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How to Handle Emotional Eating During the Holidays

Ahh, the holidays. For many of us, this celebratory month of office parties, shopping trips and heightened stress is a time we either look forward to or dread — or maybe a bit of both. Add in the challenge that comes with being an emotional eater, and it's easy to see how being surrounded by trays of cookies and festive desserts can turn troublesome.

Are you an emotional eater?

Emotional eating, or stress eating as it is often called, involves using food to make yourself feel better. Typically, emotional eating has nothing to do with hunger or nutrition. Rather, most emotional eaters eat this way in order to suppress or soothe negative feelings and experiences. After a particularly difficult day, for example, you might grab a pint of ice cream to numb the painful emotions rather than use other coping strategies such as meditation, going for a walk or talking with your partner or friends.

Most of us can certainly agree that eating in order to cover up, deal with or escape from difficult feelings is probably not the healthiest thing to do. Dr. Jonny Bowden, an expert on weight loss, nutrition and health, explains that we never really feel in control of our eating when we're eating to self-medicate. And it's this lack of control that often leads to bingeing on all the foods that make us feel worse than we did before we started the binge.

Causes of emotional eating

"Emotional eating often increases over the holidays, a time when expectations are high and sweets and treats abound," explain Dr. Paige O'Mahoney, a certified health and wellness coach, and Karen R. Koenig, a psychology of eating expert.

But why such an increase over the holidays? Well, O'Mahoney and Koenig say emotional eating this time of year may be fueled by socializing with people you don't ordinarily see, unresolved childhood grievances, alcohol, travel fatigue, pressure to party, shifts in routines, unhealthy family dynamics and striving to be on your best behavior.

"Often, we're not even conscious that we're eating emotionally," say O'Mahoney and Koenig, who coauthored the book *Helping Patients Outsmart Overeating: Psychological Strategies for Doctors and Health Care Providers*.

We may not even realize we're feeling overwhelmed from too much to do or from striving for the perfect meal or gift. We simply see food and eat it. Other times, O'Mahoney and Koenig say we're aware of our stress and guiltily choose food as a way to relax because we feel entitled to a mini-reward or to grab some me-time.

Tips to help you cope with emotional eating

Unlike other coping strategies (healthy or unhealthy) we can

choose to stop using, quitting food is not an option. That's why learning new ways to have a healthy relationship with food is critical, regardless of the time of year. Here are a few ways the experts say you can avoid turning to food for comfort this holiday season.

Know your triggers

O'Mahoney and Koenig say that one way to prevent emotional eating is to know your triggers. Monitor the emotions you're experiencing throughout the holidays that may trigger emotional eating, such as sadness, excitement, disappointment, exhaustion and overwhelm.

Think ahead

"Think ahead to what usually drives your emotional eating, then plan for how you will comfort or care for yourself," suggest O'Mahoney and Koenig. Call a friend, take a walk, find a quiet space to reset your emotions or use soothing self-talk to get you through.

Pause for a minute

Bowden recommends putting 15 to 60 seconds between you and the food you're compelled to eat. Ask yourself if you really want it, and then ask yourself what the consequences of eating it will be. Finally, decide whether it's worth it.

Take a page from the 12-step program

"Don't get too hungry, too angry, too lonely or too tired," says Bowden. It's a recipe for disaster. Self-care is critical all the time, but especially during the holidays. Make sure you're sleeping well, eating regularly throughout the day and tackling emotions as they surface.

Try mindfulness

"Unconsciousness is the handmaiden of emotional eating," says Bowden. He suggests paying attention 10 percent more than you usually do when it comes to food. And try this mindfulness exercise the next time you have a craving: Stop and ask yourself, "Am I physically hungry or emotionally hungry?"

Depending on the food you're about to grab, the answer should be pretty clear. If you're reaching for the plate of holiday cookies rather than the bowl of fruit sitting right next to it, you're likely dealing with an emotional need.

At times you might be struggling, try to remember that the holidays are temporary and that it's perfectly healthy to take time for yourself or get mental health assistance during especially difficult times.

Data Master: Alyssa Hollingsworth

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How to Save Overheated Chocolate



One of the biggest bums when doing the delicate work of melting chocolate is when you overheat it. You go from the perfect, silky chocolate to something stiff and unappetizing. Chocolate is remarkably delicate. Dark chocolate needs to stay below 120 degrees F, and milk chocolate beneath 110 degrees F. This allows it to be smooth, silky and creamy. Between finding the perfect temperature and trying to keep moisture out of the concoction, which can lead to your chocolate seizing, there are a lot of ways to ruin your perfect chocolate.

Luckily, if you do find you've accidentally made your chocolate too hot but haven't yet burned it, there are some ways to save it.

Cool it immediately

If you've overheated your chocolate, begin cooling it as quickly as possible. The longer it stays warm, the harder it's going to be to save. To cool the chocolate, remove it from the heat source, and transfer it to a cool, dry bowl. This immediately stops the melting process. Add in a few handfuls of chocolate chunks, and stir. The coolness of the chunks helps cool down the melted chocolate more quickly.

Whatever you do, please do not add ice cubes or cold water. This will make your chocolate curdle even more.

Run it through a sieve

A sieve is like a strainer, only it's more fine and used for sauces as opposed to pastas or noodles. After you've cooled down the chocolate, strain it through a sieve to get rid of any excess chunks. Consider adding a tablespoon or two of vegetable oil and mixing thoroughly, then straining again if the first time didn't fully solve the problem.

Use an immersion blender

An immersion blender is a handheld blender that looks like a stick. The purpose is to blend the foods in the container that they're in as opposed to transferring the ingredients to a regular blender. If you've cooled your chocolate and strained it through a sieve with no luck, then take out the immersion blender, and blend until smooth.

Tips to avoid overheating chocolate

Chop it up. Chocolate buttons are the best for melting purposes, but if you only have a regular bar of chocolate, break it up into smaller pieces before melting. This will help the chocolate melt evenly and quickly.

Avoid contact with water. When heating chocolate, make sure it does not come into contact with water or steam. This will cause it to seize — or become one gritty mass. Make sure all spoons and bowls are dry before adding chocolate to them.

Use small, heatproof bowls. Clear glass bowls work great since they don't trap the heat. This prevents the chocolate from further cooking once it's melted.

Use a metal spoon or spatula. Never use a wooden spoon. Wooden spoons may contain moisture from previous use, which will cause the chocolate to seize. They also may contain odors from other foods that will spoil the chocolate. Make sure to stir the chocolate frequently as it melts.

Data Master: Karen Deffenbaugh



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Is Perfectionism Ruining Your Holiday Happiness?

We all see how the holidays are portrayed on television and in magazines. It is supposed to be a time when everything is cheery and bright. We see images of parents decorating the tree with their kids as they sip cocoa and listen to Christmas music. We see families sitting perfectly still in their Sunday best in church. We see immaculate houses that resemble a snow globe. We drool over big feasts and want to make all the special dishes.

It all looks idyllic. It makes us feel peaceful to see these dreamy scenes, and we want them for ourselves and our family to enjoy. The problem is, these images, commercials and Hallmark movies all portray something that isn't realistic. Deep down, we know this, but some try to make things perfect over the holidays anyway.

And in some cases, the more we try to make things nice for everyone around us, the harder it gets — you simply can't please everyone and have some time to relax and enjoy the holidays for yourself.

Perfectionism can have harmful effects on your mental health. And many times, that perfectionism intensifies during the holidays. Our expectations are high, and there is more to do. We become busier with shopping, decorating, parties and baking. Before we know it, we've planned and done so much, we have nothing left to give anyone. We are crabby and can feel resentful and like no one appreciates our efforts.

Karen Koenig, a licensed clinical social worker and psychotherapist, says perfectionism is a side effect of anxiety. "It's a compulsion to relieve that anxiety," she says.

She goes on to explain perfectionists have a fear of failing or feeling inadequate, so "they go over and above" to make sure everything is taken care of and are rarely aware of their actions. "They set exceptionally high standards for themselves and see things in an all-or-nothing manner," she says.

Naturally, when there is a big event like the holidays coming up, when there is more to do and people to please, they are going to look at it as a time to fail or shine. Koenig says, to a perfectionist, the true magic of the holidays will be wrapped up in "doing everything right and receiving approval for it."

Putting that kind of pressure on yourself and those around you, no matter what time of year, is never going to end well. It's hard for the person trying to make everything perfect because it is virtually impossible, but it's also hard for friends and family to witness, as "they hate to see someone they love stressing themselves out striving for it," Koenig says.

Really, nobody wins here. While it's easy for a non-perfectionist to tell someone to just relax and enjoy this magical time of year, it doesn't always work. Perfectionism is a sign of a bigger problem that needs to be addressed.

Koenig suggests if you struggle with perfectionism to "start to examine your beliefs about success, achievement and failure." Then try to find out how these beliefs and feelings manifested inside you.

She also suggests doing things to reduce your anxiety, such as self-soothing techniques and "developing nurturing, rational self-talk," she says.

Because the more we realize nothing horrible is going to happen if we don't wrap the gifts perfectly, we burn the turkey or we forget to buy a Secret Santa gift, hopefully, the more we can forgive ourselves.

If you are feeling the effects of a perfectionist family member or friend during the holidays, Koenig says the best thing you can do is confront them in a loving and compassionate way and try to realize how much they are actually struggling inside. People should also "set guidelines about what they will or won't do over the holidays," she says.

This time of year can be wonderful, but it's also hard for many people. We all feel the pressure to some extent, and it's best for us all if we try to meet everyone (especially ourselves) with some love and understanding.

Data Master: Eric Peachy



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Fun Ways to Keep Kids Active When It's Freezing Out



Complete this sentence: When the weather outside is frightful... kids stuck inside are sure to be a nightmare. That's how the song goes, right?

As much as parents love a chance to bond with our little ones, cabin fever does take its toll after a while — on kids and adults alike. And did you know that kids over 6 require about an hour of exercise a day, whereas toddlers need a whopping 180 minutes every day? Pretty tough to accomplish when it's colder than a polar bear's toenails outside — regardless of how many times per day said kids insist on scream-singing, "The cold never bothered me anyway!"

Luckily, there are ways to wear out restless kids (and regain your sanity) without totally trashing your house — or having to get everyone bundled in Arctic-grade snowsuits to head outside. The games ahead are chock-full of hyperactivity-draining fun, and they're a great opportunity for you to play with your favorite little snowbirds in the comfort (read: warmth) of your own home. Plus, in our experience, a little exercise works mental-health wonders for snowbound parents too.

Freeze dance

It's literally freezing outside, so why not shake it off with a (metaphorical) freeze dance? This takes all the fun and freedom of a good old-fashioned dance party and turns it into a game the whole family can enjoy. You each take a turn DJing while everybody else dances, and when the DJ stops the music — everyone freezes. Last person to freeze is the next to DJ. There's even a Spotify playlist to get you started.

Indoor field day

All the fun of the field without any of the grass stains. Many conventional relays and similar activities can be translated to indoor play with a little creativity. For instance, try plastic bottle bowling (with a squishy ball to preserve your furniture, of course). Or go for a hallway relay race or a beanbag toss. The possibilities are as boundless as your kids' ever-wild imaginations.

Balloon volleyball

Have a couple of budding athletes on your hands? Satisfy their craving for sports with this snowy-day activity. Set up a net in your living room or basement — or anywhere you can clear some space. Blow up a balloon, and use it in place of a volleyball for the ultimate bad-weather tournament. Who needs the beach?

Living room obstacle course

What if your living room isn't a living room at all — but a full-fledged obstacle course in disguise? It can be just that with

minimal effort. Create a few obstacles, such as a limbo pole made from a broom and a row of chairs to crawl under. Add in a few heart-pumpers, like a jumping jack station or a Hula-Hoop stop. It's sure to make bedtime go a little bit smoother.

Fitness videos

Adults use videos to exercise at home; why can't kids?

With tons of fun (and free) online options, like this one from Fitness Blender, kids can gamify a fitness routine by working in fun twists on exercises. Bonus: They'll be watching something other than cartoons. (Probably keep this option for tots over 2, though.)

Kid yoga

If your family is more into Downward Dogs than push-ups, you can easily orchestrate a custom kid yoga session. Plus, kids are naturally flexible, so they may find yoga even more accessible than you do. Start with a few kid-friendly poses, like Downward Dog, Warriors, Cat/Cows and Puppy posture. Write each pose on a note card and draw them at random. Make sure to woof and moo out loud at all the appropriate moments. Or you can just try one of these amazing spoof videos from Cosmic Kids.

Exer-gaming

Like it or not, some kids will simply feel more engaged if there's a screen involved — which is why we're so thankful for active games like Dance Dance Revolution, Walk It Out, or Punch-Out. Known as exer-gaming, these programs trick — er, encourage — kids into getting off the couch and working up a sweat, all disguised as a lazybones video game. Hey, whatever works.

The classics

Let kids take a trip down memory lane to revisit some of the games of your own youth. Classics like hide-and-seek, red rover, capture the flag and freeze tag are active, simple and fun — and way better than sharing your childhood nostalgia via Atari and snap bracelets.

