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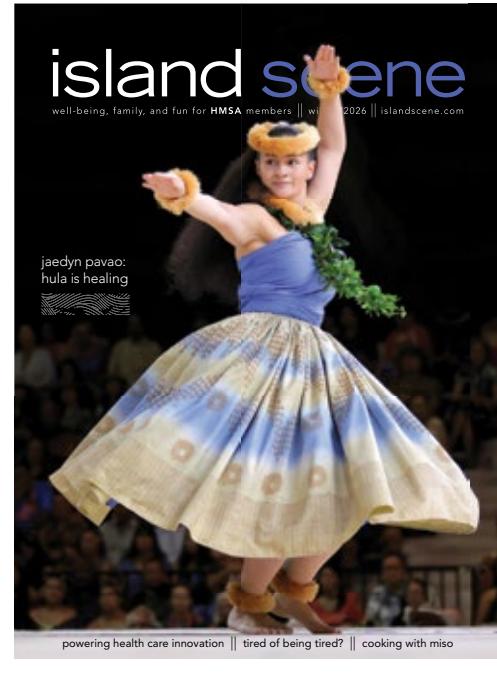
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LEW HARRINGTON

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COVER: Story on Kaua'i's Jaedyn Pavao by Craig DeSilva on page 16. Pavao is a public health nurse and 2025 Miss Aloha Hula. Photo by Mike Teruya.

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aloha members,



As we all know too well, the biggest problem for the people of Hawai'i is the cost of living. Many factors contribute to this, such as housing, energy, food, retail, and health care. And because living in Hawai'i is too expensive in aggregate, an increase in any one area is more stress than we can tolerate.

Over the years, we've implemented many innovative health programs at HMSA, and we've been better than most at addressing the unsustainable increases in the cost of health care nationwide. But from our members' viewpoint, "better than most" is not good enough.

That's why we've initiated transformational changes to directly address affordability, experience, and population health for the people of Hawai'i.

The first is a combination with Hawai'i Pacific Health. When two local, not-for-profit health organizations with the same intent join together, they provide resilience for our state.

Though both HMSA and HPH will continue to exist and function as they have in the past, we've formed a new parent company, One Health Hawai'i. An integrated approach delivers more affordable, seamless care, and therefore, the capacity to invest across the care delivery system statewide. Every provider taking care of every resident will benefit from this increased capability. Please see the article on page 14.

The second is a joint venture with other like-minded, mission-driven Blue Cross Blue Shield plans. As we've advanced as a society with rapidly evolving technology (such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, etc.), health care has been largely unable to benefit from that progress because most of the health dollar is spent on delivering care.

All of us want the benefits sophisticated technology can bring. That requires investment, as well as scale, to ensure sustainability. So, HMSA, Blue Shield of California, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas have founded Stellarus, a shared utility that will bring technology solutions to our plans while allowing us to remain local. Read more on page 15.

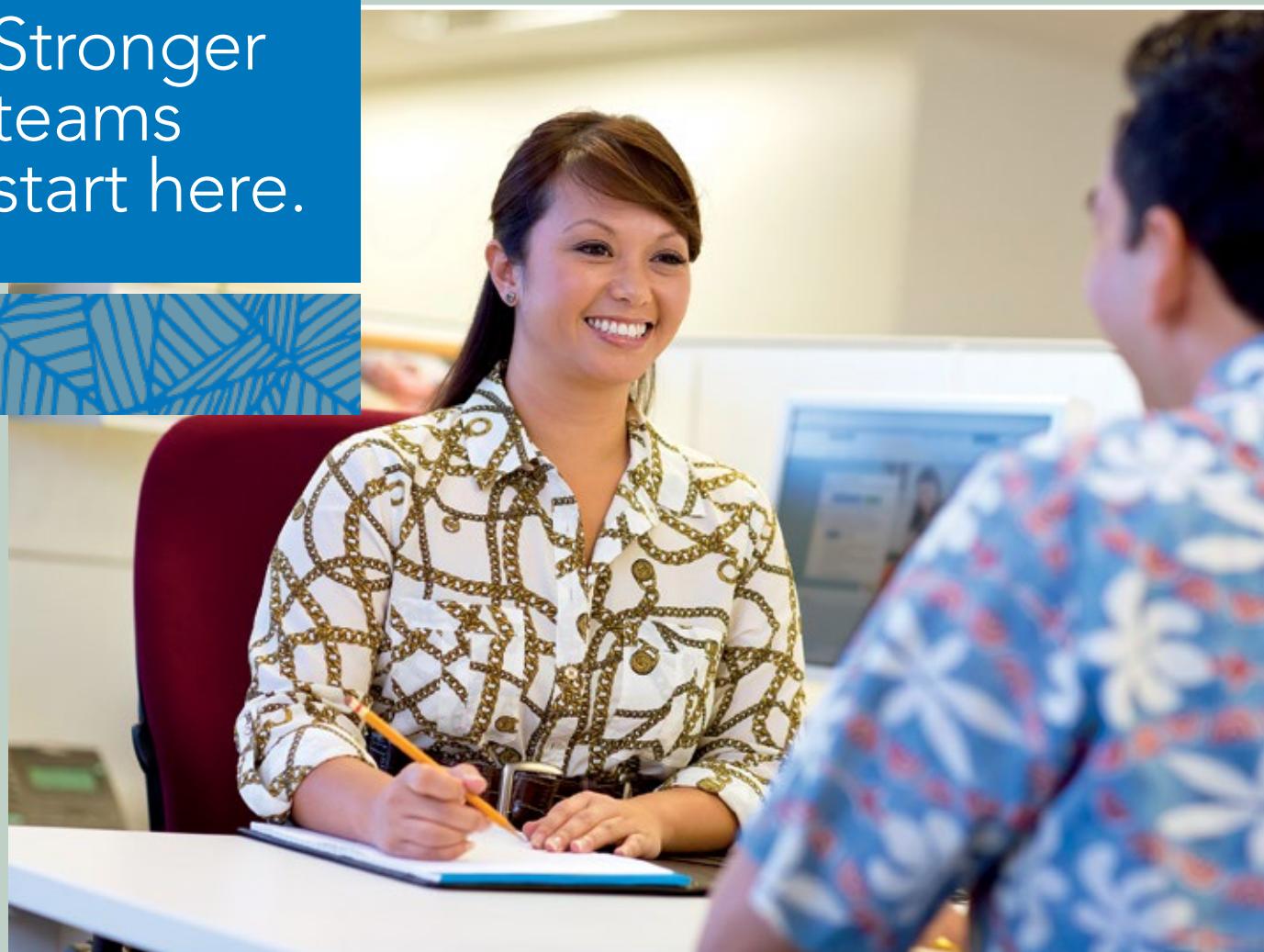
In this issue of *Island Scene*, you'll learn more about these exciting and transformational initiatives, which will fulfill our promise to improve your lives and the health of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark M. Mugiishi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Chief Executive Officer

Stronger teams start here.



HMSA's flexible well-being resources help you and your employees improve and maintain their well-being in ways that suit them best.

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dear friends,

Life seems more challenging than ever, and the pace of change and the information avalanche can be dizzying.

But the new year gives us an opportunity to pause, breathe, take stock, and look forward. Eleanor Roosevelt reminded us, "With each new day comes new strength and new thoughts." And a promise from C.S. Lewis: "There are better things ahead than any we leave behind."

I hope this issue of *Island Scene* helps you start the new year strong.

- Do you have a resolution to lose weight? Learn about intermittent fasting on page 36.
- Tired of being tired? Check out our article on fatigue, page 34.
- Need a pick me up? Is coffee a boost or a bummer (page 33)?
- Tips for dealing with picky eaters (page 50) and great recipes to help (page 56).

