liked the shift from always having to monitor their children day to day, to becoming more of a peer or mentor," says Proulx. "It was very fulfilling for the

parents. I think many were surprised at the level of pleasure they derived from this new relationship with their children, as well as being able to spend more time with their spouse."

That's one thing Sedgwick plans to make the most of. She's said her heart still skips a beat when she sees Bacon enter a room—or when he writes one of his many love songs for her (in addition to his famously versatile acting career, Bacon has a band with brother Michael; they released *Philadelphia Road: The Best of the Bacon Brothers* last month). "My favorite song he's written for me is 'Kikko's Song'—my nickname is Kikko. 'Angelina' is another good one—my other nickname is Angel. It's about me, not Angelina Jolie," she says, laughing. "The songs are so sweet."

## Kyra's Top 4

As hard as actor Kyra Sedgwick works to nurture her marriage and family, she also takes time to care for herself. That's one reason she constantly appears on lists of women celebrities who look much younger than they are. "I spent the whole year last year thinking I was 46, so on my birthday, when I realized I had only been 45 and I'd just turned 46, that was awesome!" she says. How does she do it?

**1 She's fierce about exercise.** "It's like a Sedgwick thing. Sedgwicks for centuries have either been exercise addicts, or they kill themselves," she laughs. She's a fan of the ultra-bendy dance-cum-yoga body sculpting workout known as the Bar Method, and she's also discovered a new super-intense interval routine called the Tabata Protocol. "You can do it running or on an exercise bike, and it's very intense. I used to like spinning, but I hurt my knee."

**2 She cries.** "I talk about my feelings in a lot of different venues, and I let them come out, and I cry," she says. "I spent so many years on *The Closer* living Brenda's life six months out of the year, and some of my emotions got squashed down pretty low. Since I finished the show, I've been letting all that flow. I don't wear mascara now, and it's great!"

**3 She cuts herself some slack.** "I wish I hadn't given myself such a hard time about working when the kids were younger," she says. "I'd be giving myself a hard time about the work while I was at work, but I couldn't be home, so I wasn't in either place. I regret that. I've learned to let myself off the hook."

**4 She de-stresses by window shopping—online.** Sedgwick's favorite guilty pleasure is to log on to pricey shopping websites and fill her virtual cart with everything she wants. "I load up bags, but I don't actually check out," she says. "Net-a-Porter is fun because the prices there are so outrageous, you're like, 'I'm definitely *not* clicking yes to check out!'"—GS



Sedgwick and Bacon with their daughter, Sosie.



From left, Sedgwick in *Man on a Ledge*, *Phenomenon* with John Travolta, and *The Closer*.

# SplitDecision

Perhaps no one in the United States knows more about adult children of divorce and how they approach their own relationships than Judith Wallerstein, PhD, a psychologist and former senior lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley. Wallerstein's groundbreaking 25-year study tracked more than 100 children from the time their parents separated (the youngest child was 3 at the time) into young adulthood.

Most of these young people want to make sure they don't make the mistakes their parents made. "They tend to do it carefully, and they want their children to have everything they didn't have," says Wallerstein, who chronicled her findings in *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25-Year Landmark Study*. "They say over and over again, 'I don't want my son or my daughter to have the childhood I had.'"

Wallerstein, also the author of *What About the Kids? Raising Your Children Before, During, and After Divorce*, often advises adult children of divorce how to build healthy relationships of their own.

**Don't sweep it under the rug.** Talk about the sometimes-forbidden topic of why the divorce happened. "Go back to your parents and ask why. 'Why did you divorce? Looking back, do you think it was a good reason?'" Wallerstein says. "Children of divorce rarely feel they have permission to ask those questions, but this is exactly what they have a right to know."

**Take your time.** "Often, what I see is that during [young adults'] 20s, they experiment with different relationships and then they're able to make a choice," Wallerstein says. The big problem they have to overcome, she says, is that they don't have a frame of reference for a happy marriage.

"Whatever you can rescue out of your experience would be useful to pass on," Wallerstein advises. "It's a great gift to be able to say to your child, 'There's no connection between my divorce and your relationships. What happened to me doesn't have to happen to you. Divorce isn't in the genes.'"—GS

## Mom at Work

Although the sweet-but-steely detective Brenda Leigh Johnson is the role that made her a household name, Sedgwick has worked steadily ever since she won a part on the soap opera *Another World* when she was just 16. When her kids were younger, she and Bacon had a rule not to work at the same time. Sedgwick averaged about a role per year in films like *Singles*, *Phenomenon*, and *The Woodsman*, but she was still very much a working mom—and she's clear-eyed about the sacrifices that required.

