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Metro Creative Services

MOUNT AIRY MEDIA GROUP

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What's Inside

- 4 Leslie Mcpeak neuro patient
- 5 What can be done to help students with ADHD improve focus
- 6 Sleep and academic performance go hand in hand
- 8 A hygiene guide for kids
- 9 How social media affects kids' mental health
- 12 What parents should know about mental health issues and children
- 13 Tips to reduce youth sports head injuries
- 14 Physical activities for kids who are not into competitive sports
- 16 Foods that can benefit children's eye health
- 17 Did you know?
- 18 Nutritional benefits of watermelon
- 19 Did you know?

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LESLIE MCPEAK NEURO PATIENT

BONNIE DAVIS | CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Last summer within a two-week span, Leslie McPeak went from walking normally to wondering if she'd ever be able to get around on her own two feet again.

The 64-year-old Mt. Airy woman had experienced profound weakness and numbness in her right leg and decreased sensation in her left leg and abdomen.

"The week before Memorial Day I thought I had overdone it a little bit. I thought it was fatigue, but my right side kept getting weaker," she said.

McPeak said her symptoms progressed while she was on vacation which was frightening.

"My right leg started feeling heavy, and I could barely pick it up and my knee would give way without any warning. When I got back the next Tuesday, I was at the doctor's office on Wednesday. By the middle of June, I went from walking normally to being in a wheelchair."

As the music director of Haymore Baptist Church, who also oversees the church's finances and plays the piano for services, life for McPeak had changed dramatically. She knew she needed an answer quickly.

McPeak was referred to neurosurgeon Dr. Michelle De Witt of Novant Health Brain & Spine Surgery – Kimel Park. Because of her rapid immobility, she couldn't get in the car and had to be transported to Novant Health Forsyth Medical Center by ambulance. An MRI revealed that she had severe pinching of her spinal cord in her upper back.

"Dr. De Witt came to see me in the hospital," McPeak said. "She couldn't promise if I would get all or even some of my feeling back. It was all in God's hands."

On Wednesday, July 3, De Witt performed a thoracic laminectomy – a type of back surgery during which a small section of bone called the lamina is removed from the middle part of the



LESLIE MCPEAK

spine to make more room and relieve pressure on the spinal cord and nerves. Following surgery, McPeak could move her foot and toes again. By that Sunday, she was able to work from her hospital bed to process the church payroll, she said.

De Witt said that many people who experience back pain can begin with less invasive procedures, but there are certain cases, like McPeak's, that require immediate attention.

"Some red-flag symptoms are progressive numbness, walking imbalance, as well as muscle weakness," said De Witt. "It's really frustrating for the patient, because one day they're going along well enough and within days they're not living the same life."

She spent two weeks in the hospital, followed by two weeks in a rehabilitation hospital and follow-up with home health services once she returned to Mt. Airy and her family. She was soon able to walk without any assistance.

"I'm thankful for Dr. De Witt because she believes in God just as well as I do, and we all prayed together several times," McPeak said. "It was just a miracle through her hands that's gotten me back to doing my work and enjoying my life."

