

**WHAT A  
PARTY!**

A Free Magazine for Parents and Caregivers

# THE Mom & Caregiver™

JANUARY 2020  
VOLUME 22 ISSUE 1

[momandcaregiver.com](http://momandcaregiver.com)

**STANDING  
ON THE EDGE  
OF 2020**

**SOCIAL MEDIA:  
BENEFICIAL  
OR BEASTLY**

**BE BODY-POSITIVE  
THIS NEW YEAR**

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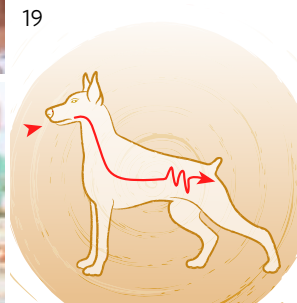
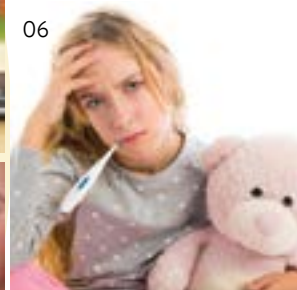
## ON THE COVER

What a New Year's party that must have been! **Gabriel** made it so easy on us - shows that a well-fed, well-rested baby is a happy baby. He even sat and waited for more photos to be taken after the shoot was done - now there's a boy who loves the camera!

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Sabina Manji  
Melissa Warkentin

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THE MOM & CAREGIVER is published by Anibas Productions Limited, Publications Mail, Agreement Number 40834037 PO Box 29118, London, ON N6K 4L9 - [www.themomandcaregiver.com](http://www.themomandcaregiver.com)  
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## BRING IT ON, 2020!

Dear readers/friends/fellow parents,  
Happy new year! I hope your December holidays were full of peace, fun and time with family and friends, and that you're ready to embark on all the great things I am hoping 2020 will bring.

Last year was a wonderful one for our magazine, ending off with a bang! Our Mom & Caregiver Live was an epic party where we celebrated a milestone, gave away amazing prizes, enjoyed a few drinks, and chatted with our panel about parenting joys and challenges, relationship highs and lows, and everything in between. We hope you joined us live or from the comfort of your own home. If you weren't able to join us, you can still watch it on our Facebook page. We hear you – you want more! So stay tuned to see what's up our sleeves.

As much as I love celebrating great moments from the year past, I'm one to charge ahead with fresh ideas, big dreams and new plans for the year ahead. We're off to a fabulous start with the articles from this, our first issue of the decade.

Looks like our valued author, Jordan, couldn't agree more! She's "Standing on the Edge of 2020" on page 18. Find out what she's doing with this mysterious thing we call life. We talk a very important, but often misunderstood, topic with Frank on page 12. You'll be shocked, and warmed, and inspired by "What If? Raising a Transgender Child". And I'm signing up for "Creating a Body-Positive Home this Year" (page 20). I'm throwing out body shaming and weight talk in favour of healthy behaviours and making food fun. I refuse to raise a child who feels food guilt or insecurities which can lead to disordered eating.

With the start of a new year, we are honoured to bring on new writers to The Mom & Caregiver team. Speech-Language Pathologists, Elizabeth and Andrea, are helping us understand speech and language milestones on page 23's From Babbling to Words. Welcome to the family, ladies!

I'd like to take this moment to sincerely thank the people who make the Mom & Caregiver possible. A shout-out to our staff, our writers, our advertisers and our readers. Without you, we would be nothing. With you, we are a team of mighty parents, caregivers, community players and supporters. And we cannot be stopped. Bring it on, 2020! 🙌

With gratitude,



*Kindness is like snow.  
“ It beautifies everything it covers ”*

- Kahlil Gibran

# JAN 01/2020 EVENTS

1<sup>ST</sup>

Nature Walks and Talks:  
New Years' Day Walk, Springbank  
Gardens Community Centre,  
[www.naturelondon.com](http://www.naturelondon.com)

5<sup>TH</sup>

London Lightning vs. Sudbury  
Five, Budweiser Gardens,  
[www.lightningbasketball.ca](http://www.lightningbasketball.ca)

12<sup>TH</sup>

Health and Wellness Expo,  
Budweiser Gardens,  
[www.budweisergardens.com](http://www.budweisergardens.com)

17<sup>TH</sup>

Eat Together: PC Cooking  
School, Loblaws Wonderland,  
[www.pccookingschool.ca](http://www.pccookingschool.ca)

