

# “The Smartest Health Move I Ever Made”

By Sarah McCraw Crow

We all know what we're supposed to do: Eat right, exercise, and take those vitamins. But the demands of parenthood can send our best intentions to the bottom of the to-do list. Meet four moms who vowed to improve their health for the sake of their kids—and let their success stories be your inspiration.



“I became a fitness fanatic.”

**Stephanie Harris**, age 36, Atlanta, Georgia. Four children, ages 5 to 11. Stephanie had always considered herself active.

But with four kids and a job as a college math instructor, she was finding it increasingly difficult to fit exercise into her schedule. One day after stepping off the scale, she vowed to make fitness more of a priority. “I was about 150 pounds, and I’m only five foot three,” she says. “I made a promise to myself to exercise daily.”

She hired a personal trainer, who created a routine alternating cardiovascular workouts (jogging or aerobics) with strength training (free weights, push-ups, and abdominal curls). “I just wanted to tone my lower body, but my trainer showed me the importance of upper-body strength—to keep my back strong and my body in balance,” she says.

Some days, Stephanie gets up early and hits the gym before the rest of the family is awake; other days, she exercises at home. “I always have a plan A, a plan B, and a

plan C to squeeze a workout into my schedule,” she says. The payoff: Stephanie has dropped 20 pounds and added muscle tone. Last year, she took a course to become a trainer and now helps other women get fit. “I’m in better shape than I was before having kids,” she says. “I thought that taking time for myself was selfish, but it’s the best thing I’ve done.”

Stephanie’s commitment to exercise has spilled over into her family’s life: All of her kids now play sports—football, track, and basketball. “Being active is great for all of us, for lots of reasons,” she says.

## How you can do it too

- Set measurable goals. Saying, “I will become more fit” is vague; instead, think concretely: “I will increase my walking speed to a mile in 20 minutes” is a goal you can meet.
- Commit to at least one active family outing—a group walk or a skate session—each week. “Young children look to their parents for their values,” says Brad Cardinal, Ph.D., codirector of Oregon State University’s sport- and exercise-psychology lab, in Corvallis. “So when exercise is important to you, it’s important to them.”
- Try a personal trainer, who can help you devise a home workout or show you how to navigate a gym more efficiently. (Ask if she’s certified; groups like the American College of Sports Medicine or the American Council on Exercise offer certification.)
- Up your daily activity level. “You can accumulate 30 minutes of movement just by climbing stairs at work or doing a few laps around the field during your child’s soccer practice,” Dr. Cardinal says.



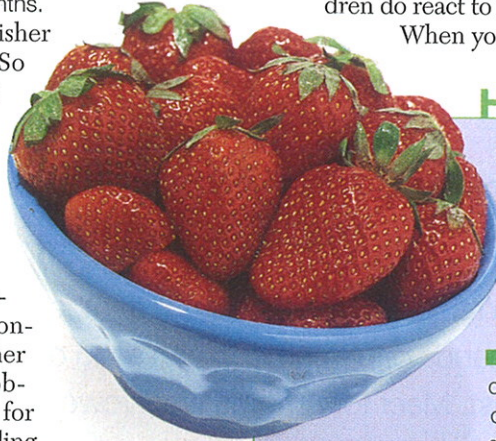


**“I cut my risk for heart disease—and lost weight too!”**

**Helene Fisher**, age 41, New York, New York. Two kids, ages 4 and 19 months.

With 40 pounds to lose, Helene Fisher knew she wasn't in great shape. So she scheduled a medical checkup and came away with some surprising news: Her total cholesterol, at 279, was too high, and her LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol was an alarming 206. (An LDL of about 130 is desirable.) That, combined with her family history—she'd lost both parents to congestive heart failure, and two of her brothers had cardiovascular problems—meant that she was at risk for developing heart disease, the leading killer of women in the U.S.

On her doctor's advice, Helene revamped her diet. She ate more deliberately to eliminate cholesterol intake, cutting out meat, chicken, cheese, and eggs and replacing them with soy alternatives, fruits, and vegetables. Instead of eggs and a bagel for



breakfast, she eats soy yogurt and toast; for lunch, she has soy “nuggets” and salad or fruit.

After nine weeks, Helene cut her LDL cholesterol by 50 points and lost 15 pounds in the bargain. “I don't miss the meat, and as long as I can eat pizza now and then, I'm fine,” she says. What's more, Helene sleeps better and has more energy. And that's affected her parenting: “My children do react to my mood, and I'm more patient now.

When you feel better, they feel better too.”

