

leaps & bounds



bump up your health

FEEL YOUR BEST
WHILE EXPECTING
SEE PAGE 3.

HEART-SMART SHELVES

Try these simple swaps

WHEELS IN MOTION

Tips for
family rides

WINTER
2026

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



LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY

CHILDREN'S
HEALTH

to protect your baby's teeth

Don't let babies fall asleep with a bottle. Formula and breast milk contain sugar, which can lead to tooth decay. Instead, let sleepy babies suck on a pacifier. Or give them a bottle filled with water. In addition, don't give juice to infants younger than 12 months old and avoid giving toddlers juice in bottles or sippy cups they can drink from all day.



why everyone's falling for pumpkin seeds

Considered super seeds, pumpkin seeds are packed with nutrients. Below are just a few reasons why they're important:

- **Calcium** keeps bones and teeth strong and helps nerves, muscles and blood vessels work as they should.
- **Fiber** aids digestion and makes you feel full faster. It also supports brain and heart health.
- **Iron** helps your body make hemoglobin and supports your bones, muscles and organs.
- **Magnesium** is a must for healthy bones, muscles and nerves.
- **Potassium** supports healthy muscle movement and blood pressure levels.
- **Protein** allows you to build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and skin.
- **Zinc** plays a key role in cell growth and protects against infections.

Enjoy roasted pumpkin seeds by the handful, on a salad, or added to your morning yogurt or oatmeal!

KIDS' CORNER

fruity holiday tree platter

INGREDIENTS

- 70-80 green grapes
- 4-5 large strawberries
- 1 cup of blueberries
- 1 banana
- White and red edible sprinkles (optional)
- 1 star fruit (for the star on top)



DIRECTIONS

1. Wash the green grapes, strawberries and blueberries well.
2. Arrange the green grapes on a large platter or cutting board in the shape of a holiday tree, starting with one grape at the top and each subsequent row containing one additional grape.
3. Cut the tops off the strawberries and place them upside down at the base of the tree to create a "tree stump."
4. Slice the banana into thin slices and arrange them along with the blueberries as "ornaments" on the tree.
5. Sprinkle white and red sprinkles over the fruit for added decoration and a festive touch.
6. Slice the star fruit and place a slice at the top of the tree as a "star."



STRONG BEGINNINGS START WITH YOU

4 KEYS TO A HEALTHY PREGNANCY

During pregnancy, you're making lifestyle choices for both yourself and your baby. Here's how to take care of your health and give your little one a strong start in life.

1. GET YOUR NUTRIENTS

To feel your best and fuel your baby's growth, build your diet around:

- Vegetables.
- Fruits.
- Whole grains (such as oats, quinoa and brown rice).
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy products (such as milk, yogurt and cheese).
- Protein foods (such as beans).

Your healthcare provider may advise you to take a vitamin and mineral supplement, too.

2. BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Staying active during pregnancy helps reduce back pain, promote healthy weight gain and more. That generally means aiming for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity every week.

Many pregnant women enjoy:

- Walking.
- Swimming.
- Stationary cycling.
- Water aerobics.
- Prenatal yoga.

3. RETHINK YOUR DRINK

Constipation is a common complaint during pregnancy. Drinking eight to 12 glasses of water daily helps fight this problem. (Eating fiber-rich foods — such as fresh fruit, veggies and whole-grain cereal — is helpful as well.)

4. MAKE SLEEP A PRIORITY

Sleep deprivation during pregnancy is tied to an increased risk of pregnancy complications or premature birth.

To improve your sleep, drink most of your fluids early to reduce late-night bathroom visits. Skip rich or spicy foods that keep you awake with heartburn. And experiment with new sleep positions and extra pillows to get comfy.



HEALTHY IS ...
caring for two.

Every prenatal appointment helps ensure both you and your baby thrive throughout pregnancy. Make yours today through MyChart at luch.org/mychart.

STOCK A HEART-HEALTHY PANTRY

When you stock it right, your pantry can not only help you whip up a quick meal, but it can also support your family's heart health. Here's what to have on hand.



Canned fruits

Choose fruits packed in their own juice or water (without added sugar) for fiber that benefits cholesterol.



Canned tomatoes

Make your own marinara sauce or chili with canned tomatoes, which contain the heart-protective antioxidant lycopene.



Canned vegetables

Rinse off the veggies to lower salt so you don't go over the 1,500 milligrams daily heart-healthy limit.



