

leaps & bounds

make checkups count

HEALTHY KIDS,
STRONG STARTS.
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FEED YOUR GUT

Microbiome-friendly foods

GUARD AGAINST CANCER

HPV vaccine facts

FALL
2025

YOUR GUIDE TO KIDS' HEALTH FROM LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY CHILDREN'S HEALTH



LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY

CHILDREN'S
HEALTH

how to add more iron to your diet

Whatever stages your family members are in, iron plays an important role in their growth, development and overall health. This essential mineral supports bones, muscles, organs and red blood cells. Good sources of iron can be found in most food groups. Consider these options:

- Eggs.
- Dried fruit like raisins, prunes and apricots.
- Leafy greens such as spinach, kale and collard greens.
- Legumes, including lentils, peas and white beans.
- Nuts, including pistachios and cashews.
- Vegetables, including acorn squash, beets and broccoli.
- Whole grains such as brown rice.



the reason you're sneezin'

Fall is the season for apple picking, hayrides — and ragweed. This common fall allergen causes a runny nose, itchy eyes and congestion.

To learn how to prevent or control these symptoms in kids, talk with your child's pediatrician, who may prescribe an antihistamine, a nasal corticosteroid spray, a decongestant or other medication.

Your child may need to begin taking medication up to two weeks ahead of peak ragweed season. Consult their doctor if symptoms persist longer than usual, your child has asthma or their symptoms interfere with activities.

KIDS' CORNER

SWEET POTATO CHIPS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 5-inch sweet potato
- Olive oil spray
- ¼ tsp. no-salt herb blend

DIRECTIONS

1. Peel and cut sweet potato in half diagonally. Use a mandoline or other slicer to cut into 1/8-inch slices.
2. Put slices into a bowl of ice water for about 15 minutes to wash off some starch. Pat dry with paper towels.
3. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Line cookie sheet with easy-release aluminum foil. Spray generously with olive oil and put the sweet potato slices in one layer.
4. Bake about eight minutes and then carefully turn over. Bake another six minutes. Let cool on a baking rack and sprinkle with no-salt herb blend. Serve at room temperature.



HAPPY IS ... spending time together as a family. With wholesome recipes from Live It in the Kitchen, you can make mealtimes fun. Visit lulh.org/live-it for ideas.

YUMMY TUMMY

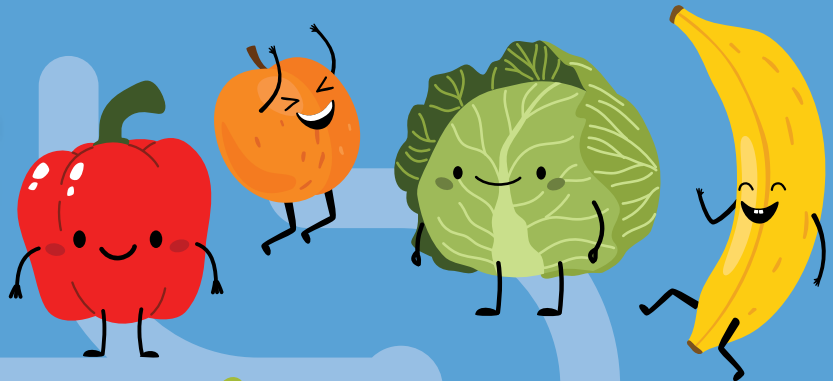
DOES YOUR DIET AFFECT YOUR GUT HEALTH?

The secret to better digestion, stronger immunity and less inflammation? It all begins with how — and what — you eat.

The way you eat can shape the health of your gut, starting with your gut microbiome. That's the community of bacteria and other microbes living in your digestive system, and it plays a big role in everything from digestion to immune support. Here's a look at other types of diets and how they influence your gut health.

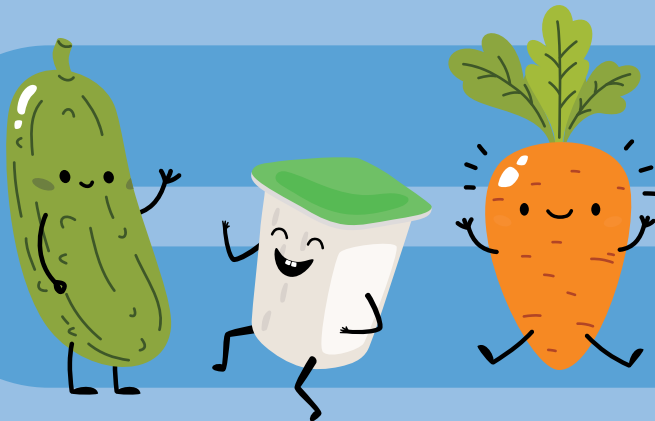
VEGAN DIETS: FIBER ALL-STARS

Vegan diets tend to be high in fiber, thanks to all the fruits, vegetables and legumes. That fiber feeds your gut bacteria, which produce short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs). SCFAs are powerful little compounds that can calm inflammation, keep your gut barrier healthy and support immunity.