24<sup>TH</sup>

Cynthia Loyst at the Library:  
Find Your Pleasure, London  
Public Library Central branch,  
[www.londonpubliclibrary.ca](http://www.londonpubliclibrary.ca)

30<sup>TH</sup>

Free Family Fun Night,  
London Children's Museum,  
[www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca](http://www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca)

4<sup>TH</sup>

STEAM: Melting Snowman,  
London Children's Museum,  
[www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca](http://www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca)

8<sup>TH</sup>

Run Club,  
Anderson Craft Ales,  
[www.andersoncraftales.ca](http://www.andersoncraftales.ca)

16<sup>TH</sup>

James and the Giant Peach Jr.,  
Palace Theatre  
[www.palacetheatre.ca](http://www.palacetheatre.ca)

21<sup>ST</sup>

Curious Connections  
Playgroup, London Public  
Library Pond Mills branch,  
[www.londonpubliclibrary.ca](http://www.londonpubliclibrary.ca)

25<sup>TH</sup>

Western Mustangs  
Women's Hockey vs. Nipissing,  
Thompson Arena,  
[www.westernmustangs.ca](http://www.westernmustangs.ca)

31<sup>ST</sup>

Starry Night Skating  
hosted by Oxford Learning,  
Storybook Gardens,  
[www.oxfordlearning.com](http://www.oxfordlearning.com)

# HAPPY NEW YEAR



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# COLD AND FLU SEASON

Predicting weather and predicting the flu season are national pastimes in Canada. While we rely on the Farmer's Almanac to predict the severity of the winter season, we rely on agencies such as the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to make predictions about the upcoming flu season.

The peak of flu season in Canada is typically from late fall to early March. The flu season in Australia is often the predictor of our flu season. This year has seen a rise in cases of flu in Australia and, in particular, the strain has been one that causes a more severe illness, the H3N2 strain.

The flu is different from a cold and while a cold can cause sore throat, congestion and cough, a flu is associated with more severe body aches, extreme weakness, cough and sometimes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. The flu can also lead to secondary infections such as pneumonia and ear infections. This is especially true for those who are very young or the elderly.

Our best protection against the flu is to be vaccinated. There is an attempt to predict the subtypes of the flu virus each season and, even when there is a miss in predicting this, having the flu shot makes the illness less prolonged and severe.

Frequent hand washing can prevent getting the flu. If you become ill, staying home from work or school and coughing into your sleeve can help to minimize spread. It is tempting to hibernate in the winter. Being in close quarters and staying indoors together adds to the likelihood of getting the flu.

It is not too late to get the flu shot and getting it now will help to protect you and your family during the peak season.

Wishing you a healthy winter ahead! 🍷

*Dr. Bhooma Bhayana is a family physician in London and the mother of two young men and grandmother of one lovely princess! She continues to find wonder and enjoyment in family practice despite more than 30 years on the job!*



# SUGAR IN YOUR CHILD'S DIET



Sugars are carbohydrates that taste sweet, and our bodies use them as a quick source of energy. It can be divided into two main categories: natural sugar and added sugar. Natural sugar is found in many foods like fruits, vegetables and milk. Natural sugars are part of a healthy diet. Added sugar is added by the manufacturer, cook or consumer.

Eating a large amount of sugar can reduce the overall quality of the diet. Foods high in sugar are often low in nutrients. It is recommended to reduce sugar intake to less than 10% of total energy. For most people this is less than 12 teaspoons of added sugar per day.<sup>3</sup>

## AMOUNT OF SUGAR IN COMMON FOODS:

FOOD OR BEVERAGE	GRAMS OF SUGAR	TEASPOONS OF SUGAR
Apple Juice (355 ml)	39g	10
Pop (355 ml) can	40g	10
Chocolate Bar	28g	7
Granola bar	15g	3
Store-bought muffin	44g	11
Iced Cappuccino - Large (648 ml)	62 g	16
Frappuccino - Venti (710 ml)	88g	22
Soft candy (~1/4 cup)	44g	11

\*4 g of Sugar = 1 tsp



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.healthunit.com/sugar>

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Dietitians of Canada, Unlock Food. (2018). Recipe Makeover: Reducing sugar in the kitchen. Retrieved from <https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Carbohydrate-and-Sugar/Recipe-Makeover-Reducing-Sugar-in-the-Kitchen.aspx#.VGYplvNF-So>