Indoor playgrounds

If you've got a really bad case of cabin fever on your hands, you may want to get out of the house for a little while. No, not skiing or ice fishing. Simply head straight to an indoor playground. These do in fact exist in many cities and towns (you can usually find one via a quick Google search). They feature tons of engaging equipment, from fanciful slides to inflatable climbing areas to ball pits. The only problem? Convincing kids to go home again.

Data Master: Cody Welch



Getting to know the Lutherans

A PRAYER AT THE MARCH OF TIME

With the arrival of another new year, we might find ourselves amazed anew at how quickly time passes. Here is a prayer to share with you about the march of time: Heavenly Father, nothing can hurry or stop the march of time. Forgive my fear of the changes it brings, that You are not in charge, or my reluctance to face what You are trying to do. Remind me that You send Your Son into time did not spare Him pain, fatigue, and even death itself. Lord, help me remember that You made time and with its march comes the unfolding of Your plans and the displaying of Your power, and the outplaying of Your grace. Let me see time as You in action to lead me to do what You would have me do. Give me the the certainty that in Your Son, I already know Your mercy and the fulfilling of Your promises. In Jesus' name I boldly pray this. Amen Join us at one of our churches this Sunday where we spend time in prayer and worship!

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Can Achy Joints Really Predict Rain?



It's always helpful to know the weather forecast before stepping outside, but instead of turning to apps or the local forecast on The Weather Channel, some people rely on pain in their joints to tell them when it's going to rain. This idea has been reinforced by pop culture, folklore and likely members of your family with their own weather-predicting body parts. But according to new research from Harvard Medical School, this has no basis in actual science.

The study, published in the *British Journal of Medicine*, found no relationship between rainfall and joint or back pain. Researchers analyzed data from insurance claims from millions of medical appointments with daily rainfall totals from thousands of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather stations. But as Dr. Anupam Jena of Harvard Medical School's department of health care policy said in a statement, no matter how they looked at the data, researchers couldn't find a correlation between rainfall and doctor's visits for joint or back pain.

Specifically, the study analyzed Medicare records of more than 11 million primary care office visits by older Americans between 2008 and 2012 and found that overall, 6.35 percent of the office visits included reports of pain on rainy days compared with 6.39 percent on dry days.

But what about all the anecdotal evidence? Do you really need to tell your Great Aunt Ida that her weather-predicting knee pain is all in her head?

"It's hard to prove a negative," Jena said, "but in this flood of data, if there was a clinically significant increase in pain, we would have expected to find at least some small, but significant, sign of the effect. We didn't."

As humans, we're pretty good at looking for patterns, Jena explained, making beliefs — like the rain-joint connection — self-fulfilling prophecies. In other words, if someone expects their elbow to hurt when it rains and it doesn't, then they forget

about it. But if it does hurt and you associate it with the rain, the connection will stay with you.

But before completely dismissing your grandmother's magical rain-predicting hip, remember this is one (albeit very large) study that only focused on the times joint pain brought patients to the doctor's office. For so many people, chronic pain is a part of everyday life and wouldn't cause them to seek medical attention.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, though scientists may not agree on whether or how weather causes pain, some attribute it to the higher humidity that accompanies falling barometric pressure. Dr. Robert Bolash, a pain-management specialist at Cleveland Clinic, says weather changes actually can affect chronic pain — especially in joints.

"People with arthritis, neck pain or other types of musculoskeletal issues tend to report most weather-related pain," Bolash explains. "Weather doesn't seem to have as much effect on nerve pain, like complex regional pain syndrome or neuropathy."

On top of that, cold weather can make it worse, causing muscles, ligaments and joints to get stiffer and more painful.

So, what can you do if you have achy joints? Bolash recommends the following:

- Staying limber by stretching, exercising or doing yoga regularly to help maintain joint health

- Exercising in water, which provides gentle resistance for sore joints while loosening stiff muscles

- Taking anti-inflammatory medication (as directed by your doctor)

Regardless of whether the weather is behind your discomfort, take care of yourself — and don't forget the umbrella.

Data Master: Nikki Hamilton

This Month in History: January

January 1

New Year's Day - The most celebrated holiday around the world.

January 1, 1502 - Portuguese explorers landed at Guanabara Bay on the coast of South America and named it Rio de Janeiro (River of January). Rio de Janeiro is currently Brazil's second largest city.

January 1, 1660 - Samuel Pepys began his famous diary in which he chronicled life in London including the Great Plague of 1664-65 and the Great Fire of 1666.

January 1, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag in America.

January 1, 1801 - Ireland was added to Great Britain by an Act of Union thus creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

January 1, 1863 - The Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves in the states rebelling against the Union.

January 1, 1877 - Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India.

January 1, 1892 - Ellis Island in New York Harbor opened. Over 20 million new arrivals to America were processed until its closing in 1954.

January 1, 1901 - The Commonwealth of Australia was founded as six former British colonies became six states with Edmund Barton as the first prime minister.

January 1, 1915 - During World War I, the British Battleship Formidable was hit by a torpedo in the English Channel, killing 547 crewmen.

January 1, 1942 - Twenty six countries signed the Declaration of the United Nations, in Washington, D.C., reaffirming their opposition to the Axis powers and confirming that no single nation would make a separate peace.

January 1, 1958 - The EEC (European Economic Community) known as the Common Market was formed by Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and The Netherlands in order to remove trade barriers and coordinate trade policies.

January 1, 1959 - Fidel Castro seized power in Cuba after leading a revolution that drove out Dictator Fulgencio Batista. Castro then established a Communist dictatorship.

January 1, 1973 - Britain, Ireland and Denmark became members of the Common Market (EEC).

January 1, 1975 - During the Watergate scandal, former top aides to President Nixon including former Attorney General John Mitchell, Domestic Affairs Advisor John Ehrlichman and Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman, were found guilty of obstruction of justice.

January 1, 1979 - China and the U.S. established diplomatic relations, 30 years after the foundation of the People's Republic.
January 1, 1993 - Czechoslovakia broke into separate Czech and Slovak republics.

January 1, 1999 - Eleven European nations began using a new single European currency, the Euro, for electronic financial and business transactions. Participating countries included; Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

January 2, 1905 - The Russians surrendered to the Japanese after the Battle of Port Arthur during the Russian-Japanese War. A peace conference was later held in Portsmouth, New Hampshire,

with President Theodore Roosevelt serving as a mediator. In September of 1905, the Russians agreed to the Treaty of Portsmouth yielding Port Arthur and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan. Russia also agreed to evacuate Manchuria and recognize Japan's interests in Korea.

January 2, 1942 - During World War II in the Pacific, the Japanese captured the Philippines capital of Manila and the nearby air base at Cavite.

January 2, 1960 - In Washington, D.C., Senator John F. Kennedy announced his intention to seek the Democratic presidential nomination.

January 3

January 3, 1777 - During the American Revolution, General George Washington defeated the British at Princeton and drove them back toward New Brunswick. Washington then established winter quarters at Morristown, New Jersey. During the long harsh winter, Washington's army shrank to about a thousand men as enlistments expired and deserters fled.

January 3, 1924 - British Egyptologist Howard Carter found the sarcophagus of Tutankhamen in the Valley of the Kings near Luxor after several years of searching.

January 3, 1946 - An Englishman known during World War II as "Lord Haw Haw" (William Joyce) was hanged for treason in London. Joyce had broadcast Nazi propaganda via radio from Germany to Britain during the war.

January 3, 1959 - Alaska was admitted as the 49th U.S. state with a land mass almost one-fifth the size of the lower 48 states together.

January 3, 1961 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba two years after Communist dictator Fidel Castro had seized power and just weeks before John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as the next president.

January 3, 1990 - Manuel Noriega, the deposed leader of Panama, surrendered to American authorities on charges of drug trafficking after spending 10 days hiding in the Vatican embassy following the U.S. invasion of Panama.

January 3, 1993 - President George Bush and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed the Start-II (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) Treaty, eliminating about two-thirds of each country's long range nuclear weapons.

January 4

January 4, 1790 - President George Washington delivered the first State of the Union address.

January 4, 1974 - President Richard Nixon rejected subpoenas from the Senate Watergate Committee seeking audio tapes and related documents.

January 5 [Return to Top of Page](#)

January 5, 1919 - German Communists in Berlin led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht attempted to take over the government by seizing a number of buildings. However, ten days later, they were both assassinated by German soldiers.

January 5, 1919 - The German Workers' Party (Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) was founded by Anton Drexler in Munich. Adolf Hitler became member No. 7 and changed the name in April of 1920 to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) commonly shortened to Nazi or Nazi Party.

January 5, 1925 - Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming became the first female governor inaugurated in the U.S.

January 5, 1968 - Alexander Dubcek became first secretary of Czechoslovakia's Communist Party. He introduced liberal re-

forms known as "Communism with a human face" which resulted in Soviet Russian troops invading Prague to crack down.

January 5, 1972 - President Richard Nixon signed a bill approving \$5.5 billion over six years to build and test the NASA space shuttle.

January 5, 1976 - In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot announced a new constitution which legalized the Communist government and renamed the country as Kampuchea. During the reign of Pol Pot, over 1 million persons died in "the killing fields" as he forced people out of the cities into the countryside to create an idyllic agrarian society. Educated and professional city people were especially targeted for murder and were almost completely annihilated. In January of 1979, the Pol Pot was overthrown by Cambodian rebels and Vietnamese troops.

Birthdays - King Juan Carlos I of Spain was born in Rome on January 5, 1938. He was chosen by Francisco Franco to inherit his right-wing dictatorship and was sworn in as King on November 22, 1975, two days after Franco's death. The new King then announced his intention to mold Spain into a broadly based democratic society.

January 6

January 6, 1066 - Harold, Earl of Wessex, was crowned King of England following the death of his brother-in-law Edward the Confessor. Harold II was England's last Anglo-Saxon king. In October of 1066, Harold met the invading army of William the Conqueror at Hastings and died on the field of battle.

January 6, 1941 - President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his State of the Union address to Congress asking for support for the lend-lease program aiding Allies fighting the Axis powers. Roosevelt also defined four essential freedoms worth defending; freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

January 6, 1990 - Poland's Communist Party disbanded and then reorganized as the Social Democratic Party, an opposition party to Solidarity.

Birthdays - Joan of Arc (1412-1431) was born in France. After a series of mystic visitations by saints, she inspired French troops to break the British siege at Orleans and win several important victories during the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) between France and Britain. She was eventually captured and sold to the British who tried her for heresy and burned her at the stake. In 1920, Joan of Arc was canonized a saint by the Roman Catholic Church.

January 7

January 7, 1714 - A patent was issued for the first typewriter designed by British inventor Henry Mill "for the impressing or transcribing of letters singly or progressively one after another, as in writing."

January 7, 1782 - The first U.S. commercial bank opened as the Bank of North America in Philadelphia.

January 7, 1989 - Emperor Hirohito of Japan died after a long illness. He had ruled for 62 years and was succeeded by his son, Crown Prince Akihito.

January 7, 1999 - The first presidential impeachment trial in 130 years began as members of the U.S. Senate were sworn in by Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist to decide whether President Clinton should be removed from office.

House prosecutors had delivered two articles of impeachment charging Clinton with perjury and obstruction of justice.

Birthdays - Millard Fillmore (1800-1874) the 13th U.S. President was born in a log cabin in Cayuga County, New York. He was a Whig who became president upon the sudden death of Zachary Taylor in 1850 from cholera. Best remembered for signing five

bills concerning slavery known as the Compromise of 1850 which temporarily prevented civil war in the U.S. He was not re-nominated by his party.

January 8

January 8, 1798 - The 11th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, preventing lawsuits against a state by anyone from another state or foreign nation.

January 8, 1815 - The Battle of New Orleans occurred as General Andrew Jackson and American troops defended themselves against a British attack, inflicting over 2,000 casualties. Both sides in this battle were unaware that peace had been declared two weeks earlier with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812.

January 8, 1918 - Amid the ongoing World War in Europe, President Woodrow Wilson proposed his Fourteen Points, calling for a reduction of arms, self-determination for governments, and the creation of a League of Nations, all intended to serve as a basis for resolving the conflict and establishing a lasting peace in Europe.

January 8, 1959 - Charles de Gaulle took office as the first president of France's Fifth Republic. De Gaulle had led the Free French government in exile during Nazi occupation. Following the war, he advocated a strong presidency to balance the powerful National Assembly. He was chosen to head the new government following years of political instability in which no French government was able to stay in power for more than a few months. On this day in 1966, he took office for a second term.

January 8, 1964 - President Lyndon Johnson declared War on Poverty during his State of the Union message before Congress.

January 8, 1982 - The American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) Company was broken up as a result of an antitrust suit. AT&T gave up 22 local Bell system companies, opening the U.S. telephone system to competition.

January 8, 1987 - The Dow Jones industrial average first topped the 2,000 mark.

Birthdays - Elvis Presley (1935-1977) was born in Tupelo, Mississippi.