What can be done to help students with **ADHD IMPROVE FOCUS**

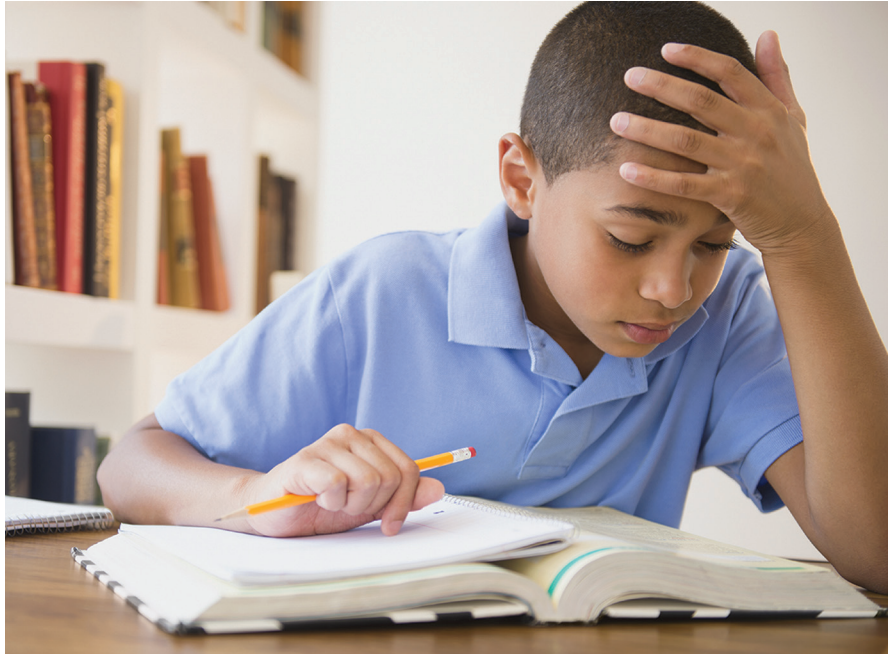
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Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may seem like a relatively recent phenomenon that perhaps developed late in the twentieth century, when more and more distractions started vying for humans' attention. However, WebMD notes the condition actually dates back several centuries to 1798, when a Scottish doctor recognized some people were more easily distracted than others.

The ADHD people know today may or may not bear much resemblance to the condition first identified in the eighteenth century, but it's notable that issues affecting human beings' ability to focus are not exactly a recent phenomenon. Many students with ADHD, diagnosed or undiagnosed, face an uphill battle in the classroom, where the ability to focus is integral to their success. It may take some trial and error and some help from educators and physicians, but the following are some strategies that could help students with ADHD as they seek to improve their focus in the classroom.

- **Ask educators about behavioral classroom management.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes behavioral classroom management is an approach that involves encouraging students when they behave positively in a classroom. The approach may be centered around a reward system or involve teachers issuing daily report cards. Teachers also discourage negative behaviors. The CDC notes behavioral classroom management is driven by teachers and has been shown to have a constructive impact on students of all ages that increases their academic engagement.

- **Emphasize organization skills to students.** The CDC notes organizational training that emphasizes time management and planning has been tested on children and adolescents and found to be effective. The Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA) suggests people with ADHD learn how to break down complex tasks, such as end-of-semester school projects or exams, into smaller sub-tasks, and the planning skills emphasized by the CDC can be



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employed to do just that.

- **Take breaks.** It's hard for anyone to maintain intense focus for lengthy periods of time, and that's true for people with ADHD and those who do not have the condition. A report from the American Psychological Association notes that routine breaks from challenging tasks, including coursework, can restore energy, prevent burnout and improve performance. Fatigue can compromise a person's ability to focus, so students and parents should not see routine breaks as counterproductive in relation to the goal of improving focus. In fact, purposeful breaks that are not too long can sharpen focus.

- **Adjust students' environment.** The ADDA notes that several strategies can help students optimize their environment so they can better focus on the task at hand. Utilizing noise-canceling headphones while studying in a quiet spot away from noise and distraction is one way students can optimize their environment. Turning off smartphone notifications, periodically decluttering a workspace and keeping only study materials in spots where schoolwork is done can help students with ADHD sharpen their focus.

Students with ADHD may be able to improve their focus, and thus their academic performance, with a few simple strategies.

SLEEP AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

go hand in hand

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Students and sleep are not always compatible. College students have long expressed a tendency to be night owls, but even school-aged youngsters may be reluctant to go to bed on time during the school year.