And lots of inspiration, too:

- Cover story on Miss Aloha Hula and Kaua'i public health nurse Jaedyn Pavao, page 16.
- The hālau hula of cancer survivors supported by the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (page 28).



Self-portrait by Garry Ono

- A profile on HMSA's leader, Mark M. Mugiiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S., on page 10. He excels in everything he puts his mind to and is optimistic about the future of health care in Hawai'i.
- The story of 8-year-old Leila-Rose Coloma and how Blood Bank of Hawai'i helped save her life, page 20.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you and best wishes to illustrator Garry Ono, who is retiring in February after a 35-year career at HMSA. He was one of our original *Island Scene* staffers and has contributed so much to our magazine and to HMSA's Communications department. He and his artistic talent will be missed. Join us in looking back at his amazing work at islandscene.com/more.

Love and best wishes in 2026.

Lisa Maneki Baxa
Publisher and Editor

around the 808

kaua'i

K-PAL is building futures

The Kaua'i Police Activities League (K-PAL) is looking to increase its positive impact on the island's keiki with the opening of a new sports complex this year. Construction is anticipated to finish in March.



Flag football is one of many programs offered by K-PAL.

K-PAL is a nonprofit dedicated to developing character, self-discipline, and healthy lifestyles among Kaua'i's youth and strengthening the relationship between the police and the community. K-PAL offers programs such as boxing, wrestling, jiu jitsu, flag football, and pickleball. In 2024, more than 1,100 youth participated in K-PAL programs.

"K-PAL has long been a cornerstone of positive youth development on our island," says Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami, "and this new facility will expand the program's reach and impact in incredible ways."

The new 4,000-square-foot K-PAL Sports Complex will be near Vidinha Stadium. "We're building more than just a facility; we're building futures," says Kaua'i Police Department Deputy Chief Mark Ozaki.

Registration for K-PAL programs is free, and volunteers are welcomed to coach and mentor. For more details, or to register, visit kauipal.org or email KPAL@kauai.gov.

maui, moloka'i, and lāna'i

Unleash your inner fitness warrior

Suspend from walls as you strengthen your core, test your agility and balance with dot jumps, or challenge your friends to a squat contest!

Keōpūolani Regional Park and Kahului Community Center Park are now home to free, state-of-the-art fitness courts, thanks to a partnership between HMSA, the County of Maui, and the National Fitness Campaign. The outdoor gyms each feature seven exercise stations, where you use your own body weight to get full-body workouts.

"These outdoor exercise spaces have created exciting opportunities for residents of all ages to stay active, connect with each other, and enjoy the outdoors," says Maui County Mayor Richard Bissen. "These courts will have a positive impact on our community's health and wellness for years to come."



Members of the Maui Fire Department work out on the fitness court at Keōpūolani Regional Park.

big island

Helping families one step at a time

In East Hawai'i, there's a place where families find support and connection. Founded in 2002, the Neighborhood Place of Puna works to end homelessness, prevent child abuse and neglect, and foster healing and resilience by listening to the community's needs.

The nonprofit's free services include an emergency shelter, youth center, and programs focused on housing navigation, parenting education, crisis assistance, and personal development. The Hale 'Iki Family Assessment Shelter, which opened in 2019, is Puna's only emergency shelter dedicated to families with children, offering a safe space while helping families regain stability.

"Nationally, about a third of all individuals experiencing homelessness are family members, which means children and parents together – entire households – are struggling for stability," said Paul Normann, Neighborhood Place of Puna's executive director. "It reminds us how important it is to support families as a unit."

The organization emphasizes that resilience is built one step at a time and celebrates small, but meaningful victories. "Little steps matter," says Normann. "Sometimes success looks like just being willing to ask for help."

For more information, please visit neighborhoodplaceofpuna.org, email info@neighborhoodplace.org, or call (808) 965-5550.

Have a great story, place, or event that makes your Neighbor Island community special? Share it with us at feedback@islandscene.com or call (808) 948-6839.



The Neighborhood Place of Puna's Hale 'Iki Family Assessment Center is an emergency shelter dedicated to helping families with minor children.

COURTESY THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE OF PUNA

becoming dr. mark mugiishi



words Lynn Shibuya

It was 1976. Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S., was a bright-eyed junior at 'Iolani School who set his sights on becoming a doctor. In the years that followed, he would become a respected surgeon, 'Iolani School's winningest boys basketball coach, and CEO of HMSA. He was also an associate producer of the Broadway musical *Allegiance*, which told a family's story of Japanese American internment during World War II.

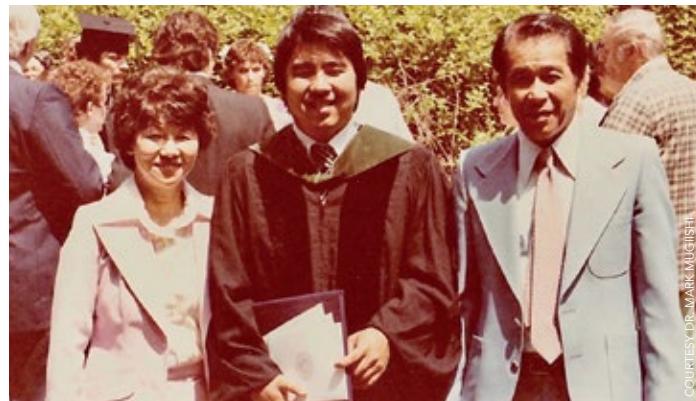
As HMSA continues its journey as a health organization with 87 years of serving the people of Hawai'i, Dr. Mugiishi is proud of the road he's traveled and is optimistic about improving the health of Hawai'i.

Local roots head east

Dr. Mugiishi grew up in Kāne'ohe and Honolulu. His father was an insurance agent and his mother taught at Ma'ema'e Elementary School in Nu'uau. After graduating from 'Iolani School in 1977, Dr. Mugiishi attended Northwestern

University in Chicago, where he earned his medical degree through a fast-track honors program for medical education.

After six frigid Chicago winters, Dr. Mugiishi applied to four residency programs, mostly in California, and was fortuitously matched at home in Hawai'i.



Dr. Mugiishi and his parents at his graduation from Northwestern University.

Basketball days

Between medical school and residency, Dr. Mugiishi began coaching basketball at 'Iolani School. He coached the first girls team in the school's history and later became the boys basketball coach. While he didn't play basketball in high school himself, Dr. Mugiishi had a passion for sports and a vision for coaching.

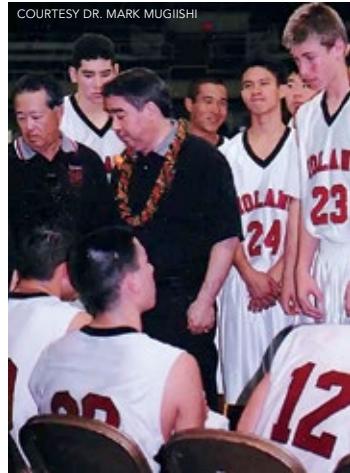
"My philosophy was to create a classroom of learning that focused on how to be a part of a community and embrace the common good above your own individual aspirations," he shares.

From 1989 to 2009, Dr. Mugiishi led the 'Iolani School boys' basketball team to amazing heights, with seven state championships and 11 Interscholastic League of Honolulu championships.

Doc to CEO

In 1989, Dr. Mugiishi started practicing surgery in private practice and later, in association with the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine. He co-founded the Endoscopy Institute of Hawaii and the Eye Surgery Center of Hawaii. In 2015, he joined the HMSA leadership team as executive vice president, chief medical officer, and chief health officer.