January 9

January 9, 1960 - With the first blast of dynamite, construction work began on the Aswan High Dam across the Nile River in southern Egypt. One third of the project's billion-dollar cost was underwritten by Soviet Russia. The dam created Lake Nasser, one of the world's largest reservoirs, at nearly 2,000 square miles and irrigated over 100,000 acres of surrounding desert. The dam was opened in January of 1971 by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and President Nikolai Podgorny of the Soviet Union.

Birthdays - Richard M. Nixon (1913-1994) the 37th U.S. President, was born in Yorba Linda, California. He served as vice president under Dwight D. Eisenhower from 1953-61, then made an unsuccessful run for the presidency, narrowly losing to John F. Kennedy. Nixon ran for governor of California in 1962 and lost. He then told reporters he was leaving politics. However, he re-emerged in 1968 and ran a successful presidential campaign against Hubert Humphrey. He won re-election by a landslide in 1972, but resigned two years later amid impeachment proceedings resulting from the Watergate scandal.

January 10 Return to Top of Page

January 10, 1776 - Common Sense, a fifty page pamphlet by Thomas Paine, was published. It sold over 500,000 copies in America and Europe, influencing, among others, the authors of the Declaration of Independence.

January 10, 1861 - Florida became the third state to secede from the Union in events leading up to the American Civil War.

January 10, 1863 - The world's first underground railway service opened in London, the Metropolitan line between Paddington and Farringdon.

January 10, 1878 - An Amendment granting women the right to vote was introduced in Congress by Senator A.A. Sargent of California. The amendment didn't pass until 1920, forty-two years later.

January 10, 1912 - The flying boat airplane, invented by Glenn Curtiss, made its first flight at Hammondsport, New York.

January 10, 1920 - The League of Nations officially came into existence with the goal of resolving international disputes, reducing armaments, and preventing future wars. The first Assembly gathered in Geneva ten months later with 41 nations represented. More than 20 nations later joined, however, the U.S. did not join due to a lack of support for the League in Congress.

January 10, 1922 - Arthur Griffith was elected president of the newly formed Irish Free State.

January 10, 1946 - The first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly took place in London with delegates from 51 countries. The U.N. superseded its predecessor, the League of Nations.

January 10, 1984 - The U.S. and Vatican established full diplomatic relations after a break of 116 years.

January 11

January 11, 1861 - Alabama seceded from the Union in events leading to up the American Civil War.

January 11, 1964 - The U.S. Surgeon General declared cigarettes may be hazardous to health, the first such official government report.

January 11, 1990 - In Lithuania, 200,000 persons demanded political independence from Soviet Russia after Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the Soviet Union, publicly warned that separatism could lead to tragedy. Independence was achieved in September of 1991, three months before the collapse of the Soviet Union itself.

January 12

January 12, 1879 - In Southern Africa, the Zulu War began between the British and the natives of Zululand, ultimately resulting in the destruction of the Zulu Empire.

January 12, 1932 - Hattie W. Caraway, a Democrat from Arkansas, was appointed to the U.S. Senate to fill the term of her deceased husband. Later in the year, she became the first woman elected to the Senate.

January 12, 1990 - Romania outlawed the Communist Party following the overthrow of Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu who had ruled for 24 years.

January 12, 1991 - Congress authorized President George Bush to use military force against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait.

January 12, 1996 - The first joint American-Russian military operation since World War II occurred as Russian troops arrived to aid in peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia.

January 12, 1999 - President Bill Clinton sent a check for \$850,000 to Paula Jones officially ending the sensational sexual harassment legal case that ultimately endangered his presidency. The president withdrew \$375,000 from his and Hillary Rodham Clinton's personal funds and got the remaining \$475,000 from an insurance policy. The lawsuit had exposed the president's affair with Monica Lewinsky and resulted in investigations by Independent Counsel Ken Starr that led to Clinton's impeachment by the House of Representatives and subsequent trial in the Senate.

Birthdays - John Winthrop (1588-1649) was born in Suffolk, England. In 1630, he joined a group of Puritans emigrating to America and became the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony,

establishing a colony on the peninsula of Shawmut, which became Boston.

January 13, 1893 - The British Independent Labor Party was founded with James Keir Hardie as its leader.

January 13, 1898 - French author Emile Zola published J'Accuse, a letter accusing the French government of a cover-up in the Alfred Dreyfus case. Dreyfus had been convicted of treason for selling military secrets to the Germans and had been sent to Devil's Island. As a result of Zola's letter and subsequent trial, Dreyfus was completely vindicated.

January 13, 1935 - The population of the Saar region bordering France and Germany voted for incorporation into Hitler's Reich. The 737 square-mile area with its valuable coal deposits had been under French control following Germany's defeat in World War I.

January 13, 1990 - Douglas Wilder of Virginia became the first African American governor in the U.S. as he took the oath of office in Richmond.

Birthdays - Author Horatio Alger (1834-1899) was born in Revere, Massachusetts. He wrote over 100 books for boys, many featuring "rags to riches" themes of poor boys triumphing over life's obstacles.

January 14

January 14-23, 1943 - President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met at Casablanca in Morocco to work on strategy during World War II. At the conclusion of the conference, Roosevelt and Churchill held a joint news conference at which Roosevelt surprisingly announced that peace would come "by the total elimination of German and Japanese war power. That means the unconditional surrender of Germany, Italy and Japan."

Data Master: Nikki Hamilton

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Does Cinnamon Have Any Health Benefits?



Cinnamon is one of my favorite tastes and smells all year, and I love how prominent it is during the holiday season. For me, the spice smells like home (probably because my mother used to put a pot of water with cinnamon sprinkled in on the stove as an air freshener — something I do now in my own apartment). Beyond that, she has long touted its health benefits, which I think of each morning as I put cinnamon in my coffee. But is there any medical basis to this? I spoke with a few doctors to find out.

Turns out, the answer isn't exactly straightforward. According to Dr. Rahil Bandukwala, an endocrinologist at MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center in Laguna Hills, California, there are multiple theoretical and suggested benefits from cinnamon covering anti-inflammatory, anticancer and antidiabetic actions.

But Dr. Bhavesh B. Shah, the medical director of interventional gastroenterology at MemorialCare Long Beach Medical Center in Long Beach, California, points out that there are some conflicting studies and theories about cinnamon and health benefits, and at this stage, there have been no conclusive trials demonstrating any clear health benefit.

Shah explains it is important to consider, though, that a study attempting to discern the health benefits of cinnamon would be very difficult to conduct, and the results would be in question regardless for several reasons, including bias, lifestyles, genetic effects and other medical conditions.

If there are health benefits, what are they?

Some of the proposed health benefits are related to the fact that cinnamon is considered an antioxidant, Shah explains.

It also has the reputation for being beneficial for those with diabetes, specifically, Bandukwala notes, it is thought that derivatives of the spice may improve insulin secretion.

Other proposed health benefits are a reduced level of glucose in diabetic patients, improvement in blood pressure, improvement in symptoms of multiple sclerosis and reduction in cholesterol, he adds, noting that some of these studies were conducted solely on animals, but have been proposed to be beneficial for humans as well.

How much should you take?

The U.S. Department of Health does not recommend a dose higher than 6 grams per day for six weeks or less, Shah says. There are two main types of cinnamon: Ceylon cinnamon and cassia cinnamon, each of which has slightly different ingredients and makeup.

"Coumarin, a chemical compound, is present in cassia cinnamon and has been reported to cause liver damage in rare cases as well as acting as a blood thinner," he explains, noting that this is important to consider if you are on a blood thinner

already as per your physician. Also — and this seems like common sense — don't take or use cinnamon if you are allergic to it.

Like anything else, don't take too much cinnamon. According to Dr. Theodore Sy, a gastroenterologist at MemorialCare Medical Group in Aliso Viejo, California, although there is some mixed evidence showing improvement in fatty liver disease and glucose intolerance and diabetes, certain types of cinnamon can be toxic to the liver in large amounts.

"My practice is to encourage adding cinnamon to the diet as a supplement but not as a replacement for any medications I prescribe for diabetes," Bandukwala explains.

While it might not be a miracle supplement, cinnamon does appear to have some properties that could end up being beneficial. Either way, go ahead and add that extra sprinkle to your coffee.

Data Master: Karen Deffenbaugh

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Have Questions About Egg Freezing? You're Not Alone



Egg freezing is becoming an increasingly popular option for women who want to take control of their fertility, providing a possibility for delaying pregnancy. Although the process is becoming more accessible and affordable through clinics specializing exclusively in egg retrieval and freezing, as well as some companies offering it as part of their benefits package, there is still a lack of clear, uniform guidelines about the procedure.

And according to new research, there is one component largely missing from the egg-freezing process: comprehensive counseling. In an article published recently in the *Journal of Women's Health*, the authors argue that with egg freezing on the rise — especially in elective uses in situations where women are looking to extend their fertility — extensive counseling should be part of the process, regardless of a person's age or reason for freezing. But that doesn't always happen.

Specifically, the authors are concerned about scenarios in which young, healthy women who opt to freeze their eggs for later use may not be aware of the potential risks associated with pregnancy in older mothers. As they discuss in the article, when individuals or couples seeking other forms of assisted reproductive technologies like in vitro fertilization or artificial insemination, any counseling they receive as part of the process involves the immediate risks and benefits of the procedure, as well as any potential complications. The aim of ARTs is typically to produce a pregnancy as soon as possible, so the counseling they receive is applicable right away.

But in situations in which a woman freezes her eggs, she may not actually use them and become pregnant until years later. At that point, her fertility situation — including the chances of a successful pregnancy, as well as possible maternal and fetal health issues — may have changed from the time she went through egg retrieval and freezing. As a result, the authors of the study recommend more thorough counseling for women at the point when they freeze their eggs.

Also of note, up until 2013, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine considered egg freezing for nonmedical reasons (meaning in situations in which a person's fertility is not compromised because of aggressive cancer treatments, for instance, which may reduce their fertility) an experimental procedure. While that is no longer the case, the ASRM still currently does not recommend elective egg freezing for the sole purpose of working around reproductive aging — which they refer to as "social freezing" — because of a lack of data in the area.

But as the authors mention, despite the lack of official recommendation, because egg freezing has become so mainstream — including with corporations like Apple and Facebook offering it as a medical benefit — it is important to address the elective egg-freezing process and make it as safe as possible, starting with increased counseling for patients.

According to the authors of the study, the rise in social freezing occurred alongside a sevenfold increase in the number of women undergoing egg freezing in the United States between 2009 and 2013. And although egg freezing works best with patients 35 years old or younger, most wait until their mid to late 30s to get the procedure. But just because someone is young doesn't mean they're necessarily in the optimal health condition for egg retrieval, which is also something that should be discussed with doctors.

As a result, the researchers suggest multidisciplinary counseling involving an OB-GYN, reproductive endocrinologist and a mental health professional to provide the woman with the most complete picture possible regarding not only the immediate procedure, but also what a potential pregnancy might look like down the road.

"When a woman of any age chooses to undergo egg retrieval and cryopreservation, she should have access to the knowledge and counseling available to be able to make a truly informed decision," Dr. Susan G. Kornstein, editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Women's Health*, says in a statement. As the authors point out, she adds, the scope of that information should not differ depending on the woman's age at the time of the egg freezing, the reason for the procedure or her plans for future pregnancy.

Ultimately, anyone who decides to use ARTs, including egg freezing, should be fully informed before medical action is taken in order to ensure the best health outcomes for everyone involved.

Data Master: Nikki Hamilton

20 Best New Year's Resolutions

1. Eat healthy foods.
2. Get a physical exam.
3. Set up a fitness routine.
4. Attend educational events.
5. Schedule time for hobbies.
6. Save money and pay off debts.
7. Maintain a healthy weight.
8. Volunteer with charities.
9. Get more sleep.
10. Organize your life.
11. Spend more time with family.
12. Reduce TV time.
13. Spend more time in nature.
14. Read a book.
15. Quit smoking.
16. Quit drinking.
17. Walk more and drive less.
18. Learn a new skill.
19. Conquer a fear.
20. Travel. Plan a vacation.



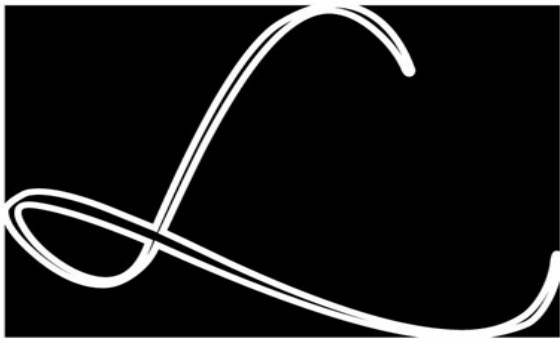
Our hopes don't change as we age. We want to remain healthy, have the money to pay our bills, and age independently for as long as possible. These are the hopes we all share for our futures. But Aging can be challenging. If you would like to feel the spirit of the holidays all year and be a part of improving the lives of older people, consider becoming a Senior Companion. In exchange for a small amount of your time helping others you will receive a tax free stipend, mileage reimbursement and other benefits.