Parents of school-aged children know that bedtime can be challenging, particularly when moms and dads want to ensure their youngsters get the recommended number of hours of sleep each night. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine advises school-aged children between the ages of six and 12 get nine to 12 hours of sleep per night, while teens are urged to sleep eight to 10 hours per night. Studies have found that when students don't get enough sleep on school nights, their academic performance is likely to suffer. A 2023 study of first-year college students led by researchers at



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Carnegie Mellon University and published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that negative outcomes began to accumulate when students received less than six hours of sleep per night. Authors of the study noted that previous studies in animals showed that memories formed during the day were consolidated while animals slept but forgotten when those animals' normal sleep

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patterns were interrupted. The researchers behind the study identified a notable decline in students' grade point averages when they received less than six hours of sleep, suggesting humans' ability to learn and remember what they've learned in a given day is compromised if they don't get enough sleep that night.

School-aged youngsters typically get more than six hours of sleep per night, but if they're falling short of AASM recommendations, those students' academic performance could be adversely affected. With that in mind, parents can try various strategies to get children to bed on time.

- **Stay consistent with bedtime.** A firm bedtime can reduce the likelihood that sleep disruptions will affect how children perform in the classroom. If children are staying up three hours past their weeknight bedtime on Friday and Saturday, then they're less likely to want to go to bed on time on school nights. A little flexibility on the weekends might not upset the apple cart, but try to maintain a consistent bedtime throughout the week.
- **Help kids calm down before bed.** A winding down period leading up to bedtime can help kids fall asleep more quickly and might even make them

less resistant to bedtime. Avoid particularly energetic activities directly before bedtime. Calmly reading a book and picking clothes out for the next day of school are calm activities that can get kids' bodies ready for sleep.

- **Avoid confrontation.** Parents are urged to let it go if kids aren't falling right asleep but are still being cooperative at bedtime. Kids might want to keep reading to themselves after Mom and Dad say goodnight, and that's alright so long as children aren't continually getting out of bed or getting riled up. Eventually kids will tire out when engaging in a calm, pre-sleep activity, so parents should not grow upset and confront kids who are behaving but not falling asleep right away.
 - **Create a positive sleep environment.** Young children will resist sleep if it sounds like their parents and siblings are having a grand old time without them. Parents typically go to great lengths to ensure kids' bedrooms are conducive to sleep, but it's also important to maintain a peaceful setting throughout the rest of the house once children go to bed.
- Sleep and school are inextricably linked, and parents can do much to ensure kids get the rest they need to do their best in the classroom.

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A HYGIENE GUIDE FOR KIDS

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The world learned a significant lesson about the importance of personal hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from getting vaccinated, one of the single-best things people could do to prevent the transmission of the virus was to wash their hands thoroughly throughout the day, particularly after touching surfaces at stores, schools and other public places.

The importance of handwashing is one of the earliest hygiene lessons children learn. But it's not the only important lessons kids should be taught about personal hygiene and how it relates to overall health. Here are the grooming and hygiene lessons that children should learn as they get older and mature.

WASHING HANDS

Regular handwashing reduces the risk that kids will contract and transmit illnesses. Everyone should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or about how long it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" two times. It is important to wash hands after going to the bathroom; before eating or making food; after sneezing, coughing or blowing one's nose; after touching pets or other animals; and whenever hands are dirty. Emphasize to children that germs are there even though they cannot be seen.

BATHING/SHOWERING

The American Academy of Pediatrics says a baby should be bathed three times a week, but there may be instances when children require more frequent bathing. Over-bathing can dry out the baby's skin, so parents are urged to keep that in mind.

At some point a child can bathe on his or her own. Parents magazine says some kids are mature enough to bathe on their own at age five or six, but most experts recommend waiting for solo bathing or showering until youngsters reach age eight.

FRESH CLOTHING

Encourage children to pick their own outfits so they are more inclined to choose fresh clothing each day. While it is possible to get away with wearing something for more than one day, soiled clothing and undergarments should be changed daily and children



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should be encouraged to do so.