"When I first had my kids, I thought, 'I really wish I was the person who could be happy and fulfilled only being a mom,'" she says. "But that's not me. I heard Meryl [Streep] talking the other day"—and here she laughs at herself. "You know, 'Meryl, my friend'—but we actually *are* friends!—anyway, she was talking about how no one in her family likes her to go to work. It's true!"

Sedgwick says she won't pretend there aren't drawbacks to working when you're the mom of young children. "There's a great line in this movie [*This Is My Life*, released in 1992] with Julie Kavner, where she plays a single mom who is a comedian and starts to make it when her kids are like 10 and 14," Sedgwick says. "She comes back from a tour and they're furious at her for having left. Someone says, 'Oh, they don't really mean it—they just want their mom to be happy.' She says, 'That's the

biggest load of s\*\*\*. They'd rather have me in the next room wanting to commit suicide than happy on the road.'"

That's a child's birthright, Sedgwick says. "They should have their parents there all the time, but that's not the way the world works. Like Freud said, we need love and work." She believes the family separations required for doing *The Closer* taught her how to handle that. "Before I left to start filming the show, someone told me to keep my heart where my feet were. I tried to do that. My heart was really at home, of course, but I wanted to show up and really be present for this."

Now she's focused on the upcoming release of *The Possession*, which represents a bit of a departure for her.

"It's cool, man," she says. "Ole [director Ole Bornedal] is like the Martin Scorsese of Denmark. I'd never done a movie like this before, and I don't think it reinvents the genre, but it's really good. I play a mom who's splitting up with her husband and the divorce is affecting the children. The movie is a metaphor about what happens when something evil gets into a family that loves each other, and how they have to come together. And there's this little girl in it, Natasha Calis, who's like the next Jodie Foster."

## Separate Peace

With her rather dramatic family history, Sedgwick's cards might have predicted a much less sunny personal life. Her father is one of the New England Sedgwicks, an old-money and old-drama family in which mental illness, drug addiction, and suicide figured along with judge-ships and names on the Declaration of Independence. One of her cousins was the model Edie Sedgwick, who became famous as artist Andy Warhol's muse in the 1960s and died of a drug overdose in the early 1970s.

Kyra was just 6 when her parents split, and says it wasn't until well after she and Bacon had married that she truly understood the impact of that trauma. "I was so young when I got married. I felt like Kev was this raft I clung to. I suddenly felt at home and safe for the first time in my whole life when I met him," she says.

When I first had my kids, I thought, 'I really wish I was the person who could be happy and fulfilled only being a mom.' But that's not me.

"But it took years later until I let myself have the feelings and know how deeply I was affected by the divorce of my parents. When I did realize it, I thought, 'I will never do that! I'm so grateful this will never happen to my kids.'"

"I don't think I would have stayed in a desperately unhappy marriage, but divorce was something I would have avoided at almost all costs. But I didn't have to. It was easy. I'm lucky. I couldn't be happier, really." ■



# Oh, Boy

By Gina Shaw, WebMD Contributing Writer

**W**hen Washington, D.C., mom Sara Durkin's son was 3, she got a call one day from his preschool. "They said he wasn't sitting in circle time, he wasn't sharing as much as he should, and he liked to be the center of attention," she recalls. There were other issues as well. He didn't like group activities, although he did like to play one-on-one with other children. He was busy and physical, but he didn't want to ride a bike and seemed a bit clumsy.

The school suggested that Durkin take her son to see an occupational therapist. "They said that he might have sensory processing disorder or something like that," she recalls. Occupational therapy (OT) helps adults do better at their job and daily tasks. OT helps children be more comfortable and successful at play and in school.

Durkin and her husband thought he was just being a 3-year-old boy, and that in some ways—such as seeking the company of adults and enjoying the limelight—he was simply taking after his father, a national TV news correspondent. They elected to skip OT.

Then within a few months she heard from several other D.C. families. Their sons, all around the same age, had also been referred for occupational therapy (by different schools) with the suggestion that they might have sensory processing (or integration) disorder (SPD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). "I have one neighbor who's a speech pathologist and another who's an audiologist, and they both told me [SPD] is one of the most over-diagnosed disorders these days," Durkin says.

What's going on here? Is there something really wrong with our kids—especially little boys? Or is "sensory processing disorder" the new ADHD—that is, a diagnosis of the moment that may well apply to certain kids who truly need professional help, but could also be over-applied to turn typical young-child behavior into an illness?

It's true that behavioral and developmental disorders are on the rise among America's children. One in every six children now has been diagnosed with a developmental disability, such as autism, ADHD, or learning disabilities, according to research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's 1.8 million more children than were diagnosed with similar conditions in the late 1990s. And nearly twice as many boys as girls have these conditions.

But what's not entirely clear is how much of this rise is due to a real increase in behavioral

Reviewed by  
Hansa Bhargava, MD  
WebMD MEDICAL EDITOR



PAUL VANTRETT/IMAGES

Some parents of young children, especially boys, often hear about sensory processing disorder. Is it a new childhood crisis or just the latest label?





problems, and how much can be attributed to greater willingness to diagnose children who seem more active or distracted than others, but who in the past might not have received a “behavioral disorder” label.

