

# Healthy Lifestyles

March 26, 2025

## The power of walking in Teal: A Step toward strength and balance

By Christian Campilii PT, DPT

In the world of physical therapy, walking is one of the most fundamental and effective tools for restoring strength, improving balance and promoting overall health. It's a low-impact exercise that engages multiple muscle groups, supports joint health and enhances cardiovascular function - all while helping to improve mental clarity and emotional well-being. Whether recovering from an injury, managing chronic pain, or simply looking to stay active, walking remains one of the most accessible and valuable forms of movement in any rehabilitation plan.

### Walking: The Foundation of Functional Movement

Walking is more than just a form of exercise - it's a complex, coordinated movement involving strength, flexibility, balance and neuromuscular control. Every step requires the engagement of the core, glutes, hamstrings, quadriceps and calf muscles while simultaneously demanding joint stability from the hips, knees and ankles.

In physical therapy, walking is often incorporated as a key functional activity because it translates directly to daily life.

### Finding Balance: Strength and Support

Balance training is a core component of any walking-focused rehabilitation plan. Without proper balance, walking becomes inefficient and potentially dangerous, increasing the risk of falls and injury. By strengthening the gluteus medius, improving proprioception, and enhancing single-leg stability, physical therapists can help patients regain confidence and control over their gait. Exercises like single-leg



Stepping out in Teal with the Center for Physical Therapy are, from left, Maggie Bottjer, Terri Walsh, Kristin Rose-DaCosta, Olga Mironenko, Sierra Christophides, Christian Campilii, Aimee Taft, Tracy Quinlan, Brandy Stossel, Kris Villaflor and Riley Wilson. Photo by Curtis Schmidt

stands, tandem walking and lateral step-ups are often incorporated to target these deficits and improve dynamic stability.

Teal represents the sense of calm and balance that walking can provide. Much like the soothing nature of the color itself, walking has a grounding effect on the body and mind. For patients navigating recovery, walking serves as a stabilizing force - an activity that promotes both physical strength and mental clarity. The repetitive, rhythmic motion of walking helps regulate breathing, calm the nervous system, and improve circulation, much like the calming effect of viewing a teal ocean or sky.

### Walking Toward Recovery

For patients recovering from orthopedic injuries or surgeries, walking serves as both a goal and a means of progress. After knee replacements, for example, restoring a functional walking pattern is often one of the primary markers of success.

Gait training—focusing on step length, stride symmetry, and foot positioning - is essential for ensuring that patients not only regain their ability to walk, but also develop a more efficient and pain-free gait.

Similarly, walking is a powerful tool for neurological rehabilitation. Patients with conditions such as stroke, Parkinson's disease, or multiple sclerosis often benefit from targeted gait training to improve balance, coordination and muscle activation. Therapists may use techniques like weight shifting, visual cueing and assistive devices to facilitate smoother, more confident walking patterns.

### Stepping Into Strength

Walking is not just about physical recovery - it's about regaining independence and confidence. When patients can walk without pain, navigate stairs comfortably, and feel secure on uneven surfaces, they regain the freedom to engage in everyday life. This sense of

independence often translates into improved mental well-being, reduced anxiety, and increased motivation to stay active.

Teal, with its calming and stabilizing presence, symbolizes the balance and harmony that walking can bring to the body and mind. Just as teal is a blend of blue's calmness and green's renewal, walking represents a blend of strength and restoration a reminder that progress often happens one step at a time.

Whether you're recovering from an injury, managing a chronic condition, or simply aiming to stay active, walking remains one of the most powerful tools for improving strength, balance and overall well-being. Step by step, with the guidance of physical therapy, you can find strength and stability—and perhaps a sense of calm—in the steady rhythm of walking in teal.

For more information, visit [centerforphysicaltherapy.com](http://centerforphysicaltherapy.com) or call 845-297-4789.



# Adjustments at home can help in preventing falls

## By Brookmeade Community

In youth, a simple slip and/or fall may end up being little more than a skinned knee or bruised elbow. With age, however, falling can lead to much more serious injuries such as fractures, broken bones, and severe bruising. And even a seemingly minor fall may lead to lasting health consequences, including permanent physical limitations.

