



YOUR PREGNANT FRIENDS NEED YOUR HELP! Share This to Save a Life

If you're a mom or about to be, let me be the first to tell you happy Mother's Day! I know it's not Mother's Day yet, but the holiday is definitely on my mind, and not for a happy reason. I've been thinking about it because not long ago, a friend of mine nearly died while having her baby.

This friend — let's call her Ella — developed a complication called preeclampsia during her pregnancy. Preeclampsia is basically dangerously high blood pressure, and it's serious business. It's a painful condition that can have dire consequences for both moms and babies. In severe cases, it can cause seizures, brain injuries, and permanent organ damage in pregnant women. It can also trigger premature delivery when the baby is at a really low birth weight.

My friend had a severe case. Her family actually had to rush her to the hospital before her delivery date because of her symptoms! The situation was so bad that the doctors injected her with steroids to help the baby's lungs develop, then delivered the baby early. If they hadn't done that, Ella would have died. Fortunately, she and the baby both made it through.

At this point you're probably wondering why a dentist is telling you about preeclampsia. Good question! The thing many people don't realize is that preeclampsia is actually directly related to oral health, specifically airway issues and periodontal disease (aka gum disease). In people who aren't pregnant, airway problems like sleep apnea can lower your immune system, make it harder to sleep, and leave you feeling exhausted in the morning. They can also increase your risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and Alzheimer's. If you're pregnant, it's worse.



When there isn't enough oxygen getting to a pregnant woman's brain, her body will respond by increasing her blood pressure to boost circulation. This can cause dangerously high blood pressure and — you guessed it — preeclampsia. Mom's airway issues can also increase their baby's risk of ADHD, autism, and low birth weight. Periodontal disease is also a risk factor for preeclampsia because, like airway issues, it causes inflammation in the body. This inflammation can compromise a pregnant woman's immune system and put her and her baby at risk!

There are a lot of things people tell you about motherhood. They say you'll be tired all the time, there will never be enough hours in the day, and that your kids will be cuddly and gross and the best thing ever (all true!). But there are also things no one talks about, and the connection between airway issues and preeclampsia is one of them. That's why airway issues in pregnant women often go untreated.

I want to spread the word and let soon-to-be-moms like Ella know about red flags like snoring, so they catch their airway issues before they cause pregnancy complications. All it takes to solve this problem and prevent a potential tragedy in the delivery room is a trip to the dentist.

If you're expecting or know someone who is, please, please visit our website, GreatSmilesNJ.com. There, you'll find a free guide called "Healthy Mouth, Healthy Baby!" that goes over everything you should know about oral care during pregnancy.

If you learn something from the guide, please share it as widely as you can! Print it out and give it to a friend, email it to your sister, or post the link on Facebook. You just might save a mother and her baby. There's no better way to celebrate Mother's Day than that.

To your great smiles and better health,



Brighten up your spring with our limited-time whitening special!

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FINDING THE RIGHT MASSAGE GUN FOR YOU

While surfing the web or visiting your local sporting goods store, you've probably noticed the most recent physical fitness trend: massage guns. Massage guns vibrate at a high frequency to help loosen your muscles, increase blood flow, and temporarily ease pain and soreness. While massage guns have been on the market for the last several years, they were mostly for massage therapists and chiropractors to use on their patients. Now, newer models have seen great improvements that make massage guns more accessible to the average consumer.

There are many benefits that come with using a massage gun. For people who experience chronic pain, have tension headaches, or suffer from an injury, massage guns can reduce symptoms and even help users feel more relaxed. Massages cause the body to release dopamine, which improves moods, but not everyone can

make it to a massage parlor whenever they need to. That's what makes this tool a perfect temporary replacement.

Since massage guns have exploded in popularity, there are many brands and models to choose from — but there are a few things to consider. Some massage guns are incredibly loud, and that could make massaging your head or neck rather unenjoyable. Also pay attention to the model's strength and speed levels, since more powerful massage guns can reach deeper into muscle fibers.

Other factors to keep in mind are the massage gun's weight and portability as well as if it's easy to use (especially if it comes with additional head attachments or works alongside a smartphone app). Massage guns can be expensive, ranging anywhere from \$60 to \$500. Each model has different features and functions, so make sure you do some research before purchasing one.

The Fitness Boost You Need How Rewards Can Reinforce Healthy Habits

People often talk about why we need to exercise more and eat right. But how do you reward yourself for the new habits you embrace? If you aren't rewarding yourself, then you may find it challenging to stick to your plans.

Don't be shy to give yourself the boost you need — the right way.

Can rewards be dangerous?

In some cases, yes. Gretchen Rubin, author of "Better Than Before," recently told Medium that rewarding our good habits can be "dangerous." You might feel the same way. After we get the reward we wanted, it might feel easier to give up the habit or make it more difficult to meet our goals. After all, we might give up on running if we don't meet our weight loss goals because

improper foods are the reward after a run. That's counterproductive!

Or, what if we decide our reward isn't worth it to begin with? For example, you might tell yourself, "I don't really have time for a nice bath tonight, so I'll just skip my run today."

However, Rubin says that one kind of self-reward is always best: the reward that takes you deeper into your new habit.

Reward a new fitness habit right.

Finding an exercise you enjoy is one of the most effective ways to reward yourself and continue to build your new fitness habit! If you look forward to working out in a gym environment with gym equipment, then at-home exercises probably won't feel as satisfying. But



there's still at-home equipment and sports, such as biking, that you can do to reward yourself, especially if you have a favorite time of day to get outdoors.