“Schools often make these calls with good intentions; often they want to find out what’s going on with a child who isn’t ‘fitting in’ with the regular model of schooling,” says Maureen Healy, MA, MBA, a child development expert who has advised public school programs in New York, Connecticut, California, and North Carolina.

This phenomenon may be occurring partly because we ask much more of preschool-age children than in previous decades. “We’ve compressed the curriculum more and more over the years, to the degree that what we’re expecting of younger children is developmentally inappropriate,” says John Schinnerer, PhD, a former school psychologist now in private practice in California and the author of *Guide to Self: The Beginner’s Guide To Managing Emotion and Thought*.

“Not being able to sit in circle time for 20 minutes or resist touching the person sitting 6 inches away from them? That’s totally normal for a 4- or 5-year-old boy. I’d say that for probably more than half of young boys, school just isn’t made for them.”

And why are parents of boys getting most of these phone calls? That may have to do with how boys’ brains are wired. The prefrontal cortex—the brain’s “CEO,” which helps us to make decisions, organize,

## Is there something really wrong with our kids—especially little boys?

This phenomenon may be occurring partly because we ask much more of preschool-age children than we have in previous decades.

analyze, and resist impulsive behavior—matures more slowly in boys.

“Boys are just antsy and full of energy, and part of that is because the ‘brakes’ in their brain aren’t fully wired yet,” says Ahsan Shaikh, MD, a child and adolescent psychiatrist for EMQ FamiliesFirst, a mental health and social services agency with offices throughout California.

### The ABCs of SPD

So what is sensory processing disorder? It’s been compared to a “neurological traffic jam,” in which sensory signals received by the brain—about everything from the taste and texture of a food to the intensity of a touch—become garbled and disorganized. People with SPD may be oversensitive (or undersensitive) to stimulation of any of the five senses.

Some examples: A typical child may cover her ears when the train with its loud whistle rockets by; a child with SPD may fall into hysterical fits of terror. A typical

child may wrinkle his nose and say that Grandma’s perfume is stinky, but a child with SPD might refuse to play at someone else’s house because he thinks they all smell yucky. (The Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation has a checklist of symptoms at [www.spdfoundation.net](http://www.spdfoundation.net).)

The concept of SPD has been around for a long time—it was first described in the 1960s by occupational therapist A. Jean Ayres, PhD—but the diagnosis gained traction in the late 1990s with the publication of *The Out-of-Sync Child*, by educator Carol Stock Kranowitz, MA. The Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation claims that as many as one in every 20 people—both children and adults—in the United States is affected by the condition. It often seems to be worse in children, though.

“Sensory dysregulation tends to get better with neurological maturation, but in many cases, it does not go away altogether,” says Allison Kawa, PsyD, a Los Angeles child psychologist.

“Most people learn coping strategies as they grow up. For example, people with sensitivity to light often find fluorescent lights irritating. As adults, they might choose to bring floor lamps into their office to avoid having to use them.

“Remember, we all engage in sensory seeking behavior (such as tapping a pencil or chewing a pen cap while concentrating) and sensory avoidance (I personally hate touching cold, mushy things like raw meat). It is when these needs or aversions interfere with our functioning and cause dysregulation that we have a disorder,” Kawa adds.

But not everyone is convinced that SPD is a distinct disorder at all—many suggest it is only a symptom related to other behavioral or developmental disorders, like

autism and ADHD. Even those who do think it exists are cautious about applying the SPD label.

“I see it all the time in kids, and I do refer for further evaluation by occupational therapists,” says Kawa. “But it does not yet appear in any of our diagnostic manuals, and it’s not something like depression that has been well researched and defined with a large body of evidence.”

“It can be a legitimate diagnosis,” Healy adds, “but I also think that a lot of highly sensitive kids get lumped with a label that’s not to their benefit. In extreme cases, it’s clear there’s a problem that needs help. But in milder situations, it’s very unclear if it makes sense to label these kids.”

### What Can Parents Do?

What if you realize that the school might be on to something? A referral to an occupational therapist can pretty much never hurt, says Shaikh. “This isn’t medication. It doesn’t have side effects,” he says. “There are a lot of adaptive, common-sense things that a good occupational therapist can do help a child with sensory issues.”

For example, perhaps your son has been fighting a lot at recess. The occupational therapist may find that he has a problem with knowing where his body is in space, so when another child bumps into him, he lashes out.

“A good OT will give him exercises to better develop that positional sense,” says Shaikh. “In general, with young kids, the more ‘nonmedical’ work—teaching and training—that can occur, the better off you are.”