### How you can do it too

- Keep cholesterol counts in check. Cut back on fatty foods, and eat more fruits and veggies—“the kinds of things you want your kids to eat,” says Sandra Adamson Fryhofer, M.D., president of the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine.

- Exercise regularly—it not only helps control your weight but increases HDL, or protective, cholesterol. And ask your doctor how often you need a cholesterol test (women with normal counts can get screened every five years; those with family history may need more frequent screenings).

- Learn your body-mass index (BMI), which is a ratio of your weight in kilograms to your height in meters. A healthy BMI is less than 25; if yours is higher, it's time to lose weight.

**“I made sleep a priority.”**

**Becca Williams**, age 28, Portland, Oregon.

One daughter, age 2.

Becca started a home-based Web business selling kids' wall-mural kits ([www.wallnutz.com](http://www.wallnutz.com)), because she wanted to stay home with her daughter. “But I had no idea that it would take up so much time,” she says. “I was getting up at 5:30 A.M. to work and then staying up late answering e-mail. With a home office, you never leave your work behind.” The result: Becca was cranky all the time. “Being tired made it really tough to be patient with Capra, our toddler.”

Becca resolved to get more sleep, but to do so, she had to change the family's routine. First, she



ended Capra's late nights. “Her 8:30 P.M. bedtime was difficult at first, but now she knows the routine—bathtime, pajamas, toothbrushing, and bed.”

This gave Becca extra time with her husband to talk over the day. Next, she imposed a strict bedtime—9:30—on herself too. “I do about five minutes of quiet stretch-

ing, and then I read a bit. I keep a pen and paper by the bed, so if I wake up with an idea I won't run to the office.” Becca still wakes early each morning to work, but now that she's better rested, she gets more done. She's also able to give Capra her full attention, she says, “because now every little thing at work doesn't feel like a crisis. I'm more patient and optimistic, and that's made a huge difference.”

### How you can do it too

- Don't downplay your sleep needs. There's mounting evidence that a lack of sleep reduces your ability to fight infection and may throw off your metabolism.

- Keep a sleep and wake log. “Chart how much sleep you and your family are getting overall for two weeks,” says Sharon Schutte, M.D., associate director of Thomas Jefferson University's Sleep Disorder Center, in Philadelphia. “It may be less or more than you think.”

- Start good bedtime habits. Allow at least a half hour to relax. Avoid caffeine and alcohol, which interfere with restful sleep, and turn off the TV, which can be too stimulating.

- Pare down your to-do list, Dr. Schutte suggests. Determine which daytime activities you can organize better, which you can drop, and where you need help, so you can get to bed earlier.

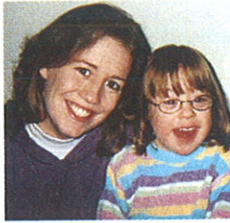




## "I quit smoking."

**Jennifer Glaze**, age 29, Columbus, Ohio. One daughter, age 4. A longtime smoker, Jennifer knew she would give up cigarettes once she became a parent, and she quit when she became pregnant. But after her baby had been born prematurely with Down syndrome, a heart defect, and other health problems, the new mom was so overwhelmed by stress that she started smoking again. "Mikayla needed so much care," Jennifer recalls. "I was so stressed-out that I just couldn't give up the cigarettes."

At 5 months, Mikayla returned to the hospital for surgery to close the hole in her heart's lower chambers. "Once the surgery was past, I was able to worry a little less," Jennifer says. When Mikayla's pediatrician mentioned a new stop-smoking program for parents, Jennifer signed up. The program offered nicotine patches, check-ups, and counseling. "A nurse called me once a week to see how I was doing. She helped me under-



stand that even if I messed up, that was okay." And with Mikayla's frequent trips to her doctors, Jennifer got lots of support from her daughter's caregivers. "Of course, my husband and family were behind me, but getting that encouragement from other people made a huge difference in helping me quit," Jennifer says.