Dr. Mugiishi became the president and CEO of HMSA in 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and continues in his role as CEO. He led the organization in providing



Dr. Mugiishi in his coaching days.

COVID-19-related relief and support to members, employers, providers, and communities, which helped to mitigate some of the financial impacts and support access to care during a critical time.

Soon after, HMSA announced its partnership to administer the TRICARE West Region contract for the Department of Defense. With the addition of TRICARE, the uniformed services health care program, HMSA is proud to provide access to care for nearly one million people in the state.



Dr. Mugiishi converses with Cindy Pau, M.D., an HMSA medical director and specialist in endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolism.

Dr. Mugiishi's colleagues have emphasized his balanced and measured leadership approach.

"Dr. Mugiishi navigates challenges with grace and fortitude, which will continue to benefit HMSA and its stakeholders in the years to come," says Janna Nakagawa, HMSA's recently retired chief administrative and strategy officer.

Looking ahead

As health plans locally and nationally face financial challenges and policy changes related to Medicare and QUEST (Medicaid), Dr. Mugiishi is focused on keeping quality, affordable, and accessible care at the core of everything HMSA strives for.

"Despite the challenges we face, we must not ration our ambition. We'll solve many of the significant problems we face in health care and build a more resilient Hawai'i for our families, friends, and neighbors," Dr. Mugiishi says.

One thing is certain: Dr. Mugiishi is ready to bring his A-game to the opportunities and challenges ahead. 

See Dr. Mark Mugiishi in HMSA's latest commercial, featuring his legacy and vision for the future. Find it on YouTube @hmsahawaii.



hmsa's first woman president: a trailblazer with visionary leadership

words Lynn Shibuya

Jenny Smith is HMSA's new president and chief operating officer, and the first woman to serve as president since the company was founded 87 years ago.

Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S., who has served as HMSA's president and chief executive officer since February 2020, will continue in his role as CEO, focusing his attention on the needs of external stakeholders such as providers, employers, communities, and the government.

"With everything happening in health care, we're making this change to ensure that a single leader focuses on and prioritizes the internal operations of HMSA so we can continue to run the best health plan possible, which the people of Hawai'i deserve now more than ever," said Dr. Mugiishi. "Jenny's leadership is exactly what this moment calls for – steady, visionary, and attuned to the needs of both people and progress."

Smith oversees health plan strategy and operations. She is responsible for performance and profit and loss management across all lines of business, and for developing a sustainable operating model to support HMSA's vision. She joined HMSA in April 2024 as executive vice president and chief financial officer.



With more than 25 years of experience, Smith was previously executive vice president, chief financial officer, and treasurer at CareFirst, a Blue Cross Blue Shield plan that serves members in Maryland and Washington, D.C. In this role, Smith oversaw the finance division and helped to elevate the company's financial position while supporting its not-for-profit mission.

Prior to CareFirst, Smith was chief financial officer of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest region, where she was responsible for the financial health and strategic growth of Kaiser's integrated system in Oregon and Southwest Washington. She also served as a key member of the national strategic leadership team.

She is passionate about the work HMSA is doing to improve the health of Hawai'i and also serves on the board of directors for the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii.

Smith was born in Shanghai, China, and earned a baccalaureate of law degree in Shanghai, where she met her husband. The couple has been married for 29 years. Their son is a junior at 'Iolani School and is on the varsity basketball team. Their family dogs, Hans and Hugo, are sweet protectors who love to be close to their humans.

Charting the way forward

Local and national health plans face a complex mix of challenges driven by economic pressures, policy uncertainty, and evolving consumer needs. Smith is ready to meet the demands of the moment and help fulfill HMSA's mission of advancing the health and well-being of its members.

"I'm deeply honored to serve as HMSA's president at this pivotal time," Smith says. "Together with our partners and collaborators, we have a powerful opportunity to create lasting, positive change for our members and communities statewide." **15**



partnering for hawai'i's health care future

words David Lato



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Across Hawai'i, families are dealing with the pressure of our rising cost of living and growing concerns about access to quality health care. As the state's most experienced health plan, HMSA recognizes our responsibility to lead with purpose and innovation.

The need for fresh, forward thinking has never been greater and HMSA and Hawai'i Pacific Health (HPH) are joining forces to meet the challenge. Nobody believes that the status quo is working. We are going in the wrong direction, and the time has come for us to correct course and create a more resilient Hawai'i for the people of Hawai'i.

In a bold move toward transformation, HMSA and HPH recently announced a partnership agreement that aims to reshape the health care landscape across the Islands. This collaboration brings together the strengths and dedication of two trusted local health organizations. Together, we will form One Health Hawai'i, a new not-for-profit entity, designed to make health care more affordable, improve the consumer experience, and expand access to care for communities statewide, all while realizing long-term financial sustainability.

One Health Hawai'i will own the strategy, philosophy, and financing of health care delivery to lower the cost of care and enable investments in the access, quality, and experience of care for all the people of Hawai'i. 1+1 = 3, creating value, resilience, and healthier communities.

The mission of One Health Hawai'i is "Creating a healthier Hawai'i for a better tomorrow" and our vision is "High-quality, accessible care for you and your 'ohana – for generations to come."

Despite the significance of this partnership and the vital change it represents for Hawai'i's health care landscape, both HMSA and HPH will continue to operate much as they do today and would become affiliates of the combined company. The goal is not disruption, but enhancement that builds on existing foundations to create a more unified and responsive system of high-quality care for a more resilient and healthier Hawai'i for all. To be clear, provider choice for HMSA's members continues to be a core principle of this new health ecosystem. HMSA members can continue to be cared for by the entire HMSA network of providers as they do today.

"HMSA firmly believes in maintaining access to all providers and systems of care delivery," said HMSA CEO Mark M. Mugishi, M.D., F.A.C.S. "We're committed to ensuring our members always have the freedom to choose their doctors, specialists, and other health care providers and we will work closely with all our provider partners to ensure that the health of our members and communities remains at the heart of every decision."

"We are thrilled to partner with HMSA as One Health Hawai'i to better serve our patients by finally addressing the rising costs of care and difficult access issues facing the people of Hawai'i," said Ray Vara, president and CEO of HPH. "This transformational opportunity will allow us to reshape health care in our state and improve affordability and the quality of care to build a more sustainable future here in the Islands."

The partnership between HMSA and HPH reflects a shared responsibility and vision of meaningful transformative change that prioritizes the health and well-being of Hawai'i's people. As this journey unfolds, we're focused on listening, learning, and leading with care. 

powering health care innovation

words David Lato

Last September, it was announced that HMSA and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas joined Stellarus, a health care technology and strategic solutions company as co-founders. The not-for-profit health plans joined Blue Shield of California to use Stellarus' technology innovation platform powered by artificial intelligence, to provide access to care that's smarter, personalized, and more affordable for the members and communities we serve.

The adoption of modern technology is vital to providing our members with quality health care experiences, but advanced digital capabilities require investments that most health plans can't afford.

Stellarus tips the scales back toward community-focused health plans and will enable HMSA to leverage modern technology and artificial intelligence to improve the way we serve our members. The Stellarus platform improves the member experience and makes health plans more efficient.



"The people of Hawai'i deserve world-class care," said HMSA CEO Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S. "With Hawai'i's size and geographic position, we are better off if we enhance our ability to innovate and grow our technological capacities by investing in Stellarus with like-minded, mission-driven health plans that are trying to accomplish the same things. Together, we can achieve remarkable advances and provide the best possible care for our community, while remaining uniquely independent and local."