But you shouldn’t take a referral from a school straight to an occupational therapist, advises Melanie Fernandez, PhD, a clinical psychologist and director of The Parent-Child Interaction Therapy Program at New York City’s Child Mind Institute. Instead, consult your pediatrician, and perhaps seek an evaluation from a child psychologist or psychiatrist.

“That diagnosis will help identify the most effective approach,” she says. “For example, the real issue might turn out to be ADHD, which occupational therapy doesn’t treat. An evaluation may also be

## Does Your Kid Need a Diagnosis?

Maybe, maybe not. First, consider taking one or more of these steps to help him or her adjust to a school environment.

**Discuss alternate activities.** “You might just have a kid who isn’t developmentally ready for a 20-minute circle time,” says Allison Kawa, PsyD. “After 10 minutes, perhaps he can be allowed to go to a beanbag chair and look at a book.”

**Hold your child back from kindergarten.** “Don’t start him early, especially if he has a late summer or early fall birthday,” John Schinnerer, PhD, advises. “Hold him out a year, let him be a kid and develop socially, mentally, and emotionally.”

**Look at simple things like nutrition, sleep, vision, and hearing.** Evaluating these areas may help you identify an easily correctable problem that might be causing behavioral issues. “My own son was a very wiggly little guy, and was even more so when he would eat sugary breakfast cereals,” says Ahsan Shaikh, MD. “When we started giving him more protein in the morning, a lot of his behaviors went away.” Note, however, that sugar doesn’t necessarily cause heightened activity in kids.

**Consider changing schools.** “A lot of kids are sensitive, but that doesn’t mean they have sensory integration disorder,” says Maureen Healy, MA, MBA. “They may just do better in a different school—for example, a more open-ended, nontraditional environment.”—GS

a way to establish what the condition isn’t—ruling out SPD or ADHD, but still identifying support that can take place in the classroom to help your child.”

Many providers, such as child psychiatrists or psychologists, may be willing to do a short “second opinion” consultation over the phone, says Kawa. “You can tell them that the school has brought up x, y, and z concerns about your child, and ask what they think. They may say that it sounds like you need an ADHD evaluation, or that it’s ‘typical boy stuff’ and suggest waiting a few months to see if it’s still a problem. Or they may tell you to come right in because it sounds like your child is really struggling.”

To find a qualified child psychologist or psychiatrist, contact the nearest major medical center or use the search tool provided by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry ([www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)).

Since occupational therapy can cost thousands of dollars out of pocket, you’re more likely to get insurance coverage for it if the referral comes from a pediatrician or a child psychologist or psychiatrist.

If your child *does* have sensory issues, Shaikh says, identifying them and intervening at an early age can be enormously helpful. “One child was just slamming into people, and [his parents] realized that he just needs to feel things pushing up against him,” he recalls.

“Every once in a while, the school has him crawl through plastic tunnels back and forth on his hands and knees, to get that need for stimulus out of him, and then he goes back into class and does fine. If you’re a kid who struggles with this, every part of the day can be a bit irritating. Getting his needs met by modifying his day can make a world of difference.”

Durkin’s son started a new school last fall, one that seems to be a better fit for his personality. But his year at the old school ended well, and the teachers didn’t mention occupational therapy again.

“I know they had his best interests at heart,” she says. “Some of the things they complained about early on, he’d already stopped doing. I think in a lot of kids, it’s just a question of maturity. They don’t all mature at the same pace, and that doesn’t always mean there’s anything wrong.” ●



# SLEEP

# QUIZ

## DO YOU HAVE GOOD SLEEP HABITS?

**Schraderj4**, a member of the WebMD sleep disorders community, doesn't have a problem falling asleep. Her issue, she writes, **"is STAYING asleep! I sleep for about an hour at a time, sometimes a little more or less. It affects everything in my life now as I am always tired, can't remember things I've known for years, can't concentrate on simple tasks."** Schraderj4 may have a problem with "sleep hygiene." Do you know how the following affect your shut-eye?

- 1 Do you watch TV, eat, or discuss emotional issues in bed?
  - Yes  No
- 2 Do you smoke or drink alcohol or caffeine before sleeping?
  - Yes  No
- 3 Do you exercise before bedtime?
  - Yes  No
- 4 Does your pet sleep with you?
  - Yes  No

**Answers:** 1. Use your bed only for sleep or sex; other activities can make it harder for you to fall asleep. 2. Nicotine is a stimulant and so can disrupt sleep. Caffeine is also a stimulant, so avoid it late in the day. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but later in the night it can affect the quality of your sleep. 3. Regular exercise makes it easier to fall asleep and contributes to sounder sleep, but do it at least three hours before bedtime. 4. Keep pets out of your bed so they don't wake you or trigger allergies.

If you improve your sleep habits and still don't sleep well, talk with your doctor.