VEGETARIAN DIETS: PROBIOTIC PERKS

Like vegans, vegetarians get the fiber-rich benefits of a plant-based diet. But there's a bonus: Many also eat dairy products like yogurt and kefir. These fermented, probiotic foods add helpful bacteria to the mix and may improve digestion, as well as support overall microbiome health.



ALL ABOUT BALANCE

Did you know that red meat may encourage the wrong kinds of bacteria — those linked to low SCFA levels, inflammatory bowel disease and even colorectal cancer? The fix is stocking up on plant-based foods, like:

- Fruits and vegetables.
- Nuts and seeds.
- Whole grains.
- Legumes.



NO MATTER WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU, KEEP YOUR GUT HAPPY BY KEEPING PLANTS FRONT AND CENTER.

HEALTHY IS ...

growing up big and strong. To learn more about which nutrients your family needs, make an appointment with one of our pediatricians. Call 800-825-KIDS (5437) or visit luch.org/genpeds.



HEALING IS ...

getting the care you need before issues worsen. Our urgent care services can help treat sports injuries from broken bones to sprains and strains. Find out more at lilh.org/urgent-care.

SPOT STRESS FRACTURES IN YOUR YOUNG ATHLETE

When you think of kids and broken bones, you might picture a sudden fall, followed by an arm in a sling. But not every injury happens quickly, especially for young athletes.

Children who play sports are at risk for another type of bone problem that develops over time. This is called a stress fracture.

Stress fractures are very small cracks in the bone. They happen when your child puts pressure on the same bone over and over again.

If your child does not stop their sport and get treatment, a stress fracture can become more serious. So, parents and coaches need to be on the lookout.

UNDERSTAND THE RISKS AND SIGNS

The risk of getting a stress fracture goes up

if your child plays a sport with repeated or high-impact movements. For example:

- Cheerleaders, divers, wrestlers and football players can have stress fractures in their spines.
- Runners, dancers and gymnasts get them in their feet and legs.
- Baseball pitchers develop stress fractures in their arms.

The most common sign of a stress fracture is pain. The pain often feels better when they rest and worse when they move. It may come on slowly and last several weeks.

Sometimes, the area may be red or swollen. But it is usually not bruised. One spot may be very sore when you push on it. If you notice these signs, visit a healthcare provider.

TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

Treatment for a stress fracture includes a break from sports and exercise. A walking boot or crutches may keep weight off the bone as it heals. Physical therapy can make the muscles around the bone stronger.

After a stress fracture, your child's healthcare team and coach should work together on when and how your young athlete returns to their sport.

To prevent stress fractures:

- Have your child start exercise or training slowly. They can ramp up activity over time.
- Buy shoes that fit well and are made for their sport. Replace them regularly.
- Encourage your child to play many sports. Moving in different ways can prevent overuse. If they play only one sport, try multiple positions.



HAPPY IS ...

staying on top of your child's development through routine care. When was the last time your child had a well-child visit? Schedule one today using MyChart at luch.org/MyChart.

HOW REGULAR CHECKUPS ENHANCE KIDS' HEALTH

Here's something you might not know: More than 30% of kids between the ages of 5 and 17 were diagnosed with a chronic condition in the past two decades, according to a national survey.

That's a 7% jump compared to previous years. Translation? There are now about 130,000 new diagnoses every year of conditions like ADHD, asthma, diabetes and depression — all of which can get worse without proper care.

Chronic conditions are going up among young adults, too. For people between the ages of 18 and 25, rates jumped from 19% to 29%. That means more people are entering adulthood with a chronic condition. One reason is that healthcare providers may be doing more screenings than before.

As a parent, these stats may seem overwhelming. But there's a proactive way

you can respond to this trend. It's as simple as getting your child regular checkups.

BENEFITS OF WELL-CHILD VISITS

These appointments, which should start when your little one is only 3 to 5 days old, continue from when they're an infant until their teen years.

Well-child visits aren't just for shots or measuring your child's growth — they're vital for monitoring other aspects of your child's development, too. Pediatricians and other providers are on the front line for catching chronic issues early, when they're easier to treat.

Developmental screenings during these visits can help detect conditions like autism spectrum disorder. This can assist you in getting your child the care and services they

need sooner rather than later. In addition, if you have concerns about other issues, like mental health, you can talk with the provider about getting your child evaluated.