Stellar health care transformation

Stellarus makes it seamless for health plans to integrate into its technology platform, which is comprised of core foundational components including:

- Experience Cube: An intelligent data hub that brings together disparate sources of information into a single source of truth.
- Digital health record: A comprehensive, longitudinal health record for every member that draws in data from the Experience Cube in near real-time.

By combining more than 60 data sets – ranging from clinical health and social demographic information to provider, billing, and claims data – Stellarus' platform provides leading capabilities such as:

- Member and physician access to a comprehensive digital health record that facilitates truly personalized care.
- Fully automated, near-real-time completion of transactions such as prior authorization.
- Technology-enabled, personalized support for patients with conditions such as diabetes.

As early adopters, HMSA, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, and Blue Shield of California, will have early access to these capabilities, provide valuable insights on what health plans need, and guide Stellarus to power a health care system that's worthy of our family, friends, and neighbors.

For Stellarus, this partnership with three Blue plans means they can leverage \$40 billion in revenue and 6 million members to power their technology development, giving their platform powerful scale while the plans maintain local governance. **15**

For more information on Stellarus, please visit stellarus.com.



MIKE TERUYA

hula is healing

words Craig DeSilva

Jaedyn Janae Puahaulani Pavao can certainly entertain a crowd. Whether dancing at a backyard lu'au or on stage at the Merrie Monarch Festival in Hilo, she glides gracefully and almost effortlessly as if she were on a cloud.

But Pavao doesn't consider herself a performer. Instead, she's a storyteller who brings to life the people and places in the mele and chants of her hula. "I try to transcend space and time," she says. "I imagine myself at these place-names. That connection to the 'āina allows me to share with the audience these places they otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to go to."

That mindset enabled Pavao, 24, to win the coveted Miss Aloha Hula title at the 2025 Merrie Monarch Festival. The award was a culmination of discipline, hard work, and sacrifice in her hula journey that started from small-kid time. "Hula came naturally to me from the moment I could walk and talk," she says.

Pavao remembers watching dancers at the hālau of her aunt, the late kumu hula Leina'ala Pavao Jardin of Hālau Ka Lei Mokihana o Leinā'ala in Kalāheo, Kaua'i. In 2010, she won Miss Keiki Hula at the Queen Lili'uokalani Hula Festival, paving the way for her to dance with her hālau at the Merrie Monarch Festival for the past 10 years.

Even for a seasoned dancer, every moment on stage becomes a new experience. "Yes, nerves kick in," she admits. "But at that point, you're prepared. In the moment walking up that ramp, there's no turning back. And you remember your purpose of being on stage. It's not about me. It's about making my kūpuna, kumu, and community proud. Everything just falls into place."

"Hula came naturally to me from the moment I could walk and talk."

: Jaedyn Pavao

Hula is also the continuation of her family's hula legacy. Her cousin, Breeze Pavao (Jardin's daughter), won second place as Miss Aloha Hula in 2023 and is a past Keiki Hula winner. She feels a sense of kuleana (responsibility) to stay true to her hula lineage. "It's not just blood relatives, but also our kumu who paved the way for us – kumu Rae (Fonseca), Uncle George (Na'ope), and Aunty Lovey (Apana). My love for hula starts with them."

Pavao also knew at a young age that she wanted to be a health care provider after her grandfather had a stroke. "Seeing my family give so much love and care to him at his bedside, I realized that I can also make a big impact on my community," she says.

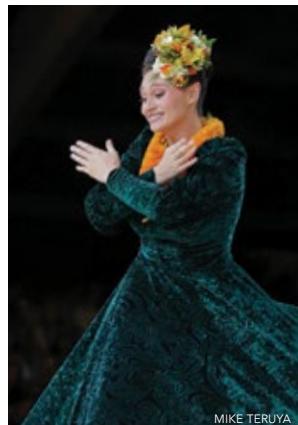
As a public health nurse for the Hawai'i Department of Health, Pavao works with students, kūpuna, and others in the community with health and well-being education and clinical programs.

Hula can also be healing, she says, and she's looking forward to continuing her lifelong journey of learning – both in health care and Native Hawaiian culture.

"We'll see the plans Ke Akua has for me," she says. "I'm just glad to be given these gifts to share." **is**



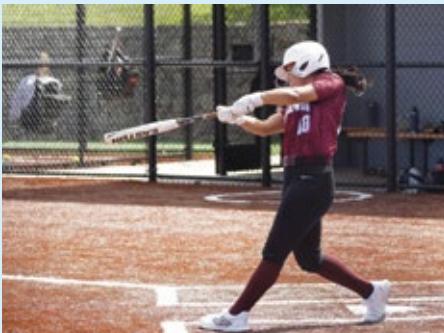
PHOTOS COURTESY JAEDYN PAVAEO



MIKE TERUYA



From top to bottom: Jaedyn Pavao (center) with cousin Breeze Pavao (left) and kumu hula Leinā'ala Pavao Jardin, who died in October 2025. On the job as a public health nurse. Kahiko performance at the 2025 Merrie Monarch Festival. Jaedyn Pavao (center) with members of Hālau Ka Lei Mokihana o Leinā'ala at the Edith Kanaka'ole Stadium in Hilo.



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COURTESY HAWAII PACIFIC HEALTH

Leila-Rose Coloma, 8, of Moanalua.

saving lives one blood donation at a time

words Michelle Liu

Eight-year-old Leila-Rose Coloma loves riding her bike, swimming, and playing with her little brother, Liam. She's outgoing, kind, and full of spirit, light, and energy.

These are all things her parents are grateful for because Leila was born with two congenital heart defects. She had her first open-heart surgery at 5 months old and then another when she was 3. "During that surgery at Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children, Leila required blood transfusions, which came from the Blood Bank of Hawai'i," says Kayley Coloma, Leila's mom. "That saved her life."

Someone in Hawai'i needs blood every two seconds. That means 200 people must give blood every day to meet the needs of our Islands' hospitals. Blood Bank of Hawai'i (BBH) has two donation sites on O'ahu. It also hosts pop-up blood drives, including quarterly blood drives at the HMSA Building in Honolulu.

"The mission of the Blood Bank is so aligned with HMSA: We're out here to try and help people, to save their lives, to take care of them in moments of critical illness," says Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S., HMSA CEO and a BBH board of trustees member. "Blood is one key element of that, and we have to make sure we continue to provide that resource to the people of Hawai'i."

Without a safe and continuous blood supply, none of the major medical programs in our hospitals would be able to function. As a former surgeon, Kenric M. Murayama, M.D., F.A.C.S., HMSA executive vice president, chief health officer, and president of Integrated Services, Inc., understands the critical role of blood in the operating room.

"Patients come in and you don't have the luxury of saying, 'We're going to need blood.' It has to be readily available," says Dr. Murayama, who is also on the BBH board. "And that's where the Blood Bank provides an amazing service."

BBH is the sole supplier for all 18 local hospitals. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, BBH was self-sufficient. Now, it imports some blood from the Mainland to meet our local hospitals' demand. The nonprofit is hoping to achieve that stable level of a local blood supply once again, but it can't be done without your help.



COURTESY BLOOD BANK OF HAWAII



Leila Coloma with her parents, Kayley and Jared, and little brother, Liam.

"The blood supply of Hawai'i isn't on our shelves; it's walking around the state," says Kim-Anh Nguyen, Blood Bank of Hawai'i CEO. "You are Hawai'i's blood supply."

Up to 50% of Hawai'i residents age 16 or older are eligible to donate blood, but only 2% currently donate. Jason Chang is among the donors; the president and CEO of The Queen's Health Systems donates six times a year and has done so since high school.

