

# Healthy Living Corner

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## Back to School Checklist

### *Keep Your Child on the Right Track to Health*

Making sure that children at every age receive all of their vaccinations on time is one of the most important things parents can do to ensure their children's long-term health—as well as the health of their friends and classmates. Not only do vaccines protect children against common seasonal diseases like seasonal influenza, they also help prevent diseases that are much rarer. However, vaccine-preventable diseases are still out there, so, if children don't stay up to date with vaccinations, the U.S. could see new epidemics of diseases. More children would get sick and more would die.

**Children 0-6 years:** During the early years of life, children are recommended to get a number of vaccines to protect them from diseases that can be serious, even life-threatening. Parents who choose not to vaccinate their own children increase the risk of infection for their children, other children around them, neighbors, and the community. Parents can find out what vaccines their children need and when the doses should be given by reviewing the nationally recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website.

**Children and Teens 7-18 years:** As children get a little older, it's easy to forget that they still need vaccines. However, children 6 months through 18 years of age are recommended for a yearly flu vaccination, so young children, pre-teens, and teens should be getting at least one vaccination every year. As children move into adolescence, they are at greater risk of catching diseases, like meningitis, and HPV. Also immunity from some vaccines can decrease over time, so people may need to get another dose of a vaccine during their pre-teen years. For example, adolescents 11-12 years of age are recommended to get a single dose booster of the Tdap vaccine which is recommended for adolescents and adults. The CDC provides a full vaccine schedule for people ages 7 through 18 years for parents to remain up to date on their children's vaccines.



**August is National Immunization Awareness Month.** This reminds us that immunizations are important for people of all ages, from infants to seniors. August is the perfect time to remind family, friends, co-workers, and others to talk with their doctors to make sure they're up-to-date on their vaccinations.

Is good nutrition important for good learning? In a word, **yes**. Research has shown that children who regularly ate breakfast had better standardized test scores, better behavior, and were less hyperactive than children who skipped breakfast. Research also shows that children who eat high glycemic index breakfasts (sugary breakfasts) tend to eat more at lunch.



Breakfast is Important.

What makes a good breakfast for children? One good example would be an egg, a slice of whole grain toast with nut butter, a piece of fruit and a glass of low-fat milk. Tofu, lean meat and whole grain cereals are also good choices at breakfast. The protein and fiber from the whole grains will keep your child satisfied until lunch time.

Avoid sugary breakfast cereals, white-flour pancakes and syrup—all of which will leave your child hungry and tired half-way through the morning.

**Top 10 Ways to Boost Your Energy.** Experts offer some fatigue-zapping tips that really work  
(Source: WebMD)

Everyone is familiar with all-out energy drain—that exhausted day (or night) when no matter how enticing that new movie, fabulous shoe sale, or friendly barbecue, we just can't psych ourselves up to go. What can be harder to recognize is a low-grade energy drain. In this case, you may not necessarily feel the classic signs of exhaustion—like achy muscles or that all-over tired feeling. What you do experience is an increasing lack of get-up-and-go for many of the activities you used to love.

Health experts have compiled the following list of the top 10 energy boosters. Try one, two, or all 10, and you're bound to see your energy levels soar.

## 1. Increase your Magnesium Intake

Eating a balanced diet can help ensure your vitamin and mineral needs are met. But if you still find yourself too pooped to pop, you could have a slight magnesium deficiency. This mineral is needed for more than 300 biochemical reactions in the body, including breaking down glucose into energy. The recommended daily intake of magnesium is around 300 milligrams for women and 350 milligrams for men. To make sure you're getting enough, the experts suggest adding a handful of almonds, hazelnuts or cashews to your daily diet; increasing your intake of whole grains, particularly bran cereal; and eating more fish, especially halibut.

## 2. Walk Around the Block

While it may seem as if moving about when you feel exhausted is the quickest route to feeling more exhausted, the opposite is true. Experts say that increasing physical activity—particularly walking—increases energy. In experiments, a brisk 10-minute walk not only increased energy, but the effects lasted up to two hours. And when the daily 10-minute walks continued for three weeks, overall energy levels and mood were lifted.

## 3. Take a Power Nap

Research has shown that both information overload and pushing our brains too hard can zap energy. But studies by the National Institutes of Mental Health found that a 60-minute "power nap" can not only reverse the mind-numbing effects of information overload, it may also help us to better retain what we have learned.

## 4. Don't Skip Breakfast—or Any Other Meal

Studies published in the journal *Nutritional Health* found that missing any meal during the day led to an overall greater feeling of fatigue by day's end.

## 5. Reduce Stress and Deal With Anger

We can counter energy killers such as stress and unexpressed anger by programming more relaxation activities into our day. While for many folks, increasing exercise burns off the chemical effects of stress and anger, others find relief in quiet pursuits: listening to music, reading a steamy romance novel, or even just talking on the phone.

## 6. Drink More Water and Less Alcohol

You may already know that it's easy to confuse signals of hunger with thirst. Sometimes, even slight dehydration can leave you feeling tired and lethargic. The solution is simple: a tall, cool glass of water. If you find yourself frequently fatigued even after a good night's sleep, try cutting down on alcohol during the evening hours.

## 7. Eat More Whole Grains and Less Sugar

The key here is keeping blood sugar balanced so energy is constant.

## 8. Have a Power Snack.

Power snacking is more than just eating between meals. Experts suggest a treat that combines protein, a little fat and some fiber—like peanut butter on a whole-wheat cracker, or some yogurt with a handful of nuts.

## 9. Make It a Latte

Pair a quick caffeine hit with the sustaining power of protein by having a low-fat latte instead of just a cup of coffee. All that milk turns your java into a protein drink, which provides not only extra energy, but extra calcium, which is good for your bones.

## 10. Check Your Thyroid Function and Complete Blood Cell Count

It certainly won't provide an instant boost, but if you're constantly low on energy—especially if you feel sluggish even after a good night's rest—you should talk to your doctor about a blood test for thyroid dysfunction as well as anemia.

