

MARCH-APRIL 2023

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Be Kind

In the world we live in today, I believe we need more kindness and empathy. Mental health illnesses like anxiety, depression, PTSD, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder are on the rise and it's not only Covid that is to blame. We seem to have lost the ability to be kind and I think I know why.

When we think life is good, we feel kind, compassionate, and even generous towards one another. But the chronic stress we have all been subjected to in the past few years have exhausted and depleted everything that's good in us – good health, good outlook, good relationships, and even our good heart.

Most acts of unkindness are not really intended. It is more a result of carelessness or ignorance as we do not realize how others feel hurt or are experiencing some form of distress. A simple apology is often sufficient to appease the offended individuals.

The worst type of unkindness is when people gain pleasure from the distress of others, particularly where the distress is intense, and are unapologetic about what they have done. Such actions are evil rather than just bad or wrong. Two examples stand out:

- When people are intentionally rude and nasty online because they think they can hide behind anonymity.
- Another is abusing and mistreating people who are economically or politically powerless like subordinates, shop employees, house helpers, and the poor and dispossessed in general.

To bring back kindness to our lives, we at *Healthy Options* are launching **Be Kind** campaign beginning this month. But being kind must begin with us and this means taking good care of our health, body, and mind first. Our **Be Kind** advocacy aims to encourage people to make random acts of kindness by giving suggestions in all our communication channels. Some might say love is all we need but love (like respect) needs to be earned. Kindness, on the other hand, is for everyone including strangers.

We believe random acts of kindness can make the world a better and happier place for everyone. We want to encourage others to repeat the good deeds they've experienced themselves – contributing to a more positive and less toxic community. We hope you will do something kind today....and every day.

Finally, here's a quote from Lady Gaga about kindness: *"Kindness heals people. it's what brings us together. It's what makes us healthy."*

Best of health,
Romy Sia
romy@healthyoptions.com.ph

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Be Kind to Yourself

5 Self-Care Practices for Every Area of Your Life

By Elizabeth Scott, PhD



All the stress relief activities in the world won't help if you aren't taking care of yourself. Meditation won't do you any good if you aren't getting adequate sleep. In fact, when you try to meditate, you might doze off because you aren't taking care of your body's need for sleep.

Similarly, hitting the gym once in a while won't relieve much stress if you're not regularly fueling your body with healthy, nutrient-dense food. You need to take care of your basic needs first if you want your stress relief activities to be effective.

What Is Self-Care?

Self-care has been defined as a multidimensional, multifaceted process of purposeful engagement in strategies that promote healthy functioning and enhance well-being. Essentially, the term

describes a conscious act a person takes in order to promote their own physical, mental, and emotional health.

There are many forms self-care can take. It could be ensuring you get enough sleep every night or stepping outside for a few minutes for some fresh air.

Self-care is vital for building resilience toward those stressors in life that you can't eliminate. When you've taken steps to care for your mind and body, you'll be better equipped to live your best life.

Unfortunately, however, many people view self-care as a luxury, rather than a priority. Consequently, they're left feeling overwhelmed, tired, and ill-equipped to handle life's inevitable challenges. It's important to assess how you're caring for yourself in several different domains so you can ensure you're caring for your mind, body, and spirit.

Different Types of Self-Care

Self-care isn't just about finding ways to relax. It's about taking care of yourself mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. In order to care for your health and well-being, it is important to find a balance that allows you to address each of these areas. Sometimes you might need more self-care in one specific area in order to restore balance or find relief from a stressor in your life.

1. Physical Self-Care

You need to take care of your body if you want it to run efficiently. Keep in mind that there's a strong connection between your body and your mind. When you're caring for your body, you'll think and feel better too.

Physical self-care includes how you're fueling your body, how much sleep you're getting, how much physical activity you are doing, and how well you're caring for your physical needs. Attending healthcare appointments, taking medication as prescribed, and managing your health are all part of good physical self-care.

When it comes to physical self-care, ask yourself the following questions to assess whether there might be some areas you need to improve:

- Are you getting adequate sleep?
- Is your diet fueling your body well?
- Are you taking charge of your health?
- Are you getting enough exercise?

2. Social Self-Care

Socialization is key to self-care. But, often, it's hard to make time for friends and it's easy to neglect your relationships when life gets busy.

Close connections are important to your well-being. The best way to cultivate and maintain close relationships is to put time and energy into building your relationships with others.

There isn't a certain number of hours you should devote to your friends or to work on your relationships. Everyone has slightly different social needs. The key is to figure out what your social needs are and to build enough time in your schedule to create an optimal social life.

To assess your social self-care, consider:

- Are you getting enough face-to-face time with your friends?
- What are you doing to nurture your relationships with friends and family?

3. Mental Self-Care

The way you think and the things that you're filling your mind with greatly influence your psychological well-being.

Mental self-care includes doing things that keep your mind sharp, like puzzles, or learning about a subject that fascinates you. You might find reading books or watching movies that inspire you fuels your mind.

Mental self-care also involves doing things that help you stay mentally healthy. Practicing self-compassion and acceptance, for example, helps you maintain a healthier inner dialogue.

Here are a couple of questions to consider when you think about your mental self-care:

- Are you making enough time for activities that mentally stimulate you?
- Are you doing proactive things to help you stay mentally healthy?

4. Spiritual Self-Care

Research shows that a lifestyle including religion or spirituality is generally a healthier lifestyle.

Nurturing your spirit, however, doesn't have to involve religion. It can involve anything that helps you develop a deeper sense of meaning, understanding, or connection with the universe. Whether you enjoy meditation, attending a religious service, or praying, spiritual self-care is important.