To make matters worse, older individuals are at increased risk for falling due to changes in normal balancing functions. Statistics, according to Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation, show that 30 percent of all senior citizens fall each year.

That number becomes much greater with Alzheimer's and other dementia patients.

Coordination decreases,

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individuals tend to shuffle instead of lifting their feet, and are less likely to recognize fall hazards. In addition, and maybe not as obvious, Alzheimer's can alter a person's response to visual inputs, which may lead to difficulty in areas with patterns, light-dark contrast, or monochromatic patterns. These are just a few of the problems you may face which may also increase the likelihood of falling.

But there is hope. There are several adjustments that can make the home safer. Certain rooms can be made safe with simple adjustments.

The first step is to assess the safety of your living space.

Examine all the rooms and hallways, keeping an eye out for items such as loose carpet, slippery throw rugs, or wood floorboards that stick up. These should be repaired, removed, or replaced with more effective fall prevention.

Adhesive strips on the bottom of rugs can help prevent slipping. Make sure areas are well lit and kept neat and tidy. Remove all clutter, such as stacks of old newspapers, boxes, and magazines, especially from hallways and staircases. Grab bars placed strategically around the house, like on stair wells and wood or tile floors or hallways will also help.

In the kitchen, forget about using the top shelves at all. Many falls happen while stepping on a step stool or climbing onto a chair to get something that's out of reach.

For the bathrooms, there should be grab bars by the toilet and in and outside of the bathtub/shower, non-slip adhesive strips go a long way to helping reduce slips. And if a shower chair is used, be sure to get one that is sturdy and well balanced so it won't tip over backwards. Also, a raised toilet seat will make it easier to sit and stand up easier.

What you wear is important too. Loose, baggy clothes should be exchanged for tighter fitting clothes that don't drag on the floor. Those old fluffy slippers may be comfortable, but they could be a source of slips and falls. Slippers with rubber or other non-slip bottoms should be used. Another good idea is to switch to slip on shoes or shoes with Velcro.

Remember, fall prevention is injury prevention. Awareness on your and your loved ones part is essential, every step you take can help prevent an injury.

To learn more information or to seek rehabilitation exercises please email [info@brookmeadecommunity.org](mailto:info@brookmeadecommunity.org) or call 845-876-2071.



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## Find the perfect pair of shoes this spring

(StatePoint) This guide is your ultimate resource for finding the right shoes to elevate your spring look. Whether you're seeking statement-making colors, effortless comfort or athletic performance, get ready to discover the latest trends, and find the perfect pair to complement your spring wardrobe.

1. Colorful Styles: From classic sneakers to trendy slides, there's a pair for every personality and every age. This season, brands like Nike, New Balance, Crocs and Hey Dude are delivering vibrant colors and playful patterns. So, let your style shine!

2. The Classics: Looking for some timeless footwear to enhance your style this spring? Look no further than Adidas, Converse, and Y2K styles from New Balance. These iconic brands offer timeless designs that are great for everyday wear.

3. Sandals and Easy Comfort: Who says fashion can't be comfortable? Reef, Crocs, Madden Girl and Birkenstock offer a variety of easy-to-wear sandals and shoes ideal for relaxing at home or running errands around town.

4. Athletic Performance: Performance never goes out of style with athletic shoes from Nike, Brooks, Skechers, New Balance and Adidas. Whether you're a seasoned athlete or a weekend warrior, these brands have shoes that can help you reach your fitness goals.

Find shoes for everyone in the family by visiting [rackroomshoes.com](http://rackroomshoes.com).



# Learn the benefits of spring cleaning on mental health



## CREATIVE ARTS THERAPY INSIGHTS with Lisa Papantoniou

### A Sense of Accomplishment

One of the most immediate benefits of spring cleaning is the sense of accomplishment it provides. Observing a tidy and organized space instantly lifts your mood and promotes feelings of positivity. Completing even the smallest cleaning tasks can boost your self-esteem and give you a gratifying sense of achievement. Additionally, our environment plays a crucial role in shaping our emotions; a clean, organized, and aesthetically pleasing space can greatly enhance our overall mood and sense of well-being.