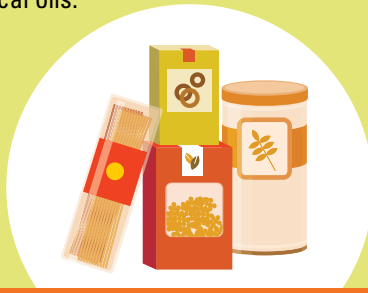
Cooking oils

Pick liquid oils like canola, corn, olive, soybean and sunflower — they're lower in saturated fat than coconut oil and other tropical oils.



Canned beans

Black beans, chickpeas and kidney beans are high in fiber and protein, which help keep blood sugar levels stable.



Whole grains

From brown rice to couscous and quinoa, whole grains bring flavor to any meal and offer fiber that lowers your risk for heart disease.

YOUR QUICK GUIDE TO LABEL LINGO

Whether you're shopping at the store or taking inventory of what you already have in your kitchen, keep these heart-healthy food label tips in mind:

- A **low-fat food** contains 3 grams of total fat or less per serving.
- The terms **reduced sodium**, **reduced calorie** and **reduced fat** mean that a product has at least 25% less of these ingredients than the regular version.
- The claim that a food is a **good source of any nutrient** (think fiber, for instance) means that one serving of the food contains between 10% and 19% of the daily recommended amount.

HAPPY IS ...

knowing every meal can support your heart. Stocking smart staples today helps prepare quick, nutritious dishes tomorrow. Find more inspiration at luh.org/live-it.

→ **BEING CAN CONSCIOUS** Fresh foods are great when possible, but canned options are a budget-friendly way to get your nutrients. Plus, they have a longer shelf life. Always skip cans with bulges, dents or leaks — imperfections make it easier for bacteria to grow.

THE FAMILY GUIDE TO ELECTRIC BIKES AND SCOOTERS

You may have noticed a new trend in transportation. More kids and adults than ever are riding electric bikes and scooters to work or school or for exercise.

These so-called micromobility devices are better for the climate than gas-powered cars. But with battery power comes risks. Injuries from e-bikes and e-scooters are also rising. Since 2017, 23% more people have sustained micromobility-related injuries each year. About one-third of those who get hurt are children younger than age 14.

Taking precautions can ensure you reach your destination, not the emergency room. To take charge of your family's health and safety, follow these rules and teach them to your children:

- **Protect your noggin.** Wear a helmet every time you ride and make sure it has a snug fit. The straps should form a V shape around the ears. Don't forget to buckle the chin strap. This should fasten directly below the chin to prevent the helmet from moving or slipping.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Even kids and grown-ups who know how to ride a bike or scooter should note that e-versions feel different. Try them out in a safe location free from vehicles and people, such as an empty parking lot.
- **Be seen.** Drivers can't always spot small vehicles, so avoid unpredictable movements. Riding when it's dark out? Brighten up with reflective clothing and lights.
- **Make noise.** Use your bell or horn to alert drivers and pedestrians to your presence. Or call out "on your left" as you pass.
- **Stick to the rules.** Follow all traffic laws. Keep to bike lanes rather than sidewalks when riding on public streets. On e-bikes, use arm signals for turning and changing lanes.
- **Hang on.** Always hold the handlebars on e-scooters. Adjust them to the rider's height.
- **Slow down.** Some e-bikes can hit speeds of 30 miles per hour. Go slower to avoid losing control. Take extra care when riding downhill, as heavy batteries can power you forward faster.
- **Ride solo.** Adding extra bodies to e-bikes or e-scooters isn't safe. Most are built for one rider at a time.

Put energy into the proper equipment and safeguards up front to reduce the risk of collisions and falls. That way, your family can safely wheel to your next great adventure.

HEALTHY IS ...

peace of mind on every ride. If an e-bike or e-scooter ride takes a wrong turn, urgent care is here when you need it. See all locations at [lluh.org/urgent-care](https://www.illuh.org/urgent-care).



**BEST
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITALS**

US News & World Report

**CARDIOLOGY &
HEART SURGERY
2025-2026**

HEALING IS ...

knowing your child's heart is in the very best hands. Loma Linda University Children's Hospital has been ranked a top cardiac program in the country for five years in a row by U.S. News & World Report. Learn more about our nationally recognized heart care services at lluch.org/heart-care.



Randall Fortuna, MD

FROM CALLING TO CAREER DR. RANDALL FORTUNA'S JOURNEY TO PEDIATRIC HEART SURGERY

Randall Fortuna, MD, a cardiothoracic surgeon at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, first discovered his passion for medicine during college when a professor invited him to observe a surgery. Stepping into the operating room for the first time, he was struck by the focus, harmony and sense of purpose among the team.