WASHING HAIR

Sebum from the skin can build up on the scalp and cause oily, smelly hair. Children should wash their hair once or twice each week and brush it every day, according to Health Direct, an Australia-based health organization. If kids are afraid of getting water in their eyes, suggest they wear swimming goggles while bathing.

HEAD LICE INSPECTION

Head lice is common in children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there are six to 12 million infestations of head lice each year in the United States. Inspecting children's hair and treating when necessary can help to reduce such infestations.

USING ANTIPERSPIRANT OR DEODORANT

As children get older and their hormones and bodies change, some may develop body odor. Daily showers may be needed for kids who have started puberty. In addition, the daily use of deodorant or antiperspirant can help control odor and sweating.

ORAL HYGIENE

Oral hygiene is another consideration for kids' health. The American Dental Association says teeth should be brushed and flossed twice a day as part of a daily hygiene routine.

Lessons emphasizing personal hygiene and grooming can keep kids healthy as they grow up.

How social media affects **KIDS' MENTAL HEALTH**

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Social media has become such a key component of most people's lives that it is easy to think that it as always been there. SixDegrees, created in 1997, was the first social media site similar to the format known today. When SixDegrees shut down in 2001, Friendster, LinkedIn, MySpace, and Facebook soon took root. The University of Maine reports there are now 4.8 billion social media users worldwide, representing 92.7 percent of all internet users. And according to the American Family Survey 2023, 96 percent of parents say their kids have access to at least one social media platform. Many use multiple online platforms daily.

Although social media may have originated as a means to bring people together, there are many who argue that it actually does the opposite. Instances of cyberbullying, which is a form of online harassment, have grown as social media has become more pervasive. Some experts believe that mental health concerns are an unexpected side effect of increased social media use, says Johns Hopkins Medicine. In fact, in the spring of 2023, United States Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, MD, MBA, released an advisory that suggested social media is harmful to young people. In 2024, Dr. Murthy called for a surgeon general's warning label on social media not unlike the warnings on cigarette packages.

How might social media affect children's mental health? Here are some of the main concerns.

- **Changes in a developing brain:** According to the Surgeon General's report, children's brains go through a highly sensitive period of development between the ages of 10 and 19, when feelings of self-worth are forming. Frequent social media use may affect these

feelings as children compare themselves to others they see online. In addition, functions like emotional learning, impulse control and emotional regulation may be affected.

- **Development of depression:** Johns Hopkins Medicine says research has demonstrated there are high rates of depression attributed to very low social media use and very high social media use. Finding a healthy balance might not be as easy as it seems.

- **Addiction:** There is some evidence that children become addicted to checking social media, which can lead to addiction-like behaviors in other areas. According to The Addiction Center, a Web-based substance abuse resource, addiction to social media is driven by an uncontrollable urge to log on that impairs other important areas of life. Fear of missing out (FOMO) is another threat to kids' mental health.

- **Low self-esteem issues.** Children and teenagers who compare themselves to others' carefully curated online profiles (which usually are not telling the whole story) can develop feelings of inadequacy and body image issues.

- **Exposure to inappropriate content.** Social media may introduce children to content and images that are not appropriate for their age levels and capacity to understand and interpret. According to Dr. Murthy's report, deaths have been linked to suicide- and self-harm-related content, such as risk-taking challenges or asphyxiation content. Viewing this content normalizes these behaviors for some youngsters.

Although plenty of good can come from social media, parents are urged to exercise caution when giving children access to these platforms, which can affect kids' mental health in negative ways.

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WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

mental health issues and children

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Mental health issues were once stigmatized to such an extent that many people dealing with problems like anxiety and depression felt uncomfortable speaking about them or even seeking help. Though some may still find it difficult to acknowledge their mental health issues, society has made great strides in regard to destigmatizing mental health conditions and recognizing how common such problems are.