As you consider your spiritual life, ask yourself:

- What questions do you ask yourself about your life and experience?
- Are you engaging in spiritual practices that you find fulfilling?

5. Emotional Self-Care

It's important to have healthy coping skills to deal with uncomfortable emotions, like anger, anxiety, and sadness. Emotional self-care may include activities that help you acknowledge and express your feelings regularly and safely.

Whether you talk to a partner or close friend about how you feel, or you set aside time for leisure activities that help you process your emotions, it's important to incorporate emotional self-care into your life.

When assessing your emotional self-care strategies, consider these questions:

- Do you have healthy ways to process your emotions?
- Do you incorporate activities into your life that help you feel recharged?

>> Continued from page 3



Why Is Self-Care Important?

Having an effective self-care routine has been shown to have a number of important health benefits. Some of these include:

1. Reducing anxiety and depression
2. Reducing stress and improving resilience
3. Improving happiness
4. Increasing energy
5. Reducing burnout
6. Stronger interpersonal relationships

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), self-care is important because it can help promote health, prevent disease, and help people better cope with illness.

Specific forms of self-care have also been linked to different health and wellness benefits, including a longer life. Exercise, finding a sense of purpose in life, and sleep have all been connected to an increased lifespan.

Develop Your Self-Care Plan

An effective self-care plan should be tailored to your life and your needs. It needs to be something created by you, for you. Customizing your own self-care plan can act as a preventative measure to make sure that you don't get overwhelmed, overstressed, and burned out.

As you are building your self-care plan, the following steps can be helpful:

- **Consider your stressors:** Think about the aspects of these areas that cause stress and consider some ways you might address that stress.
- **Devise self-care strategies:** Think about some activities that you can do that will help you feel better in each of these areas of your life. Spending time with friends or developing boundaries, for example, can be a way to build healthy social connections.
- **Take small steps:** You don't have to tackle everything all at once. Identify one small step you can take to begin caring for yourself better.
- **Schedule time to focus on your needs:** Even when you feel like you don't have time to squeeze in one more thing, make self-care a priority. When you're caring for all aspects of yourself, you'll find that you are able to operate more effectively and efficiently. 🌱

source: [verywellmind.com](https://www.verywellmind.com)

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The Attractive Power of Red and Plumper Red Lips

By Sandra Wallace – Senior Injector (RN)



The Power of Red: What is it about red plump lips that is so attractive? A woman wearing red lipstick (or a red dress) certainly tends to stand out in a crowd. But what is it, exactly, that makes wearing red so attractive?

Is it the colour red itself? Or the contrast between red and the colours in your skin, hair or eyes? Psychologists and others have actually done research studies on the colour red to investigate the psychology of red.

Wearing Red Can Give You a Competitive Edge

So does Red help or hinder your chances in life – or the kind of attention you get? One study found that contestants in a physical contest had a better chance of winning if they were wearing red than any other colour.

Researchers have concluded that wearing red improved the sense of dominance over others in competition and seeing other competitors who were wearing red increased the perception of the other person as either dominant and/or being a threat. In other words, red does symbolise power but it can also symbolise ‘watch out.’

But these are just for competitive situations. What about facial attractiveness and the power of red? Redness in faces equates to attractiveness when women rate men’s attractiveness.

In November 2016, U.S. researchers reported that when women view men, the redness in the men’s faces positively influenced how attractive they rated the men. The women also judged the men as healthier.

The opposite is also true in how men rate women’s attractiveness – red apparently matters. In another study by the same researchers, men rated women as more attractive if their face was redder, and rated them less attractive if their skin was not as red. They also judged the women as healthier.

It is likely that these perceptions have to do with our innate, sometimes unconscious responses to what we consider to be healthy in a potential partner. If your facial skin is redder, there’s likely to be more blood flow to the skin and in general in your body. And having good circulation is usually a sign of good health, as well as youthfulness and the perceived potential to reproduce.

The Power Of Red in Photographs

In yet another study, this one in the UK in 2010, scientists allowed participants to change the colouring of the skin of women’s faces on a photograph to make the woman look more attractive in their view.

The participants increased the redness of the faces, especially the lips, which increased the contrast in the face. The scientists concluded that the association of the lip colour contrast and attractiveness may be attributable to its association with oxygenated blood including estrogen levels, sexual arousal and cardiac/respiratory health.

The Psychology of Colour and the Power of Red in Fashion

Wearing red works, too, to improve perceptions of attractiveness. It can draw attention and may leave a more positive impression than, say, wearing brown, beige or even black. What do we know about wearing red? Recent studies show that a woman wearing red clothes draws men's attention and that women who wear red are seen as being "warmer" and more competent. Others note they even feel more confident – and more alluring – when wearing red. So red is a colour of power that can command attention – on your lips or as a fashion choice.

Studies of the Red Effect and Attractiveness

At the University of Phoenix, researchers handed a picture of a female wearing a red or white shirt eating healthy or unhealthy food. They asked the participants to rate the female for attractiveness.

When the woman wore red, she was rated as being more attractive. But if she wore red and ate an unhealthy food, the red effect didn't occur. She wasn't as attractive. So perhaps the context of wearing red, and behaviours we see linked to a person wearing red, may either enhance or negate the effect of the power of red alone.

Red Lips: Do Cosmetics Really Help? – Yes!

Many women swear wearing red lipstick and other makeup colours makes a huge difference in how they perceive their own attractiveness. Scientists in the UK believe they have the red effect figured out. They report that the use of cosmetics by women seems to consistently increase their attractiveness. It's because the cosmetics increase the contrasts (in their skin colouring) that decline with age, such as when the skin starts to appear dull or 'lifeless' due to less circulation.