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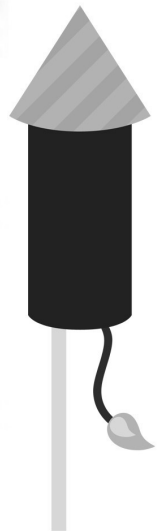
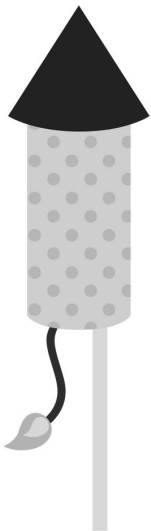
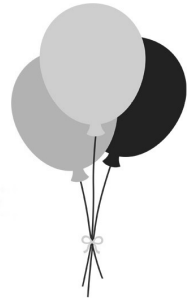
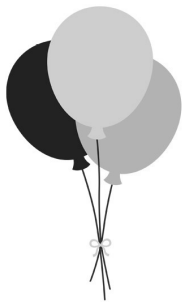
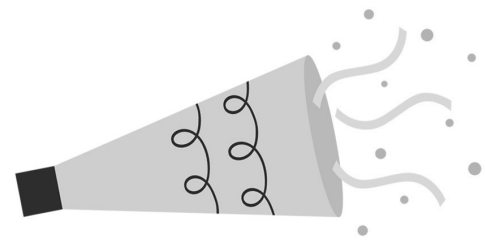
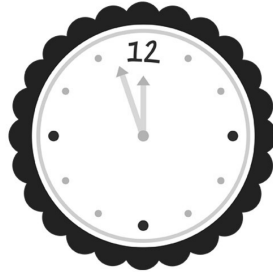
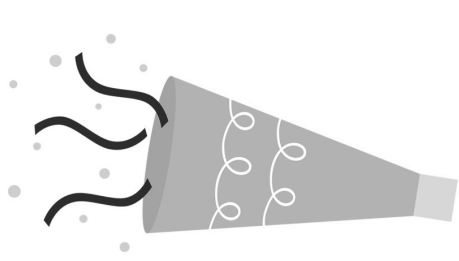
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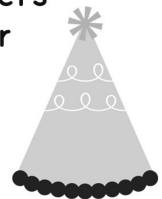
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How to Care for Your Dog's Teeth at Any Age

Before I sat down to write this article, I brushed my dog's teeth. It took me less than two minutes, and yet still there are days where I occasionally forget or think, "I am too tired," or "I don't have enough time."

These are, of course, excuses.

It's a fact of life that kids love snacks, so it isn't exactly surprising that they ask for them...

Brushing your dog's teeth is the easiest thing you can do to keep your dog healthy and lower your veterinary bills. Sure, you will probably still have to get your dog's teeth cleaned every once in a while, but the difference between a regular cleaning and having multiple teeth pulled is kind of like the difference between going to your dentist for a cleaning versus getting a root canal without dental insurance.

It hurts, and it is expensive.

Here is how you can care for your dog's teeth at any age to prevent gum disease and improve their stinky breath.

Caring for puppy teeth

The best (and worst) thing about puppies is how impressionable they are. If you play your cards right when your dog is a puppy, she will love getting her teeth brushed just as much as she loves going on walks and chasing balls.

Veterinarian Gary Clemons of Milford Animal Hospital in Ohio advises that the critical age to start brushing a puppy's teeth is between eight and sixteen weeks. This, he says, "will make the job easier when he is an adult."

So how do you convince your new puppy that teeth-brushing is the best idea since tennis balls?

The American Animal Hospital Association, the accreditation body that oversees American veterinary hospital standards, has a few recommendations.

Begin gradually, rubbing a finger dipped into beef bulion gently along your dog's gums

Gradually introduce a piece of gauze followed by a toothbrush designed for pets or an ultra-soft child's toothbrush

Reward with treats

Make sure to focus on the gum line, as this is where plaque and infection build up

Use a toothpaste intended for dogs, and do not use human toothpaste or baking soda, as these will upset your dog's stomach

Work your dog up to a full brushing slowly and be very gentle. Forcing your dog or causing discomfort will make teeth-brushing an unpleasant experience

These training tips can be applied to dogs of any age and can help dogs who are extra excited about teeth-brushing calm down.

Puppyhood is also a great time to get your dog hooked on chewing by providing lots of age- and size-appropriate chew toys. Chewing helps dogs keep their teeth clean naturally, so pick up a variety of toys to see which your dog prefers.

Dental care for adults

Teeth-brushing should be a lifelong habit for both you and your dog. The best way to make sure your dog has healthy teeth is to brush her teeth at least once a day.

There are a few toothbrush options out there. Some dogs prefer rubber finger brushes, which always remind me of finger puppets and prompted some embarrassing wannabe pup-peteer moments that even my dogs judged. Others like tooth-

brushes. You should always use a soft, small-headed toothbrush for pets, but this is especially true for small-breed dogs. Sticking a big old toothbrush in their mouths will be uncomfortable for them, and they will learn to dislike the entire process.

Doggy toothpaste comes in several flavors, from peanut butter to a whole lot of meat. My dog's eyes get as round as saucers when I break out the tube no matter the flavor, but other dogs are pickier. If your dog has a food allergy, talk to your veterinarian about the best toothpaste for dogs with food allergies.

Adult dogs, like puppies, need to chew, but not all dogs enjoy this activity. If your dog does not like toys, you can always buy chewing treats designed to keep their teeth clean or feed a commercial dental diet designed to help clean their teeth as they eat. Several brands carry dental diets, and there are prescription diets available for dogs with serious issues with their chompers.

Adulthood is also the time to start thinking about professional teeth-cleaning. Your veterinarian will advise you about the best time for your dog to get a dental cleaning, and they will also examine your dog's mouth during regular visits to make sure there is nothing abnormal going on in there.

Caring for senior dog teeth

Like us, dogs' teeth tend to deteriorate with age. Dental disease and a lifetime of chewing on anything from sticks to rocks can lead to painful mouths, loose or missing teeth and downright rank dog breath.

As with puppies and adults, continue to brush your dog's aging teeth, but be on the lookout for loose teeth, bleeding gums, sensitivity to cold water or difficulty eating, as these could all be signs that your senior dog needs some veterinary intervention.

Many owners of senior pets worry about putting their senior dogs under anesthesia for a dental cleaning. Dr. Marty Becker, a veterinarian writing for Vetstreet, has a few words of reassurance. "With safety measures in place, anesthetic risk is minimized to the extent that the benefits of dental care more than outweigh the concerns, no matter the age of your pet."

These safety measures include prescreening tests and the extensive care and monitoring that takes place during every procedure involving general anesthesia. While there is always a risk anytime an animal or person goes under, the benefits of having a clean, healthy mouth are almost always worth it.

Dental care for a better life

Periodontal disease can cause your dog pain and increase stress on their internal organs, shortening their lifespans and leading to potentially dangerous complications. You can help your dog avoid these pitfalls by following these tips for keeping your dog's teeth healthy from puppyhood into her golden years.

Data Master: Karen Deffenbaugh

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What Are the Health Benefits of Ginger?



Ginger is a terrific (and spicy) addition to many foods and drinks, but some tout it for its possible health benefits. Are there actual health benefits from consuming ginger? Or is this simply another unscientific claim we can push to the wayside?

What is ginger?

Ginger is a tropical plant that has pretty flowers, but the root is where all the fun is. The root, called a rhizome, is a fragrant underground stem used around the world as flavoring or fragrance, from foods and beverages to soaps and cosmetics. In ancient texts, ginger has another use. It is described as being used for health-related purposes in many cultures — for example, Asian medicine has used dried ginger for millennia to treat stomach discomforts.

We decided to dive into a couple of health claims to see if there is any truth behind the notion that ginger has actual health benefits.

Benefits of ginger

Nausea relief

Ginger is frequently recommended for nausea and general digestive issues. There have been several randomized clinical trials (reviewed and compiled by Oxford University researchers for the *British Journal of Anaesthesia*) on the topic, and while the results continue to be a matter of debate, the studies they reviewed do show ginger is superior to a placebo as far as postoperative nausea goes (side note: post-op nausea is truly awful) and equally as effective as a medication given for the same purpose.

A study by Australian researchers that examined other causes of nausea — including seasickness, morning sickness and chemotherapy — also found that ginger often had better results over placebos. However (and confusingly so), a study by the University of Maryland Medical Center showed that ginger actually increased nausea in some patients, and in other areas, it seemed to be effective only when paired with anti-nausea medications.

Overall, it's recommended that pregnant women always ask their doctor if they want to use ginger for morning sickness, and more research is definitely needed across the board before science can definitively say whether ginger is a cure-all for nausea.

Blood sugar regulation

SheKnows spoke with Dr. Michelle Davenport, who is a registered dietitian, holds a doctorate in nutrition and founded the company Raised Real. She mentions that ginger may have a positive, promising role to play in Type 2 diabetes, for example. "One of the compounds in ginger, gingerol, may help muscles uptake glucose without insulin, lowering sugar in the blood,"

she said. "In other words, ginger may help alleviate some of the stress on blood sugar caused by the insulin resistance in Type 2 diabetes."

In fact, a recent paper published in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* noted that ginger plays a role in fat burning, carb digestion and insulin secretion. While these results are promising, there is still a ton of research that needs to be done before anyone can even begin to think that ginger can be subbed for proper diabetic treatment and medication.

Possible complications

While research on whether ginger does or does not have verifiable health benefits is ongoing, there are some potential complications that should be heeded. Davenport says, "It's possible that ginger has an effect on blood thinning by keeping platelets (the compounds in our blood that causes clotting) from clumping together. This means it can increase bleeding. While the scientific evidence is still sparse (some studies show no effect), it's still important to consult a physician if you're already taking any blood thinners like Warfarin (coumadin), Plavix or aspirin."

Ways to consume ginger

If you're hoping to add some spice to your life, Davenport says ginger is easily incorporated into all foods. "You can grate a little ginger into any dish, steep it in tea, use it as an aromatic in soups, grate some into smoothies," she explains. "The possibilities are endless. The side effects of overconsumption are rare, but some people may experience gastrointestinal issues like heartburn or diarrhea."

While ginger may sound like the perfect treatment for nausea (in fact, it's a common suggestion in just about any pregnancy-related online forum for morning sickness), it's always best to consult with your doctor before starting on a ginger regimen for health reasons, whether you're pregnant or not. While it may not hurt to try, there are risks involved in some cases, and you don't want to be on the wrong end of that story.

Data Master: Karen Deffenbaugh

How to Choose the Best Dog Food for Your Pup

Walk into any pet specialty store in search of food for your beloved canine, and you can quickly become overwhelmed at the choices. Put “dog food” into the search box of any online pet food retailer’s site, and you’ll be presented with a plethora of choices — a quick search such as this on Petco returned over 1,200 choices.

So what’s a concerned pet parent who just wants to feed a food that will keep their dog healthy and happy to do when presented with so many choices? Read on to learn the best way to choose the best food for your dog.

Read the label

Duh, right? Lots of consumer information these days admonishes us to review nutrition information when it comes to our own health, and the same goes for our dog’s.

All dog foods that are sold in U.S. stores must meet nutritional guidelines that dictate the percentages of macronutrients (fats, carbohydrates and proteins) in a serving of the food. Every dog food label must contain the “guaranteed analysis,” which depicts this breakdown.

Keep in mind that these are minimum standards as dictated by the American Association of Feed Control Officials. Some companies go the extra mile to conduct feeding trials on actual dogs to determine whether their foods provide complete and balanced nutrition, so you’ll likely gain a degree or two of confidence if you purchase a food that’s tested in this manner.

Ask your dog

Your dog’s opinion is important in choosing a dog food, but it’s not the only consideration. Dogs evolved as scavengers, and thus many of our pet dogs today will consume pretty much anything they can find (I’m looking at you, beagle). So choose a dog food that your dog enjoys and eats readily without coaxing, but remember that low-quality grocery store brands tend to have lower-quality ingredients and may not provide the best nutrition for your dog, even though he appears to enjoy them.

Know the ingredients

The restrictions I mentioned above (those formulated by AAFCO) only apply to macronutrients — fat, carbs and proteins. But what about all of the other things your dog needs, like vitamins and minerals? The theory is that if the diet meets those general guidelines, it will provide adequate quantities of those as well, but there’s no guarantee.

In general, foods that are less expensive have lower-quality ingredients. It makes sense when you think about it — a serving of fresh salmon costs more than a meal at Taco Bell, after all. So choose a food for your dog that has as many “whole” ingredients on the label as possible.

One very important nutrient that’s typically left to the discretion of the food manufacturer is omega-3 fatty acids. Most foods don’t add this nutrient because even though we recognize the huge importance of it, we also know that keeping it stable in a bag of dry dog food is problematic. That’s why omega-3 fatty acids in the form of fish oil capsules or liquid are a great thing to supplement in any dog’s diet.

