



WELCOME TO *THE HEALTHY BUZZ*

Advocates for Healthy Kids is here to cut through the noise and bring parents the practical, balanced information they need to raise strong, healthy families. From real-life nutrition tips to clear breakdowns of hot-button health topics, this newsletter delivers resources, ideas, and encouragement — so you can stay confident in the most important role you'll ever have: **being your child's greatest advocate.**

Empowering Parents to Make Healthcare Decisions for Their Children: A Conversation With Real Moms

JOIN US LIVE!
May 28 at 8 PM ET

Tune in for a conversation about parental rights, screen time, getting kids moving, and making confident health decisions for your family.



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Join us LIVE on Instagram, **Thursday, May 28, at 8:00 PM ET** for a conversation with Dr. Siobhan Dunnavant (@Adv4HealthyKids), Ginny Yurich (@1000HoursOutside), Lauren Johnson (@NaturalNurseMomma), and Jenna Johnson (@JennaJohnsonLiving).

From parental rights to screen time to getting kids moving, no topic is off limits. **Submit your question below, and it could be answered live during the panel!**

SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION

A NOTE FROM DR. DUNNAVANT



Dear Friends,

Decades of practicing medicine will teach you a lot of things that don't show up in textbooks.

One of them is that the families who get the best outcomes are almost never the ones who say the least. They're the ones who built real relationships with the people caring for their children. Who came in prepared, pushed back when something didn't sit right, and kept showing up even when it wasn't easy.

That's not a personality type. It's a habit. And it's one worth building deliberately.

I think about this beyond the exam room, too. The teacher who catches something with your child early because a parent took time to get to know them at the start of the year. The coach who gives a struggling kid extra attention because a mom asked, genuinely, not defensively, how her child was doing.

These moments compound. A relationship built on honesty and mutual respect doesn't just feel better. It produces better results for your child.

Nobody raises a healthy kid alone. The parents I've admired most over the years weren't the ones who had everything figured out. They were the ones who knew how to find the right people, ask the right questions, and stay in the conversation — even when it was uncomfortable.

That's worth something. That's worth a lot, actually.

Warmly,

Dr. Siobhan Dunnavant, MD

Senior Advisor, Advocates for Healthy Kids

FACT OR MYTH?

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Staying out of your child's teacher's way is the respectful move. **Teachers are professionals, they don't need or appreciate parents hovering.**

Keep up the conversation!

Follow us [@adv4healthykids](https://twitter.com/adv4healthykids) for useful tips, clear breakdowns on hot-button issues, and encouragement to stay empowered and confident in your role as a key part of your child's growth.

ADVOCACY
ACTION





The People Who Show Up

The People Who Show Up

Ask your child to think of one adult outside your family (a teacher, a coach, a neighbor) who has made them feel seen, safe, or supported this year. Then sit down together and help them write that person a letter. Real paper. Real pen. Three sentences are enough.

Tell them what you noticed. Tell them it mattered.

In a world of texts and notifications, a handwritten letter is rare enough to stop someone in their tracks. And the act of writing it teaches kids that showing up for the people in your corner is an important foundational skill to carry throughout their life.

THE LATEST

Tick Season Is Starting Early — Here's How to Get Ahead of It

Spring is back, and so are the ticks. If your family spends any time outside hiking, camping, or even just playing in the yard — this is a good moment to pause and pay attention.

The CDC recently released data showing that emergency room visits for tick bites are already higher than normal in most parts of the country. In every region except the South Central U.S., weekly ER visit rates are the highest for this time of year [since 2017](#).

This isn't a reason to panic. It's a reason to be prepared.

The Numbers Worth Knowing

Tick bites are more common than most parents realize. Every year, [an estimated 31 million people](#) in the United States are bitten by a tick. Lyme disease alone affects an [estimated 476,000 patients](#) annually which makes it the most common tickborne illness in the country.

But beyond Lyme, ticks can carry other serious conditions, including [Rocky Mountain spotted fever](#) and [alpha-gal syndrome](#), a tick-triggered allergy to red meat that's only recently started getting the attention it deserves from mainstream medicine.

These health risks aren't as rare or mysterious as they sound. They're real, documented conditions that active families in tick-heavy regions need to know about.

The good news is that practical prevention works. No expensive interventions, no special equipment. A few consistent habits can make a meaningful difference for your family.

Before You Head Outside

Prevention is your most powerful tool. Places to start:

- **Use EPA-registered insect repellent.** Products containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus are [recommended by the CDC](#) and safe for children when used as directed. Apply to exposed skin and clothing before heading out.
- **Consider permethrin-treated clothing.** Permethrin is an insecticide applied to clothing and gear, not skin, and it kills ticks on contact. Used correctly (on fabric only, per label directions), it's considered safe and effective by both the CDC and EPA. It's especially useful for kids who spend time in wooded or grassy areas and can last through multiple washings.
- **Stick to the center of trails.** Ticks don't jump or fly. They wait on tall grass, shrubs, and leaf piles and latch on as you brush past. Staying on cleared paths and avoiding dense brush reduces exposure significantly.
- **Do a full tick check after being outside.** This is the single most important habit to build. Check behind knees, in armpits, around the waistband, behind ears, and on the scalp, especially in kids. Ticks are often no bigger than a poppy seed.
- **Shower within two hours of coming inside.** A quick rinse can wash off unattached ticks before they find a spot to settle in.

If You Find a Tick

Don't panic or rush to the ER. The [CDC recommends removing the tick yourself](#) as quickly as possible using fine-tipped tweezers. Grab the tick as close to the skin's surface as you can and pull upward with steady, even pressure. Clean the area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

Here's the reassuring part: removing an attached tick within 24 hours can significantly reduce the risk of Lyme disease transmission. Time matters, but acting quickly at home is highly effective.

