

leaps & bounds

boost teen z's

TIPS FOR HEALTHIER SLEEP
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GROWING SOCIAL SKILLS

Friendships, their way


POWER YOUR PREGNANCY

Nutrients that support baby



SPRING
2026

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



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HEALTH

do probiotic sodas live up to the hype?

Next to common sodas, you'll now find "healthy" options with added probiotics. Are they actually better for you and your family compared with other sodas? Health experts say these drinks often have less sugar and fewer calories than traditional fizzy beverages. And probiotics do feed good-for-you gut bacteria.

But these sodas don't have proven benefits, and a common ingredient — a plant fiber called inulin — may cause bloating and gas, especially for those with conditions like irritable bowel syndrome.

It's OK to sip them occasionally, especially if you're replacing sugary beverages. But be sure to also choose water and eat fiber-rich whole foods like fruits and veggies to keep your gut healthy.



5 ways to help your teen get a good night's sleep



Does your high schooler seem to sleep the whole weekend away? Research explain why: Fewer than two in 10 teens get the advised amount of shut-eye on school nights. Take these steps to ensure your teen sleeps enough, and well:

- 1. Suppress screen time.** Bright lights and stimulating content disrupt rest. Create a screen curfew to limit devices before bed.
- 2. Avoid all-nighters.** Encourage your student to do a little schoolwork each evening.
- 3. Nap wisely.** Teens should limit midday sleep to 20 minutes or less, and if they must nap, they should do so early in the day.
- 4. Control caffeine.** Discuss cutting back on coffee, soda, and chocolate, especially in the afternoon.
- 5. Encourage exercise.** Regular sweat sessions make sleep more restful.

KIDS' CORNER

springtime pattern puzzle

How many days are in spring? ____
Solve the pattern puzzle to find the answer!

$$\text{Sun} + \text{Sun} + \text{Sun} = 30$$

$$\text{Sun} + \text{Rainbow} + \text{Rainbow} = 24$$

$$\text{Rainbow} + \text{Frog} + \text{Frog} = 19$$

$$\text{Sun} \times \text{Rainbow} + \text{Sun} + \text{Frog} + \text{Frog} = \text{?}$$



Solution: Sun = 10, Rainbow = 7, Frog = 6; 10 x 7 + 10 + 6 + 6 = 92

HOW TO HELP NEURODIVERSE KIDS BUILD FRIENDSHIPS

Making friends can be tricky, especially for kids who are neurodiverse. But whether your child is on the autism spectrum, has ADHD or lives with an intellectual disability, building connections is possible.

While these tips may not work for everyone, they can help create opportunities for friendships to grow.



Set up playdates

Organize activities in a one-to-one or small-group setting. Try starting with parallel play, such as an arts and crafts project. Then build toward more interactive play skills.



Find common interests

Kids bond over shared passions, like a love for LEGOS or animals. Encouraging activities based on their interests can make socializing easier.



Stand back

During social get-togethers, stay nearby but don't hover. Give your child space to learn on their own. Step in only if there's fighting or meanness, or if the kids need activity ideas.



Ask for school support

Talk with counselors about opportunities for social inclusion. Make sure you are updated on your child's social development in school by speaking with teachers. Many schools provide peer programs where your child can practice getting along with others.

HEALING IS ...

making sure your children's healthcare providers know if your child seems anxious. Communicate concerns through the MyChart app, available on Google Play, on the App Store, and at [lluch.org/mychart](https://www.lluch.org/mychart).





HEALTHY IS ...
knowing your baby is supported every step of the way. Connect with a pediatric specialist through MyChart at [lluch.org/mychart](https://www.lluch.org/mychart) to get personalized guidance for your little one.

HOW CRANIAL HELMETS HELP GROW WITH CONFIDENCE

Finding out your baby may benefit from a cranial helmet can bring up a lot of questions. For many parents, it's unfamiliar territory. Here's a quick look at what you should know, plus answers to commonly asked questions.

HEAD SHAPE CHANGES

A baby's head grows fast, roughly doubling in size in the first year of life. To make room for the brain, the skull stays soft. But that can also mean flat or uneven spots show up, especially when babies spend a lot of time in one position.

A cranial helmet helps correct those differences. How? By placing gentle pressure on the fuller side of the head and leaving space for flatter areas to expand.

PARENT FAQs

What's the first step?

Your doctor will refer you to an orthotist. They're a type of specialist who will measure your baby's head and design the custom helmet. You may also work with a physical therapist if your baby has difficulty turning their head, so they don't keep resting on the same spot.

Does the helmet stay on all the time?

Babies usually wear their helmets for about 23 hours a day. It comes off for bath time, which is also when you should clean it.

Will my baby be uncomfortable?

No, the helmet shouldn't cause any pain or discomfort. It's custom-made for your baby

and lined with soft foam. Most children get used to wearing them pretty quickly. If you do notice fussiness, skin irritation, or a bad smell, go back to the specialist who made it and ask for adjustments.

How long does helmet therapy take?

The timeline looks different for every baby. Some may need to wear the helmet for several months or even get a second helmet if they outgrow the first. Others might be done sooner, especially if they started therapy in early infancy. The specialist will track your little one's progress at follow-up visits every one to two weeks.