### Promotes Mindfulness

Engaging in decluttering and cleaning also serves as a form of mindfulness practice. These tasks require us to be present and attentive, which can help quiet racing thoughts and improve emotional well-being. As we immerse ourselves in cleaning, our minds often clear, allowing us to focus on the current moment and reducing symptoms of stress and anxiety.

### Encourages Healthy Habits

A clean space promotes the adoption of healthy habits. When our environment is organized, we are more likely to engage in activities that benefit our mental and physical health. For example, a tidy kitchen can inspire us to prepare nutritious meals, while an uncluttered living room may invite us to practice yoga or exercise. Over time, these healthier routines contribute to a significant improvement in overall well-being.

### Creating Space for New Experiences

Letting go of items that no longer serve a purpose not only clears physical clutter, but also opens up mental space for new opportunities. By adopting a minimalist approach, we create room for growth, new hobbies, relationships, and enriching experiences. Simplifying our surroundings helps us appreciate the things that truly matter, leading to a more intentional and

fulfilling life.

### Enhances Sense of Control

In a world filled with uncertainty, decluttering can provide a much-needed sense of control and stability. When external events feel overwhelming, focusing on the aspects we can manage - like our home environment - offers comfort and reassurance. A stable and organized space fosters a greater sense of security, making it easier to navigate challenges in other areas of life.

Overall, spring cleaning goes beyond merely creating a tidy home; it significantly contributes to a balanced and positive mental state. By integrating these practices into our routines, we can maintain a healthy living environment throughout the year. So, as we welcome the beauty of spring, take the time to clear out the old and make way for the new. Embrace this season of renewal and enjoy the many benefits that come with a clean and organized space.

Visit Lisa Papantoniou at Creative Arts Therapy PLLC at 33 Henry Street in Beacon or online at [lisaarttherapy.com](http://lisaarttherapy.com) for more information.

We can all feel the change of season as the weather starts to warm. This morning, as I walked my dogs along the familiar path, I noticed beautiful purple flowers blooming and hints of greenery emerging. This sight filled me with a wonderful, warm feeling, signaling the arrival of spring—my favorite season—and the approach of my favorite task: Spring cleaning!

As my husband and I have begun strategizing our cleaning approach this year, I am reminded of the myriad benefits that decluttering and spring cleaning can have on mental health. These seasonal activities offer significant positive effects that go beyond simply tidying up our homes.

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## Discipline with love can work miracles in teaching your children

The music from "The Lion King" is one of my favorites. Whenever I hear the music and listen to the words, especially Simba's song, I think about our children. He dreams of being king. He will be master. No one will tell him to do this or that or be here or there. He will do what he wants to do.

Do we have children like this? How do we help them learn?

Several years ago, my daughter came into my life. She was nine years old and had a learning disability, as well as some behavior issues. She had a lot to learn in many areas.

One night she had problems with her math homework. When I tried to help her, she had a major meltdown. Quietly I said, "When you are ready for help, let me know," and I walked into my room.

About 15 minutes later she came to me and calmly said, "Mom, will you help me?"

After we completed her assignment, she prepared for bed. We said our prayers and I tucked her in. "Sleep tight," I said. "Don't let the bedbugs bite." I shut the light and she went to sleep.

The next day we had a conversation about her behavior. There would be consequences. She accepted this decision and life went on. This behavior was

## MAKING EDUCATION WORK with Diane Fulves

never repeated.

Some may say I was lucky that the discipline worked. I disagree. A wise man once said that love without discipline doesn't work. Discipline without love can be destructive. But discipline with love works wonders.

My daughter knew that she could trust me. She knew that I wanted her to be the best she could be. She knew she was loved. Discipline with love is the key.

Now that the school year is going into its final months, many parents will be attending meetings to make important decisions for their children for the next year. As I have advised in the past, parents, be prepared.

Here is some excellent advice from Wrightslaw, which was founded by Peter and Pam Wright. Wrightslaw is a valuable resource for parents, which provides them with accurate information on special education law and advocacy for their children with disabilities.

"The school has a responsibility

to provide your child with an education tailored to his/her UNIQUE needs and to prepare your child for future education, employment and independent living. Find the legal authority in IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act.)"

Take notes during this meeting. Peter Wright states, "If it was not written down, it was not said. If it was not written down, it did not happen."

Document everything!