"I didn't realize it wasn't that big a deal until I did it. You get past that first anxiety of needles and think about the benefits you provide to more than one person," says Chang, chair of the BBH board.

One donation can save up to three people's lives. What's more, the donations you give here in Hawai'i stay in Hawai'i.

"Growing up in a fourth-generation family in Hawai'i, I learned how everyone here is interconnected," says Leslie Chun, M.D., CEO of Hawai'i Pacific Health Medical Group and a BBH board member. "We all rely on one another, and that's what giving blood is all about."

Every day, Coloma appreciates the donors who saved her little girl.

"We're so lucky to have Leila with us today. There are so many things that could have gone wrong, but they went right, thanks to the Blood Bank, Kapi'olani, and HMA's support," says Coloma.

"There were so many hands that touched our lives, and now, Leila's life is limitless." 



Leila's success story is just one of many. Visit islandscene.com/newsroom to learn how the generosity of people like you and BBH have helped saved lives.



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Island medical students gain invaluable pediatric experience with the help of Hawaii Residency Programs.

building hawai'i's physician workforce

words marvin buenconsejo



Hawaii Residency Programs staff at its annual Physician Career Pathway event at the Neal S. Blaisdell Galleria.



HMSA's Dr. Stefanie Park shares real-world medical insights with graduates at the Hawaii Residency Programs Physician Career Pathway event.

It is the vital final step to becoming a practicing physician — the post-medical school training program for medical students known as residency.

For more than four decades, the nonprofit Hawaii Residency Programs (HRP) has provided aspiring doctors with the essential employment, administration, and support to complete their medical training here in Hawai'i.

"We serve as the employer and administrator for Hawai'i's resident physicians while they're in training," explains Natalie Talamoa, executive director of HRP. "It's a unique model. Most states have a single university hospital that runs residency programs, but here, training happens across multiple hospitals and communities. HRP was created to bring efficiency, coordination, and shared investment to that system."

Prior to HRP's founding in 1982, graduate medical education in Hawai'i had a loose-knit system with hospitals and programs. It lacked the necessary policy-making and governing authority. HRP fundamentally changed that, providing coordination and increased success among all partners — hospitals and the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).



Natalie Talamoa

COURTESY JABSOM

"It's hard to find a doctor in this community, in primary care in particular, who didn't go to medical school here or train here," shares Kenric M. Murayama, M.D., F.A.C.S., HMSA executive vice president, chief health officer, and president of Integrated Services, Inc. "A large majority of the doctors in this community in primary care — internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics — have some affiliation with the medical school. And if they trained here, they worked for Hawaii Residency Programs."

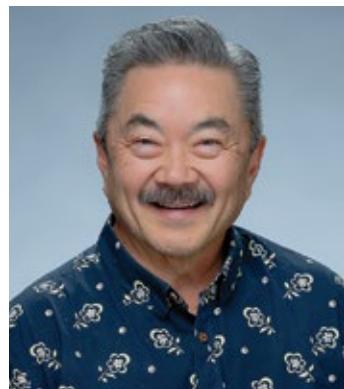
The overwhelming need for medical doctors in the Islands is well documented. According to the 2025 University of Hawai'i report to the state Legislature, Hawai'i needs 768 full-time doctors to meet patient demand. That's up from 757 doctors in 2024.

"We know that young people tend to practice where they train," adds Dr. Murayama. "If we want local access to high-quality care, we need to make sure that training happens here at home. Without programs like HRP, more specialized care would have to move to the Mainland, which means higher costs, longer travel, and more hardship for families."

Beyond its role in facilitating the training of doctors, HRP also helps fortify a long-term physician pipeline. Each fall, the organization partners with Hawai'i Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and Hawai'i Young Healthcare Professionals to host the Physician Career Pathways event that connects residents and fellows with health care organizations across the state.

"Partnership is essential, and HRP is an essential partner," says Crystal Costa, program specialist for JABSOM graduate medical education. "They play a huge role in keeping our training programs strong and helping our graduates find meaningful careers in Hawai'i."

Through collaboration and commitment, Hawaii Residency Programs is helping build a more coordinated, equitable, and resilient health care workforce — one that ensures Hawai'i's future physicians can train, live, and serve right here at home. [15](#)



Kenric M. Murayama, M.D., F.A.C.S.



COURTESY JABSOM

Future health care heroes hone their clinical skills during residency.

For more on the work by Hawaii Residency Programs, scan the QR code or visit islandscene.com/more.





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From left: Wilma Rumbaoa, Katie Costello, Vickie Bunye.

a hālau hula of strength, hope, and healing

words Michelle Liu

photos Lew and Vicky Harrington

When TeMoana Makolo started learning hula as a keiki, she never expected it to save her life twice. The former professional hula dancer was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008 and then with bone cancer in 2017.

"My oncologist says I'm unbelievable because short-term survival of stage 4 bone cancer is 18 to 24 months, and long-term survival is two to five years. I'm now in my eighth year," she says. "And I think a lot of it has to do with hula."

Makolo's hula career spans decades, from dancing at the famed Hawaiian Room in New York City to opening her own Polynesian dance studio in Hawai'i. Her latest venture involves leading Nā Wahine Hula 'Akala, a hālau comprised of breast and gynecologic cancer survivors.

The hālau formed after the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center conducted two intervention studies of hula for breast and gynecological cancer survivors. Researchers wanted to explore the multidimensional benefits of hula, encompassing physical, mental, cognitive, and social aspects, all deeply rooted in Native Hawaiian tradition.

"Hula is relevant, engaging, and meaningful to our community," says Erin Bantum, Ph.D., a UH Cancer Center researcher and co-investigator of the studies. "We hoped by studying hula, we could invite more of our Native Hawaiian community to participate, given Native Hawaiian women have high rates of breast cancer."

The studies found that hula can help increase physical activity and improve quality of life. But it was the incredible bond these women formed that impressed researchers most; when the research portion of the studies was complete, many of the participants weren't ready to part ways.

"We're a family. Everyone is so caring toward each other's situations because we've been there. We understand."

: TeMoana Makolo

"Physical activity intervention studies are generally three to six months. One of the challenges these types of studies face is having the participants maintain their activity level when the intervention ends," explains Lenora Loo, Ph.D., also a UH Cancer Center researcher and co-investigator of the studies. "But the women were quite sad when ours ended, and they said they wanted to continue dancing together."



TeMoana Makolo



Members of the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center hālau hula. Front row, from left: Wilma Rombao, Hazel Yoshida, Luvie Hurdus, TeMoana Makolo, Kehaulani Young, Vickie Bunye. Back row, from left: Letitia Yee, Katie Costello, Cherie Higashihara, Puna Fyrberg, Sheila Forman, Lynnette Sakamoto.



From left: Cheri Higashihara, Luvie Hurdus, Hazel Yoshida.



From left: TeMoana Makolo, Dr. Lenora Loo, Dr. Erin Bantum.

The researchers say it's rare to have a group like this continue their relationship after the study, and then stay connected to the facility where the research happened. But the UH Cancer Center wanted to support the hālau and their members' healing journeys, so the center has continued to open its Kaka'ako campus and reserve time slots for them in the Health and Wellness room.

Twice a week, Nā Wahine Hula 'Akala meets to learn the dance and mele, and their meanings, as well as rehearse for upcoming performances typically held at senior homes and UH Cancer Center events. These hula practices have become a cherished routine: a time for the women to connect with Native Hawaiian culture while continuing to strengthen their bond, whether they're discussing appointments, challenges related to their cancer journeys, or any other life updates.