Do your own research

Pet food recalls have done much to open our eyes regarding how and where pet foods are manufactured. Less-than-perfect manufacturing practices, including sourcing ingredients from other countries and contracting out manufacturing to companies that have less-than-scrupulous oversight of how the dog food is made, have resulted in some disasters of epic proportions.

At this point, pretty much every major dog food manufac-

turer has experienced a recall at one time or another. (You can see a list of all pet food recalls in the last year provided by the American Veterinary Medical Association [here](#).) Don’t panic if the company you’re considering has had a recall, but do read about how they handled the recall. Did they communicate in an open and honest way with consumers and the veterinary profession? Did they cover veterinary bills for pets that were sickened by eating their contaminated foods? Did they make changes to their ingredient-sourcing and/or manufacturing processes to ensure that a problem didn’t occur again?

In this case, the internet is your friend, so take advantage of the information that is available to you in order to choose the best food for your dog.

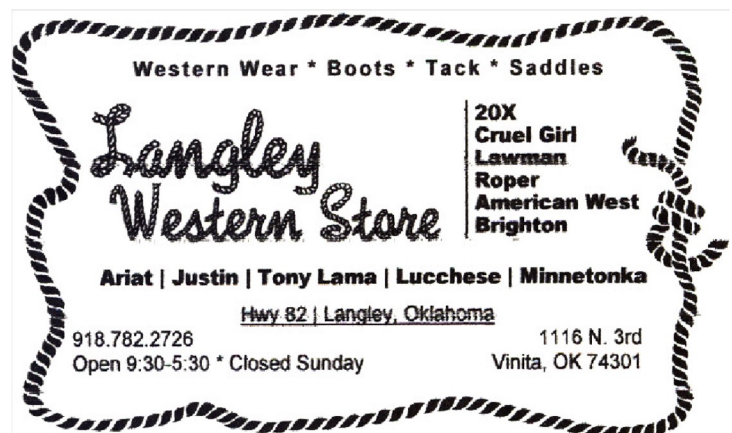
Treats are not food

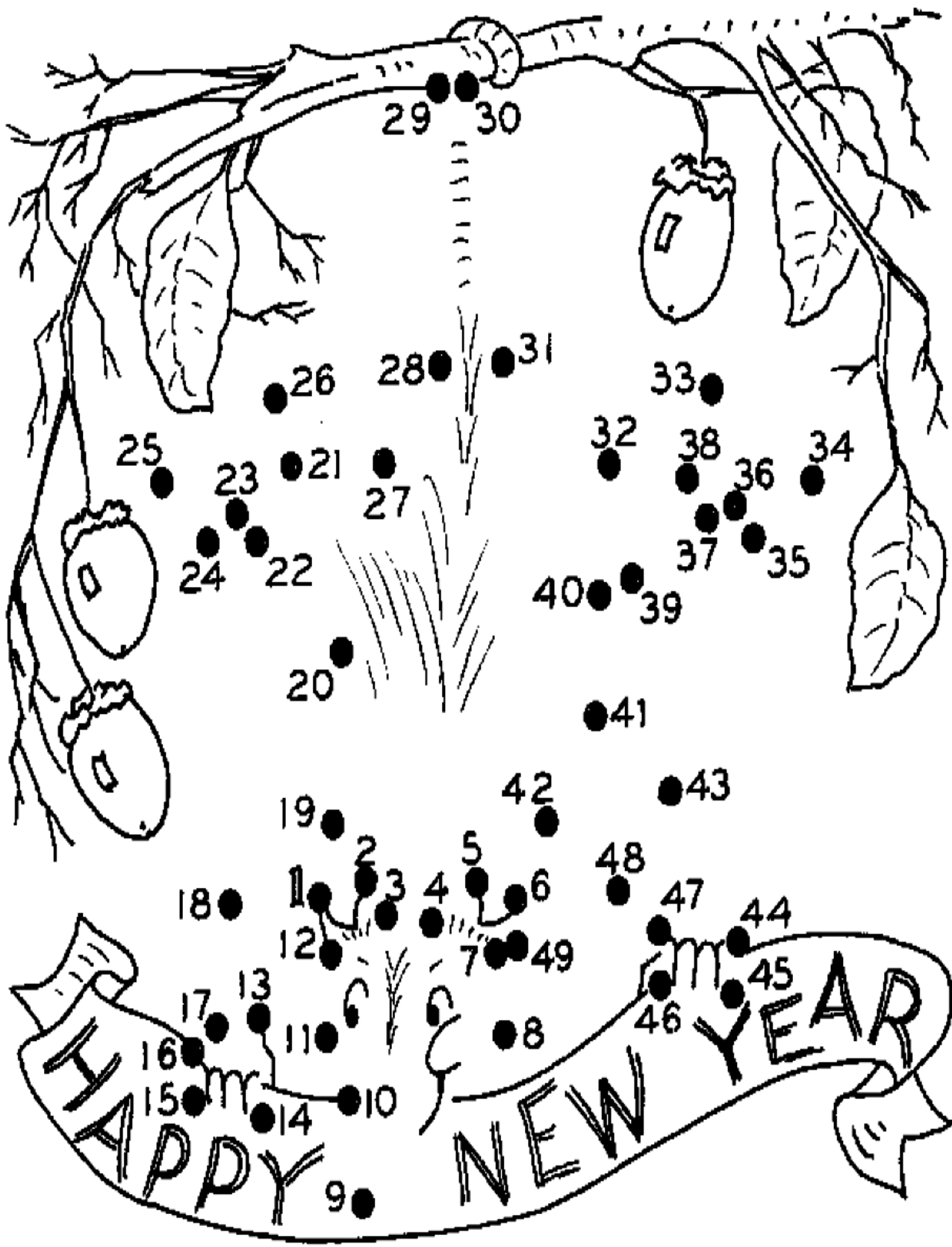
There’s a dizzying array of dog treats available to pet food consumers these days, and it’s worth reminding everyone reading this that treats are not food. Treats do not have to be “complete and balanced,” so on their own they do not provide adequate nutrition for adult dogs. Remember this when you find yourself giving more and more treats and less and less actual food. If your dog prefers treats to the point of not eating his food, he’s either got you well-trained or it’s time to consider a switch to a new diet that he considers more palatable.

What about raw?

The movement to feed diets composed mostly of raw meat to dogs has gained significant momentum in recent years. Many people swear that their dogs do better on these diets, and while I don’t recommend feeding raw due to concerns for bacterial contamination (both for the dog and the person preparing the meal), I have seen many patients over the years who do well on raw diets. I always ask pet parents to grind their own meat at home since store-bought ground meat is potentially high in bacteria and lightly sear the outside of a large cut of meat first — to sterilize the outer surfaces — before grinding or chopping the rest for consumption. If you like the idea of feeding raw but don’t want to mess with large quantities of raw meat, consider some of the newer commercially prepared raw diets. These take the guesswork out of figuring out the ideal recipe and provide good nutrition for your dog.

Data Master: Nikki Hamilton

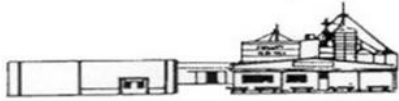








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Up-Coming Events

TOPS #570 We meet 9am to 11am Monday morning at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Miami 2337 N. Main St. "Taking off pounds sensibly!"

TOPS #567 meet every Thursday at 10am 433 N Mississippi in Nowata.

TOPS #506 in Miami Heavenly Winds Worship Center meet every 6pm Monday evening. For more info call Susan Walls at 918-540-0570

Community Baptist Church Pensacola Gospel Singing. Second Saturday of every month with a potluck dinner at 6pm. Singing begins at 7. Contact Pastor Mike Earp 918-314-7451 or Anna Earp 918-314-7436. Please call for directions.

Nov 23, 2017 to Jan 01, 2018 Winter Wonderland Christmas Light Tour Come and enjoy this spectacular old-fashioned Christmas light display featuring over 400,000 lights. Step back in time and become a child again with illuminated log cabins, antique cars and woodland animals all aglow at the Winter Wonderland Christmas Light Tour. Get into the Christmas spirit along the shores of Grand Lake as you drive through the twinkling grounds of Pine Lodge Resort in Ketchum. Admission is free and visitors can drive through the grounds as many times as they like. Pine Lodge Resort Ketchum, OK 74349 Phone: 918-782-1400 Phone: 918-782-7062 Toll Free: 800-640-3173 Fax: 918-782-3493

Nov 24, 2017 to Dec 23, 2017 Woolaroc Wonderland of Lights Woolaroc Museum & Wildlife Preserve Embark on a winter adventure to the Woolaroc Ranch, Museum & Wildlife Preserve near Bartlesville for the annual Woolaroc Wonderland of Lights. Visitors to this much-loved event are invited to ride a wagon or stroll the grounds to enjoy a spectacular display of more than 750,000 glistening lights decorating the Woolaroc grounds and facilities, creating an illuminating atmosphere of magical holiday wonder. Bring the family to Woolaroc Wonderland of Lights and enjoy live entertainment, snack on holiday refreshments and visit Santa Claus in the museum. 1925 Woolaroc Ranch Rd Bartlesville, OK 74003 Phone: 918-336-0307 Fax: 918-336-0084

Nov 24, 2017 to Dec 24, 2017 Lights on the Hill Chandler Park will be ablaze with the sights and sounds of the holiday spirit during November and December. Drive through miles of bright lights and whimsical displays in celebration of Christmas during the city's annual Holiday Lights on the Hills event. Entry to the park is free; however, donations are appreciated. 6500 W 21st St Tulsa, OK 74107 Phone: 918-591-6053

Nov 24, 2017 to Jan 01, 2018 Garden of Lights Experience animated displays and over 1,000,000 shimmering lights at Muskogee's annual Garden of Lights. Drive through Honor Heights

Park and view 120 acres of trees, bushes and water areas decorated for the holiday season. Visit Garden of Lights and experience the natural beauty of the park filled with twinkling streams of light. View rose and azalea bushes illuminated with color, imitating their natural state during the blooming of spring. This Christmas light display will also feature lighted displays of deer, squirrels and birds scattered amongst a wide variety of trees wrapped in lights. Guests are invited to enjoy all this holiday beauty from the comfort of a hay ride or from an outdoor synthetic ice rink set up within the park called WinterSkate at the Papilion. Admission to Garden of Lights is free; however, donations are appreciated. Honor Heights Park 1400 Honor Heights Dr Muskogee, OK 74401 Phone: 918-684-6302

Nov 24, 2017 to Jan 07, 2018 Winterfest Downtown Tulsa is transformed into a festive wonderland during Winterfest, an annual holiday tradition. Bring friends and family together for holiday festivities and share the joyful spirit of the season. Experience the thrill of outdoor ice skating, see Oklahoma's tallest outdoor Christmas tree, take a ride in a horse-drawn carriage, listen to live entertainment and browse beautiful holiday light displays. Downtown Tulsa, OK 74103 Phone: 918-894-4268

Nov 24, 2017 to Dec 30, 2017 Holiday Helicopter Rides - Tour of Lights This holiday season, gather your family and take in Tulsa's magical light displays just like Santa - from the air - on a holiday helicopter ride. Every night throughout the holiday season, Tulsa County Helicopters will be launching tours from Safari Joe's H2O Water Park. At this unique holiday extravaganza, choose from one of four family-friendly packages to take in the lights shows put on by Safari Joe's, Rhema, Winterfest, midtown Tulsa or Utica Square. After each flight, enjoy a special open house experience courtesy of Safari Joe's. Safari Joe's H2O Water Park 4707 E 21st St Tulsa, OK 74114 Phone: 918-749-7385

Nov 30, 2017 to Dec 21, 2017 Holiday Luminaries Get into the holiday spirit with the warm glow of luminaries at Tulsa Botanic Garden. Guests can take in the beautiful sight of winter flowers, well-lit by the colorful luminaries. While wandering through the garden, guests can also snap photos with the botanical Saint Nick, who can be found roaming the grounds. All who attend are invited to keep warm with hot cups of cocoa, and s'mores kits can be purchased and used throughout the night. Each week, all ages can also participate in a holiday craft session put on by a local artist. Tulsa Botanic Garden 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr Tulsa, OK 74127 Phone: 918-289-0330

Dec 07, 2017 Festival of Lights Parade Get into the holiday spirit at Okmulgee's annual Festival of Lights Parade, one of the state's oldest nighttime parades with more than a million lights. The parade will travel east on 6th Street, so get there early and

secure a spot along the sidelines. Watch as area businesses and organizations compete to win Best Float in a selected theme. The Festival of Lights Parade will feature numerous floats, local dignitaries and an appearance from Santa Claus. Bring the family and enjoy this downtown parade with plenty of lights and Christmas-themed floats. Downtown Okmulgee, OK 74447 Phone: 918-758-1015 Fax: 918-756-6441