Other awesome rewards for exercising can include running or yoga socks, a nice water bottle you enjoy using, a new yoga mat, a subscription to a workout program or app, or a fitness tracker.

You can also watch fitness videos or documentaries that explain the benefits of your new hobby or habits, which will both educate and encourage you! A fitness habit, after all, is linked to all sorts of long-term health benefits you'll enjoy for a lifetime.

What Are Cravings? How Do I Stop Them?

How Playing the Long Game Helps Overcome Cravings

Cravings — they can feel like a comforting friend or a gut-punching enemy, depending on what you're craving. An estimated 90% of people experience cravings, and, believe it or not, not all cravings are bad. Leaning into our healthy cravings can help establish a healthy diet.

Don't worry, we're thinking the same thing: "If that's the case, why do we crave sugary snacks and fatty foods the most?!" It's complicated, but understanding your brain is a great place to start.

What are cravings, really?

Decades of research have proven that cravings start in our brain, not our body. This might be shocking for some, since it was commonly believed for a long time that if you were craving a steak, you were probably low in iron.



However, the brain connection makes way more sense. Think about it: Does your body love circulating excess sugar that can lead to health complications, or does your brain enjoy sugar more? After all, sugar releases the feel-good neurotransmitter dopamine, which our brains love. A chocolate milkshake or lemon bar helps us feel good by literally triggering our brain's pleasure centers.

That means when we're unhappy, stressed, or needing a pick-me-up, we might start craving foods that comfort us, such as ice cream.

How do I stop craving unhealthy things?

One thing is for sure: Restrictive diets don't always work. It's hard to "rewire" the brain by completely rejecting how it currently operates. Instead, you might want to consider accepting your cravings, but make slow and deliberate changes to how you satisfy those cravings.

For example, if you're craving potato chips, why not try kale chips or another crunchy but healthier alternative that you already enjoy? If you're craving soda, why not crush some fresh fruit into sparkling water instead? Make it a treat, make it special, but make it healthier.

Eating more filling, nutrient-dense food and getting more sleep are also great ways to fight cravings. It leaves little time or room for bingeing on bad foods. However, a six-month 2018 study in the National Institutes of Health has shown that flexibility in your diet can make a difference for making real, meaningful changes to your lifestyle long term.

By overcoming shame and accepting your cravings, you won't fear making a single mistake as much. It's all about playing the long game.

TAKE A
BREAK!



ONE-PAN
BAKED SALMON
AND VEGGIES

Inspired by [BBCGoodFood.com](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com)

DOES THIS

MAKE ME LOOK HOT?

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb spring potatoes, halved
- 2 handfuls cherry tomatoes
- 2 tbsp olive oil (divided)
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 8 asparagus spears, trimmed and halved
- 2 5-oz salmon fillets
- 1 handful fresh basil

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
2. In an oven-proof dish, combine the potatoes and 1 tbsp olive oil. Roast for 20 minutes.
3. Remove the dish from the oven and add the asparagus. Toss, and bake for 15 more minutes.
4. Remove the dish from the oven and add the cherry tomatoes. Toss. Drizzle with balsamic, then nestle the salmon fillets into the vegetables. Drizzle with the remaining oil, and bake for 10-15 minutes.
5. Remove the dish from the oven, garnish with basil leaves, and serve!

WHEN SHE SAID

SHE WASN'T HUNGRY

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STRETCHING PRESERVES YOUR FLEXIBILITY FOR LIFE

A NOT-SO-SECRET FOR YOUR LONGEVITY

Engineers and doctors can agree on one thing: Lubrication is often necessary for joints to function and move properly, including human joints. Every day, your joints create fluid that allows your arms, legs, neck, and back to move properly.

But did you know that by stretching and using your full range of motion once a day, you can help those joint fluids preserve your flexibility and balance?

Many people are worried about their independence later in life, and an improper sense of balance can be a big part of that. Stretching keeps muscles flexible, strong, and healthy, but the “flexible” part is more important than most people think. Without flexibility, our muscles shorten and become tight — and even with the fluids that our joints create, without regularly stretching, we’ll still be unable to use our full range of motion.

By the time you need your muscles for activity, they’re weak and unable to extend fully. This puts you at risk for joint pain, strains, and muscle damage.

Can stretching extend my life?

Not only does stretching improve your independence, but it might also help you live longer. Studies show that stretching is linked to improved circulation, and better blood flow can lead to improved heart health and cardiovascular function. Considering that heart disease is the leading cause of death among adults in the U.S., that’s a huge bonus!

The benefits of stretching are best enjoyed without injury, however, and that’s why it’s important to warm yourself up before stretching. Although it used to be thought that stretching is the first step before exercise, it’s now becoming more commonly understood that light

activity is better for preventing injuries from overstretching. Physical therapist David Nolan of Massachusetts General Hospital told Harvard Health, “All it takes to warm up the muscles before stretching is 5-10 minutes of light activity, such as a quick walk. You can also stretch after an aerobic or weight-training workout.”

If you’re worried about joint pain, it’s smart to stretch as well as build stronger muscles to carry your body weight more effectively — especially around your spine, hips, and knees, which do most of the heavy lifting. Proper stretching and joint care can take years of effort, but as research shows, it pays off over many decades.