"We're a family. Everyone is so caring toward each other's situations because we've been there. We understand," says Makolo. "But hula helps us all overcome our struggles. It keeps us going." **is**

The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center is working to save lives in Hawai'i and the Pacific. If you're on a cancer journey, the UH Cancer Center can help. Learn more at UHCancerCenter.org.

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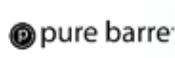
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1010-1478486



the real truth about coffee

words Kevin Allen



There are a lot of reasons to love coffee. It can warm you up on a cold morning and kickstart the mind and body with a jolt of caffeine. The flavors and aroma have launched entire subcultures related to its craft and brewing process. But is it good for you?

According to the National Coffee Association, 66% of Americans drink coffee on a daily basis, with 36% of coffee drinkers consuming three to five cups a day. That's a whole lot of coffee – and because of its national popularity, blanket statements about its health benefits and negative effects are seen as truths.

However, some of these myths are just that – myths. Let's take a closer look at (nearly) everyone's favorite brew and see what's fact and what's fiction.

Fact or fiction? Coffee is addictive and can cause severe withdrawal.

Fiction. According to registered dietitian and manager of HMA's Condition Care Programs August Espinal, coffee – and thus caffeine – can cause a mild dependence. However, it's not addictive the same way that alcohol or tobacco can be. Stopping regular use may cause a day or two of mild headaches and fatigue, but most coffee drinkers can reduce or pause regular intake without serious issues.

True or false? Coffee can cause anxiety and increased heart rates.

True. Coffee's main stimulant, caffeine, can have certain adverse side effects, especially for those with low tolerances to the substance. This can include a rise in heart rate, as well as feelings of anxiety, according to the

Mayo Clinic. However, everybody's different, and the way we react to coffee and caffeine is based highly on the individual's mental health, body weight, muscle mass, metabolism, and age – so results may vary.

Can or no can? Drinking coffee at night will keep me up and ruin my sleep.

Can. Coffee should be consumed six hours before you hit the hay at the latest. The effects of coffee and caffeine can last for hours, so if you're planning on getting a good night's rest, don't drink a cup of joe pre-bedtime.

But wait, is coffee good or bad for my health?

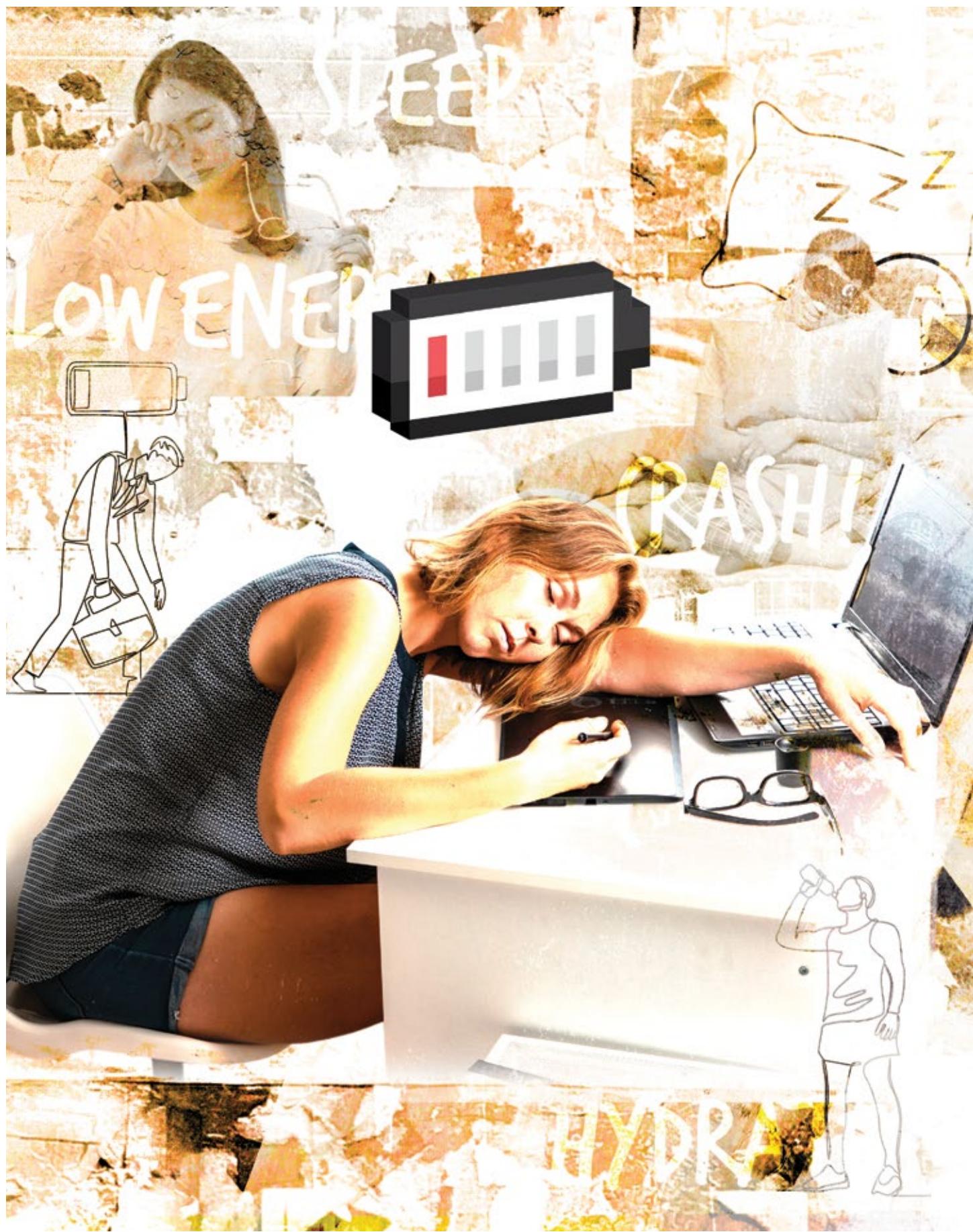
When consumed in moderation – up to 400 mg or four cups of brewed coffee a day for most people – coffee can be good for your health in the long term. Containing polyphenols and antioxidants, coffee can help to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, according to Espinal. Regular coffee intake has also been linked to lower incidences of certain cancers, like endometrial, prostate, and oral cancers, as well as improved moods and reduced risks of depression and Alzheimer's disease.

What can be bad for you is an excess of cream or other add-ins, which can be filled with sugar, calories, and saturated fat. Try healthier options such as adding milk, cocoa powder, or cinnamon.

If you have questions about your own coffee consumption, check with your primary care provider or a nutritionist.

For a video on how coffee affects your health, scan this QR code or visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkiK2NjJuxo.





tired of being tired?

words Keely Kalama-Lakey
photo illustration Brandon Young

Everyone gets tired, but when fatigue lingers it may be cause for concern. Fatigue is an important signal your body sends you, so it helps to know what's normal and when you need to talk to your doctor. Board-certified internist, Lifestyle Medicine diplomate, and HMSA Medical Director Rupal Gohil, M.D., answers our questions about when to seek help if you can't seem to shake your tired symptoms.



Rupal Gohil, M.D.

When is fatigue "normal"?

Fatigue can be a normal physiological response signaling the need for rest and recovery. It's normal to feel tired after certain activities like having a busy week, traveling, or starting a new workout routine. This type of fatigue typically improves with sleep and rest.

If you're still tired after you've rested and you can't find a reason for it, your body may be telling you something isn't right. Ask yourself:

- Has this been going on for weeks or months?
- Am I waking up tired, even after 7-8 hours of sleep?
- Is my fatigue affecting my ability to function?
- Is it new or worse than my usual energy level?