Make a list of your concerns and provide a copy to each member of the team. Check each item as it is discussed. If you are not satisfied with a response to any concern, continue to advocate for your child. Remember that the IEP is a plan to address the unique needs of your child. As stated in Wrightslaw: "The purpose of IDEA is to meet the unique needs of your child, not the class, not the teacher, not the school, not the district budget. Do not accept these statements:

- We don't have to do it.
- We don't have money in the

budget.

- We can't make exceptions.
- We have never done that before."

After the meeting, you may want to write a note to thank the team members for their time and reiterate what you were told at the meeting. Request that this letter be placed in your child's file. This letter becomes another written document to confirm the decisions that were made.

Remember, parents, the IEP is a guide to help children gain independence. They will achieve this when THEY ARE TAUGHT THE WAY THEY LEARN! The IEP is a clear path to reach this goal. The IEP is not a suggestion. It is a mandate. Our children have a right to an educational program that works for them. They are worth it!

*Diane Fulves is an educator and advocate for children and parents who is located in Millbrook. She is director of Empowering Our Parents, which offers information and support to parents. She is the director of Nurture the Spirit and Shakespeare Odyssey, programs that enrich children with the magic of the arts. For more information, please contact her at dee076@verizon.net.*

## Let the scent of candles 'Spring' into every corner of your home



## LIFE IS BETTER WITH CANDLES With Sonya, the Candle Lady

- Bathroom – the scents of Fresh Laundry or Roses will help keep that space smelling pleasant

- Bedroom - calming scents like Chamomile, Eucalyptus or Lavender promote relaxation should you feel anxious or stressed and even improve sleep quality (blow out the candle before sleeping)

Do not underestimate the influence that candle scents have on your mood for certain scents can give you a sense of calm, improve focus and even bring back childhood memories. If you tailor your fragrance choices to each room's function, you will create a harmonious and pleasant environment in every corner of your home.

*Safety - Always practice safety when burning candles. Never leave unattended and keep away from children and pets. Never burn a candle for more than 4 hours and trim the wick to ¼ inch before lighting to promote proper flame height. Additionally, keep candles away from drafty areas to avoid flame flickering and the wax pool*

*free of debris, it should stop black marks from forming on the sides of the candle holder.*

*Avoid displaying candles where they will be directly exposed to sunlight or strong indoor lighting because they will fade or melt. Store candles in use in a cool, dark and dry place and use dust protectors or lids to keep them free of dust and preserve the scent. If you have a candle holder with old wax? Place the candle holder in the freezer for 30 minutes. The freezer will cause the wax to shrink and separate from the glass.*

*Sonya, the Candle Lady established herself as a trusted source for soy and beeswax candles when she opened Ye Olde Candle & Gift Shoppe in 2015 at Pleasant Valley with late husband, Dominick and relocated to Eastdale Village in 2020.*

*Ye Olde Candle & Gift Shoppe had transitioned from storefront to focus on candle-making workshops; art galleries, local libraries, restaurants and schools. However, you can now visit her*

*new showroom suite at:*

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*To set up appointments to visit or to inquire about candle-making workshops, call (845) 818-6280*

*I can be of assistance to you with planning your wedding with ceremony and reception candles and with wedding invitations. You may view and order wedding invitations at:*

*candlehousegiftshoppe.  
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For most of us, the first unseasonably warm day gets us thinking about spring cleaning.

However, should you need a little motivation, citrus scents like lemongrass or mandarin will help create an uplifting atmosphere and make spring cleaning less of a chore.

Here are a few tips to help you welcome in the scents of spring:

- Just like each room in your home serves a purpose so should the scent of the candle you burn in that room
- Living room – pick a warm scent such as Amber, Sandalwood or Vanilla
- Kitchen – an Apple Pie or Coffee scent is highly recommended



# Start your Spring on the right foot!

## April is National Foot Health Awareness Month!

### By Premier Medical Group

As the weather warms up, more people spend increased amounts of time outdoors. Walking, running, biking, and many other forms of exercise and recreation can take a toll on your feet. According to a study by the American Podiatric Medical Association, 75% of Americans will experience foot problems at one time or another in their lives.