Parents may be surprised to learn that many mental health issues begin in childhood. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety disorders, depression and other mood disorders can start to develop long before children leave for college. Recognition of that reality may compel parents to learn more about children and mental health, including signs of potential issues and how to determine if certain behaviors are indicative of a burgeoning issue or a part of normal development.

IDENTIFYING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN CHILDREN

The NIMH notes the difficulty in distinguishing between behaviors that are a normal part of a child's development and those that suggest a potential mental health problem. Parents know that children's behaviors and emotions can be challenging to deal with, but that's often a normal part of a child's development that youngsters outgrow with age. The NIMH notes that time is a potential indicator of a mental health problem, and encourages parents to seek help if a child's challenging behavior or emotions persist for weeks or longer. Kids will not outgrow negative behaviors overnight, but persistent problems that extend for weeks or months could be indicative of something beyond normal developmental hurdles.

Behaviors and emotions that cause distress for a child or the child's family are another potential indicator of a mental health issue. In addition, behaviors or emotions that interfere with a child's ability to function, be it at school or at home or among friends, may indicate the presence of a mental health issue.

WHAT IF SIGNS SUGGESTIVE OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ARE PRESENT?

The NIMH advises parents to be proactive if they notice signs of mental health issues in their children.

Parents can begin by contacting their child's teacher and asking how the child behaves in school, both in the classroom and on the playground. A child's pediatrician also can be a valuable resource. Share the particular behavior(s) or emotion(s) that are causing concern with the child's pediatrician. The pediatrician may note if the behavior is part of normal development or may recommend a mental health professional to further address the issue.

IS AN EVALUATION REALLY NECESSARY?

The aforementioned stigma associated with mental health issues may make even the most well-intentioned parents hesitant to seek an evaluation. But evaluations can set children on a path to improved mental health, and it's worth reminding parents that issues like anxiety and depression are quite common and nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, a large-scale 2023 study published in the journal *The Lancet Psychiatry* found that one out of every two people in the world will develop a mental health disorder in their lifetime. Evaluation is one of the initial steps toward overcoming mental health issues, and children may exhibit different signs that an evaluation is necessary based on their age. For example, the NIMH notes that young children who often seem fearful or worried and those who have frequent tantrums or are irritable much of the time may benefit from a mental health evaluation. Older children who engage in self-harm behaviors or those who diet or exercise excessively can benefit from an evaluation. Additional age-based indicators that an evaluation may be necessary can be found at [nimh.nih.gov](https://www.nimh.nih.gov).

Many mental health issues begin in childhood. Parents can keep an eye out for indicators of mental health issues and work with their children's health care providers to determine the best course of action.



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TIPS TO REDUCE YOUTH SPORTS HEAD INJURIES

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The benefits of youth sports are numerous and varied. Making friends and getting regular physical exercise stand out as benefits of sports participation. But youth sports also pose a danger that athletes and their parents should not overlook.

Head injuries are a very real concern for young athletes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which collects data about traumatic brain injuries, says about seven out of 10 emergency department visits for sports- and recreation-related traumatic brain injuries and concussions affect children ages 17 and under. Boys have about twice the rate of emergency department visits for these type of injuries than girls. However, the CDC warns that girls have a higher chance for sports-related concussion than boys in sports that use the same rules, like soccer and basketball. Preventing concussion and TBIs comes down to education and practicing certain safety guidelines.

It's important to know which youth sports produce the highest rates of concussion and other head injuries. Boys tackle football, girls soccer, boys lacrosse, boys ice hockey, boys wrestling, girls lacrosse, girls field hockey, girls basketball, boys soccer, and girls softball have the highest rates of concussion in this order, according to a 2018 report in the journal Pediatrics. Across all sports, two out of three concussions result from collisions among athletes.

New concussion guidelines are updated in schools and youth sports programs across the country, and it's important for coaches and volunteers to abide by them. For example, U.S. Soccer implemented

new guidelines that state no child under the age of 10 should be heading the ball during practice or games. For athletes between the ages of 11 and 13, heading should be limited to practice only.