She has been smoke-free for almost three years, and Mikayla, now in a special preschool, is thriving. Jennifer went back to college and worked as a human-resources specialist while her husband stayed home with their daughter. "Knowing I could do something that was so difficult—and quitting smoking was really difficult—has given me much more confidence in my abilities, as a worker and as a parent," she says. But giving up cigarettes was even more important for Mikayla's sake, she adds. "Her medical issues, especially her heart problem, mean that she needs clean air even more than most kids do. By not smoking, I'm helping her every day." □

## How you can do it too



- Know the risks. Smoking puts women at high risk for heart disease, cancer, and lung disease, but it hurts kids too: Children exposed to secondhand smoke suffer more respiratory infections, ear infections, asthma, and pneumonia; parental smoking also raises infants' risk for SIDS, says Judith Groner, M.D., a clinical associate professor of pediatrics at Ohio State University, in Columbus.
- Try, try again. "Many people attempt to stop smoking several times before they quit for good," Dr. Groner says. "This may be the right time for you."
- Set a quit date. With a deadline in mind, you can start to think of yourself as a nonsmoker.
- Consider medication. Nicotine patches, gum, nasal spray, and inhalers help control cravings, as can the prescription drug bupropion.
- Seek support. Call the American Lung Association to learn about counseling options in your area.
- Avoid other smokers. "If you can get your spouse to quit with you, that's even better," Dr. Groner says.

# Play. Drink Water. Repeat.

## Encourage Kids To Drink Water

Kids, like adults, need plenty of water to stay healthy. But sometimes it's difficult to make sure your kids get enough water. Check out these tips from Dannon Natural Spring Water... and water your family's way to good health!

### EASE THE WAY

When your kids are at school or on the go, make it easy for them to drink water. Pack Dannon's 11 oz. easy-to-carry "kid-size" bottles in your child's back pack or lunch box. Secure bottle holders on your child's bicycle.

### PURE IS BEST

Unlike many soft drinks, water contains no sugar or artificial flavors. Offer your child Dannon Natural Spring Water, the quality water from protected springs with essential natural minerals in every bottle.

### SET AN EXAMPLE

Kids tend to pick up their parents' habits. So drink plenty of water throughout the day and your kids will, too!

## Spring to Life!





# Diflucan<sup>®</sup>

(fluconazole) 150 mg tablet  
for vaginal yeast infections due to *Candida*

## Summary of patient information about DIFLUCAN (Di-flū-can), fluconazole (flū-con-ā-zol)

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE USING DIFLUCAN for the treatment of vaginal yeast infections due to *Candida*. Pfizer wants you to know as much as possible about your medicines. The purpose of this summary is to inform you about DIFLUCAN and its use in the treatment of vaginal yeast infections. However, no summary can take the place of a discussion between you and your doctor or other healthcare professional. Your doctor has been provided with full prescribing information for DIFLUCAN, upon which this summary is based. You may want to read it and discuss any questions you may have.

### What is a vaginal yeast infection?

In the vagina, yeast and bacteria live together in a balance that limits the excessive growth of either. When this normal balance is upset for any reason, an infection can occur. Changes within the vagina can be caused by increased moisture, as may happen during prolonged exposure to wet clothing or sweaty exercise outfits.

In addition, some medical conditions and certain medicines can increase the chances of getting a yeast infection. Specifically, the chances of getting an infection are higher in women who are pregnant, diabetic, using birth control pills, or taking antibiotics. Vaginal infections are common, and an estimated 75% of all adult women have at least one vaginal yeast infection in their lifetimes.

Vaginal yeast infections are uncomfortable and may cause itching, burning, and soreness. When infected, the lining of the vagina becomes inflamed (a condition known as vaginitis) and the vaginal area reddens. An increase in vaginal secretions is also common during yeast infections, and some women have a thick, white discharge.

### What is *Candida*?

Most yeast infections are caused by a type of fungus called *Candida*. It is normal for the *Candida* yeast to live in the human body.

How does DIFLUCAN work against a yeast infection? DIFLUCAN is an antifungal agent that works by interfering with the yeast's normal growth process. Because of this action, DIFLUCAN effectively cures most vaginal yeast infections due to *Candida*.

### Who should NOT take DIFLUCAN?

DIFLUCAN should not be taken by anyone known to be allergic to fluconazole, the active ingredient, or to any of the inactive ingredients listed at the end of this Summary. Also, you should tell your doctor or other healthcare professional if you are allergic to any other medicines. Do not take DIFLUCAN if you are taking the medicine cisapride (Propulsid).

### How should I take DIFLUCAN and what should I expect?

DIFLUCAN for vaginal yeast infections is a 150-mg tablet that is taken by mouth. Most patients can expect to see the beginning of symptom relief within 24 hours of taking the tablet. As DIFLUCAN works to cure the infection over a period of days, symptoms will gradually lessen and eventually disappear.

DIFLUCAN can be taken anytime—day or night, with or without meals. You should take it as soon as possible, by mouth, to ensure the earliest relief. If the symptoms have not started to go away within 3 to 5 days, you should contact your doctor or other healthcare professional.