Dec 07, 2017 Vinita Christmas Parade Bundle up tight and bring the family to downtown Vinita this December for the annual Christmas Parade. This holiday parade features themed floats, light displays and a visit from Santa Claus, as well as live entertainment and food vendors. Get your whole family in the holiday spirit with a trip to the Vinita Christmas Parade, featuring this year's "Hometown Christmas" theme. Downtown Vinita, OK 74301 Phone: 918-256-7133 Fax: 918-256-8261

Dec 07, 2017 Pryor Christmas Parade of Lights The Pryor Christmas Parade of Lights features more than 100 entries and 2,000 participants. Bring the whole family to enjoy beautiful lighted floats, marching bands, antique cars, horses and a special appearance by Santa Claus. Downtown Graham Avenue Pryor, OK 74361 Phone: 918-825-0157 Fax: 918-825-0158

Dec 08, 2017 to Dec 17, 2017 Living Nativity at Shepherd's Cross Come to this Living Nativity event at Shepherd's Cross, a working farm and Christian mission, to walk through a living, interactive nativity depicting the birth of Jesus Christ. Come, take a peaceful stroll back in time and enjoy live character portrayals, including over one hundred costumed participants. Live animals in the nativity scene include sheep, mules, donkeys, chickens, guineas and horses. The animals are housed in a real, working barn, as this event is an indoor nativity. Shepherd's Cross 16792 E 450 Rd Claremore, OK 74017 Phone: 918-342-5911 Phone: 918-231-6947 Fax: 918-342-5911

Dec 09, 2017 Jay Christmas Parade Come and celebrate the holiday season with a downtown Christmas parade in Jay. Witness as local dignitaries, decorated vehicles and holiday-themed floats meander their way through the streets of downtown Jay. Get in the holiday spirit and join the citizens of Jay for Christmas entertainment that is perfect for all ages. Main Street Jay, OK 74346 Phone: 918-253-8698

Dec 09, 2017 Grove Lighted Christmas Parade Enjoy one of the largest Christmas parades in the area at the annual Grove Lighted Christmas Parade. This fantastic holiday parade features over 75 lighted floats, bands and a variety of organizations all decked out for the Christmas season. Watch as the streets of downtown Grove come to life on this special night and celebrate the holidays at the Grove Lighted Christmas Parade. Downtown Business District Grove, OK 74344 Phone: 918-786-9079 Fax: 918-786-2909

Dec 09, 2017 Claremore Christmas Parade Join in the holiday cheer at the Christmas Parade in Claremore. The parade begins at the Claremore Expo Center and snakes down Will Rogers Blvd. with plenty of decorated and lighted floats. Bundle up, bring a thermos full of hot chocolate and bring the whole family to see these festive floats. Keep an eye out for the big, jolly elf and you might even catch a glimpse of Santa Claus himself. The Christmas Parade features over 200 entries, and visitors to the parade also have a great view of downtown Claremore's Christmas lights. Claremore Expo Center Claremore, OK 74017 Phone: 918-341-2818 Fax: 918-342-0663

Dec 09, 2017 Tulsa Christmas Parade Welcome the holiday season with the Tulsa Christmas Parade. This festive celebration includes floats, bands, drill teams, dancers and plenty of Christmas Cheer. Crowd favorites among parade onlookers are the gigantic helium balloons escorted by teams of balloon wranglers.

Watch as towering balloons float through the streets of downtown Tulsa along the parade route. Bundle up and join family and friends for the highly anticipated Tulsa Christmas Parade to see downtown Tulsa come alive with thousands of people celebrating the spirit of Christmas and the holidays. Downtown Tulsa, OK 74103 Phone: 918-732-9403

Dec 09, 2017 Salina Christmas Parade Head to the Salina Christmas Parade to see a one-of-a-kind holiday celebration in the streets. Salina comes to life with festive floats, sweet treats and downtown businesses elaborately decorated for the season. Enjoy the hometown parade followed by a community chili feed at Salina First Baptist Church. Immediately following the parade is a free Chili Cook-Off hosted annually by the first Baptist Church at 110 N Ross St. Santa will be there, door prizes, hot chocolate and cookies for all. 103 W Ferry St Salina, OK 74365 Phone: 918-434-8181

Dec 09, 2017 to Dec 31, 2017 West Bend Winterland Claremore's West Bend Winterland is reminiscent of holiday memories with an ice skating rink, pictures with Santa, real reindeer borrowed from the North Pole for you to see and take pictures with up close, shopping from local artisans, a beautiful 50 foot live Christmas tree and more. Bring out your family to enjoy skating, hot cocoa and caroling. It's going to be a great holiday event for everlasting memories. Claremore Expo Center 400 Veterans Pkwy Claremore, OK 74017 Phone: 918-342-5357

Dec 10, 2017 Tulsa Toy Run Thousands of bikers descend upon Tulsa Expo Square every winter just in time for the holidays. During the annual Tulsa Toy Run, bikers donate thousands of toys to help kids celebrate the holiday season. Bikers will take off at Tulsa Expo Square and ride over to the Blue Dome District to make their festive donations and gather with fellow motorcycle enthusiasts. Tulsa Expo square 4145 E 21st St Tulsa, OK 74114 Phone: 918-691-8513

Dec 01, 2017 to Jan 14, 2018 Lantern Light Festival Tulsa's River West Festival Park will transform into a spectacle of Chinese lanterns in mesmerizing shapes, sizes and colors, just in time for the holiday season. For 45 days in the winter, guests can attend the Lantern Light Festival for a variety of Chinese food, showstopping acrobatic performances and live music for all to enjoy. The kids are sure to have a blast mining for emeralds, racing through inflatable mazes and riding on makeshift dragons. Come explore the park and see a stunning display of silk-like fabric in 400-ft-long dragon, 30-ft-tall panda, tunnel, flower and dolphin form. River West Festival Park 2100 S Jackson Ave Tulsa, OK 74107 Phone: 918-596-2008

Jan 06, 2018 to Jan 07, 2018 Oklahoma Gun Show The Oklahoma Gun Show at Expo Square in Tulsa is sure to have the products you are looking for with a wide selection of firearms, ammo, knives and more. With over 1,000 tables for vendors and 70,000 sq ft of merchandise to browse through, you'll want to come to both days of this weekend event to see everything these high quality dealers have to offer. Tulsa Expo Square 4145 E 21st St Tulsa, OK 74114 Phone: 918-955-1092

Jan 09, 2018 to Jan 13, 2018 Chili Bowl Nationals The Lucas Oil Chili Bowl Nationals at Tulsa Expo Square's River Spirit Expo is an annual competition for Midget Sprint Car racing. Held each year for nearly 30 years, these races attract over 200 talented drivers from around the world. Four qualifying nights lead up to the championship competition on Saturday. See cars zoom around the quarter-mile clay oval track and perform stunts that will keep you on the edge of your seat. The RC Chili

Bowl will be held alongside the Chili Bowl Nationals, attracting top drivers and welcoming spectators to be part of the excitement in Tulsa. Tulsa Expo Square 4145 E 21st St Tulsa, OK 74112 Phone: 918-838-3777

Fax: 918-836-5517

Jan 13, 2018 Eagle Tour Stop by the Three Forks Nature Center at beautiful Sequoyah State Park for a tour to view eagles in their natural habitat. This eagle tour, which highlights the Fort Gibson and Hulbert area, begins with an overview of eagles at the nature center. This program is followed by an educational eagle video and a chance to meet the nature center's live eagle. Enjoy doughnuts, coffee and hot chocolate before the caravan trip over to the Fort Gibson Dam to meet with the Indian Nation Audubon Society and search for the bald eagles that winter in Oklahoma. Bring your binoculars and enjoy watching eagles soar over the lake and see them in their nesting areas. Along the way, other bird species can be seen, including loons and cormorants. Sequoyah State Park 19460 Park 80 Hulbert, OK 74441 Phone: 918-772-2108 Phone: 918-772-2046 Fax: 918-772-2108

Jan 13, 2018 The Oklahoma Wedding Show Bring your significant other and trusted group of family and friends to the Oklahoma Wedding Show to help you narrow down wedding necessities before the big day. Held inside Central Park Hall at Tulsa Expo Square, this wedding show highlights statewide vendors, prizes, experts and catering samples. Meet one on one with photographers, bakers, florists, venues and caterers to hone in on details for your upcoming nuptials. Guests can also take a peek at current bridal fashions at the bridal runway show. Tulsa Expo Square 4145 E 21st St Tulsa, OK 74114 Phone: 918-744-6205 Fax: 918-748-5772

Jan 13, 2018 The Runway Run Compete in the annual Runway Run 5K and enjoy the unique experience of running along on the Tulsa International Airport runway. You're sure to beat your best time on the flat runway surface, but don't miss out on the planes parked along the race strip just for this fun, 3.1-mile race. Individuals and families are welcome to compete in this event, whether you walk, run or push a stroller the whole way. Afterward, visit the Tulsa Air & Space Museum where you'll receive free admission the day of the race. Regardless of your experience level, this fun 5K is sure to be a fun event for the whole family. Tulsa International Airport 7777 E Apache St Tulsa, OK 74115 Phone: 918-834-9900

Jan 18, 2018 to Jan 20, 2018 Western Hills Winter Bluegrass Festival Come out and enjoy gospel and traditional bluegrass music during the Western Hills Winter Bluegrass Festival. Held over three days in January, this bluegrass festival is a fast-moving display of musical talent with a handful of bands showcasing their skills on the fiddle, banjo and guitar. The Western Hills Winter Bluegrass Festival, held on the grounds of the beautiful Lodge at Sequoyah State Park, will feature top bands from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Colorado and Missouri. A special all-gospel show will be performed on Thursday. The Lodge at Sequoyah State Park 17131 Park 10 Wagoner, OK 74467 Phone: 405-273-8578 Phone: 405-535-9179 Fax: 405-275-6222

Jan 18, 2018 to Jan 20, 2018 World of Wrestling Flo Tulsa Nationals Come to Tulsa Expo Square and experience one of the oldest and most prestigious Junior Wrestling events in the world. 40 states will be represented by more than 2,000 young wrestlers between the ages of four and 16. See who takes home a national title during this thrilling, double-elimination tournament. Wrestling enthusiasts of all stripes won't want to miss World of Wrestling's 63rd Annual Flo Tulsa Nationals. Tulsa Expo Square 4145 E 21st St Tulsa, OK 74114 Phone: 918-366-4411

Jan 20, 2018 Hard Rock Casino presents: Criss Angel Come to the

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa for a night of mind-blowing magic from Criss Angel. The star of the hit TV series Criss Angel Mindfreak has been one of the world's most successful illusionists for more than a decade, and he will be bringing his spectacular magic show to Catoosa for a special one-night performance you won't forget. Criss Angel RAW: The Mindfreak Unplugged is a theatrical experience unlike any you've ever seen, so grab your crew and come see this one-of-a-kind magic show that's guaranteed to blow your mind. Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa 777 W Cherokee St Catoosa, OK 74015 Phone: 918-384-7800 Toll Free: 800-760-6700 Fax: 918-384-7591

Jan 20, 2018 Eagle Tour & Loon Watch Come to the Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge and see southern bald eagles in their natural habitat. You will begin the tour by watching eagles from the refuge's webcam before taking off on the 25-person tour bus. Guests are encouraged to bring binoculars. Stops will be made at two nesting sites as well as other points of interest where eagles frequently appear. Two spotting scopes will be provided for a close-up look at these incredible birds. After spending the morning at the refuge, take a break and have a leisurely lunch in Vian. Then, make your way to Tenkiller State Park's Driftwood Nature Center to continue your bird-watching adventure with more eagles and lots of loons, including the common loon, the red-throated loon, the pacific loon and the yellow-billed loon. Come out and catch sight of this famed bird of the northeast and beyond. Tours will occur unless there is a travel advisory for the area. Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge & Tenkiller State Park Vian, OK 74962 Phone: 918-489-5641 Phone: 918-489-5025 Fax: 918-489-2111

Jan 20, 2018 Mad Dog Demolition Derby Make your way to the Mad Dog Demolition Derby at the Claremore Expo Center for an evening of fun and car smashing. Come see and hear one of the loudest events in Claremore, full of crushed metal and smashed cars. Drivers will compete in figure eight, mower derby and Hornet car circle racing. This event is fun for the whole family, with a mini car derby kids will love and a full-size derby fit for adults. Claremore's Mad Dog event offers fast-paced action for everyone to enjoy, including the Saturday night Power Wheel Derby. Claremore Expo Center 400 Veterans Pkwy Claremore, OK 74017 Phone: 918-342-5357 Phone: 417-863-6353

Do You have an event that you would like to share ?