Looking after your feet by wearing appropriate footwear or finding the root cause of pain and discomfort will help ensure the time you spend on your feet is enjoyable. Below are some tips on how to take care of your feet so you can put your best foot forward.

### Maintain Good Foot Hygiene

Your feet have the highest concentration of sweat glands when compared to any other part of your body. Regularly washing your feet with soap and water and thoroughly drying them can prevent fungal infections, odors and other foot problems. Applying moisturizer to your feet every day can keep them soft and prevent dry, cracked skin. When cutting your toenails, make sure to cut them straight across and avoid cutting them too short, as this can lead to ingrown toenails.

Also, use a proper nail clipper instead of scissors or other sharp objects. This is especially important if you have been diagnosed with diabetes, as this chronic disease can cause peripheral artery disease (PAD), also known as poor circulation. Poor circulation can negatively affect the feet, putting patients at a greater risk of developing foot ulcers, slow-healing sores, and infections that are difficult to treat. Additionally, reduced sensation or numbness in the feet can make it difficult to notice foot ailments or injuries early on, making preventative care critical.



**PREMIER** *medical group*

### Wear Proper Footwear

It is essential to use appropriate footwear to protect your feet, especially when you engage in activities such as running or hiking. Wearing protective shoes, like steel-toed boots, can also prevent injuries in the workplace. Shoes that fit well and provide enough support can prevent blisters, calluses, and other foot problems.

Where possible, avoid wearing tight shoes or high heels for extended periods. This can reduce the risk of developing painful conditions such as corns and bunions. Also be sure to alternate your shoes, giving them time to dry out between wears. This can also help to prevent foot odor and reduce the risk of infections.

### Balance High Impact and Low Impact Exercise

High impact exercise can help strengthen the muscles and bones of the feet, which can improve balance and stability. It also increases blood flow to the feet and improves overall cardiovascular health. However, high impact exercise may also put a lot of stress on the feet, particularly the plantar fascia (the band of tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot) and the bones and joints in the feet. This can lead to injuries such as stress fractures, plantar fasciitis, as well as several Achilles tendon disorders.

It's important to gradually increase the intensity of your workouts to avoid overuse injuries.

Low impact exercise, such as walking, is great exercise for your feet and can help improve your overall health.

### Stretch and Rest Your Feet

Stretching your feet can help to improve circulation, reduce muscle tension, and prevent cramps and injuries. Try doing simple exercises, like ankle rotations or toe curls, to stretch and strengthen your feet. Resting your feet is also important for reducing fatigue, improving circulation, preventing injuries, and alleviating foot pain.

### When to See a Doctor for Foot Pain

Taking care of your feet is vital to

prevent foot problems and maintain overall foot health. By following the tips mentioned above, you can keep your feet healthy, comfortable, and pain-free. Remember, your feet are your foundation, so take care of them, and they'll take care of you.

If you have foot problems that persist or worsen, seek professional help. A podiatrist can diagnose and treat foot conditions and provide advice on proper foot care.

*At Premier Medical Group, our dedicated podiatrists focus on providing you with the highest quality of compassionate and expert care. Let us help you on your journey to better foot health, schedule an appointment today by calling one of our convenient office locations: Poughkeepsie office: #(845) 454-0630; Fishkill office: #(845) 451-7266; Wappingers/New Windsor/Brewster offices: #(845) 231-0310*

## Take on new hobbies in retirement

Retirement should be relaxing, not boring. In fact, taking on new hobbies can keep your mind sharp and body vital as you age. Here are five ways to stay active in your golden years:

1. Join a gym: Joining a gym is one of the easiest ways to ensure you perform a mix of strength training and cardiovascular exercise. Doing both will help keep your bones and muscles strong and your heart and lungs fully functional. Don't forget to add in yoga and stretching to promote balance and agility.
2. Play music: There are numerous cognitive and emotional benefits associated with playing music. Whether you're a beginner just looking to pick up the basics or a seasoned musician with the hopes of performing in public, you can equip yourself to sound amazing with a high-quality instrument like the CT-S1-76 keyboard from Casio.

3. Start a book club: It's always more fun to read books when you can discuss them with friends. From tackling the classics, to diving into non-fiction works that will challenge your perspective, to enjoying some easy, breezy beach reads, it's important that the other members of the group have the same reading goals as you. So do a little leg work in advance to ensure everyone is on the same page.