When you look at your mom and grandmother, their features may seem to blend together; but wearing makeup makes their eyes, eyebrows and mouth stand out so they look more youthful – and often, a bit more beautiful in their and in others' perceptions. It all has to do with colour. And facial skin health and skin tone colour, as we age, is somewhat dependent on circulation, not just makeup.

Fortunately, circulation in the skin – along with collagen – can be improved with home skincare treatments to help give your skin a bit more colour – and more life.

How Can You Increase Your Facial Attractiveness

When you're young, your eyebrows, eyes and eyelashes, and lips stand out naturally. Your lips are fuller and redder, thus increasing the contrast of colours in your face. You can enhance it by wearing red lipstick and other colours – but you have a bit of natural redness too, and plump features, which really helps. So what are all these studies telling us how we can try to look our best as we age?



We could interpret them in a few different ways. How you interpret them will be something fun to test in your life. Here are three ways you might interpret the studies, but at the end of the day – just see what you experience when you experiment with the power of red, including red lip colour.

Three Research-based Lessons to Help You Be More Attractive

Lesson 1 – Don't leave home unless you have your makeup on

Increasing the contrast in the face doesn't mean not covering up that newly sprouted pimple. Wear your eye makeup, use the liner on your brows, and for the power of red's sake, wear your favourite red lipstick if it compliments your other colouring. There are different shades of red, fortunately, so even when you're at the gym, you can still wear red lipstick.

Lesson 2 – Work out other ways to look healthier

In one study, scientists in Scotland tested the effect of diet on skin colour. Six weeks of eating 3 portions of fruits and vegetables was enough to be rated more attractive to the opposite sex. Beauty comes from within! Now imagine how much more attractive you would look if you consumed an 8-ounce glass of freshly squeezed vegetable juice daily, which is equal to about 6 servings or more. You wouldn't have to wait six weeks for others to think you were more attractive.

Lesson 3 – Consider lip plumping with lip filler injections.

These dermal fillers to lips give you a bit more facial contrast, so your lips aren't dwindling away as you age. Injections can even remedy an overly gummy smile or uneven lips, or just add a bit of natural-looking plumpness to thin lips (so long as you use an injector who doesn't go overboard).

Wearing Red Lipstick for Upcoming Beach Parties? Maybe You Should! 🍷

Birth Control Pill: Benefits and Disadvantages



The birth control pill is a safe, simple, and convenient way to prevent pregnancy. It also has other benefits like reducing acne, making your periods lighter and more regular, and easing menstrual cramps.

The pill is an effective way to prevent pregnancy

If you follow the instructions and use the birth control pill correctly, it gives you great protection against pregnancy.

All you have to do is stick to your daily pill schedule, and make sure you start your new packs on time — that's it. But if you miss or forget pills, it won't work as well.

You can use condoms along with your birth control pills to get extra protection from pregnancy. Bonus: condoms also help protect against STDs.

The pill has health benefits

Side effects aren't always a bad thing, and birth control pills aren't just for birth control. The pill has many perks besides pregnancy prevention.

Both combination and progestin-only pills reduce menstrual cramps, lighten periods, and lower your risk of ectopic pregnancy.

The combination pill can also help prevent or lessen:

- Acne
- Bone thinning
- Cysts in your breasts and ovaries
- Endometrial and ovarian cancers
- Serious infections in your ovaries, fallopian tubes, and uterus
- Iron deficiency (anemia)
- PMS (premenstrual syndrome)

The pill can make your periods better

Lots of people like the pill because it makes their periods regular and easy to predict. The hormones in the pill can also reduce menstrual cramps and make your period lighter.

You can also use the pill to safely skip your period, which is totally convenient for people who want a special occasion to be period-free, or just don't want a visit from Aunt Flo every month.

You can get pregnant right away when you stop taking the pill

Many people on the pill want to have kids when the time is right. One of the great things about the birth control pill is you can get pregnant right after you stop taking it.

After you stop taking the pill, it can take a few months for your periods to return to the cycle you had before you started using it. Once in a while, people have irregular periods or no periods at all for a few months. This is more likely if your periods were irregular before you started taking the pill.

Even if your regular period doesn't come back right away, it's still possible to get pregnant when you're not taking the pill. So if you're going off the pill but don't want to get pregnant, start using another birth control method right away.

The pill is convenient

Taking the birth control pill is easy, but remembering to take it every day can be hard. Luckily, pill packs are small — about the size of a cell phone — so you can carry your pills with you wherever you go.

The pill is birth control you don't have to think about during sex. If you take the pill correctly, you're protected from pregnancy all day, every day. Many people say the pill makes their sex lives better because they don't have to interrupt sex or worry about pregnancy.

You may need a prescription from a doctor to get birth control pills. Depending on where you live, you can even get birth control pills online.

What are the disadvantages of the pill?

Remembering to take a pill every day can be hard. And some people get side effects that bother them (but they usually go away in a few months).

1. You have to take the pill every day.

It's really important to take your birth control pill every day, or you might not be protected from pregnancy. Using a birth control reminder app, setting an alarm, or keeping your pill pack next to things you use every day (like your toothbrush or phone charger) can help you remember to take your pills.

If you have a really busy life and think you might not remember your pill every day, check out other birth control methods like IUDs or the implant that are super low-maintenance and almost impossible to mess up.

2. There can be negative side effects.

Like all medications, birth control pills can have side effects. But most usually go away after 2 or 3 months. Many people use the pill with no problems at all.

The most common side effects are spotting or bleeding between periods (this is more common with progestin-only pills), sore breasts, nausea, or headaches. But these usually go away after 2 or 3 months, and they don't happen to everyone who takes the pill.