If you answered "yes" to any of these, it may be time to talk with your doctor. Fatigue can be a symptom of a range of conditions. Your doctor might run blood tests, ask about your sleep or mental health concerns, check the medications and over-the-counter products you use, and review lifestyle factors, such as nutrition, hydration, and physical activity.

What if everything is normal, but you're still tired?

Sometimes tests come back within normal limits, but fatigue remains. That doesn't mean you're imagining it. It can mean you need a lifestyle change and to reassess habits that could be draining your energy. Try these strategies:

- Prioritize sleep: Good sleep is the crux of energy maintenance. Aim for consistent, high-quality sleep. Create a wind-down routine before bed and avoid blue light – scrolling on phones before bed can negatively affect sleep. Keep your bedroom cool and dark.
- Move your body: This is a known and underrated energy jumpstart. Even light daily exercise (20 minutes of walking, especially after meals) improves energy and mood.
- Eat to fuel: Focus on whole fresh foods and well-balanced meals. Energy crashes often follow heavily processed foods or sugary snacks. Stay hydrated, as dehydration is a common energy drain.
- Take breaks: Though a good night's sleep can work wonders, rest doesn't always mean sleep. Take breaks that restore you and help alleviate stress – reading, music, time outdoors, or just find a moment to yourself to relax.

Ignoring persistent and unexplained fatigue can be risky. Even when a medical reason is not identified, prolonged fatigue can lead to weakened immune function, poor focus and memory, burnout, and an increased risk of anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Rest is a biological necessity and many of us are not getting enough. Tune into what your body is telling you to best protect your health. If significant fatigue persists, follow up with a health care professional to rule out additional underlying conditions and receive further guidance.



a doctor's experience with intermittent fasting

words and photos Earl Yoshii

"I was having knee and back pain," says Kenric M. Murayama, M.D., F.A.C.S., HMSA executive vice president, chief health officer, and president of Integrated Services, Inc. "Nothing serious, but enough to be annoying." Then one day, Dr. Murayama came across an article on intermittent fasting. It sounded simple enough. "I thought, why not? All I had to do was skip breakfast," he says.

That one small change led to big results. Just by fasting in the morning and doing some light exercise, Dr. Murayama lost almost 20 pounds and has been able to maintain his weight loss. "I couldn't believe how much better I felt – less pain, more energy. I was sold," he says.

"Intermittent fasting isn't a diet in the traditional sense," says Lisa Morita, a registered dietitian and HMSA certified diabetes educator. "It doesn't tell you what to eat, just when."

Here are popular methods of intermittent fasting:

- 16/8 method: You fast for 16 hours and eat within an eight-hour window. Example: Eat between noon and 8 p.m., fast the rest of the day.
- 5:2 method: You eat normally five days a week and cut way back on two days. Example: Calorie restrictions on Wednesdays and Sundays and eat normally the rest of the week.
- Eat-stop-eat method: A 24-hour fast once or twice a week. Example: Finish dinner at 7 p.m., then don't eat again until 7 p.m. the next day.
- Alternate-day fasting: Alternate between calorie restriction days (500 calories) and normal eating days. Example: Monday – fast, Tuesday – normal, Wednesday – fast.

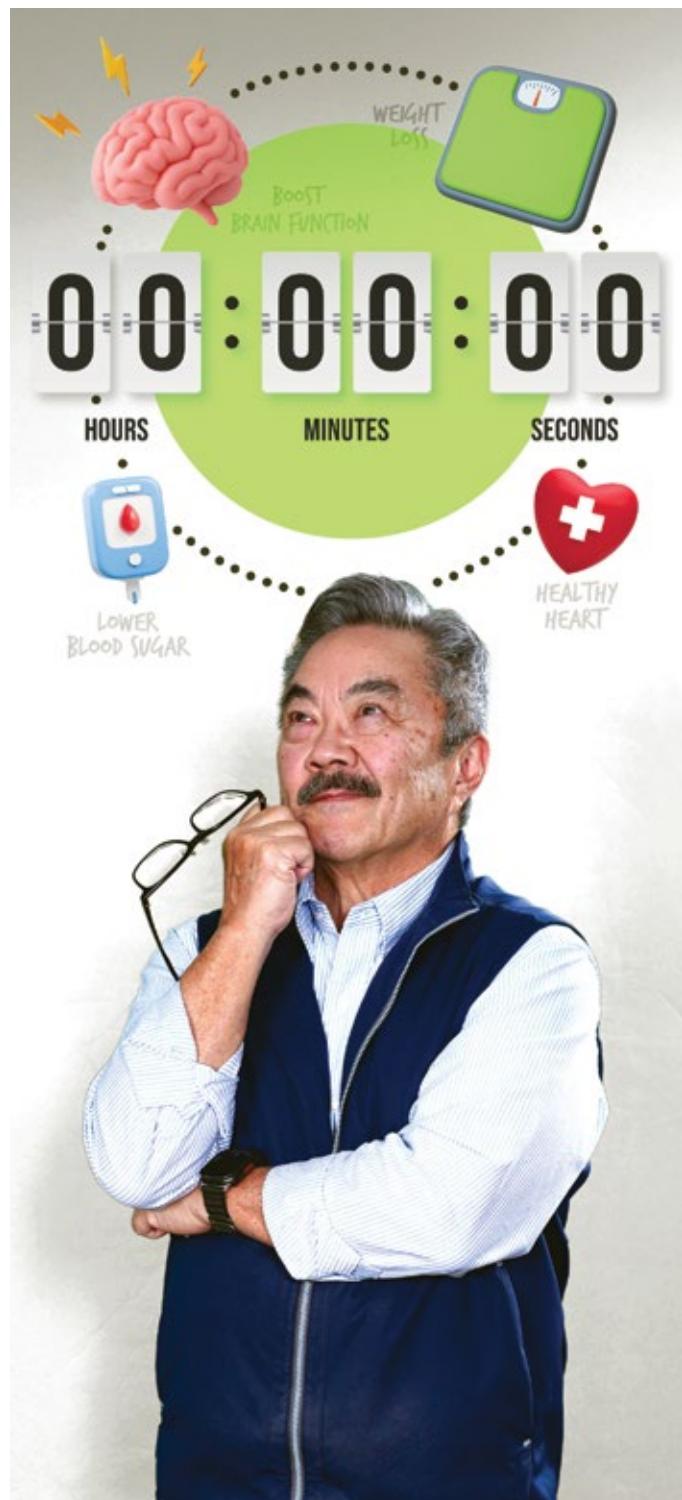
People like it because it's simple. No calorie counting, no special foods, just a shift in timing. And it comes with some serious perks. Studies have shown that intermittent fasting can help with weight loss, lower blood sugar, reduce inflammation, and even boost brain and heart health.

"I liked that it was drug-free and didn't feel restrictive," Dr. Murayama says. "It was easy to stick with."

And just as with any other weight management program, it's important to exercise on a regular schedule. It's not just about losing weight, but also regaining health," he says.

Morita adds, "Always talk to your doctor before starting any diet or lifestyle change. What works for one person might not be right for another." She notes that intermittent fasting isn't for everyone, and some people may experience low energy, nutrient deficiencies, digestive discomfort, or changes in their hormones or blood sugar levels.

For Dr. Murayama, it was a small shift that made a big difference, and it all started with skipping breakfast. **IS**



HMSA offers a variety of well-being programs such as nutrition and physical activity, preventive care, and managing chronic stress.