<sup>2</sup>Government of Canada. (2017). Food Labelling Changes. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-labelling-changes.html>  
<sup>3</sup>World Health Organization. (2016). WHO calls on countries to reduce intake among adults and children. Retrieved from [https://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/sugars\\_intake/en/](https://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/sugars_intake/en/)

## TIPS TO REDUCE ADDED SUGAR:

- Lead by example
- Avoid sugar sweetened drinks; offer water or white milk instead.
- Keep desserts for special occasions such as birthdays and holidays.
- Keep healthy snacks on hand:
  - Fresh, frozen or canned fruit and plain yogurt
  - Roasted chickpeas
  - Veggies and hummus
  - Cheese and multigrain crackers
  - Apples and nut butter (peanut butter, almond butter, seed butter)
- Offer small portions of foods high in added sugars along with healthy foods. Example: one small scoop of frozen yogurt or ice cream with sliced bananas or fresh blueberries.
- Make homemade baked goods and allow your children to help you! There are lots of "low sugar" recipes available online.<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Carbohydrate-and-Sugar/Recipe-Makeover-Reducing-Sugar-in-the-Kitchen.aspx#.VGYplvNF-So>

Nutrition labels are changing to help you choose lower sugar foods. Improvements to nutrition facts tables on food products are scheduled to be released in Canada by 2021. The changes will include a daily value for total sugars. 5% daily value or less means "a little", 15% or more means "a lot". Choosing foods with less than 5% daily value of sugar more often will help you reduce the amount of sugar you eat.<sup>2</sup> 🍬



Emily Andrews, Dietetic Practicum Student,  
 Brescia University College  
 Ginette Blake BASc RD (Registered Dietitian)  
 Middlesex-London Health Unit



# DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE FATTY LIVER?

**F**atty liver, also known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, or “NAFLD” is a medical condition caused by excessive fat accumulation within the liver. The liver is an organ with many important jobs for our bodies. In mild cases of NAFLD, fat simply builds up in the liver. In some severe cases, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) happens with fat build-up and liver irritation (inflammation), resulting in damage. Long term liver inflammation can cause fibrosis or “scar tissue” to develop. Over time, a condition called cirrhosis occurs, leaving irreversible scars on the liver. At this point, the liver may have problems functioning, which, in some cases, may require a liver transplant. For prevention, it is vital to recognize NAFLD and prioritize its management.

NAFLD usually, but not always, occurs in children or teens who are overweight or obese. Various factors may contribute to development of NAFLD, such as fatty diets, simple sugars and inactivity. With obesity increasingly prevalent, NAFLD is the most common cause of liver disease in children. Other health problems such as pre-diabetes, diabetes, abnormal cholesterol and high blood pressure are closely linked with this liver problem. Usually, children with NAFLD do not have many symptoms. Some children may have tiredness or minor tummy pains. Blood tests for liver enzymes are usually done to screen for liver damage. Other tests like liver ultrasound or liver biopsy may be necessary. Because there are other causes of fatty liver, your child’s doctor may do additional tests to rule out other causes of liver disease.

Currently, the best available treatment for NAFLD is weight management. In some cases, weight loss may be needed to prevent further damage to the liver. Children with this condition should engage in healthy lifestyle habits. One important element is eating a balanced diet low in fatty or sugary foods. Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages and soft drinks. Making physical activity a regular part of your child’s day will also help. You should also reduce your child’s TV and screen time. The good news is that weight loss with lifestyle changes may reverse the fatty liver and prevent further damage. 🍌

*Becky Biqi Chen was a resident in general pediatrics for three years at the Children's Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre. She is currently specializing in pediatric gastroenterology during her fellowship at the British Columbia Children's Hospital.*





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# SOCIAL MEDIA BENEFICIAL OR BEASTLY?

## **Are you active on social media?**

**Ella:** I am active on one type of social media, Snapchat.

**Mikaeel:** I am active on Instagram.

## **What kind of guidelines have your parents put into place for social media?**

**Ella:** My parents have told me to not add anyone I don't know, and to let them know if I want an account on any other social medias.

**Mikaeel:** None, because I rarely use social media.

## **What do you think the pros and cons of social media are?**

**Ella:** I think that some pros are that you can keep in touch with people if you don't see them often, or even if you do, and that you can keep up with what people are doing. Some cons are that people tend to be braver behind a screen, therefore making it easier to say mean things that they wouldn't normally say.

**Mikaeel:** I think the pros are that people can be social and have friends from anywhere, and it can be enjoyable. The cons are that it affects mental health, it makes it easier for people to be bullied and it's much easier for child predators to lure children.