After removal, monitor your child for symptoms in the days and weeks that follow. A bull's-eye rash, fever, fatigue, or joint pain after a bite are all reasons to call a doctor.

Know Where Ticks Hide

Ticks are most common in wooded, brushy, and grassy areas but they're not limited to wilderness hikes. Backyard leaf piles, neighborhood parks, and even the edges of suburban lawns can harbor them, especially in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and upper Midwest where [blacklegged ticks](#) (the primary carrier of Lyme disease) are most active.

If your family has pets, don't overlook them. Dogs and cats can bring ticks inside on their fur. Talk to your vet about tick prevention for your animals, too.

The Point Isn't To Stay Inside

Outdoor time is good for kids. Full stop. Movement, fresh air, unstructured play, time in nature — these are all things that contribute to healthier, happier children.

The goal isn't fear. It's preparation.

When parents are informed — not scared, not overwhelmed, just equipped — they can give their kids the freedom to explore while keeping them protected.

Tick season is here. *Now you know what to do about it.*

Meet the Woman Who Could Change How Washington Talks to Parents

Most parents have never thought much about who holds the title of U.S. Surgeon General. It's easy to see it as a Washington position — distant, political, removed from what actually happens at your child's well visit.

But the Surgeon General is, by definition, [America's Doctor](#). The person in this role shapes how the country talks about health, what information reaches families, and whether that information feels trustworthy or like another top-down directive from people who don't know your child.

If you've ever left a doctor's office with more questions than answers, or felt like the health decisions coming out of Washington didn't account for your family, Dr. Nicole Saphier's nomination for Surgeon General is worth your attention.

Who Is Dr. Nicole Saphier?

Dr. Saphier is a board-certified radiologist and Director of Breast Imaging at [Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center](#), one of the most respected cancer institutions in the world. She is also an Associate Professor at Weill Cornell Medical College, a New York Times bestselling author, a former Fox News medical contributor, and a mother of three sons.

She is not a career bureaucrat. She is a practicing physician who has spent her career sitting across from patients (many of them women navigating one of the scariest diagnoses of their lives) and helping them understand their options, ask better questions, and make decisions that are right for them.

That is a meaningfully different background to bring to this role.

Why This Is Worth Paying Attention To

For too long, public health communication operated on a simple assumption: tell people what to do, and they'll do it. Mandate it if they don't.

What that approach missed (*and what many parents felt viscerally*) is that **trust doesn't work that way**. When families feel talked at instead of talked with, when their questions are dismissed instead of answered, when decisions get made for them instead of with them, the whole relationship between families and the healthcare system erodes.

Dr. Saphier has been clear and consistent on this: health decisions belong in the exam room, between parents that know their child and a physician they trust. She has written and spoken about how top-down health directives that leave no room for a parent's judgment, their child's individual history, or a real conversation with their doctor don't build healthier communities. They build resentment. And children pay the price for that loss of trust.

Her position is rooted in something straightforward: parents are smart, parents are engaged, and parents deserve to be treated like the most important decision-makers in their child's life. *Because they are.*

What She's Actually Said

In a [recent op-ed for Fox News](#), Dr. Saphier wrote: *"Americans want the freedom to make their own choices alongside their doctors — and that freedom is only meaningful when access is guaranteed."*

She has also been direct that pulling back on mandates is not the same as pulling back on medicine. Vaccines remain, in her words, "one of the most effective tools in modern medicine." What she is arguing for is the kind of healthcare that actually works: families with real information, real access to their doctors, and the trust and space to make decisions that fit their child. That's a vision of public health built on respect, not pressure.

What It Could Mean for Families

The Surgeon General sets the tone for how this country talks about health. Not just what the guidance says, but how it's delivered — and who it trusts.

A nominee who has spent her career sitting with patients through hard decisions, helping them understand their options and find the path that's right for their family, brings a fundamentally different instinct to that role. She's not coming to it as someone who believes families need to be directed. She's coming as someone who has seen, up close, what it looks like when a patient feels genuinely heard.

For families who have felt like an afterthought in conversations about their own children's health, that matters. Dr. Saphier still has to clear the confirmation process — but if she does, the voice speaking for American families' health will be one that has actually looked a scared mom in the eye and said: I'm going to give you everything you need to make the best decision for your child.

That's the kind of Surgeon General this moment calls for.



CHECK OUT THE INSTAGRAM POST

The parent-teacher connection doesn't get nearly enough credit.

When it's strong, kids feel it in their confidence, their behavior, and how safe they feel at school.

And when something isn't right, a teacher who knows you're engaged and coming from a place of care is far more likely to hear you.

We shared some thoughts on building that relationship all year long — not just during parent-teacher conferences. **Head to [@Adv4HealthyKids](#) to check it out!**

BELL PEPPER RING EGGS

Breakfast your kids can build.

Crack an egg inside a pepper ring, put it in the oven, and breakfast is done! The fun part is letting your kids pick their pepper color and load up their own toppings. Every ring comes out a little different, and they'll be proud of every one.



DOWNLOAD TO SAVE THIS RECIPE FOR LATER

ENGAGE WITH US

Outside of your immediate family, who does your child turn to most?

- *A teacher or coach*
- *A grandparent*
- *A family friend or neighbor*
- *A faith leader or mentor*

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

KEEP IN TOUCH

Follow Advocates for Healthy Kids for quick tips, fun updates, and real talk from fellow parents and our founder, Dr. Dunnavant. Get involved and help us keep our children safe and healthy!



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