"It felt like a sacred place," Fortuna says. "I knew this was the kind of work I wanted to do." That powerful experience, combined with his time at the University of Utah's artificial heart research lab, set him firmly on the path toward cardiothoracic surgery.

A MISSION OF THE HEART

For Fortuna, the calling was more than professional; it was spiritual. As a second-year medical student, he remembers sitting in class as a pediatric heart specialist lectured. The same reverence he had felt in the operating room returned, and he knew with certainty where he was meant to serve. "I have always believed that God has a mission for each one of us," he said. "For me, pediatric heart surgery was the clear direction."

The road to that calling took 14 years of intensive training. Along the way, he was guided by mentors such as Anees Razzouk, MD, senior pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon at Loma Linda University Health. "Watching him pause to pray with patients and families before surgery has always inspired me," Fortuna says.

TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S LIVES

Today, Fortuna is part of the nationally recognized pediatric heart team at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, ranked among the top 10 programs in the country. His days begin with multidisciplinary rounds to discuss patients recovering from surgery or preparing for procedures. Most of his time is spent in the operating room repairing congenital heart defects such as ventricular septal defects and tetralogy of Fallot or performing complex reconstructions for newborns.

The most rewarding moments, he shares, are when a surgery transforms a child's life. "When a blue, cyanotic baby becomes pink after surgery, the change is dramatic. Seeing relief and joy on parents' faces is why we do this work."

INSIDE THE SAN MANUEL MATERNITY PAVILION

When the San Manuel Maternity Pavilion opened in August 2021, it became more than a new hospital wing; it became a lifeline for mothers and babies across the Inland Empire. Thanks to a \$25 million gift from the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation, the pavilion was built to offer state-of-the-art facilities, advanced expertise and a nurturing environment for families welcoming their newest members.

Each year, more than 4,000 babies are delivered at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital. Nearly half of those births are considered high risk, meaning, both moms and babies may need extra medical support. The pavilion was designed with those families in mind, featuring 44 OB beds, 11 labor and delivery rooms, three C-section suites, and nine triage rooms. The spaces are private, filled with natural light and equipped with the latest technology to ensure a safe and comfortable experience.

A HIGHER LEVEL OF CARE FOR MOMS AND BABIES

What truly sets the pavilion apart is its Level IV Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the highest level of newborn care. A Level IV NICU means the hospital can care for the tiniest and sickest babies, including those born as early as 23 weeks or those with complex health conditions. Families have immediate access to neonatologists, pediatric subspecialists and surgeons, along with advanced technology that can save lives. Very few hospitals in the region have this distinction, making Loma Linda University Children's Hospital the go-to destination for families across Southern California and beyond.

"Families choose us because we can provide the full breadth of care," said Ciprian Gheorghie, MD, medical director of Maternity Services at Loma Linda University Children's

Hospital. "We're the only hospital in the area with a Level IV NICU, and our team regularly handles the most complex cases. That expertise, paired with compassionate care, is what makes us different."

GROWING DEMAND AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The pavilion has quickly become busier than ever, with births up 12% over the past year and more than 1 in 5 families traveling from outside the local network to deliver here. National organizations have also taken notice, awarding the maternity program Advanced Perinatal Certification from The Joint Commission, designation as an Obstetric Anesthesia Center of Excellence and ranking it among the top programs in the nation by U.S. News & World Report.



HAPPY IS ...

welcoming your baby in the best possible place. Take a virtual tour of the San Manuel Maternity Pavilion and explore all we offer for moms and newborns. Register at luch.org/maternity-tour.

leaps&bounds

Leaps & Bounds is published by Loma Linda University Health to provide general health information. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a physician. © 2026. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

Richard Hart, MD, DrPH
President
Loma Linda University Health

Rachelle Bussell
Senior Vice President

Peter Baker
Senior Vice President and
Administrator of
Children's Hospital

Heather Valentine
Editor-in-Chief

Angela Bergamo
Managing Editor



Loma Linda University Medical Center
11234 Anderson Street
Loma Linda, CA 92354-2804

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Loma Linda University
Medical Center

Printed on Recyclable Paper.
Developed by WebMD Ignite. Printed in USA. 10859M



RANKED AMONG THE BEST CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS IN THE REGION.



[READ MORE
news.llu.edu](https://news.llu.edu)



HEALING. HEALTHY. HAPPY.
A Seventh-day Adventist Organization

CONNECT WITH US!



@lluchildrens



Facebook.com/LLUChildrens

Want more? Click the code to sign up for e-news on topics that interest you.