Source: National Sleep Foundation; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; and the WebMD Sleep Disorders Health Center

### DID YOU KNOW?

During middle age, sleep patterns change: **We wake up more** during the night than in our younger years.



## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR

- 1 Do my sleep problems indicate I may have a sleep disorder? Is so, what type?
- 2 Are my sleep problems caused by an underlying medical or mental illness?
- 3 Will a sleep medication help? Are prescription sleep medications habit-forming?
- 4 Should I see a sleep specialist? Will I need to undergo overnight testing?

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sleep disorders

# DIABETES

# QUIZ

## IS TYPE 2 IN STORE FOR YOU?

**Alliej025** worries she's at risk for diabetes. **"My sister had diabetes and lost both legs and her life last year,"** alliej025 writes in the WebMD diabetes community. **"I do not want to end up like she was. I know that being overweight doesn't help. I also have numbness and tingling in my feet, legs, and hands. Is any of this enough to be concerned?"** What do you think? Take the quiz to learn more about the risk factors for type 2.

- 1 Young people get type 2 diabetes more often than older people.
  - True  False
- 2 Being overweight increases your risk of getting type 2 diabetes.
  - True  False
- 3 If a family member has diabetes, your own risk increases.
  - True  False
- 4 Caucasians are the ethnic group most likely to get diabetes.
  - True  False

**Answers:** 1. False. In general, the risk of type 2 diabetes goes up with age and people age 45 and older are more likely to get it than younger people. However, greater numbers of people younger than 40—including teens and people in their 20s—now develop the disease as a result of the U.S. obesity epidemic. 2. True. Too many pounds can hamper your body's ability to use insulin properly, which can lead to type 2 diabetes. 3. True. A parent, brother, or sister with type 2 diabetes raises your risk. 4. False. Native Americans, Alaska Natives, African-Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans, and Pacific Islanders get type 2 diabetes more often than Caucasians.

Source: American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, and the WebMD Diabetes Health Center

### DID YOU KNOW?

**7 million** Americans have diabetes but don't know it.



## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR

- 1 If I have pre-diabetes, will I definitely develop diabetes? Can I avoid it?
- 2 What's the best way for me to control my blood sugar levels?
- 3 How can I lose weight and exercise safely if I have diabetes?
- 4 Will I need to inject insulin? What other medications can help me?

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diabetes

## QUIZ

## THE LOWDOWN ON CHOLESTEROL

An **243681** got a wake-up call when she received her most recent cholesterol results. **"398!"** she tells WebMD's cholesterol management board, **"and the 'bad cholesterol' was 200! Help. I'm trying to manage my diet but it's so difficult...any tips?"** WebMD's Cholesterol Management and Eating & Diet centers have lots of good pointers. Before you look there, take this quiz to find out how much you already know.

- 1 If a food product's package says "low cholesterol," it's also low in fat.
  - True  False
- 2 The best age to have your cholesterol level checked is 50, because that's the peak age for heart attacks in men.
  - True  False
- 3 Women don't get heart disease very often, so they don't need to worry about cholesterol.
  - True  False
- 4 There is no cholesterol in peanut butter.
  - True  False

**Answers:** 1. False. The two don't necessarily go hand in hand. For example, coconut oil has no cholesterol but is high in saturated fat. 2. False. Everyone age 20 and older should have a blood test to check for cholesterol levels at least every five years. 3. False. Heart disease is the top killer of both men and women. Because cholesterol plays a role in heart disease, women must watch their levels, too. 4. True. Dietary cholesterol comes from animal products (such as meat, eggs, and dairy products), not plant foods (such as peanuts).

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

## DID YOU KNOW?

Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains contain no cholesterol.



## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR

- 1 How do I know if I am at risk for a heart attack? What are my risk factors?
- 2 Can I control my cholesterol through lifestyle changes alone?
- 3 Do I need to take cholesterol-lowering drugs? Will I need to take them long-term?
- 4 How low can I realistically expect my cholesterol to go? What should I aim for?

## HEART HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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## Joel McHale [ACTOR/COMEDIAN]



them with love even if they are tiny and don't understand what's going on.

**Did your son's illness encourage you to pay more attention to your own health?**

No. I drink just as much as I used to. Kidding. I am not a smoker, but I didn't ever think about my health at all. I didn't think about eating more whole grains or drinking more wheatgrass juice.

**Is there anything you wish you had known about health when you were younger?**

I used to run so much. I wish I had known how rough that could be on your knees. Now I do push-ups.

**What is your best health habit? Your worst?**

I eat a lot of vegetables, and I do a lot of push-ups. At random times, I will just drop on the floor and do some push-ups. I've usually done a couple hundred by the end of the day. My worst [health habit] is too much wine and going crazy for sweets.