Young athletes should wear the right protective equipment for their sports, such as helmets, padding, eye and mouth guards, and shin guards. This equipment should be worn consistently, fit properly and be well maintained.

Full-contact play should be delayed until later in adolescence. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia says high school-age athletes are better equipped cognitively to understand and learn proper sports play techniques to protect themselves from injury-causing impacts. Coaches should teach and consistently emphasize proper technique to young athletes.

By implementing these strategies, the number of head injuries incurred by young athletes can be reduced considerably.



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PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

who are not into competitive sports

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Competitive sports provide a wonderful opportunity for children to be physically active. That's a notable benefit and one that could help to confront a growing problem of overweight and obesity among modern youths.

Data from the World Health Organization indicates 37 million children under the age of five were overweight in 2022, while more than 390 million youngsters between the ages of five and 19 were overweight or obese in that same year. In addition, the percentage of children and adolescents across the globe who qualified as obese in 2022 had grown considerably since 1990, increasing from 2 to 5 percent during that span.

Sports can definitely help to remedy the overweight and obesity epidemic among youths across the globe, but what about children who are not into competitive athletics? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends all children and adolescents, including non-athletes, get at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day. That might sound difficult for parents of non-athletes, but there are a number of physical activities beyond organized athletics that can ensure kids get all the exercise they need.

- **Dancing:** The National Institutes of Health notes that dancing is both an exciting and effective workout that benefits the body in myriad ways. Dancing is a versatile form of exercise that encompasses everything from ballroom dancing to salsa. The NIH notes that dancing is a great cardiovascular exercise that also helps to build strong bones and muscles and improve balance. Dancing also is a social activity, which means it can provide many of the same benefits related to social interactions that are often attributed to team sports.

- **Hiking:** Hiking is another physical activity that can provide great exercise for youngsters who are not into competitive sports. According to Piedmont Health, hiking is a whole-body exercise that gets the heart pumping, making it a wonderful cardiovascular activity. Cardiovascular exercise has been linked to a number of benefits, including a lower risk for conditions such as heart disease, stroke and high cholesterol. Hiking also is considered a weight-bearing exercise that helps to build muscle mass.



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- **Skateboarding:** Skateboarding has come a long way since modern parents were children. Though skateboarding might once have been frowned upon due to skateboarders' penchant for practicing in places that were off limits, the perception of skateboarding has now changed dramatically and the activity is touted as great exercise. A 2018 study published in the journal *Gait & Posture* found that skateboarding helps participants develop a strong sense of balance. The motions required to ride a skateboard also help to increase heart rate, which can provide a boost to cardiovascular health.

- **Cycling:** Many young children love riding their bikes, and it's worth noting that an afternoon of cycling provides an incredible full-body workout. The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health notes that the health benefits associated with cycling include improved cardiovascular fitness, stronger muscles, greater coordination and general mobility, and reduced body fat. Cycling also has been linked to improved mental health, as riding a bike releases feel-good endorphins that can reduce stress.

Children and adolescents who are not into competitive sports can choose from an array of physical activities that provide a host of health benefits.



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Foods that can benefit **CHILDREN'S EYE HEALTH**

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Food is more than fuel to keep human bodies moving. Food can be an integral component of a health and wellness routine, particularly when nutritious foods are finding their way onto people's dinner tables.

The right foods can bolster the body in a number of ways, including promoting strong eyesight. That's as true for adults as it is for children, whose eyesight can be bolstered with foods that support eye health. Vitamin A is especially beneficial for eye health, as the American Academy of Ophthalmology notes the retina needs ample vitamin A to turn light rays into images. The AAO also notes that vitamin A helps to keep eyes moist and thus reduces the likelihood that a painful condition known as dry eye will develop. When it comes to using diet to promote healthy vision in children, parents can consider the following eye-friendly foods.