Before you know it, this phase is behind you and your baby's onto their next milestone!

PREGNANT? YOU NEED THESE ESSENTIAL VITAMINS

If you're pregnant, eating healthy is one of the best things you can do for your baby. However, you have a higher need for certain vitamins and minerals while pregnant. Your healthcare provider will probably want you to take a prenatal vitamin.

WHY FOLATE?

Folate is very important for the growth of your baby. It is most important to get enough folate in the months before you get pregnant

and in the early months of your pregnancy. When you get enough folate, you lower the chances that your baby will have certain birth defects of the brain and spinal cord.

If you're taking a prenatal vitamin, you probably get all the folate you need. But you can also get folate from food. Foods high in folate include:

- Vegetables, especially Brussels sprouts and green, leafy vegetables such as spinach.
- Whole grains, enriched breads, and fortified cereals.
- Fruits such as bananas and oranges.
- Liver.
- Peas and beans.

CALCIUM COUNTS

Calcium helps keep bones strong and healthy. When you're pregnant, your baby takes calcium from your body to develop and grow bones. If you don't get enough calcium, your bones could become weak.

Prenatal vitamins have calcium, but you can get some from foods, too. Milk and milk products are filled with calcium. Dark green leafy vegetables, like broccoli and sardines, are also high in calcium.

HEALTHY IS ...

learning what your body and baby need — together. From pregnancy preparation to life after delivery, birth and beyond classes help you feel informed, prepared, and empowered. Discover more at [lluch.org/classes](https://www.lluch.org/classes).



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH INNOVATION: DR. HISHAM ABDEL-AZIM

HEALING IS ...
finding answers —
and hope — in one trusted
place. Start your family's care
journey at Loma Linda University
Cancer Center and visit
lluh.org/cancer-center.

Hisham Abdel-Azim, MD, MS, division chief of transplant and cell therapy/hematological malignancies at Loma Linda University Health, is at the forefront of one of medicine's most rapidly evolving fields. His dedication to hematology, oncology, and cellular therapy stems from both professional and personal motivations.

WHY CELLULAR THERAPY MATTERS

"For me, hematology and cellular therapy present unique opportunities," said Abdel-Azim. "Cancer patients often endure significant suffering, and this field allows me to make a difference. It is also one of the fastest-moving areas in medicine, where discoveries can move from the lab to real-life application far quicker than in most other specialties."

Abdel-Azim finds the work deeply rewarding. "There is nothing more fulfilling than seeing a patient and their family experience hope and success," he said.

"Cellular therapy and transplants can shorten years of painful treatment, curing patients while minimizing long-term side effects. A single treatment can transform a patient's life."

Recent advancements energize Abdel-Azim and his team. He points to breakthroughs such as CAR-T cell therapy for blood and solid cancers, gene therapy for conditions like sickle cell disease and thalassemia, and innovative bone marrow transplant techniques that reduce long-term complications.

Abdel-Azim leads a multidisciplinary team that prioritizes individualized care. Each patient undergoes a comprehensive evaluation, and treatment plans are customized to integrate the latest scientific advances alongside traditional therapies.

"We believe every patient is unique. Tailoring treatment to each individual and incorporating cutting-edge approaches is key to success," said Abdel-Azim.

ADVANCING CARE THROUGH RESEARCH AND COMPASSION

Research and clinical trials are central to the division's mission. The team ensures patients have access to both standard therapies and clinical trials.

"It is important to have an open-minded approach. Supporting patients and families emotionally is equally important. Our team includes social workers, child-life specialists, and coordinators who provide ongoing support throughout the transplant journey," he said.

Loma Linda University Transplant and Cellular Therapy is the only program in the region accredited by the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy, making Loma Linda University Health the only center in the vast Inland Empire geographic region offering these advanced, personalized therapies for adults and children.

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL RECEIVES TOP CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL RECOGNITION FROM THE LEAPFROG GROUP



Loma Linda University Children's Hospital (LLUCH) has been named a Top Children's Hospital for the seventh time in nine years.

Anthony Hilliard, MD, CEO of Loma Linda University Health Hospitals, said the recognition highlights the extraordinary commitment of employees to whole-person care.

"While the accolades are gratifying, what inspires me most is what they represent: employees' steadfast dedication to our patients, their relentless drive to improve, and the compassion that defines Loma

Linda University Health," said Hilliard. "Every single employee has contributed to this moment, whether they serve at the bedside, support our clinical teams, or keep our operations running with precision."

More than 2,400 hospitals were considered for the award, and only 156 received the distinction.

LLUCH was one of only 15 Top Children's Hospitals, and Loma Linda University Medical Center East Campus was one of the 73 Top Teaching Hospitals selected by The Leapfrog Group.

The Leapfrog Group is an independent national nonprofit watchdog organization that rates hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers on their ability to protect patients from preventable harm, such as accidents, injuries, and infections.

The awards are widely recognized as one of the most competitive awards American Hospitals can receive. To qualify for the distinction, hospitals must rank highly on the Leapfrog Hospital Survey, an assessment of hospital performance on standards for quality and patient safety, including infection rates, maternity care, and a hospital's ability to prevent medication errors, among other standards.



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