**Is it easy to switch off after work? Do you ever bring your TV personality home with you?**

It's part of the person you are, so you can't really switch it off completely. At home, I can become very distracted by work sometimes. I do need to get off the phone and put it down.

**Have you passed on the funny gene to your sons?**

Both are hams in their own way. They definitely can tell jokes. When I make a bad joke, Eddie says, "Daddy, no more jokes for a year."

**You have been married more than 15 years. How do you and your wife keep your relationship fresh?**

You have to choose your spouse every day. Tell yourself that this is the person that I love and want to be with. It has to be something you do consciously, then it becomes subconscious.

**You've often said that 90% of what's on TV sucks. Does that make it hard for you to stay positive about your profession?**

I'm always very positive because someone is paying me. Seriously, just like all art and architecture, 90% of TV is crap but the other 10% is spectacular. Even with the advent of 1,000 cable channels, the ratio stays the same. But I think the jury's out on whether I'm in the 10%. I think I am, but then I'm pretty arrogant. Plus, it would be weird for me to say "my shows suck." I'm very fortunate to be with the shows that I'm on.—Matt McMillen

**You star in two hit TV shows: NBC's comedy series *Community* and E!'s satirical *The Soup*. You've got a new movie, *Ted*, which came out this summer. How tough is it to balance career and family?**

Here's one strategy: Never sleep. That way you can get everything done. Seriously, though, at all times, I make time for the family, even though I'm not very organized about that. I take them with me on trips when I can. I try to get home to dinner every night, but it's really difficult to get home all the time. I try to keep a rhythm no matter how crazy it gets. I hurl myself at my family whenever I can.

**Your first son, Eddie, had open-heart surgery as a newborn. How did you and your wife make it through that frightening time?**

He was born with two large holes in his heart. It was horrific; we couldn't believe it. But we just started dealing with it. There's nothing else you can do but proceed. It was a dark tunnel, but we came out the other end. For other parents, it's a tunnel that never ends.

**What advice do you have for parents who find themselves faced with serious health issues with their children?**

You have to dump your life into your child. You have to live for them. That's when you really have to be a parent and shower

JUSTIN STEPHENS/AUGUST

Read [Joel McHale's full interview.](#) [WebMD.com](#)

# WebMD<sup>®</sup>Pets

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Summer 2012

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## Boarding Pass How to find the right kennel

**Q** ▶ My family is leaving for summer vacation soon. How do I choose the best kennel for our dog?

**A** ▶ “Don’t wait,” says Nana Will of Gold Hill, Colo., a dog trainer for more than 20 years. Will conducts seminars to train doggy day care staffers at her facility and does consulting work across the country. “Start checking kennels out now, not right before you have to leave. Ask your friends or your veterinarian for references. Visit the facility you’re considering and get a tour,” she says.

Ask the staff about the services they offer and if there are structured daily activities. Can you bring your own dog food to keep your dog on the same diet? See what the sleeping quarters are like, and ask who provides the bedding. What’s their veterinary care? Take note of how they handle the dogs and the facility’s cleanliness.

If your dog hasn’t been at a kennel for a while, and you’re leaving on a long-term vacation, it’s probably best to board your dog for a night or two before you go to get him used to it, she adds.

ON THE COVER: BLEACHER + EVERARD PHOTOGRAPHY; RIGHT: PLATT/GETTY IMAGES; JULIA CHRISTIE/GETTY IMAGES



Audrey Cook, BVM&S  
WebMD PET HEALTH EXPERT

My dog’s nose is hot and dry today. Does that mean he’s sick?

The common belief that a healthy dog has a cold, wet nose and a sick dog has a hot, dry nose is FALSE.

Here’s why: The temperatures of dogs’ noses fluctuate day to day, even hour to hour. It’s hard to say exactly why (it could be the environment or it could be what they’ve been up to recently). But a dog can be perfectly healthy and have a warm, dry nose. A dog can be really sick (think heart disease or critically injured) and have a cold, moist nose.

The moistness of your dog’s nose is also not an indicator of health, says Steven Marks, DVM, clinical associate professor of critical care and internal medicine at North Carolina State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. “In a very dehydrated dog, yes, the nose might be dry,” he says. “But dogs can have moist noses because they’re healthy, and they can have moist noses when they have a nasal disease. It’s just not a reliable sign.”

Better indicators of a dog’s health are symptoms such as not eating, not drinking, or behaving oddly.



**Q** ▶ My cat is more than 10 years old. How can I help her age well?

**A** ▶ Cats tend to age more gracefully than dogs, but as the years go by, they can’t jump to the top of the refrigerator anymore. Their appetites wane. They sleep more.

Marty Becker, DVM, a veterinarian at the North Idaho Animal Hospital in Sandpoint, Idaho, has this advice to help your cat age well.