Birth control shouldn't make you feel sick or uncomfortable. Luckily, there are many different types of birth control, so you've got options. If you keep having side effects that bother you after using the pill for 3 months, talk with your doctor about trying another brand of pill or another birth control method. But don't stop taking the pill without starting a new method, or you won't be protected from pregnancy.

3. There can be some rare but serious risks.

Serious problems from taking the birth control pill are very rare. People using birth control that has estrogen, like combination pills, have a slightly higher chance of having a few rare but dangerous problems than people who don't use birth control with hormones.

For more information about side effects and risks, talk with your doctor or read the package insert that came with your pills.

Side effects of stopping birth control pills

The side effects of stopping birth control pills are different for each person, just like the side effects of using them.

The hormones in the pill leave your body in a few days. That means any side-effects you experienced while using it will go away pretty quickly. Yes, this includes the positive ones like clearer skin and lighter periods. However, it can take a few weeks to several months for your regular menstrual cycle to return.

Here are some side-effects you might experience:

- PMS symptoms come back
- Mood changes, including a change in sex drive
- Changes in vaginal discharge
- Change in your periods
- Skin changes, like more acne if you had that before taking the pill

Your ability to get pregnant returns as soon as you stop the pill, so if you don't want to get pregnant right away, keep using your birth control (or use a different method like condoms) until you can get to a doctor or nurse. They can help you make a plan for switching to a new method.

Your periods might be irregular for a while. If you don't get your period within 3 months after stopping birth control pills, check in with your doctor to rule out any problems. 🍀

source: [plannedparenthood.org](https://www.plannedparenthood.org)

10 Beach Tips for Your Summer Vacation



Summer vacation often means spending a week enjoying the sand and surf at the beach. While it may seem like “a day at the beach” is all sunshine and happiness, there are some hidden dangers to avoid.

When planning your summer trip to the shore, make sure you consider beach safety as part of your preparation, especially if you aren’t familiar with the beach you’re traveling to.

Here’s a list of beach safety tips:

1. Slather on the sunscreen – Nothing ruins a beach trip faster than a sunburn on day one. Make sure you get to enjoy the sun every day of your vacation by coating yourself and the kids in a generous coating of high SPF sunblock. And reapply after lunch – especially if you’ve been swimming.

2. Protect your feet - A long walk on the beach is a great way to spend a dreamy romantic evening. But rough and rocky coastline can wreak havoc on your bare feet. An easy beach safety solution is to pack a pair of reef shoes for everyone in order to prevent cuts and scrapes from broken coral, shattered glass, unexpected tide pools and other sand hazards.

3. Swimming safety – Spending the day in the surf is a real blast! From boogie boarding to snorkeling, there are so many ways to have fun in the ocean. But the open water requires a certain respect. One of the most important beach safety tips is to encourage everyone in your group to swim with caution. Flotation devices are no substitute for knowing how to swim – don’t get in the ocean without lessons.

4. Beach security – Are you wondering if your strip of sand will include a lifeguard? Before you travel, look into whether or not your beach trip includes the reassurance of a certified lifeguard. The Beach Patrol is trained to watch for and warn beachgoers of riptides and other dangerous swimming conditions as well as jellyfish and other stinging creatures.

5. Watch the weather – When you book your trip months in advance, you may have the unlucky timing to arrive on the same day as a weather disaster. With rain comes storm water runoff that often leads to contaminated water at the beach that you’ll want to avoid. Also, keep an eye out for high surf advisories.

6. Worst-case scenario – Although occurrences are uncommon, you don’t want to be the one who knows what it’s like to deal with a jellyfish or stingray attack. Pay attention to local news reports and ask surfers and sailors for details on what’s waiting for you in the water. No one wants to consider that an accident might happen to them, but buying travel insurance is a smart move just in case. Under certain circumstances, travel insurance can provide reimbursement for medical assistance or even evacuation if your beach vacation takes a turn for the worst.

7. Drink the right liquids – Keep everyone hydrated with plenty of water and avoid alcohol. In addition to becoming dangerously dehydrated, drinking booze at the beach can impair your judgement just when you need it most.

8. Look out below – Many beaches that cater to tourists feature cliffs with stunning vistas. These are beautiful spots to look out from, but they can be dangerous. One wrong step could mean a serious fall, and falling rock means being below them can be even more hazardous. Lifeguards warn that “even just a softball-sized rock can be devastating falling from a 50-foot cliff.”

9. Wildlife warning – While part of the allure of ocean swimming is the chance to see aquatic animals in the wild, remember to keep your distance. Watching a sea turtle feeding is a bucket list moment – don’t ruin it by trying to touch its shell or disturb its routine. Purple or blue flags indicate jellyfish or other dangerous wildlife. If you are stung, visit a lifeguard or seek medical help immediately.

10. Riptides are real - Hidden dangers like rough surf, undertow and rip currents can quickly turn an afternoon paddle into a serious incident. Take a few minutes to watch a video of a riptide, learn to spot the signs and refresh the water safety skills of any weak swimmers in your group. 🌊

source: [generaltravelinsurance.com](https://www.generaltravelinsurance.com)

Super Eggs Me!

7 Health Benefits of Eating Eggs Everyday



Studies show that eggs are not the link to high cholesterol. In fact, 70% of the healthy population does not experience a rise in bad (or LDL) cholesterol levels from consuming eggs. Here are seven reasons to eat eggs every day.

1. Eggs are nutrient dense with more vitamins, minerals, amino acids per calorie than most other foods. Each egg has only 70 calories, perfect for portion control .
2. The “good” cholesterol, called HDL, goes up in people who have three or more eggs a day. HDL absorbs bad cholesterol in the blood and carries it back to the liver. The liver then flushes it from the body.
3. Eggs are rich in choline which is a very important nutrient for pregnant women and breastfeeding women because of the big role it plays in brain development.