## **How has social media changed our world?**

**Ella:** I think that social media has changed our world in a lot of ways. There are entire jobs that revolve around it and it makes news spread so much faster. People have become addicted and can't put their phones down. So much has happened and improved since social media was first introduced.

**Mikaeel:** Social media has changed our world in ways such as it is now essential for businesses to have social media, and everyone is now addicted.

## **If you had to go one week without using social media, how would you feel? How long could you go without it?**

**Ella:** I would be fine with that. When we go away on vacation or camping, I don't usually bring my phone. I think I could go a while.

**Mikaeel:** I think I would be fine and would be able to go the entire week. 😊

**Join 13-year-olds Mikaeel and Ella every month as they share perspectives on life as a child sees it.**

# WHAT IF?

## RAISING A TRANSGENDER CHILD

When we found out that we'd be having a boy, we were overjoyed. Visions of my future son playing with the toys I grew up with, watching super hero movies, and playing sports quickly flooded my mind. I was also very cognizant that we weren't assigning gender stereotypical roles to our child before he was even born. So we made sure to have all kinds of toys and books, while keeping most of our purchases gender neutral (building blocks, puzzles, stuffed animals, dress up clothes). As time went on, our boys showed preferences for cars, trucks, dinosaurs, and super heroes. Dress up evolved into capes and masks, stuffies get a lot of affection, and building blocks and board games are household favourites.

But I sometimes wonder what life would be like if either of my sons showed a preference for toys and clothes typically associated with girls. And what if those preferences evolved into gender identity questions? Well, that's exactly what happened to my new friend Mona\* and her son Andrew\*.

From a very young age, Andrew showed preferences for "girly" type things. He loved playing with dolls, makeup, sparkles and wanted his hair to be long. Mona indulged Andrew's preferences, thinking all boys should be this comfortable with their feminine side. By age 4, Andrew expressed wanting to be a girl and was upset about wearing boy clothes and having boy parts. When school started, peers made fun of Andrew's painted nails. And by age 6, Andrew spoke about his own death and how "God made a mistake when He made me." That's when Mona truly began to listen and realize that Andrew was no mistake. She was a girl.

Mona's story propelled me into research mode. I learned that gender dysphoria is the condition of feeling one's emotional and psychological identity as male or female to be opposite to one's assigned gender at birth. A transgender person expresses and identifies as a gender that differs from their assigned

gender at birth. Approximately 0.6% of Canadians identify as Transgender. 47% of Transgender youth in Canada have thought about suicide and 19% have attempted it. Research also shows that allowing children to freely choose their toys, clothing, hairstyles, pronouns or names does not "cause" children to become transgender. And that children who live as the gender with which they identify develop similarly to other kids of the same gender.

As parents, what can we do when our child experiences true gender identity concerns? First of all, we need to remind them (often) that we love them! Thoughts of being ostracized by families are very prevalent in all LGBT2Q+ youth. So tell them you love them no matter what. Secondly, listen – truly listen – to their words. Gender dysphoric language is not something to be taken lightly, and it's not something they hear on TV or on the school yard. By the time they talk to you about their inner battles, they have been struggling for a while. Next, reach out for help. This is a very difficult and emotionally charged journey you're about to embark on and you should not do it alone. And finally, take the lead from your child. Be the support they need and navigate this uncharted territory together. Don't force them forward or hold them back. Ask questions and do your best to be supportive while keeping them safe.

When I met Anna\* (formerly Andrew) she was 10 years old. She had been living as a girl for two years now and came across as a beautiful, happy child. Without knowing it, Anna has inspired me to think differently about gender identity and propelled me into being an ally for transgender youth. Knowing Anna's backstory before meeting her was irrelevant since the child I met was her true and genuine self. I can't think of a more important job as parents than to help our kids find themselves and be truly happy with who they are. 🧡

\* Names changed to protect privacy



*Frank Emanuele is a proud father of two sons, a special education teacher, and a director of Dad Club London.*





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# BEAM ME UP, *Scottie*

## LAVAL, QUEBEC



Star Trek comes to mind as we move down the sterile white space capsule-like hallway, opening sliding doors with our programmed wristbands. Inside rooms, glowing computer screens with glowing green buttons welcome us with interactive problem solving games about space, specifically building a colony on Mars.

This is one of three 60-minute 'virtual missions' new at the Cosmodome, the Space Science Centre, Canada's only space museum, located in Laval, Quebec. Yes, Laval, about 20-minutes from Montreal, has one of the coolest science museums a kid (or grown up) can visit.