**Schedule twice-annual “wellness” visits.**

“There’s a grace period for many illnesses: If you catch it early on, it’s usually less expensive and treatment is much more successful. We can do routine tests, such as blood tests or urinalysis, to pick up on the very earliest signs of health problems,” Becker says.

**Make favorite spots easy to reach.** Give her ramps or steps so she can get to the window to bird-watch.

**Buy a litter box with shorter sides.** A tall litter box can be hard for her to get in and out of.

**Get your cat close to her ideal body weight.**

Your cat may also need a special diet to treat specific health conditions, such as a kidney diet or a liver diet. Ask your veterinarian.

**Make sleep and food appealing.** Give her softer bedding. Heat her food to release the aromas. Cat fountains help encourage cats to drink, which can be a big problem with older cats.



Drew Weigner, DVM, ABVP  
WebMD PET HEALTH EXPERT

Get more expert answers to your pet health questions.





# Dog

# Show

## Maria Menounos' pooches make life entertaining

By Melanie D.G. Kaplan, WebMD Contributing Writer



It's slight consolation to us mere mortals to know that entertainment superstar Maria Menounos hasn't always had her act together. In fact, she freely admits she used to be a slob.

"After I moved to L.A., my boyfriend took it upon himself to clean out my desk, and he found ancient to-do lists" that never got done, she says. "He was genuinely sad. He said, 'It was such a mess! You poor thing, I don't know how you were living like that.'"

But thanks to her uber-organized man, writer and producer Keven Undergaro, Menounos now counts herself among the orderly. She says that's what has given her the time and peace of mind to fit so many fulfilling things into her life—including picking up stray pups on the streets of Los Angeles.

Today, the 34-year-old host of the TV entertainment news series *Extra* is so organized that nearly everything in her house—with the exception of her four rescue dogs and Undergaro—is neatly labeled. All of her dogs are white, but she quickly points out that she doesn't have a "white fetish."

"That's just a coincidence," Menounos laughs. "They all just came to me." Baby and Benjamin are bichons, Apollo (who was thrown from a moving car before he was rescued) is a German shepherd, and Athena (who was in a puppy mill) is a poodle.

"Benjamin has so many expressions, he's like a little person," she says. "And when Apollo gets jealous, he does this"—Menounos makes a high-pitched wailing sound. "But generally, he's the happiest dog you

will ever meet in your life—and he's a hero because he rescued the bichons from the pool." She says Athena is the "most soulful, appreciative lover on the planet." And Baby? "She's just like me—independent and very much a tomboy, but needs her hugs. She just loves to play. And be happy."

Born to Greek immigrants, Menounos developed a strong work ethic at an early age, helping her parents clean nightclubs in Boston. She studied broadcast journalism and film in college, and at 23, she became the youngest person ever to host CBS's *Entertainment Tonight*. She also holds the distinction of having conducted the only TV interview with the entire Obama family. She played herself in the film *Tropic Thunder*, starred in *Kickin' It Old Skool*, and did voice work for a James Bond video game. She's appeared on NBC's *Scrubs*, CBS's *Without a Trace*, HBO's *Entourage*, and The CW's *One Tree Hill*.

Most recently, Menounos and partner Derek Hough nearly made it to the season finale of *Dancing With the Stars* on ABC. "It was the most wonderful experience of my

life, hands down," she says. "Learning how to dance was something I'd always wanted to do. So with this show, I got to have my little-girl dance recital, with my costumes and fringe and glitter—and my parents sitting in the front row."

Menounos created the nonprofit Take Action Hollywood! ([takeactionhollywood.com](http://takeactionhollywood.com)), which helps raise awareness for causes ranging from type 2 diabetes and autism to the environment and pet adoption. She also serves as a diabetes awareness ambassador for the Entertainment Industry Foundation.

On top of all that (and a dog allergy), Menounos manages to rove the city, looking for strays. She used to volunteer at the Glendale Humane Society, but now she just keeps water bowls, treats, and leashes in the trunk of her car. "I realized I needed something to catch these dogs when they were running," she says. "I'm usually lucky and figure out where they come from. Some have tags, but often, I've just had this crazy intuition and find the house where they belong. It's so sad to see them wandering."

As for Menounos' next big thing, there are a few "secret" projects she can't yet talk about. But no matter what's in the stars for this star, we can be sure she'll be on top of her to-do list. ■

Reviewed by  
William Draper, DVM  
WebMD PET HEALTH EXPERT



LEFT AND ABOVE: BLEACHER + EVERARD PHOTOGRAPHY

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# Fur WARNING



Is your cat's grooming excessive? Learn the signs

Cats are meticulous groomers, but what happens when the grooming goes into overdrive? Sometimes licking, scratching, and chewing can become compulsive, annoying you and damaging your cat's skin and coat.