4. Eggs are rich in protein. One egg contains 6.5 grams of protein. If you have a three-egg omelet, you are getting 19.5 grams of protein, which is almost half of your daily limit.

5. Have them for breakfast and you’ll feel full longer. That’ll make you more likely to eat less throughout the day.

6. Eggs are rich in Vitamin A, lutein and zeaxanthin which help keep our eyes from getting cataracts and age-related macular degeneration.

7. Eggs have vitamin D, which is good for brain health. And they also have choline that helps the nerve cells (neurons) in your brain talk to each other.

source: [WebMD.com](https://www.webmd.com); [asweatpeachef.com](https://www.asweatpeachef.com)

Oh Baby! The First 100 Days of Parenting



A new baby is an exciting event, but it also comes with a great deal of uncertainty as you take your little bundle home and have to take care of their every need. Doula Donna Bland has some advice for brand new parents.

Becoming a parent is one of the most exciting and rewarding things anyone can do. After nine months of pregnancy and a short stay in hospital, you get to bring your baby home – but then reality sets in and you realise that you are responsible for everything this little human needs. Knowing what to expect can help you to navigate these early days.

The first 100 days after a baby is born (also known as the newborn stage) is a crucial time for their earliest developmental milestones, particularly brain development. It is also the time when you, as a

parent, get to learn about your new role and adjust to the changes in your life. So, what can you expect in these first 100 days?

Feeding

Regardless of whether you are breastfeeding or bottle-feeding, there are plenty of concerns and questions surrounding this topic. A bottle-fed baby will feed every three to four hours on average, whereas a breastfed baby will feed every two to three hours. This is because breastmilk digests more easily, making babies hungrier more frequently.

It is recommended therefore, that breastfed babies are fed on demand rather than on schedule. This means that a newborn baby will feed between eight and twelve times a day.

Nappies

Immediately after birth, your baby's first stool, called meconium, will be dark green (almost black). This is from the amniotic fluid that your baby has been consuming in utero.

After a couple of days, the colour and consistency will change to become more yellow and liquid for breastfed babies and a greenish colour for formula-fed babies. Plenty of wet nappies are important to know that the kidneys are functioning well.

Soothing techniques

Newborn babies cry for a variety of reasons. Your baby may be hungry or have a dirty nappy, but often they may just want to be held.

Babies also become overstimulated and may need a change in environment. Cuddling, swaddling or gentle swaying may help a fussy baby to settle. Skin-to-skin contact has proven not just to help babies settle, but feed and sleep better.

These days, many parents "wear" their babies in a wrap or a sling. Your baby is comforted by hearing your heartbeat and being near you. This practice leads to a release of oxytocin (the love hormone), creating a happier mom and baby.

Sleep

The average newborn will sleep around 16 hours a day. This may vary from baby to baby, but sleep is vital for a baby to thrive and develop during the first 100 days of life. Although sleep deprivation is guaranteed for new parents, there are some things you can do to get some much-needed sleep.

- Sleep when your baby sleeps. Night feeds and broken sleep can make coping exceedingly difficult. Catching up when your baby sleeps will help you survive the early days.
- If your baby falls asleep easily but struggles to stay asleep, it could be because of the Moro reflex. This is your baby's startle reflex and can very often cause a baby to wake, even out of a deep sleep. Swaddling can be especially useful in combatting this problem, by extending sleep periods.
- "Wearing" your baby, (as mentioned before) or co-sleeping can really help in making your baby feel safe and secure, ensuring better sleep. If you are afraid to co-sleep, why not try having your baby in a crib next to your bed where they are still aware of your presence and are accessible for easy feeding?

Tummy time

The first step towards future developmental milestones is for your baby to practise intervals of tummy time. It is recommended that a baby spend a few times a day lasting a few minutes, on their tummies either on a blanket (always supervised) or on mom or dad's chest.

They don't always respond positively initially, but if you persevere, your baby will develop the necessary physical skills, well within the recommended three-month milestone guidelines.

"The journey into parenthood is a joyous, exciting time that brings many changes to your life"

Gastrointestinal disturbances

There are copious numbers of articles written about colic and reflux. All newborn babies, particularly in the first 100 days after birth, will experience some sort of gastrointestinal issue. The main reason for this is a highly immature gut system trying to cope with its new function of digesting milk.

Breastmilk is more easily digested and therefore tends to create fewer concerns in this area. Formula-fed babies need to be well burped and not overfed to prevent the newborn's stomach from cramping.

Colic and reflux, of course, do exist and present their own challenges, but remember that most newborn babies will suffer with some gastric disturbance during this stage. Speak to a lactation consultant or your clinic sister for advice on comfort measures for your baby.

Support

The journey into parenthood is a joyous, exciting time that brings many changes to your life. Moms must deal with physical recovery from the birth process, sleep deprivation, feeding concerns and the rollercoaster of emotions caused by hormonal changes. This can lead to postnatal "blues" or even depression, so having good support at this time is imperative.

If you do not have family or friends who can help you through this time, there are support groups available. If you are struggling in a particular area e.g., feeding, there are professionals who can assist you. Reach out to those available to you so that you can enjoy this precious time.

One hundred days may seem like a long time, but it is amazing how quickly that time goes after your baby is born. Being busy with your new routine and the lifestyle changes it brings can make the first couple of months seem like they have gone in the blink of an eye.