- **Carrots:** WebMD reports that a half-cup of carrots can provide 73 percent of the daily recommended amount of vitamin A. Parents can keep that in mind come snack time, offering youngsters some carrots with hummus or peanut butter if kids are reluctant to eat them on their own.

- **Sweet potatoes:** Sweet potatoes are another excellent source of vitamin A. In fact, the Office of Dietary Supplements reports that a single baked sweet potato in its skin can provide as much as 561 percent of the daily recommended intake of vitamin A. Kids may be reluctant to eat the skin of sweet potatoes, and parents need not fret, as there's still plenty of vitamin A and additional nutrients when the skin is removed.

- **Cantaloupe:** Cantaloupe is a low-calorie fruit that also packs a nutritious punch. According to the Mayo Clinic, a single cup of cantaloupe contains about 106 percent of the daily recommended value of vitamin A. Cantaloupe also tends to be kid-friendly, as its sweet



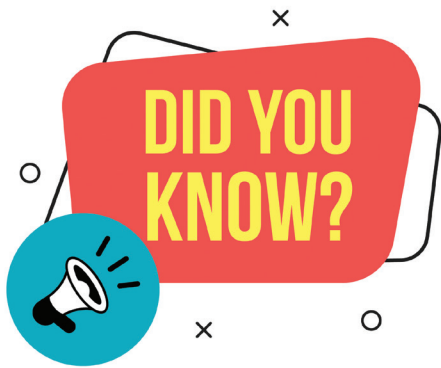
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and refreshing flavor profile makes this round melon a tasty treat for youngsters and adults alike.

- **Leafy greens:** Vitamin A is not the lone booster of eye health. The AAO notes that the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin promote a healthy macula, a part of the eye that is important to central, detailed vision. Kale and spinach may not excite youngsters as much as cantaloupe, but each are antioxidant-rich leafy greens that parents can incorporate into weekly meals. One trick is to incorporate spinach into pasta dishes that kids love so much they won't even realize they're eating greens. When serving kale, serve it alongside mashed potatoes and encourage kids to mix the two.

- **Kidney beans:** The AAO notes kidney beans are rich in zinc, which helps to maintain a healthy retina and protect the eyes from light-related damage. Kidney beans are especially helpful because they are rich in copper, which can be depleted by zinc but is necessary for the formation of red blood cells. Kidney beans thus help ensure kids get enough zinc and help to combat the effects zinc can have on copper levels.

Diet can have a notable impact on children's eye health, which makes it vital for parents to serve vision-friendly foods to youngsters.



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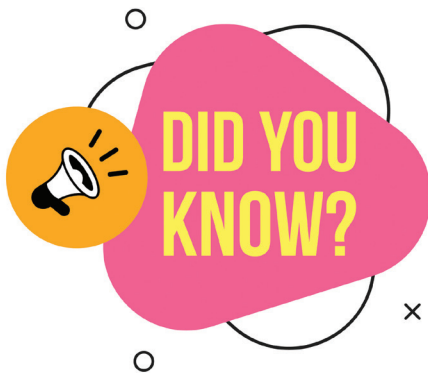
A 2024 study published in the Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology indicated that approximately one in nine children in the United States have ever been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The study also found that 6.5 million children had ADHD at the time of publication. The Centers for Disease Control



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and Prevention notes that boys are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than girls, and a significant percentage of youngsters (30

percent) with the condition do not receive medication treatment or behavioral treatment for the condition.



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A 2023 meta-analysis published in the journal Reviews on Environmental Health found that excessive screen exposure may be a significant contributor to the development of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children. The report analyzed nine studies that examined more than 81,000 children, including nearly 29,000 who had been



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diagnosed with ADHD. The analysis found that children exposed to more than two hours of screen time each day had significantly higher rates of ADHD than youngsters whose

daily screen time was limited to two hours or less. Researchers behind the analysis ultimately concluded reducing children's screen time could prevent the occurrence of ADHD.