4. Number crunch: You don't have to be in school to take up math as a hobby. There are plenty of recreational mathematicians of all ages who enjoy crunching numbers to work puzzles, compete in games, and uncover patterns in the real world.

5. Learn a language: Learning a new language not only creates new neural pathways in the brain, it can be just the motivational ticket you need to finally visit that bucket list destination you've been dreaming of.



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# The link between sleep and type 2 diabetes: Why rest matters

By **Jose Mendez, MD,**  
Nuvance Health

Sleep plays a crucial role in overall health, but for people with type 2 diabetes, poor sleep quality can have serious consequences. Research shows that lack of restful sleep can affect blood sugar levels, increase insulin resistance, and contribute to other health complications. Understanding the connection between sleep and diabetes can help improve your rest and metabolic health.



Jose Mendez, MD

**How sleep and type 2 diabetes are connected** - Poor sleep quality and type 2 diabetes influence each other in a cycle. Inadequate sleep can make it harder for the body to regulate blood sugar, leading to increased insulin resistance. At the same time, high blood sugar levels can interfere with the ability to get restful sleep, creating a pattern that worsens both conditions.

Lack of sleep can also lead to weight gain, increased appetite and hormonal imbalances, all of which are risk factors for type 2 diabetes. Additionally, stress levels tend to rise when sleep is disrupted, causing an increase in

## PATIENT FIRST

cortisol, a hormone that can negatively impact blood sugar control.

**Sleep apnea: A hidden risk factor** - Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is common among individuals with type 2 diabetes, but it often goes undiagnosed. This condition causes repeated interruptions in breathing during sleep, leading to poor sleep quality and reduced oxygen levels in the blood. Sleep apnea has been linked to higher insulin resistance and difficulties in managing blood pressure, increasing the risk of heart disease and other complications.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that individuals with type 2 diabetes or high blood pressure be screened for sleep apnea. Left untreated, sleep apnea can worsen blood sugar control, contribute to higher HbA1c levels, and raise the likelihood of diabetes-related complications such as nerve and eye damage.

**The Role of circadian rhythms in blood sugar control** - In addition to sleep disorders, disruptions in circadian rhythms — the body's internal clock — can also impact diabetes management. The sleep-wake cycle helps

regulate hormone production, including insulin. When sleep schedules are irregular, such as shift work or excessive screen time before bed, blood sugar levels may become more difficult to control. Research suggests that people with inconsistent sleep patterns often experience higher fasting blood sugar levels and greater insulin resistance.

Maintaining a regular sleep schedule, getting exposure to natural light during the day, and reducing screen time before bed can help regulate circadian rhythms and support better blood sugar control.

**Tips for improving sleep and managing type 2 diabetes** - Recognizing and addressing sleep problems can be an important part of diabetes care. The following strategies may help improve sleep quality and support better metabolic health:

- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule: Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day can help regulate the body's internal clock.
- Create a restful sleep environment: Keeping the bedroom dark, quiet, and cool can improve sleep quality.

- Limit stimulants before bed: Reducing caffeine and electronic screen exposure in the evening can help prepare the body for sleep.

- Manage stress levels: Practicing relaxation techniques, such as meditation or deep breathing, can reduce stress and improve sleep.

- Seek treatment for sleep disorders: If symptoms of sleep apnea or insomnia are present, consulting a healthcare provider for evaluation and treatment options, such as CPAP therapy or cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), can be beneficial.

**The bottom line:** Good sleep quality is essential for managing type 2 diabetes effectively. Addressing sleep issues can improve blood sugar control, reduce insulin resistance and enhance overall well-being. By making sleep a priority and adopting healthy sleep habits, individuals with type 2 diabetes can take an important step toward better health outcomes.

*Jose Mendez, MD, is a Critical Care, Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine, physician with Nuvance Health. Visit [Nuvance Health](#) for more information.*

# Tips on choosing healthy beverages for kids and teens

(StatePoint) Choosing healthy beverages for children and adolescents is just as important as choosing healthy foods, as it impacts everything from oral health to chronic disease risk. That's why leading health and nutrition organizations developed new healthy beverage recommendations for families with children ages 5-18.