Knowing some of what to expect and having a good support system can help you to enjoy your baby during these first 100 days of life. 🍀

source: mamamagic.co.za

Feeding Baby: How to Avoid Food Allergies

By Gina Shaw. Reviewed by Amita Shroff, MD



Starting to feed a baby solid foods is an exciting milestone for parents. However, it comes with a lot of questions and concerns, especially about food allergies. What foods are most likely to cause allergies in babies? How do you avoid them?

Emerging research has shown that introducing multiple foods together is safe, and may help the immune system have a lower risk of developing food allergies, but more studies are needed. Check with your doctor for what's best for your baby.

Start Gradually to Identify Any Food Allergies

It's most important to introduce a baby to new foods gradually, one at a time, in case of food allergies. If not, a parent may have trouble tying an allergy to a specific new food. For example, if you give your baby three new foods over the course of a day and they develop an allergic reaction, you won't know which of the foods provoked it.

The type of food or the order in which food is introduced is not much of a concern, as long as the foods you are offering are healthy and well-balanced for the baby. Each time you offer a new food, you

should wait three to five days before adding another new item to the menu. Don't eliminate the other foods your baby is eating during that time; you already know these are safe because the child has not had any food reactions up until now. Just don't add anything else new.

Babies and Allergies: The Top 8 Allergenic Foods

With any new food, you'll want to be on the lookout for any allergic reactions. There are more than 160 allergenic foods; certain foods may be more allergenic than others. The following eight foods and food groups are known to possibly cause problems with allergic reactions possibly up to 90% of the time.

- Cow's milk
- Eggs
- Fish
- Peanuts
- Shellfish
- Soy
- Tree nuts (such as walnuts or almonds)
- Wheat

New nutrition guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) say it's okay to introduce these allergy-causing foods when your baby is ready to eat solids. There is no evidence that waiting until the baby is older prevents food allergy. If you believe your baby has an allergic reaction to a food, such as diarrhea, rash, or vomiting, talk with your child's doctor about the best choices for the diet.

Within a few months of starting solid foods, your baby's daily diet should include a variety of foods, such as breast milk, formula, or both; meats; cereal; vegetables; fruits; eggs; and fish.

Food Allergy Symptoms to Watch for in Your Baby

Food allergy symptoms usually appear very soon after the food is eaten -- within a few minutes to a couple of hours. If you're introducing a new food to your baby, keep an eye out for these symptoms:

- Coughing or wheezing
- Difficulty breathing
- Face, tongue, or lip swelling
- Flushed skin or rash
- Hives or welts
- Loss of consciousness
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea



Severe Food Allergy Symptoms: When to Call 911

Severe allergic reactions can be fatal very quickly. If your baby is having trouble breathing/wheezing, has swelling on their face/lips, or develops severe vomiting or diarrhea after eating, immediately call an ambulance. You can inform your pediatrician at a later time.

Dealing With Mild Food Allergies in Baby

If you see mild symptoms, such as hives or a rash, contact your pediatrician for further evaluation. The doctor might refer you to an allergist (allergy specialist doctor), who will ask more questions and do a physical exam. The allergist may order diagnostic tests such as:

- A skin test. This test involves placing liquid extracts of food allergens on your child's forearm or back, pricking the skin, and waiting to see if reddish raised spots form within 15 minutes. A positive test to a food only shows that your child might be sensitive to that food.
- Blood tests to check the blood for IgE antibodies to specific foods

Remember, just because a baby's initial allergic reaction to a new food may be mild, it may get worse upon following exposures. Talk to your pediatrician about any food allergy symptoms in your baby.

Some allergies go away with time. Egg and milk allergies often go away as children get older, but peanut, tree nut, and shellfish allergies tend to persist. That said, research shows that in the case of peanut allergies, peanut immunotherapy drops administered under the tongue are safe and effective as treatment for peanut allergy, even in children as young as 1. They were also found to help significantly desensitize the patients to peanuts.

The Family Food-Allergy Connection

If there is a history of family food allergies, your baby has an increased risk of also developing allergies, although it is not a certainty. If you have the allergies, the odds are 50-50 for them to have them as well.

It's best to introduce the 8 allergens gradually, at one-to-two week intervals over time so that you can recognize if an allergy develops.

Protecting Baby Against Food Allergies: Easy Does It

In a reversal of earlier policy, the AAP is now recommending that potential allergens be introduced to your infant earlier rather than later. In doing so, the move may actually help prevent them from developing allergies to those foods.

Breastfeeding your baby for 4-6 months is the best way to prevent a milk allergy. Remember that breast milk or formula is higher in nutrition. When you begin to introduce whole milk, you should do so under a doctor's supervision. Yogurt and soft cheeses are fine, because the proteins in these dairy products are broken down and less likely to cause tummy trouble.

The AAP now advises that, in the case of infants who are at high risk of allergies, peanuts should be introduced between 4-6 months. Infants at highest risk of developing peanut allergies are those with eczema or egg allergies or both. It was originally believed that introducing your baby to the foods when they are older might make any reactions more manageable.

Other potential allergens such as tree nuts and fish should be introduced over a period of time as you introduce your baby to solid foods, between 6 and 9 months

You should wait until at least age 1 (some experts say age 2) to introduce honey, which can cause a potentially serious disease called infant botulism. Ask your pediatrician for guidance. 🍯

Keep Your Kidneys Healthy

Medically reviewed by Megan Soliman, MD — By Laura Goldman



Kidneys perform vital functions like removing waste products from your blood and producing hormones that regulate your blood pressure. Maintaining an active, healthy lifestyle may help prevent kidney problems.

Your kidneys are fist-sized organs located at the bottom of your rib cage, on both sides of your spine. They perform several functions.