Outer space enthusiasts easily spend a day here, first moving through the video guided 'mission' then the rest of the museum: travel like an astronaut aboard a replica space shuttle, grab the controls of the Canadarm, and feel what it's like to walk on the moon in an anti-gravity harness. This museum is about participating and fully experiencing the challenges of studying space.

Then get a close look at all eight solar system planets in the permanent exhibition filled with scale models eerily

lit. Finally, end your day behind a pair of virtual reality goggles feeling what it's like to ride a roller coaster in a stationary chair, or take off in a shuttle on a space mission.

Special note: Cosmodome is the only Canadian museum offering summer space and robotics camp-day-only camp for five to fifteen year olds, or three or six-day overnight camp for nine to fifteen year olds. ([www.cosmodome.org](http://www.cosmodome.org))



*Sherri Telenko is a freelance writer and blogger living in Southern Ontario. Sign up for travel ideas at [www.dogtrotting.net](http://www.dogtrotting.net) or follow her on twitter @SherriTelenko.*



# PREGNANCY & COMPRESSION SOCKS

**P**regnancy - a time in a woman's life when everything feels out of her control. Your blood volume is increasing, your uterus is expanding, your clothes are no longer fitting, your body is swelling. Overall, you are tired and have achy legs, but just think, you have a little miracle growing inside of you! What can you do to help control some of these adverse effects? Compression socks may be your answer.

The risk of venous disorders increases with pregnancy and is exacerbated with prolonged sitting or standing, pre-existing venous conditions, or multiple pregnancies. Clinical studies have found a clear link between pregnancy and varicose veins<sup>1</sup>. According to a report published in Swiss Medical Weekly, 30% of women develop varicose veins during their first pregnancy, and 55% develop them during multiple pregnancies. These veins can decrease self confidence in an already drastically changing body.

Why does risk for thrombosis (blood clots) increase with pregnancy? To prevent uncontrollable blood loss during birth or in the event of a miscarriage, blood becomes thicker to help protect the mother. The change in the blood consistency increases the risk for blood clot formation. Blood volume increases by around 40 to 50% during pregnancy. The pressure inside the veins in the legs increases because the growing child is pressing against the pelvic vessels and thus restricting the flow of blood back to the heart. In addition, the increased progesterone causes the expansion

of the vein walls which will make the veins less effective. The risk of thrombosis is highest right after giving birth and during the weeks that follow.

Wearing compression socks promotes blood circulation and alleviates discomfort in the legs. The socks provide relief for the veins and reduce edema/swelling while also reducing the risk of venous inflammation, thrombosis and varicose veins. The compression helps with the blood flow back towards the heart and prevents pooling or edema in the lower extremities. Wearing compression socks is therefore advisable from the very start of the pregnancy.

Compression socks can come as knee highs, thigh highs or leggings. Please ensure you are sized by a certified provider to ensure the fit and compression is appropriate. If they are not correct, this could make your problem worse.

**PLEASE REMEMBER:** There is a pregnancy condition called pre-eclampsia, which causes sudden swelling. If this happens, you need to contact your doctor immediately so that you can be monitored immediately. Other pre-eclampsia symptoms include blurring vision, bad headaches, vomiting, and severe pain below the ribs. 🤰

<sup>1</sup> *A systematic review and meta-analysis of the risk for development of varicose veins in women with a history of pregnancy. (Ismail et al., 2016)*  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27639009>

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Revita Medical Esthetics & Spa is London Ontario's top Medical Spa specializing in anti-aging skin care, cosmetic procedures and the Revita MD skin care product line.

Since opening in 2005, ReVita Medical Esthetics and Spa aspires to the goal of combining a relaxing spa-like atmosphere with the peace-of mind of a physician directed medical facility. Their non-medical cosmetics and medical grade skincare products are beauty enhancing and relaxing to improve one's wellness.

ReVita is the vision of Lily Seed (Medical Esthetician, Spa Director and Owner) to provide quality and affordable medical esthetic and spa services, and products to help women and men look and feel the best at any age.

Lily's passion for skin care led her to study at Elegance Schools in London, Ontario where she graduated as a Medical Esthetician. She also completed training with Dr. Fulton, the developer of Retinol A. Lily also supports the training of Estheticians in London by offering a scholarship to graduates of Elegance Schools.