These evidence-based recommendations were created as part of a collaboration by experts at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Heart Association, who were brought together by Healthy Eating Research (HER) with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

To make choosing healthy beverages easier for families, the organizations created these three categories:

### Beverages to Drink

These beverages are recommended as part of a healthy diet because they provide essential nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals, and don't

contain added sugars.

- Plain drinking water is still the best option to keep kids healthy and hydrated. It's also often the most accessible and affordable.
- Plain, pasteurized milk is another healthy option because it provides important nutrients that growing kids and teens need.

### Beverages to Limit

- 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice can be part of a healthy diet, but daily consumption should be limited. Whole fruits and vegetables are generally better choices because they provide dietary fiber, contributing to a feeling of fullness.

- Plant-based milk alternatives like oat milk and almond milk should be limited because they are not nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk, which provides essential nutrients that kids need to grow up healthy. Many also contain added sugars and non-sugar sweeteners, which are harmful to kids' health. If your child is allergic to dairy milk or has a dietary restriction, talk to your doctor or registered dietitian about finding the plant-based milk alternative that is best for your

child.

- Flavored milks, like chocolate milk and strawberry milk, should be limited because they contain high amounts of added sugars and non-sugar sweeteners. If your child does not like drinking plain milk, it's best to consider other foods from the dairy group (like unsweetened yogurt) before offering flavored milk.

### Beverages to Avoid

These beverages are not recommended as part of a healthy diet because they offer no nutritional value and have ingredients that can be harmful to kids and teens.

- Sugar-sweetened beverages, such as sports drinks, sodas, fruit drinks, fruitades, aguas frescas and sweetened waters are high in added sugars, which can put children at risk for dental cavities, and diet-related diseases like type 2 diabetes and obesity.

- Drinks with non-sugar sweeteners, such as aspartame, stevia and monk fruit, should also be avoided. Just because a drink is advertised as sugar-free doesn't mean it's healthier. In fact, new research shows non-sugar

sweeteners may not help control body weight and may increase the risk of diet-related chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

- Drinks with caffeine or other stimulants like taurine should be avoided. These include energy drinks, energy shots, coffee, and tea. Evidence suggests that there is no safe amount of caffeine consumption for children under 18 and that even small amounts can lead to poor sleep quality, increased blood pressure, and depressive moods and anxiety.

You can learn more about healthy drinks at [healthyeatingresearch.org](#).

"We all want our kids to grow up healthy, and research shows that what kids and teens drink is an important part of a balanced diet, not just what they eat. But there are so many drink products on the market, it can be hard to figure out what's healthy and what's not," said Megan Elsener Lott, MPH, RDN, deputy director of HER. "These recommendations provide a gold standard based on the latest research and can be goals that families work toward together."



# Podcast sheds light on range of issues that impact women

On March 7th, Iris Douglas and Ivette O’Sullivan, two influential women from Washington Heights residing in Dutchess County, engaged in a meaningful discussion about the history of International Women’s Day on their podcast, featuring guest Viviana Brizuela.

In 1908, women in the United States encountered numerous obstacles and vigorously advocated for their rights. Their fight against oppression inspired them to pursue change. That year, 15,000 women marched in New York City, demanding shorter working hours, fair wages, and voting rights.

The inaugural International Women’s Day (IWD) was observed on March 19, 1911, in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. This day was established to promote women’s rights to vote, work and participate in government. Today, we celebrate it on March 8th.

The trio delved into the remarkable story of the Mirabal sisters, whose enduring legacy continues to inspire women globally. Their courage and determination in tumultuous times stand as a beacon of hope, underscoring the power of unity and resilience.

With Viviana’s profound expertise as a certified life, leadership, organizational and vocational coach, this episode resoundingly reaffirms women’s



Iris Douglas

strength and the imperative of coming together to #AccelerateAction for gender equality.

I and I, as they prefer to be known, are committed to shedding light on a range of issues that impact women, including abuse, menopause, mental health, nutrition and self-love.

In their latest episode, they explored the influence of menopause on women’s mental well-being. They plan to feature numerous key guests and experts

from this field and other related areas nationwide, demonstrating their unwavering dedication to supporting women.