Most importantly, they filter waste products, excess water, and other impurities from your blood. These waste products are stored in your bladder and later expelled through urine.

In addition, your kidneys regulate pH, salt, and potassium levels in your body. They also produce hormones that regulate blood pressure and control the production of red blood cells.

Your kidneys are also responsible for activating a form of vitamin D that helps your body absorb calcium for building bones and regulating muscle function.

Maintaining kidney health is important to your overall health and general well-being. By keeping your kidneys healthy, your body will filter and expel waste properly and produce hormones to help your body function properly.

When things go wrong

More than 1 in 7 adults in the United States show evidence of chronic kidney disease. Some forms of kidney disease are progressive, meaning the disease gets worse over time. When your kidneys can no longer remove waste from blood, they fail.

Waste buildup in your body can cause serious problems and lead to death. To remedy this, your blood would have to be filtered artificially through dialysis, or you would need a kidney transplant.

Types of kidney disease

Chronic kidney disease - The most common form of kidney disease is chronic kidney disease. A major cause of chronic kidney disease is high blood pressure.

Your kidneys are constantly processing your body's blood. They remove toxins, wastes, and extra water from about half a cup of blood each minute.

High blood pressure is dangerous for your kidneys because it can lead to increased pressure on the glomeruli, the functional units of your kidney. In time, this high pressure compromises the filtering apparatus of your kidneys and their functioning declines.

Eventually, kidney function will deteriorate to the point where they can no longer properly perform their job, and you'll have to go on dialysis.

Dialysis filters fluid and wastes out of your blood. Depending on the situation, dialysis, especially peritoneal dialysis, may be effective long term. Although the average life expectancy for people on dialysis is 5 to 10 years, many people have lived for 20 to 30 years.

Eventually, you may need a kidney transplant, but it depends on your particular circumstance.

Diabetes is another major cause of chronic kidney disease. Over time, uncontrolled blood sugar levels will damage the functional units of your kidney, also leading to kidney failure.

Kidney stones - Another common kidney problem is kidney stones. Minerals and other substances in your blood may crystallize in the kidneys, forming solid particles, or stones, that usually pass out of your body in urine.

Passing kidney stones can be extremely painful, but rarely causes significant problems.

While kidney stones as a risk factor for chronic kidney disease is minimal, they may frequently lead to acute kidney injury (AKI), also known as acute kidney failure, especially if kidney stones are accompanied by dehydration or infection.

Glomerulonephritis - Glomerulonephritis is an inflammation of the glomeruli, microscopic structures inside your kidneys that perform the filtration of blood. Glomerulonephritis can be caused by infections, drugs, congenital abnormalities, and autoimmune diseases.

This condition may get better on its own or require immunosuppressive medications.

Polycystic kidney disease - Individual kidney cysts are fairly common and usually harmless, but polycystic kidney disease is a separate, more serious condition.

Polycystic kidney disease is a genetic disorder that causes many cysts, round sacs of fluid, to grow inside and on the surfaces of your kidneys, interfering with kidney function.

Urinary tract infections - Urinary tract infections are bacterial infections of any of the parts of your urinary system. Infections in the bladder and urethra are most common. They're generally easily treatable and have few, if any, long-term consequences.

However, if left untreated, these infections can spread to the kidneys and lead to kidney failure.

What you can do to improve kidney health

Your kidneys are vital to your overall health. These organs are responsible for many functions, from processing body waste to making hormones. That's why taking care of your kidneys should be a top health priority.

Here are some tips to help keep your kidneys healthy.

1. Keep active and fit

Regular exercise is good for more than just your waistline. It can lower the risk of chronic kidney disease. It can also reduce your blood pressure and boost your heart health, which are both important for preventing kidney damage.

You don't have to run marathons to reap the reward of exercise. Walking, running, cycling, and even dancing are great for your health. Find an activity that keeps you busy and have fun. It'll be easier to stick to it and have great results.

2. Manage your blood sugar

People with diabetes, or a condition that causes high blood sugar, may develop kidney damage. When your body's cells can't use the glucose (sugar) in your blood, your kidneys are forced to work extra hard to filter your blood. Over years of exertion, this can lead to life threatening damage.

3. Monitor blood pressure

High blood pressure can cause kidney damage. If high blood pressure occurs with other health issues like diabetes, heart disease, or high cholesterol, the impact on your body can be significant.

A healthy blood pressure reading is 120/80. Prehypertension is between that point and 139/89. Lifestyle and dietary changes may help lower your blood pressure at this point.

If your blood pressure readings are consistently above 140/90, you may have high blood pressure. You should talk with a doctor about monitoring your blood pressure regularly, making changes to your lifestyle, and possibly taking medication.

4. Monitor weight and eat a balanced diet

People who are overweight or have obesity are at risk for a number of health conditions that can damage the kidneys. These include diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease.

A balanced diet that's low in sodium, processed meats, and other kidney-damaging foods may help reduce the risk of kidney damage. Focus on eating fresh ingredients that are naturally low in sodium, such as cauliflower, blueberries, fish, whole grains, and more.

5. Drink plenty of fluids

There's no magic behind the cliché advice to drink eight glasses of water a day, but it's a good goal precisely because it encourages you to stay hydrated. Regular, consistent water intake is healthy for your kidneys.

>> Continued from page 17



Water helps clear sodium and toxins from your kidneys. It also lowers your risk of chronic kidney disease.

Aim for at least 1.5 to 2 liters in a day. Exactly how much water you need depends largely on your health and lifestyle. Factors like climate, exercise, gender, overall health, and whether you're pregnant or breastfeeding are important to consider when planning your daily water intake.

6. Don't smoke

Smoking damages your body's blood vessels. This leads to slower blood flow throughout your body and to your kidneys.