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Library News

CATOOSA PUBLIC LIBRARY

105 E. Oak (918) 266-1684

Hours:

Monday thru Thursday: 9am to 7pm
Friday: 9am to 12pm & 1pm to 3pm
Saturday: 10am to 2pm
Closed Sunday

CHELSEA PUBLIC LIBRARY

618 Pine (918) 789-3364

Hours:

Tuesday: 10:00am to 7:00pm
Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 10:00am to 4:00pm
Saturday: 9:00am to Noon Closed Sunday & Monday

CHOUTEAU PUBLIC LIBRARY

PO BOX 353, 111 N McCracken Phone: 918-476-4445

Hours:

Mon, Wed, Fri – 10AM to 5PM
Tues, Thur. – 10AM to 3PM
Closed Saturday & Sunday

DELAWARE COUNTY LIBRARY

429 S. 9th St. Jay, Oklahoma (918) 253-8521

Web: www.eodls.lib.ok.us/jay.html

Hours:

Mon., Wed., & Fri. 9:00am to 6:00pm
Tues. & Thurs 9:00am to 8:00pm
Sat. 9:00am to 1:00pm
Closed Sundays and Holidays

GROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY

1140 NEO Loop (918) 786-2945

Toll free in the 918 area code: 1-888-291-8150

Fax: (918) 786-5233

Hours:

Mon., Wed., & Fri.: 8:30am-5:00pm
Tues. & Thurs.: 8:30am-9:00pm
Sat. 8:00am-12:00pm
Closed Sunday

LANGLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

325 W Osage Ave. (918) 782-4461

Hours:

Mon.-. 1:00pm to 7:00pm
Tue.-Fri. 9:00am to 12:00pm
And 1:00pm to 5:00pm
Closed Sat. & Sun.

MIAMI PUBLIC LIBRARY

200 N. Main (918) 541-2292

Hours:

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Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday: 9:00AM-5:00PM

SALINA PUBLIC LIBRARY

420 E. Ferry St. (918) 434-8001

Hours: Tue. 12pm-7pm, Wed. 12pm-5pm,

Thurs. & Fri. 10am-5pm

Closed Saturday, Sunday & Monday

TALALA AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY

106 W Watova St. (918) 275-4540

Hours:

Monday - Friday 2pm to 5pm

Monday and Thursday evening 6pm to 9pm

Saturday 11am to 2pm

VINITA PUBLIC LIBRARY

215 W. Illinois (918) 256-2115

Hours:

Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri. 11:00am to 6:00pm

Thurs. 11:00am to 7:00pm

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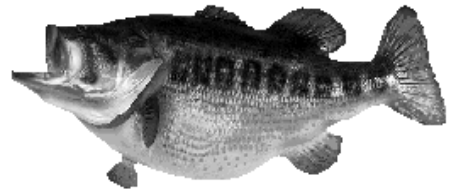
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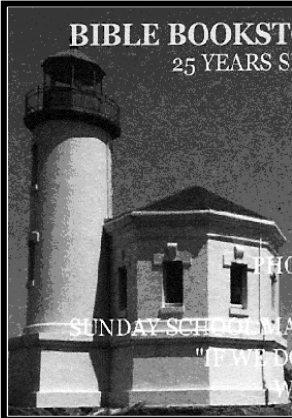
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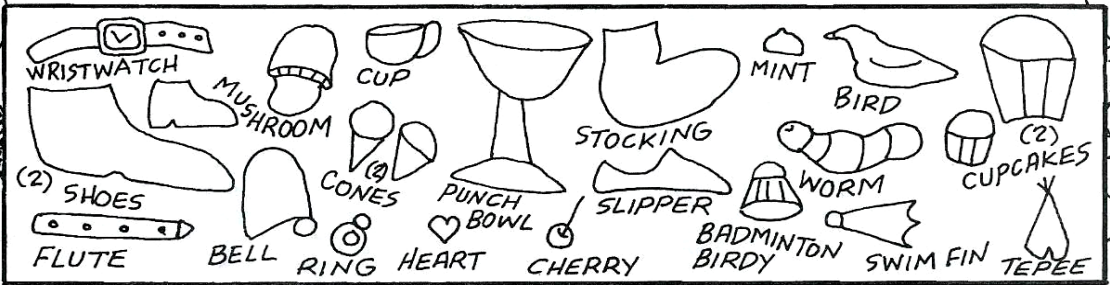
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Do our pets get angry at us?

To a non-pet lover, my conversations can seem, well odd. Of course, I don't expect my dogs to answer me back. I often wonder if they really understand me. Do animals understand us humans? It turns out they do.

I've always been interested in psychic abilities. I don't think I possess any personally, but I've had people in my life or even complete strangers tell me something about myself that sent chills down my spine. Often I feel that my pets are trying to let me know how they feel. As a devoted pet owner, I learn to interpret their body language in hopes of understanding what they want. Like most pet owners, there are times when there's obvious miscommunication — just what exactly do they want? That's when you seek the services of a pet psychic.

Boo Newell is a life coach, psychic medium and animal communicator in Atlanta, Georgia. She helps people communicate with their pets (of any type). Her gift of communication with animals has been with her for her entire life. Boo believes that everybody has an ability to communicate with animals. After all, humans and animals are not very different, we just have different forms. Learning how to communicate takes skill, practice and the ability to remain neutral. I sat down with Boo to find out how she speaks to animals and what they want us to know about them
SheKnows: How do you talk to the animals?

Boo: It's a combination of telepathy and the four psychic senses. Telepathy is where thoughts, visuals, verbal and feelings (emotional and physical) are sent directly back and forth from mind to mind. The four psychic senses are clairvoyance (clear seeing), clairaudience (clear hearing), clairsentience (clear feeling) and clairgustance (clear taste and smell). Using all of these abilities helps me communicate with animals.

SK: Do you just feel their energy or do they speak directly to you?

Boo: Both. I'm receiving the emotions and the energy level. Their message doesn't come like a burning bush — it comes in like a voice in your head or as a projected image. If I want to convey something to an animal, I project the image of what I want them to do or how I feel. And, the animal does the same to me.

Communication is really based on vibrational levels of energy. The higher the vibration, the more neutral and the clearer the reading. If you are depressed or angry, it affects your energy, causing your vibrational level to be lower. Lower vibrational levels will skew the results because you are putting your own emotions and opinions into it.

I may use up to all four of the psychic senses to read an animal. It can be a feeling, especially if they are in pain. The pain will be feeling of warmth or the actual physical pain, or I'll be drawn to the area of the animal where the health problem is. Other times, the animal will project an image in my head and/or I will hear them speak.

SK: What about pets that have passed? Can you talk to them?

Boo: Yes. Speaking to a pet that has passed is no different than speaking to one that has not. You are still communicating with the animal's spirit. It's just as easy to speak to an animal spirit when they are in or out of their physical body. Usually there's an energy difference between an animal that has passed or not — the living animal has a "heavier" energy around the spirit. The energy around the spirit is lighter than when the animal is no longer tethered to a physical body.

It gets tricky when trying to read an animal that is missing because we don't know if they have passed (because they are happy not to be encumbered by an old body or no longer in pain), or they are happy because they are someplace safe and happy.

SK: Are there things that they wish we knew?

Boo: Absolutely. Our animals are constantly trying to communicate with their people. Oftentimes, they are trying to communicate with us for our own good. We humans are so busy with our lives that we've misplaced our natural ability to communicate telepathically. So, our animals often send us a message by a change in a behavior.

If your pet's behavior has all of a sudden changed, they are probably trying to tell you something. Their behavior is their way of telling you that they need something or that you need to change a bad situation you are in, whether it's your romantic life or yourself or destructive behavior.

SK: Do they get mad at people?

Boo: They really don't get mad at you. They are madder about a situation or upset or anxious. A lot of the issues between a person and their animal are created by miscommunication. Very rarely I find an animal that is cruel or mean. They use a behavior to try to get attention to show you something that needs to be changed, or if they feel something is unfair.

SK: Are cats more difficult to read than dogs?

They can be. Cats don't like to be controlled and are very independent. They can be more temperamental to deal with. Dogs are usually more easygoing and easier to read. A lot of times, dogs are more trusting right off the bat than a cat. Cats tend to be more reserved, preferring to assess the situation first.

SK: Does every animal communicator communicate the same way?

Boo: No. Some animal communicators don't need the animal present or a photo to communicate. Some prefer to use these means to strengthen the connection. I personally do not like to use anything or even have the animal present. For me, they can be distracting because their energy is strong when they are in front of me. The animal communicates with body language. If they are in front of me, I don't want to be distracted by the body language. I can stay in neutral mode easier without the distractions. It's just as effective to communicate with the animal present or with photos; it's whatever the communicator is comfortable with. A big thing for an animal communicator is to be nonjudgmental. You need to remain neutral. You are like a telephone wire — a conduit passing the information. You use whatever you need to make the signal stronger.

SK: What are the benefits of a pet psychic reading?

Boo: It will help you communicate with your animal and help you understand their actions. A lot of issues between a person and their animal are caused by miscommunication. Animals use a behavior to try to get attention to tell you something. Learning how to understand your pet will help you interpret their behaviors. A psychic reading will help you get answers to problems and find solutions to correct a negative behavior. An animal communicator facilitates better understanding between the parties. It gives you the animal's perspective on why things are going on behaviorally and physically. A good animal communicator provides a bridge between the species. Misunderstanding breeds ignorance. What you understand, you'll cherish.

Data Master: Tino Hensley

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How to Start Family Holiday Traditions of Your Own

Holiday traditions are a lovely way to create lasting family memories. But do you have to bake cookies with your kids every year just because that's what you did with your own mom? Or maybe you grew up without much holiday fuss and feel like you missed out; how do you go about implementing more festive fun for your own family? Are traditions still traditions when they're invented from scratch?

"Holiday traditions, and tradition and rituals in general, help families create shared meaning," family therapist Megan Costello tells us. She brought up another way of looking at traditions: "In building a family life, parents are creating a whole new culture that has never existed before." That's right, parents: great power, great responsibility.

Luckily, there are plenty of ways to create brand-new holiday traditions for your own kids, regardless of what kind of holidays (or lack thereof) you grew up with. Just try to look beyond Elf on the Shelf (but no judgments — we definitely have one of those) to create unique opportunities to share this special time of year.

Below are tips on how to start new holiday traditions tailor-made for your own family — inspired by real parents who did just that.

Blend beliefs

Many modern parents are inspired to create new traditions out of their respective beliefs, religions or varying degrees of observance. Brooklyn mom Laura explains that her daughter "has only been around for two Hanukkahs so far, but we made sure to light candles before bedtime and sing a song from my husband's more secular tradition and a prayer from my slightly more observant one. We bought our daughter a kids book about celebrating Hanukkah and read it to her occasionally ahead of the holiday (or randomly throughout the year), so she knows what it's all about. And we're sure to enjoy at least one feast full of latkes, which may be her favorite part (can't blame her)."

Los Angeles mom Robynn Markus has a unique activity planned for her two preschoolers: "Since my husband is Jewish and I was raised with an exorbitant amount of Christmas tradition, I started making a 'House of Hanukkah' with my kids," says Markus. "We buy a huge box (big enough for them to fit inside) and make Hanukkah decorations and cover it with lights inside and out, and every night of Hanukkah a gift 'magically' appears inside! I think they enjoy it more than Christmas now."

Hone in on ideas that appeal to you

You're not likely to stick with a tradition that you're not interested in yourself. I love decorating (and eating) cookies, so holiday baking was a natural choice for my family. I let my kids help with the mixing and have them cut out some of their own cookies with cutters, and they get to decorate a few. Even though it can be stressful to bake with preschoolers, I grin and bear it because they love to "help." Plus, they love to be involved in making gifts, and we love to give out edible treats. And I know that when they're older, they (hopefully) won't spill flour all over the kitchen, but we'll still have our annual baking tradition.

Consider giving back

It's always a good idea to instill the holiday spirit of giving; bringing children on community-service excursions is a great idea. "I made an advent calendar with little boxes glued to a board," says mom of two Jenny McCormick. "A third of the boxes have candy or little toys, a third have pieces of paper with family activities written on them and a third have charitable or donation-based activities listed. The kids might find 'Bake cookies for firefighters' or 'Donate a bag of toys.' It inspires us to give back."

Use your environment

Is there something special about the area you live in that you can incorporate into a holiday event? "Since we live in Southern California, we go to the beach on Christmas Day," says mom Sarah Grubb, who started a unique tradition with her 21-month-old son. "We get a shell each time and put it in a jar." A Christmas shell jar? Adorable. Mom of two Katie Szurpicki is originally from Nebraska, but she also takes advantage of her current Los Angeles locale. "Now that we are in California, we hike on holidays," she says of her new family tradition. Soak up that sun when you can!

Another nature-filled holiday tradition is that of Holly Ramey, a Nashville mom and healer who celebrates Solstice. "The winter solstice is the rebirth of the sun — when the days begin to lengthen, a solar new year," Ramey explains. "I love to celebrate with my daughter by building a ceremonial altar with flowers, candles and crystals with the colors yellow and orange to represent the sun. Sometimes I add pictures or quotes — whatever feels relevant to the theme of rebirth and renewal. To include my daughter Ruby in this ritual, we'll light candles, sing a song (I like "This Little Light of Mine") and say a prayer of gratitude to welcome the light into our lives."