### Possible side effects

In US clinical studies of 448 patients taking a single dose of DIFLUCAN for vaginal yeast infections, the most common side effects reported were headache (13%), nausea (7%), and stomach pain (6%). Other side effects reported were diarrhea (3%), indigestion (1%), dizziness (1%), and changes in the way food tastes (1%). Overall, 26% of patients taking DIFLUCAN reported side effects, compared with 16% of 422

patients using vaginal products. You may want to discuss with your doctor or other healthcare professional whether the convenience of a single oral dose outweighs the increased risk of side effects compared with other treatments that are applied directly in the vagina. You should also tell your doctor or other healthcare professional about any side effects you do experience.

### Important warnings and precautions

Follow your doctor's directions about how to take DIFLUCAN, and be aware of the following points:

- If the symptoms of your vaginal yeast infection have not improved within 3 to 5 days, contact your doctor or other healthcare professional.
- DIFLUCAN has not been studied in pregnant women. If you are pregnant, your doctor should prescribe DIFLUCAN only if the benefit to you justifies the possible risk to the fetus.
- Because DIFLUCAN passes into human milk, you should not take DIFLUCAN while nursing.
- Be sure to tell your doctor and other healthcare professionals about all the medicines you are taking—prescription, nonprescription, and vitamins. They know about possible interactions between medicines and are best able to prevent them. DIFLUCAN may interact with certain birth control pills, cimetidine (Tagamet), hydrochlorothiazide, antacids, rifampin, warfarin (Coumadin), phenytoin (Dilantin), cyclosporine (Sandimmune), zidovudine (Retrovir or AZT), theophylline, terfenadine (Seldane), cisapride (Propulsid), astemizole (Hismanal), rifabutin (Mycobutin), tacrolimus (Prograf), and oral antidiabetic medicines. If you are not sure whether you are taking any of these medicines, check with your doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare professional.
- DIFLUCAN has been connected to rare cases of serious liver damage, including deaths, primarily in patients with serious underlying medical conditions.
- Rare cases of anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) have been reported, as well as rare cases of a severe skin disorder.

### Cancer and impairment of fertility

Like most prescription drugs, DIFLUCAN was required to be tested on animals before it was allowed for human use. Often these tests are designed to achieve higher drug levels than humans achieve at recommended dosing. In these tests, benign liver tumors were observed in some of the male animals and a complicated labor/delivery was observed in some female animals. Your healthcare professional can tell you more about how drugs are tested on animals and what the results of these tests mean about safety for you.

### Pediatric use

One-dose DIFLUCAN treatment for vaginal yeast infections due to *Candida* has not been studied in children. When multiple-dose DIFLUCAN was used for the treatment of other infections in children up to the age of 17 years, the most commonly reported side effects were vomiting (5%), stomach pain (3%), nausea (2%), and diarrhea (2%).

**Active ingredient:** Each tablet contains 150 mg fluconazole.

**Inactive ingredients:** Microcrystalline cellulose, dibasic calcium phosphate anhydrous, povidone, croscarmellose sodium, FD&C Red No. 40 aluminum lake dye, and magnesium stearate.

**Caution:** Federal law prohibits dispensing without a prescription. You must see a doctor to receive a prescription.

If you have any questions or want more information about DIFLUCAN for the treatment of vaginal yeast infections, talk to your doctor or other healthcare professional.

 U.S. Pharmaceuticals

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## Five Health Moves

### to Make Right Now!

#### 1 Get 1,000 milligrams of calcium daily.

(Some doctors recommend more—1,200 mg—if you're pregnant or nursing.) Calcium is not only essential to bone health but may minimize PMS symptoms and even help stave off colon cancer.

#### 2 Take a multivitamin containing 400 micrograms of folic acid.

New research suggests that folic acid can lower the risk of heart disease. In addition, consuming adequate folic acid before and during pregnancy cuts the risk of neural-tube defects by 50 percent or more.

#### 3 Make time for a daily walk.

"If you can walk 20 minutes a day, five or six days a week, you're off to a great start," Dr. Fryhofer says, but even a ten-minute walk will clear your head and burn some calories.

#### 4 Keep your alcohol intake moderate.

Drinking excessively increases your risk of developing certain cancers, including breast cancer. It can also interfere with your sleep patterns.

#### 5 Get a medical checkup, especially if you're feeling tired.

Life as a busy parent can definitely wear you down. But fatigue can also signal a treatable medical problem, like thyroid disease, diabetes, anemia, sleep apnea, or depression.