Smoking also puts your kidneys at an increased risk for cancer. If you smoke and stop smoking, your risk will drop. However, it'll take many years to return to the risk level of a person who's never smoked.

7. Be aware of the amount of OTC pills you take

If you regularly take over-the-counter (OTC) pain medication, you may be causing kidney damage. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), including ibuprofen and naproxen, can damage your kidneys if you take them regularly for chronic pain, headaches, or arthritis.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, these medications should not be taken for more than 10 days for pain, or more than three days for fever. Regularly taking more than eight aspirin

tablets each day may reduce your kidney function temporarily or permanently.

People with no kidney issues who take the medicine occasionally are likely in the clear. However, if you use these medicines daily, you could be risking your kidneys' health. Talk with a doctor about kidney-safe treatments if you're coping with pain.

8. Have your kidney function tested if you're at high risk

If you're at high risk of kidney damage or kidney disease, it's a good idea to have regular kidney function tests. The following people may benefit from regular screening:

- Who are over 60 years old
- Who were born at a low birth weight
- Who have cardiovascular disease or have family members with it
- Who have or have a family history of high blood pressure
- Who have obesity
- Who believe they may have kidney damage

A regular kidney function test is a great way to know your kidney's health and to check for possible changes. Getting ahead of any damage can help slow or prevent future damage. 🌱

source: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com)

Onions: 7 Different Types and How to Use Them

By Danilo Alfaro



The humble onion is as indispensable to the culinary arts as butter or eggs—or for that matter, knives or plates.

It's the rare food that can be sweet, savory, pungent and aromatic all at the same time, but that's what onions do. In a real sense, onions are what make food food—going beyond mere sustenance and making it enjoyable. Making it taste good.

A Culinary Luxury

Thus, onions are a luxury, yet these small, brown, sulfurous orbs are cheap and plentiful and will grow just about anywhere, as evidenced by the fact that every style of cooking on earth features them.

Onions can be roasted, grilled, pickled, caramelized, battered and deep-fried, sliced thinly or chopped and served raw in salads, sandwiches, dips, or as a garnish for tacos, making them among the most versatile and ubiquitous ingredients in the culinary arts.

Onions make up a third of the classic mirepoix, a basic mixture of onions, carrots, and celery used to enhance the flavor of soups, stocks, and sauces, appearing under different names in different cuisines, such as the Italian soffritto, or the so-called “holy trinity” of Cajun cooking (which substitutes bell peppers for the carrots).

Onions are part of the genus *Allium*, and they're related to garlic, chives, shallots, and leeks. Both the bulb and the shoots are edible. Slicing onions releases a sulfur-based vapor that irritates the eyes.



China produces the most onions of any country on earth, but they have 1.3 billion people to feed, so they use most of what they grow. Interestingly, the world's top onion exporter happens to be the Netherlands.

Yellow Onions

The workhorse, the staple, the everyday brown beauty, yellow onions are suitable for any conceivable use, other than perhaps as a garnish for your martini (use a pearl onion for that). You could easily live a rich and fulfilling life even if this were the only onion you ever tasted.

Its heavy brown parchment skin surrounds ivory white flesh with a strong, sulphury, pungent flavor and aroma. If a recipe says onion without specifying what type, it's assumed to be a yellow onion. Use them for making French onion soup.

Sweet Onions

Larger and slightly flatter than yellow onions, with lighter colored, less opaque skin, sweet onions contain extra sugar, making them good for caramelizing. Their larger size and sweeter flavor make them ideal for making onion rings. Sweet onion varieties include Walla Walla, Maui, Vidalia, as well as others with the word "sweet" in the name.

White Onions

White onions have a papery white skin, and their flavor is milder and sweeter than yellow onions, making them good for serving raw in fresh salsa or homemade guacamole.

Red Onions

Sweet and mild enough to be eaten raw, both the exterior skin and the flesh of red onions are a deep magenta color, which makes them particularly good additions to salads or anywhere else a splash of color will enhance the appearance of the dish. I love to use red onions in salads and on sandwiches and burgers.

Green Onions

Green onions are immature onions that have not yet formed a bulb, or only partially. The entire plant is usually used, including the tall green shoots, and they make a wonderful garnish for soups, omelets, tacos, as well as color and crunch. They go by other names, including scallions, spring onions, cebollitas (in Spanish), salad onions, and even—shallots!

That's right, in some countries in which English is spoken, green onions are referred to as shallots, sometimes "French shallots," to avoid further confusion. The differences in how we refer to culinary items and ingredients is wide even if the same language is used. However, green onions, shallots or cebollitas can be easily recognized by their aspect and taste, regardless of their name.

Leeks

Leeks are a truly marvelous vegetable, and also sadly underappreciated. Shaped like overgrown scallions, leeks are lovely in soups and sauces, and one of our favorite ways to prepare them is à la gratinée—baked and topped with seasoned breadcrumbs and Gruyère cheese. Baking the leeks mellows their flavor and softens them.

Shallots

Shallots are small, brown-skinned onions with purplish flesh, and their bulbs are made up of multiple lobes, a little bit like the way garlic bulbs are divided into individual cloves.

Pungent and garlicky, shallots are somewhat unappreciated in the United States—at least based on how infrequently they appear in recipes, and the careless disarray with which they tend to be displayed at the supermarket.

Which is a shame, because shallots are possibly the most sublime onion. They impart a very intense flavor, and because they're smaller, composed of thinner layers, they can be minced very finely and used in salad dressings and sauces. They're lovely to roast, however; peel and halve them, and toss them in the bottom of the pan when you're roasting a chicken. 🍷

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