If your cat is doing any of these things compulsively, you'll probably catch her in the act. If you don't, your first clue may be the disappearance of her fur, often in strips along her back or stomach. Although compulsive cat scratching, licking, or chewing behaviors can develop in any animal, they are more common in Siamese cats and other Oriental breeds. Female cats are more likely than males to lick, chew, or pull on their fur.

Several medical problems can also lead to compulsive grooming, so see your veterinarian to help determine the cause and the best course of action. Here are some of the most common culprits.

**Parasites.** Your cat can have fleas without your knowing it. Because they're excellent groomers, cats may remove all traces of fleas. If you notice your cat licking his lower back obsessively, with or without scabs on the neck, fleas might be the problem. Other parasites, including ticks, mites, and ringworm, can also prompt scratching, licking, or chewing.

**Allergies.** Just like people, cats may develop itchy, irritated skin if they're allergic to something in their environment.

**Dry skin.** Dry winter air or nutritional inadequacies can contribute to flaky skin that gets your cat started licking or scratching for relief.

**Pain.** If you see your cat licking or biting at the same spot over and over again, she could be feeling pain or discomfort in that area.

**Boredom, anxiety, or compulsive disorder.** Compulsive chewing, scratching, or licking behaviors often develop in cats who are bored, stressed, or anxious. This is more likely in indoor cats, who may get less exercise and stimulation than outdoor cats.

Compulsive disorders often begin with changes in a cat's environment, such as a move or a new animal or baby in the house.

By Hilary Parker, WebMD Contributing Writer

What can you and your vet do about compulsive grooming behaviors? Here are some ways to address the problem.

**Get rid of parasites.** Because it can be hard to diagnose flea infestation in cats, take your cat to your veterinarian for a checkup. If fleas, mites, or other parasites are present, your veterinarian can recommend the right treatment for your pet. Taking care of these parasites can eliminate your cat's problem behaviors.

**Change foods.** Putting cats on a six-week exclusion diet can help you determine whether food allergies are the problem. You may have to try several diets before you find one that works. Your veterinarian may prescribe certain fatty acids or other nutritional supplements if dry skin is to blame for your cat's scratching and licking.

**Use medication.** Depending on how badly your cat has damaged her skin, your veterinarian may prescribe steroids, antihistamines, or antibiotics. If your cat's compulsion is caused by psychological factors, a vet can prescribe clomipramine, an anti-anxiety medication, or amitriptyline, which helps fight anxiety.

**Address anxiety or boredom.** If you and your vet can find no physical cause for your pet's behaviors, try to improve your cat's state of mind. Make sure your cat feels safe, loved, and comfortable and is getting enough stimulation and exercise. You may find it helps to desensitize your cat by slowly and carefully exposing her to things she fears. Counter-conditioning—training your cat to associate something pleasurable, like a treat, with something she fears—may also help reduce anxiety. ■

Reviewed by  
D. West Hamryka, DVM  
WebMD PET HEALTH EXPERT



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pet health

# Puppy Love

Which breed is best for your family?

By Sandy Eckstein, WebMD Contributing Writer

Your kids have been begging for a puppy for years. You've been able to temporarily appease them with some fish or a hamster. But this time, only a canine will do.

Although many people are happy to get a mixed-breed puppy, others want to know a little more about what that cute ball of fur will look like in a year. If that's the case, consider purebred dogs. How do you find the best one for your family? Gina DiNardo, assistant vice president of the American Kennel Club (AKC), offers these pointers.

**Do your homework.** Search the AKC website and look at the breeds that interest you. Determine exercise and grooming requirements, and the temperament and trainability of each. Once you've narrowed your choice down to a few breeds, talk to some experts who know these types of dogs. Attend a dog show and meet the breeders.

**Consider the kids.** Dogs that are highly trainable are usually eager to please and tend to be family-oriented, rather than attaching themselves to one person. For example, sporting breeds were once bred to work side-by-side with humans, taking direction from their owners. They're also among the most popular family dogs, like golden and Labrador retrievers. Some of the herding breeds are highly trainable as well, such as German shepherds and collies. But, DiNardo says, "all breeds—if socialized properly and brought up with children—will be fine with kids."

**Assess your lifestyle.** Think about your family's activities and lifestyle. If you want a quiet, mellow pet, don't get a dog that was bred for hunting. If you want a high-energy dog, consider the sporting, herding, and working breeds. Keep in mind that dogs bred to work usually need both physical and mental exercise, or they're going to be unhappy. An unhappy dog can be a destructive dog. Be honest with yourself about how much time you want to spend on your new dog. Lots of dogs don't require a great deal of exercise, but many others do.

**Think about size.** If you have young children, a larger, more durable breed might be best. When a small child pulls on an ear or steps on a foot, a large dog is more accepting of this kind of rough treatment. ●

Reviewed by  
Mark J. Stickney, DVM  
WebMD PET HEALTH EXPERT



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