

LIVE WELL

Smart strategies for a happy, healthy life



Andrea, Evie, Julia, and dad Ryan can't wait to get little Leo, 21 months, in on the good deeds.

Family time: Spreading kindness

Paring down her family's belongings for a 2011 move to London, Andrea Dow "realized that all of our 'stuff' had little to do with our happiness." So when the family returned to San Francisco, they decided to embark on another, more poignant journey.

To get started, Andrea and her two daughters, Julia, 6, and Evie, 4, bought 10 lottery tickets, stamped them with the message, "You are awesome, beautiful, loved," and placed them throughout the city. Next, everyone sorted through their books, clothes, and toys, and chose one item to donate to charity each day of Lent. To keep the kindness going, at dinnertime everyone describes a good deed she did that day. "Julia might tell us that she walked a friend to the school nurse, or Evie will say that she shared her snack," Andrea says. Now going out of their way to help others is second nature. "Julia will hold the door open for a stranger, and I'll overhear Evie say, 'That's something nice you can talk about at dinner.' They're proud to give back."

—Leslie Goldman

Quickie quiz: Avoid summer bummers

Everyone knows germs are on parade in winter, but there are plenty of health hazards to sidestep in warm weather, too. Are you making the right moves? True or false:

- 1 You can go without flip-flops in the pool locker room if you're only there a few minutes. False.** The always-damp floor is a breeding ground for bacteria, viruses, and athlete's foot, says Joshua Zeichner, M.D., assistant professor of dermatology at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York. Stash an inexpensive pair in your tote.
- 2 At a picnic, avoid foods with mayo because it makes things spoil faster. False.** Mayo is not the issue; temperature is. Tote any perishable foods in a cooler, and two hours is the maximum length of time they can sit out (one hour if the temp is 90°F or higher).
- 3 A hot dog bun falls on the ground. As long as you pick it up ASAP, you can eat it. True—with some caveats.** Dry foods (like buns) are less likely to be contaminated quickly than edibles with a high water content, like melon slices. But really, it depends on where the food lands, says Charles Gerba, Ph.D., a microbiologist at the University of Arizona. The snack bar floor? Eh. Use your judgment.
- 4 Drinking out of a hose is just as safe as filling your glass from the kitchen faucet. False.** Skip the sips from the backyard hose; it could be brimming with bacteria, or even lead, says Jeff Gearhart, a researcher at the Ecology Center, a nonprofit environmental organization.

—Barbara Brody

A HEALTHIER WAY TO...

Enjoy the pool

Slip into your bathing suit and kick back by the water safely.

PARK YOURSELF BY THE

SIDE Even if your kids are top-notch swimmers, don't leave them in the water alone. "The biggest cause of injury I see in kids 8 to 15 is reckless behavior, like diving in shallow water under 6 feet deep," says Carlo Reyes, M.D., an emergency physician at Los Robles Hospital in Thousand Oaks, California. Also, learn the signs of drowning, which are often silent; see them at glsrp.org/signs-of-drowning.

USE THE RIGHT

SUNSCREEN Look for one that's 80-minute water-resistant and broad-spectrum, with an SPF of at least 30. Reapply after toweling off, or every two hours, says Adam Friedman, M.D., a dermatologist at Montefiore Medical Center in New York.

CHECK THE CHEMISTRY

The best time to make sure chlorine levels are high enough is in the late afternoon, says Thomas M. Lachocki, Ph.D., CEO of the nonprofit National Swimming Pool Foundation. Your community pool should have a certificate that shows its staff has earned Certified Pool/Spa Operator status.

JUICE UP YOUR PHONE

And keep it on hand. In emergencies, time is of the essence.

—Hallie Levine



Money matters:
Save on renting a car
 Here's how to forgo the fees and find the deals.

INCLUDE A SATURDAY NIGHT

Monday through Friday business travel accounts for the largest chunk of car rentals. If your trip covers a Saturday night, you might be eligible for lower leisure rates.

RENT FOR FIVE DAYS That's when most companies start offering a weekly discount rate. It might be worth renting longer than you need so you qualify.

LOOK BEYOND THE AIRPORT

You might find better rates outside the airport, where you pay for convenience. You can often take a free shuttle from a hotel to another rental location. Rates can vary greatly between nearby airports, so factor that into airfare comparisons.

AVOID THE ONE-WAY Return the car to the same place you rented it, or you could pay twice as much.

LEAVE IT WITH A FULL TANK Rental companies tack on fuel surcharges, up to three times the rates at local gas stations. Fill the car yourself, and keep your receipt; some companies require proof of purchase.

DOUBLE YOUR DEALS See if you can combine a coupon code with a discount given through your membership in AAA or a warehouse club like Costco or BJ's.

DON'T PAY TWICE FOR INSURANCE

Your credit card or car insurance might already cover you for rentals.
 —Jeanette Pavini



Jeannette & Doris Kaplun
SKIN CANCER CHANGED THE HABITS OF THIS MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

Success story: We beat skin cancer

Jeannette: Growing up in Santiago, Chile, my family spent most of our time outdoors and hardly ever wore sunblock. It was the '80s, and skin cancer wasn't on anyone's radar. So when my mom was diagnosed with two basal cell carcinomas at age 45, I was shocked. Her cancer changed the way I see the sun: My kids and I never go out without a slathering of sunblock. I wear sunglasses year-round and see a dermatologist for checkups. I also promote sun safety on my *babble.com* blog, and for years I hosted a show on Univision where I spread the word to Hispanic viewers, many of whom assume that people with dark hair and complexions don't get skin cancer.

Doris: I never imagined I'd have skin cancer, especially at such a young age. I'm fortunate that my daughter traveled overseas to hold my hand through surgeries and radiation. When the cancer returned—three times—I was angry and frustrated, but I'm grateful to be a survivor. In 2007, my husband was also diagnosed with skin cancer. Now I tell everyone, from my grandkids to my friends: Protect yourself. Wear sunblock. Wear a hat. A tan isn't worth it.
 —Leslie Goldman

50%

The amount you can reduce your risk for melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer, if you apply a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 16 daily to your head, neck, arms, and hands. That's according to an Australian study that followed more than 1,600 adults for over a decade.

PET FINDS

Happy tails

Keep your pawssengers comfy with these vacation essentials.



Movable feast Meals on the road are easy-peasy with these collapsible bowls, which open to sit flat. \$10.95 and \$12.95; *planetdog.com*



Doggie bag Tuck essentials in this made-for-dogs backpack, and your furry family member will proudly carry his own weight. \$21.99–\$38.99; *drsfostersmith.com*



Carry on For highway or skyway, this carrier meets airline regulations and slides easily under the seat. You can secure the strap safely in the car with a seatbelt. For pets up to 12 pounds. \$69; *teafco.com* ■