The Spa is located in a beautifully restored 131 year old church within the Hyde Park neighbourhood of London, Ontario; Lily moved the business there in March of 2016.

ReVita offers procedures such as Botox™, Filler, laser hair removal and customized skin treatments. Their Massage Therapy clients are encouraged to relax in either the hot tub or sauna before their massage appointment. But it's not just for the purpose of blissing out. "When we moved to our new location, I put in a hydrotherapy room", says Lily. "We have a hot tub and a cold plunge, a steam room and a sauna. We recommend that massage therapy clients go to the hot tub or sauna before their massage because they are more relaxed for their massage and their results will be better, and because the massage therapist's hands can last longer. It also helps with deep tissue massage."

In addition to the spa, Lily works with a lab out of Orange County, California, where she has developed her own line of skincare products, called ReVita MD, which are sold exclusively at the spa.

For more information check out [revitamedispa.com](http://revitamedispa.com) on Facebook and Instagram @RevitaMedicalEsthetics





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# STANDING ON THE EDGE OF 2020

I am writing this for you, my beautiful reader, who has been battered and thrown around by the events of last year and are standing at the edge of 2020, wearily. I know that you are tired and I know that you are scared. I want to share some things with you that I have learned of late, and I want you to know that you are going to be OK and you are going to make it.

First of all, welcome to a new decade. The whole "new decade" bit really threw me off for a bit, mostly because I just forgot, but I was relieved to hear it. What a beautiful, new palette we have to work with. You're going to need some tools - new tools - to do this a different way this time.

The most important thing that you will need to build the rest of your year (and really, your life) upon is the understanding and acceptance that life is basically a complete mystery and things just do not have the answers. I'm sorry. I really am so sorry, and I wish I had different news for you, but this is how it works: lots of things, both "yahoo forever!" and unspeakable, happen and we just can never know why. When the awful things happen and we chase the why, we begin a desperate and downward spiral of misery. Please, please accept that life is a mystery and stop chasing whys that you can never find. Start by trying this belief on daily (sometimes you have to take this minute by minute).

You are going to need honesty: beginning with yourself, and then, with others. We can have no hope of true change nor fulfillment if we do not know ourselves properly. You cannot do this work alone and you were not meant to. Find someone that you can trust to do the work with, and go gently. Live close to yourself. You might not know it, but you actually do have and will be given

everything you need to do this and more. Remember: we don't get what we want, but we always get what we need.

You will need openness. You will have to let this life crack you open in the places that you have spent the most time patching with cement. What you need - and all you need - is a hairline fracture, just enough to let the warmth of Spirit (whatever that means to you) hit you. That warmth might come from nature, or pets, or the snuggles of your children. But I want to let you in on a secret: if you're really brave, you will begin to lift up your head and see that the brightest light and softest glow will come from others. If you are open, it is the grace of others that will begin to thaw you.

You will also need willingness: the courage to lift up your palms and surrender. Surrender, as it turns out, does not mean to lay down and die and be captured. The definition of "surrender" is actually to join the willing side. This might be that you put down the sugar or the bottle or the phone or the credit card or the toxic relationships that leave you on pins and needles and wondering. But, be willing. Willingness is a simple decision to say yes to life and yes to the now of it.

So, let's decide to live in this new decade differently. Wherever this article has met you, if you've made it to these words, know this: things are gonna be OK. May you be happy. 🍀

*Jordan Thomas is a registered social worker and the owner of Nourish Counselling Services. Jordan works with women on improving their mental health and self-compassion. Follow along on IG @nourishcounselling.*



# WHAT GOES IN MUST COME OUT: THE BENEFITS OF A HIGH-QUALITY FOOD

On my street, there lives a friendly stray cat whose care has become somewhat of a neighbourhood collaboration. Recently, during a week when the nights were particularly cold, I started taking in "Sam" for the evenings.

Due to the protests of my grumpy housecat, Anya (who is strictly a one-cat-household kind of girl), we compromised on a living arrangement. Our handsome visitor only stayed in his suite in our half-bathroom overnight and returned to his neighbourhood domain in the milder mornings.

Sam was a very polite house guest but after every brief stay, I found it curious that the waste in his litter box was more than triple the amount of Anya's. The mystery was solved when I next saw my neighbour and discovered they'd been feeding him a popular and cheap food from the grocery store.