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NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF WATERMELON

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Watermelon is widely considered a summertime treat that's particularly refreshing on a hot day. A staple at backyard barbecues, watermelon makes a great appetizer, side dish and even dessert.

Watermelon also can make for a nutritious addition to a backyard barbecue menu. Those who want something nutritious to eat alongside less healthy fare like hamburgers and hot dogs can consider the many nutritional benefits of watermelon.

- Watermelon is low in calories. The Mayo Clinic notes that one cup of watermelon is 46 calories. That makes watermelon an ideal low-calorie dessert, particularly when compared to other treats, including ice cream. The calorie count for a single cup of ice cream varies by flavor, but the United States Department of Agriculture notes one cup of vanilla ice cream contains 274 calories, while one cup of chocolate ice cream is 286 calories. Watermelon is a low-calorie dessert alternative to ice cream that can be especially appealing after eating popular backyard barbecue fare.

- Watermelon promotes hydration. The Harvard

T.H. Chan School of Public Health notes that drinking enough water helps to regulate body temperature, lubricate the joints, prevent infections, and promotes proper organ function. Water also delivers nutrients to cells. Come summertime, it's easy to fall victim to dehydration, but consuming watermelon can help to prevent that. The Mayo Clinic notes watermelon is 92 percent water, which can help people remain hydrated on hot summer days spent outside.

- Watermelon is a good source of vitamins C and A. The National Institutes of Health notes that human beings are unable to synthesize vitamin C endogenously, which means they must get this crucial vitamin from the foods they eat. Watermelon contains 14 percent of the recommended daily value (DV) of vitamin C per USDA dietary guidelines, making it a worthy addition to anyone's diet. Watermelon also contains 5 percent of the recommended DV of vitamin A, which the NIH notes is important for normal vision, immune system health, reproduction, and growth and development.

- Watermelon does not contain any fat, cholesterol or sodium. It's not only what's in watermelon that makes it so healthy, but what's not in it as well. Unlike other popular desserts, such as ice cream, watermelon contains no fat, cholesterol or sodium. Opting for watermelon over more traditional desserts can help people lower their fat consumption, reduce their cholesterol and avoid overconsumption of sodium.

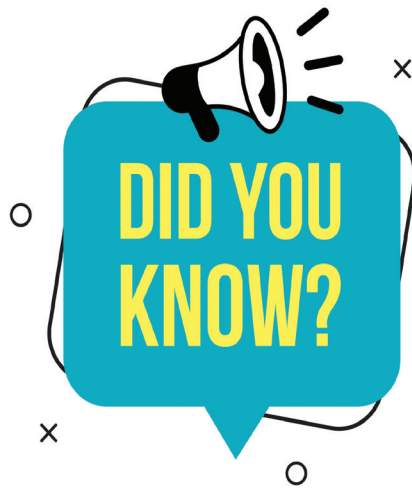
Watermelon makes for a refreshing treat on a hot summer day. But watermelon provides a host of additional nutritional benefits as well, making it an ideal food for your next backyard barbecue.



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There is no definitive age when a child may need to get eyeglasses. However, the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus notes that children's visual systems are still developing during the first 12 years of their life, and during this period wearing glasses can be important for normal vision development. Glasses can help straighten crossed or misaligned eyes, bolster weak vision caused by differences in vision between a child's eyes, and even protect the stronger eye. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children begin vision screening around age 3 and receive annual screenings each year at ages 4, 5 and 6. After that, screening is recommended when children turn 8, 10, 12, and 15. Of course, parents who begin to suspect their children are having trouble with their vision are urged to take the child to an ophthalmologist once such suspicions arise. Some notable signs include inexplicable declines in academic performance,



children sitting closer to the television than they once did and children's own remarks regarding their vision if they say anything at all.



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