And speaking of nature, mom of one Megan Persson, who lives in Sweden, plants her Christmas trees after the holiday is over. "Each year, we buy a living Christmas tree, which we plant on our land once the ground thaws, and we've named the 'Christmas forest' after our daughter," says Persson. "We will take a picture each year with her next to her Christmas forest and let her witness herself grow in relation to the trees." Is that a magical idea or what? "We want to teach her the importance of being a good steward of nature," explains Persson.

Highlight values

Aka the "reason for the season," whatever that means to you. Incorporating "gratitude jars" at Thanksgiving is a fun way to recognize what we have to be thankful for. "Thanksgiving to me is a truly beautiful occasion that captures the spirit of being grateful," says Claire Summers. "These special moments are to be celebrated and remembered for years to come, which is why I started our own tradition by creating the Thanksgiving Glass Jar." Each day through the month of November, Summers and her family and friends write down things they are thankful for on notecards and put the cards in their jar. On Thanksgiving Day, they all read the cards aloud. "We do this before we sit down to eat; it not only gets us talking and sharing, but acts to open up our hearts and fill them with love and laughter throughout the day."

Keep it simple

Get the family involved in no-stress activities like singing carols, decorating or even just wearing matching pajamas. Anything that fosters bonding is a great idea. "We've tried other traditions, but this one has stuck," Sarah Robinson says of her family's matching holiday pajamas. "My oldest, who is now 5, looks forward to it and knows it's 'our thing.'" I too got my family matching Hanna Andersson pajamas for Christmas. And yes, I bought them in October — that's how excited I am.

Whatever new tradition you decide to start with your family, getting kids on board is key; don't drag them into something they're not psyched about. "The hallmark of a successful tradition is to create one that your loved ones look forward to and that can be shared for years to come," Summers advises. The best way to do that? Take into account your kids' input and interests, because these traditions will likely make up a big part of their childhood memories. Remember what we said about great responsibility?

Data Master: Doug Stone

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First, you need to cleanse your skin. In the morning, simply wash your skin with your favorite cleanser or micellar water and blot it (never rub) it dry.

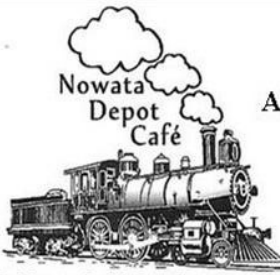
Your second step in layering is the most important step because this is where you will apply your treatment product, usually a primer. Your primer will contain all your anti-aging ingredients that will treat your skin's specific needs. You want to apply this to your cleansed skin, pat it lightly into your skin using your fingertips and let it absorb. Be generous with this product.

Next up is your eye cream. Be careful in applying eye cream and only it to the orbital bone and brow bone by gently tapping it on with your ring finger. Less is more when it comes to eye cream. You also want to let your eye cream absorb into your skin before moving on to your next step.

Your final layer is your moisturizer. It is super important to select a moisturizer with SPF in it, even during the winter or when staying indoors. A moisturizer will keep the skin properly hydrated throughout the day, and it will protect the skin from future sun damage. There are moisturizers made for different skin types, so make sure you choose one targeted toward your skin's need. Apply your moisturizer with your fingertips and pat it in (never rub) with an upward motion.

The difference between your daytime and nighttime routine is that you may want to use cleansing towelettes to remove makeup (this is so important at the end of the day) before cleansing, and you will obviously skip a moisturizer with sunscreen. Instead, look for a night cream or products targeted for nighttime use.

Data Master: Alyssa Hollingsworth



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Moving far away from my parents taught me to handle things on my own



A quick chat this morning made me think about why I choose to live away from my parents. I am from Azamgarh, a small city tucked in the far east in India, and away from the modern metros. Papa came to Azamgarh for his first job, got married and that's how this city became our hometown. There were good schools and we had what we needed for the first 17 years of our life. But it did not have much to offer in terms of what I wanted to do, and the kind of exposure my parents wanted me to have.

To become an engineer, I had to take entrance tests and in those days, there were many exams and the best chances were via the state entrance tests or the national ones. There was B.Tech, then my interest in VLSI and then the first job in Bangalore. There was no looking back once I left.

I chose to live away from my parents and they wanted me to leave their nest and grow wings of my own.

Papa never picked me up and dropped me to Greater Noida when I was studying. I learned how to get a reservation and travel on my own. There were no online reservations back then and flights were out of question. With a seat or without one, I learned how to talk to other students, manage things, and safely come home for Diwali. Then I'd travel back to college.

Mum and Papa never came to my hostel to check and inspect the food that was being provided. Mum told me to keep a bottle of jam and have it with parathas if the curry was too spicy. They knew I would be able to manage.

They told me to save time and hire help to wash my clothes, so I did. I was able to invest time in teaching others. They taught me what to delegate and what to own. They told me to take care of my health and eat well. I never cared if the other girls laughed at me when I walked into the kitchen with a five rupee coin to get a glass of milk after dinner. I learned to manage my expenses without missing my glass of

milk.

When I applied for jobs, I failed. But my parents stood by me and let me handle it on my own. When I did get a job, I had to travel another 1000 kms. Again, they did not come to drop me and find a suitable paying guest accommodation. They knew I would be able to figure it out on my own. The wings that they wanted me have were there and I was able to fly on my own.

They did not ask where was I spending my salary, they just spoke of saving well.

I was a 17-year-old when I left home and if I hadn't, I would not be the person I am today. I do miss my family. Who doesn't want to come home to parents with the first salary of your life? Who wants to come back from work and not ring the bell? I celebrated success with friends and called my parents at every milestone.

Now being married, I have another home but I still miss my parents. I can't visit them over weekends, walk over for a quick chat or dine with them when I want. This year I went back home after four years but I meet my parents every year. Their love and trust makes me strong.

I long for my family and the life many of my friends have but I chose to live away to make a life of my own. Longing for family has been my strength as that brings me closer to them. I don't think or talk about this often because I want to stay strong and let my wings grow as much as they can.

Simple ways to be healthier in the wintertime



Staying healthy during the winter is a nightmare for many of those around the country, especially those in the colder climates. It is not impossible to stay healthy if you stick to a certain routine and make sure your health is on your mind when making decisions. Sticking to these tips might still leave you sick or unhealthy but it will definitely reduce the risks of getting sick or hurt during this winter.

1. Nutritional health

It is easy with all of the holidays to break a diet or a healthy eating lifestyle. This — obviously — is fine, but not letting your diet break snowball past the holidays is extremely important. If you can avoid alcohol as well this holiday season or at least eliminate drunk eating, you might be able to keep yourself at your desired weight. Most things that are served during holidays are relatively healthy until the desserts come out. Try to limit yourself to a predetermined amount of cheat items that you have. If you can send leftovers home with someone else as far as the desserts go, then this might be your best bet if you have a sweet tooth. Just a word of advice, avoid eggnog at all costs as this can put on excessive amounts of weight in just a few days of consuming it.

2. Eye health

Getting checked out by an optometrist before the snow really hits is important. The wrong contact lens prescription can lead to a car accident, especially if the visibility is terrible with snow or sleet. Some people do not see very well at night; and with the time change, it gets darker in many places. Having a contact lens that will not begin to fail you if worn too long is important on the dark rides home from a long day at the office. Dry eyes can also plague many people during the winter, and having a contact lens that reduces irritation on dry eyes can get rid of eye irritation and them being dried out. Some people put in an excessive amount of eye drops during this time, which can reduce the eye's natural ability to produce its own lubrication.

3. Mental health

The holidays are a happy time for some, but for those who have lost a loved one recently the wounds of this loss can still be open. The holidays are a perfect time to reminisce and talk to family if you are having any emotional problems. Some people get down as the sun isn't seen for weeks at a time in some of the colder places in the country. There is actually a condition called


seasonal affective disorder that explains some of these symptoms. If possible, taking a vacation to somewhere where it is sunny can be a huge help when it comes to emotional problems caused by weather or a death in the family. It can also be beneficial to go somewhere new as old memories could bring up negative emotions.

4. Physical health

A workout plan can be decimated by a cold front or snow. Another thing that can derail workout plans is family visiting over the holidays. A good way to stay in shape while family is in town is by enlisting them to exercise with you. This will not only keep you accountable, but it can be quite a good time to play pickup sports with your siblings or other family members. Make sure to also take vitamins and supplements during the winter since this can help ward off any illnesses that could be brought into the house via company.

Data Master: Doug Stone

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Good news, dog owners – older dogs are easier to train than puppies



You've no doubt heard the adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," but if you have an old dog yourself — or are thinking about getting one — you'll be happy to hear that just isn't true.

I have a 10-year-old dog myself, and I'll be the first to admit that I've been pretty lax with training him. Sure, he can sit (when he wants to), and sometimes he even stays for a few seconds, but that's about as far as we ever got.

It's never been an issue until recently. Now, it's no longer just me, my husband and our unruly min-pin, Max. We've added two kids to the mix, and they don't pair well with an untrained dog. He steals the food from their hands and darts out the door when they're too slow to close it. Let's just say it's not working.

So I talked to a few dog trainers to find out if I'd waited so long that all hope was lost, and I was pretty excited when they both essentially told me that it's never too late.

In fact, dog behavior specialist and trainer, Blake Rodriguez, owner and founder of Dream Come True K9 in NYC, says training an old dog can actually be less work than training a young one.

"People want the puppy that starts from scratch, but that's a lot of work," he said. "An older dog has the potential to be easier than a puppy."

He went on to say that puppies, known to be full of energy, often need more attention and focus than most people can give.

"Puppy's' energies just don't match up to training," he added.

The root of the challenge

Per Rodriguez, the biggest challenge with training an older dog is its loyalty — one thing dog lovers love most about canines. The problem is, dogs aren't just loyal to people; they're also loyal to habits.

"They don't know what's good or bad, they just know what works and what doesn't," he said.

That's why, when you suddenly change the rules or routines on an older dog, they take a while to come around.

"To the dog, this is something that worked. They see no reason to change it," Rodriguez added, explaining that though it may take some time and patience, your dog will likely come around to your new way of thinking.

Changing rewards

Jodi Hass, owner and master trainer of Root Training in Highwood, Illinois, says one major difference between training an

older dog and a young one is the reward system that works. "Puppies want treats, and adult dogs want petting or praise when they've done well," she said. "In senior dogs, they really just want verbal acknowledgement."

That claim is backed up by a recent study published in *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* that found as dogs age, verbal rewards work better than treats — likely because as dogs get older, their relationship with you takes precedence over food. Turns out, you are more than a food dispenser to your dog. Kind of warms your heart, doesn't it?

Physical considerations

Hass quickly pointed out that one big hurdle with training older dogs often comes in the form of physical limitations.

"With an older dog, we always have to find out first what the physical limitations are, and then we train to that weakness," she explained.

She said that since many older dogs have issues with backs, hips and other joints, some of the more physically challenging tricks and training exercises are off the table, but there's still plenty they can do.

Those physical limitations also play into the way you should train your dog.

"With a puppy, we train in short bursts through the day because of their short attention spans," Hass said. As the dogs get older, she extends to longer durations, but then brings it back to short bursts throughout the day for senior dogs because they tend to tire out faster.

"A puppy takes more patience," added Hass. "An older dog will not take quite as long unless there is a history of abuse or neglect."

Rodriguez is firm in his belief that old dogs are just as trainable as puppies — if not more. "The brain stays young forever," he added.

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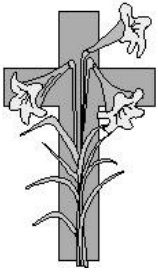
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JEWELS FROM THE WORD

THE PRODIGAL WILL COME HOME

Luke 15 tells the story of a prodigal son who squandered all his inheritance and ended up slopping hogs in a foreign country, with nothing to eat but corn husks.

But the Bible says he came to himself. He came to his senses and suddenly realized what was going on. He thought to himself, "The servants of my father's house are better off than I am. At least, they have food to eat."

He prepared his speech. "I'll tell my father, 'I am no longer worthy to be called your son; just make me one of your hired servants.'" Half-naked, barefoot, starving, smelling like hog slop, the son turned in the direction of home.

The father's heart yearned for the son's return. Every day the father watched the road, expecting his son to return. Watching. Waiting. Even while he was yet far off, the father saw him, ran to him, embraced him, and kissed him fervently, all over his unshaven, dirty,

smelly face. The son started his speech, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you and I am no longer worthy to be called your son...." But the father stopped him right there.

It didn't matter if he was worthy or not, he would always be the father's son. The father told the servants to bring the best robe, a ring, and sandals. Prepare a feast with that calf they had been saving for a special occasion. This was a celebration! The son had come home.

Do you know a prodigal son or daughter? Pray that he will come to himself, come to his senses. Ask the Lord to open his eyes.

Paul prayed a prayer for the Ephesian church, in Eph. 1:17, that "the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened," that their spiritual eyes will be opened to the truth.

When you pray this prayer for your prodigal, you better start getting the calf fattened up, the musical instruments in tune, the balloons inflated, the confetti prepared. Get the "Welcome Home" banners strung across the front of the house and the yellow ribbons tied to the trees. Call all your friends and prepare the banquet room.

The prodigal will come home.

Data Master: Steve Burdick

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