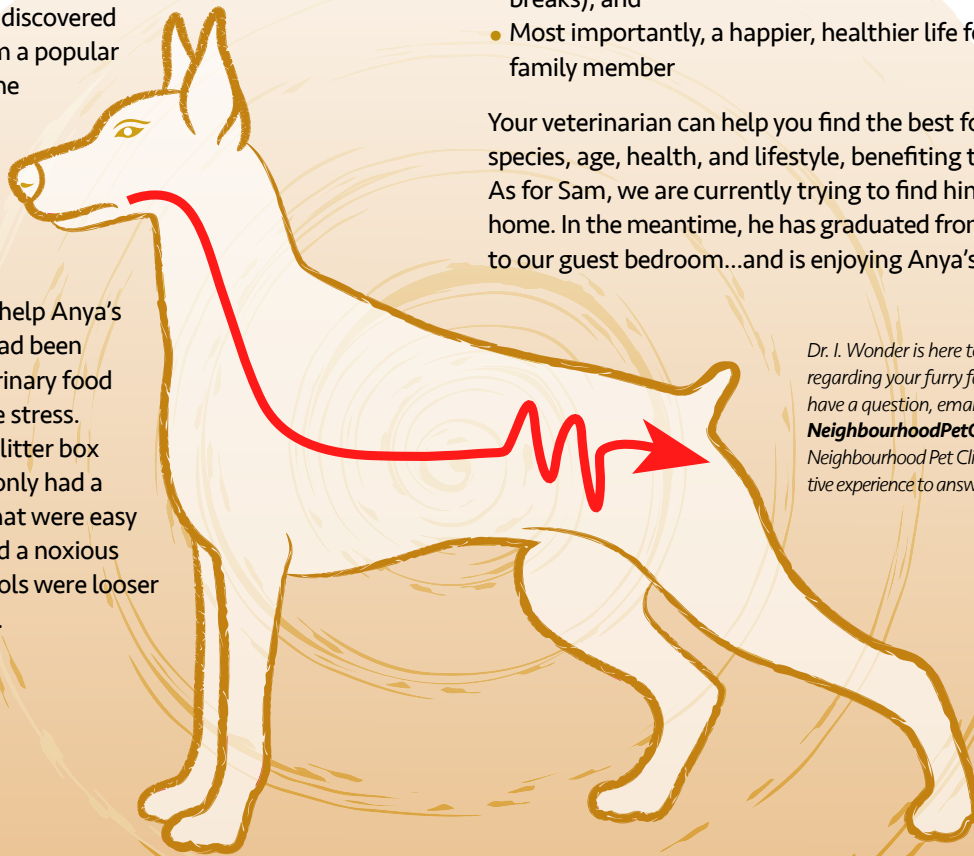
Suddenly, it all made sense, but I still couldn't believe the difference! To help Anya's anxious attitude, she had been eating a high-quality urinary food designed to help relieve stress. Compared to Sam, her litter box was less fragrant, and only had a few small "deposits" that were easy to scoop. Sam's box had a noxious odour and his large stools were looser and messier to remove.

I was even tempted to retrieve our luggage scale to find the difference in weight, but realized that might have been taking my discovery too far.

Of course, there are many other factors that may have contributed to these findings. However, many pet parents do report significant benefits after switching to a high-quality diet, such as:

- Softer snuggles (due to healthier skin and coat)
- Fewer trips to the store (a smaller quantity of food is required to meet daily nutritional requirements, so bags and cans last longer, often saving money too)
- Less household waste (as a result of fewer bowel movements)
- Simplified pet care (more manageable smell, fewer bathroom breaks), and
- Most importantly, a happier, healthier life for their furry family member

Your veterinarian can help you find the best food for your pet's species, age, health, and lifestyle, benefiting the whole family. As for Sam, we are currently trying to find him a permanent home. In the meantime, he has graduated from our bathroom to our guest bedroom...and is enjoying Anya's kibble. 🐾



Dr. I. Wonder is here to answer your questions regarding your furry family members. If you have a question, email it to us at [danielle@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com](mailto:danielle@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com). Our team at Neighbourhood Pet Clinic will tap into their collective experience to answer your various questions.



# CREATE *a* BODY-POSITIVE

First off...happy new year! I hope you all enjoyed some well deserved R&R and, most importantly, some time off with the family these last few weeks.

It's January! It's that time of year where, as consumers, we are bombarded with messages from the media and beyond regarding weight loss and weight-related new year's resolutions. Our children are too. Ads for programs pop up everywhere promising a "new you" and the next diet craze. At the same time, it's not uncommon for meal time discussions to center on weight management. How often do you hear someone say they can't have something because they are trying to lose or watch their weight? (\*slowly raises hand\*) I get it. I've said it before too. Do I say it now? No. Why? I'll explain...