Ivette O’Sullivan

Iris, the owner of the Hudson Valley Holistic Healing Center, located at 51 Springside Avenue, Poughkeepsie, is significantly influencing the community. The center acts as a gathering place for healers and those searching for wellness, encouraging mindful living and offering support to individuals seeking healing and emotional guidance.

With 25 years of experience in social work, Ivette’s career has been profoundly connected to her commitment to advocating for women and children. Over the

years, she has observed the remarkable strength and resilience of individuals confronting challenges, which has motivated her to seek ways to support and empower others consistently. Moving from the structured social work environment to the more dynamic field of creativity has been a transformative experience, allowing her to explore her passions innovatively.

Iris and Ivette are excited to share that Andrew O’Grady of Mental Health America of Dutchess County officially sponsors their podcast. His backing is essential, and we sincerely appreciate the collaboration in our goal to empower and uplift women. Tune in every Friday on Spotify, where Iris and Ivette are dedicated to supporting and uplifting women.

Your participation is vital, so please take a moment to show your support and leave a comment. Your input is essential in the dialogue surrounding women’s rights, empowerment, and mental health.

*Iris Douglas is the proprietor of Hudson Valley Holistic Healing Center and Ivette O’Sullivan, a social worker, is a certified menopause coaching specialist.*

# Helping children develop healthy device and media habits

(StatePoint) What are TikTok’s privacy settings? Can parents control what advertising their children see on Facebook? How do parents limit the amount of time their children spend on Instagram?

A new parent tool, the Glossary of Digital Media Platforms, offers the answers and will be handy for parents of children trying out new phones or other tech-related holiday gifts. The American Academy of Pediatrics Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health developed the free resource, which contains detailed information on popular digital platforms, including Apple, Discord, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok and X, with more to come.

“Parenting around media can be so challenging,” said Jenny Radesky, MD, FAAP, co-medical director of the Center of Excellence. “Figuring out what apps and settings are best for your family is an important part of the conversation. At the center, we created the Glossary of Digital Media Platforms to make it a little easier for parents to learn about each app and figure out what settings and tools exist to keep their kid safe while connecting online.”

Users click on a platform to learn about its default and customizable safety settings; messaging and friending controls;

screen-time management settings; parental controls and more.

Parents aren’t the only ones looking for assistance when it comes to the online world. Pediatric providers, teachers and others who work with children and teens can introduce the glossary briefly during clinic visits, back-to-school nights, in newsletters, or other communications and encourage families to have conversations about safe and balanced relationships with social media. The tool can also facilitate conversations on concepts like private versus public accounts, time limits and how to block or filter upsetting content.

Here are some examples of how the glossary can be used:

- If children have iPhones, parents can learn more about the Family Sharing feature, which includes settings to limit who a child can contact, downtime/do-not-disturb settings and the Ask To Buy option that requires a parent to approve purchases.
- If social media and notifications are distracting teens at night, families can use the glossary to look up apps and how to silence notifications or activate other nighttime settings.
- For teens who are stressed out by negative content on social media feeds, the glossary contains information on tools to curate feeds and block and filter

content.

- If a child’s school has a phone policy, families can look up device or app settings to silence distracting apps during school hours.

The glossary joins a roster of resources available at Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health, which includes conversation starters for parents concerned about how their children are using social media. The center’s activity cards can help young children build healthy relationships with media and their devices before they grow into teens and young adults.

Megan Moreno MD, MEd, MPH, FAAP, co-medical director of the Center of Excellence, urges parents and other adults to avoid taking a doom-and-gloom approach when talking about the sometimes-dangerous social media landscape with kids.

“We can give ourselves grace for these initial reactions of worry and fear, but we have a choice to make on what we want our reaction to be going forward,” Dr. Moreno said. “We can choose open-mindedness. We can choose curiosity. We can choose evidence over hype, and we can stay centered on our children and families.”

## Hudson Valley Holistic Healing Center



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The Hudson Valley Healing Center is a space for the community to experience the essence of whole body wellness. Services offered are meant to rejuvenate the mind, body, and spirit. Some of these services include an immersive salt cave, a therapeutic infrared sauna, Reiki, yoga classes, breath work workshops, meditation groups and more--children/families welcome!





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