KEEPING UP WITH FOLLOW-UPS

If your child has a chronic condition, it's important for them to go to follow-up visits. You and your child can work with the provider to manage any issues with medications. Going to these appointments can also make it easier to keep a close eye on symptoms and encourage your child to follow healthy habits.

Whether they have a chronic condition or not, making sure your child gets all their checkups helps them thrive, physically and emotionally, and puts them on the path to a bright, healthy future.



HEALING IS ...

finding answers and relief for your child. Our pediatric gastroenterology team is here to help. Call 909-558-3904 to make an appointment.

DR. KHYATI MEHTA LEADS PEDIATRIC GI LAB CARE AT LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

For Khyati Mehta, MD, director of the Pediatric GI Lab at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, caring for children is more than a profession. It's a calling. "During my medical school rotations, I felt energized being around children and walking alongside them through their illness," Mehta said. "That joy and satisfaction carved my path into pediatrics."

Finding a Calling in Pediatric Gastroenterology

Drawn to the intricate connection between nutrition and healing, Mehta was fascinated by the "puzzles" of pediatric gastroenterology cases. Her passion led her from a pediatric residency to a competitive fellowship, where she found her place in a specialty that balances critical thinking with hands-on procedural care.

"I loved the thrill of procedures and the ability to instantly fix a bleeding vessel or remove a polyp that was causing obstruction," she said.

Today, Mehta leads one of the region's academic centers, a high-volume pediatric GI lab, equipped to handle a broad spectrum of gastrointestinal conditions and procedures. From inflammatory bowel disease and liver disorders to celiac disease, feeding disorders, and complex motility issues, the GI physicians team diagnoses and treats them all.

In addition to routine GI procedures like Upper Endoscopy and Colonoscopy, the GI lab performs cutting-edge procedures such as Transnasal Endoscopy, EndoFLIP, and video capsule endoscopy. These tools allow for precise, minimally invasive care under Mehta's guidance.

Leading Advanced Care for Children

Mehta's role extends far beyond the procedure room. As lab director, she ensures patient safety, implements evidence-based clinical protocols, and leads efforts to innovate and improve outcomes. She mentors residents, nurses, and GI lab technicians in both the science and art of the field.

"Our work is only possible because of the incredible collaboration between our physicians, nurses, GI lab technicians, dietitians, social workers, and support staff," Mehta says.

Despite juggling a demanding clinical and administrative load, Mehta finds daily fulfillment in her work. "Seeing kids with chronic GI conditions go from pain and poor growth to thriving is incredibly rewarding," she says. "Those moments are what I live for."

DON'T GIVE CERVICAL CANCER A CHANCE — VACCINATE AGAINST HPV

As a parent, you're probably well aware of childhood shots, and you're more than familiar with the annual vaccine that fends off the flu. But did you know there's an immunization to help protect against cancer?

HPV, or human papillomavirus, causes almost all cervical cancers. Learning about the HPV vaccine — and choosing to have your kids get it — can reduce their risk for infection and HPV-related diseases.

Even if you're unsure about vaccine benefits vs. risks, the following details can help you start an open conversation with your child's healthcare provider.

VACCINATION LEADS TO BETTER HEALTH

The HPV vaccine does an excellent job of vanquishing the virus. The shot has the potential to prevent more than 90% of cancers caused by HPV.

It also defends against the strain of HPV that causes genital warts.

You might be worried about side effects. But you can breathe easy — the side effects from the vaccine are typically mild and include arm swelling, fever and headache.

HPV AND CANCER — KNOW THE RISKS

HPV is spread through sexual contact. Around 13 million people, including teens, are infected with HPV each year.

Nine out of 10 times, these infections go away on their own, and many cause no symptoms at all. But 1 in 10 infections will eventually cause health problems. Besides cervical cancer, these include:

- Anal, vulvar, vaginal or penile cancer.

- Genital warts.
- Cancer in the back of the throat.

Every year in the U.S., HPV causes about 36,000 cases of cancer in men and women. So, both boys and girls need to get vaccinated.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

Although current recommendations advise that all children age 11 or 12 get two doses of the HPV vaccine spaced at least six months apart, HPV vaccination can begin at age 9. But even older teens and young adults can benefit. Young adults can catch up on the vaccine through age 26.

If you still have questions, pick a time to call your child's provider. They can talk through any concerns and help you decide the best way to protect your family's future health.



HEALTHY IS ...

knowing which shots your little one is due for. Book an appointment today through luch.org/appointments and make a list of questions beforehand so you come well prepared.

leaps&bounds

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20th Anniversary

PA Walk to Remember

we walk for the steps they will never take

Sunday, October 19 | 3:30 p.m.

Registration is now open.

Event will be held at Loma Linda University Church.



Scan QR code for registration
and more information.

lluh.org/awtr

*This is an event to support families who have lost their baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death. All are welcome to this **FREE** event.*



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