Focusing on weight in the presence of our children often backfires – leading both young children and teens to feelings of guilt, insecurities about their bodies, sneaking food and sometimes disordered eating. Instead of "weight" talk, it's more effective to talk about foods in the sense of taste and healthfulness.

Here are a few ways to help your kids develop body-positive attitudes and healthful behaviours:

## MAKE FOOD FUN

This is the first one on the list because I think this is the most important. You've heard me say this a lot over the years: "Get your kids in the kitchen"! Every kid, of all ages, has a role to play in the kitchen. Check out my article at [www.themomandcaregiver.com/health-fitness/cook-with-your-kids-this-march-break/](http://www.themomandcaregiver.com/health-fitness/cook-with-your-kids-this-march-break/) for more tips to making food fun and getting your little chefs involved.

## TEACH THEM WHAT HEALTHY EATING IS AND ISN'T

Teach your kids that a healthy meal is half full of delicious vegetables and fruits. A healthy meal is also eating with the family as often as possible – whether it's dinner time together during the week,



*Jenn Giurgevich is the owner of Spark Nutrition & Health, a virtual nutrition consulting business. She is a Registered Dietitian and former contract Professor at Brescia University College with a wealth of nutrition knowledge. Over the last 10+ years, Jenn has paired her love for nutrition and health with her undeniable love for fitness, working as both a personal trainer and fitness instructor. Visit [www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca](http://www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca) for more info on how she can help you ignite your best self!*



# HOME *this* NEW YEAR!

breakfast in the morning, or lunches together over the weekend. Whatever works for your family and schedules. Obsessing about calories, carbs, fats or any nutrient for that matter is not healthy. It can make meals stressful and unpleasant.

## BE A ROLE MODEL

Model a healthy attitude and eating habits that you would want your children to copy. Take time to really reflect on where you think you are doing great as a role model and where you think you could maybe do better. Nobody's perfect. For some, the body shaming and "weight" talk has been ingrained in us since our early years, so making changes to be a better role model for our children can be a lot harder.

## PUT HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS INTO PERSPECTIVE INSTEAD OF WEIGHT

Healthy behaviours like making half your plate veggies and fruit, limiting highly processed foods, making water your drink of choice, eating with others, cooking more often, being mindful of your eating habits and being active every day are examples of much better markers of health than weight.

## TAKE ANY CONCERNS TO A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

If you're concerned about your or your child's weight, diet or body image, talk with your healthcare provider and schedule an appointment with a Registered Dietitian. A dietitian will be able to assess your family's diet and help you make appropriate changes to meet the needs of you and your family. Looking for a dietitian?

Look no further! Email me at [jenn@sparknutritionandhealth.ca](mailto:jenn@sparknutritionandhealth.ca). 





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# FROM BABBLING TO WORDS

## SPEECH AND LANGUAGE MILESTONES

There is nothing quite so precious as hearing your child's first words. All of the babbling, cooing, and crying are ways in which your baby is communicating with you and practicing the sounds and movements



that will lead to speech and language. While all children grow and develop at different rates, it is important to recognize whether or not your child is mastering expected speech or language milestones. Here are some guidelines to help:

### BY 12 MONTHS, YOUR CHILD SHOULD:

- Use gestures (e.g. waving)
- Be able to follow simple directions
- Communicate what he/she wants using actions and sounds

### BY 18 MONTHS, YOUR CHILD SHOULD:

- Start to put words together
- Use at least 20 different words
- Point to pictures in a book when asked

### BY 2 YEARS, YOUR CHILD SHOULD:

- Combine two words together (e.g. more cookie)
- Take turns in conversations
- Ask simple questions

### BY 3 YEARS, YOUR CHILD SHOULD:

- Combine three or more words together most of the time
- Be able to follow two-part directions (e.g. go to your room and bring back your coat)
- Understand simple concepts (e.g. up and down, in and on)

### BY 4 YEARS, YOUR CHILD SHOULD:

- Produce most speech sounds correctly
- Speak in sentences and use adult-like grammar
- Tell short stories and tell you about his/her day

*Adapted from Speech-Language and Audiology Canada, 2014, Speech, Language and Hearing Milestones (2014), [www.sac-oac.ca](http://www.sac-oac.ca)*

*Andrea Jennings, M.Cl.Sc., Reg. CASLPO*

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