To learn more, scan this QR code or visit hmsa.com/well-being.

the whys of handwashing

words Keely Kalama-Lakey



Most people learn at a young age to wash their hands to remove dirt. But how many people do it properly to get the germs off?

Knowing the reasons behind handwashing recommendations might encourage you to follow the guidelines. After all, even doctors in the mid-19th century needed proof before they believed proper handwashing could prevent the spread of disease.

An interesting history

Handwashing didn't really enter medicine until around 1847, when a Hungarian obstetrician, Ignaz Semmelweis, noticed the hospital he worked in had a higher maternity mortality rate than other hospitals. He wondered if it had to do with the fact that his hospital staff studied cadavers before seeing patients.

Soon after Semmelweis instructed staff to wash their hands in a disinfecting solution before treating maternity patients, the number of deaths dropped dramatically. However, people didn't believe him without scientific evidence.

That evidence came along in 1865 when British surgeon Joseph Lister applied Louis Pasteur's germ theory of disease (1862) and used antiseptic to destroy microorganisms when treating patients. It worked, and Lister went on to suggest various forms of sterilization in medicine.

Handwashing for community health took off in the 1980s when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published national hand hygiene guidelines to prevent the spread of illness. Here's the rationale behind those guidelines.

- **Use soap and clean water.**

Soap helps lift soil and microbes from skin, and people tend to scrub more thoroughly when using soap, which removes more germs. (If soap and water aren't available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.)

- **Rub your hands together.**

Lathering and scrubbing hands creates friction, which helps remove dirt, grease, and microbes from skin. The soap molecules attach to the oils and dirt on your hands, which often contain bacteria and viruses. Clean water rinses it all away. Scrub your entire hand, including between fingers and under the nails, since microbes are all over the hand surface.

- **Wash for at least 20 seconds.**

Experts found that 15-30 seconds removes more germs than doing so for shorter periods.

- **Dry your hands.** Wet hands are shown to transfer germs more easily.

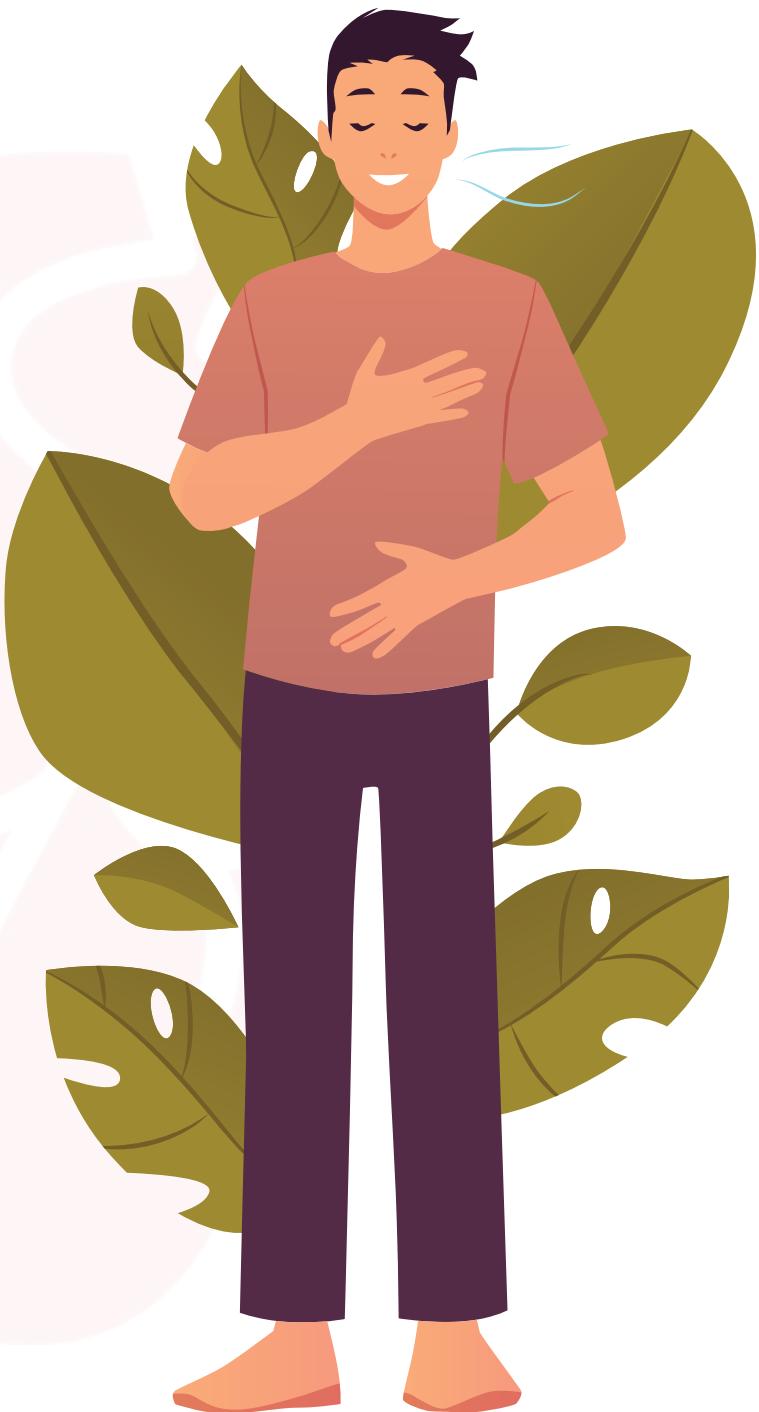
Follow the guidelines and help keep you, your family, and your community as healthy as possible. 

health matters

Be Kind to Your Heart

Did you know that chronic stress can affect your heart health? While some stress is manageable, chronic stress can be bad for your heart, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. It can increase inflammation, affect your blood pressure, disrupt your sleep, and lead to unhealthy eating.

In honor of February's American Heart Month, be good to your heart and reduce stress with regular exercise and relaxation techniques like meditation and deep breathing. As always, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional when stress gets too hard to handle on your own.





February is National Cancer Prevention Month

An important step in preventing cancer is seeing your doctor regularly. If you're over age 50, you should see your doctor once a year. If you're under age 50, see your doctor at least every two to three years, unless directed otherwise by your doctor. Keep them informed about any updates to your health. This includes new concerns or symptoms, a family member's new diagnosis, medications or supplements you're taking, and if you're seeing a specialist or receiving other care.

Your doctor uses this type of information to determine your health risks and ensure you get the health screenings you need. Cancer screenings give you the best chance of finding concerns early when they're most treatable.



Plant Food: Variety Helps

National Nutrition Month in March gives us a great excuse to talk about food. You've probably heard that regularly eating plant-based food and including different colored fruits and vegetables is good for your health. However, you may not realize exactly how important this can be.

The vitamins and minerals found in plant-based food varies. To maximize health benefits, you need a variety of colors and types. For example, your body needs minerals like calcium, potassium, sodium, and magnesium to regulate how much water you have in your body and how your nerves, brain, and muscles function.

Registered dietitian and HMSA manager of Condition Care Programs, August Espinal, provides examples of the variety of foods you need to get these minerals. For potassium, eat bananas, sweet potatoes, spinach, and avocados. You can get calcium from dairy products and leafy greens and magnesium from nuts and seeds. Learn more at nutrition.gov.

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Theresa A. Shipley-Klein
Megan Kayle Weeks
Grace Midori Yee

Kauai

Elise Burger
Dominic-Theodore Cardelli
Alyssa Mun Yee Chow
Kaiea Cole Iwasaki
Omid Jafari
Jodi Frances Kirk
Brandon Mason
Dallen K. Ormond
Howayda Mrad Powers

Lanai

Marques J. Bostic

Maui

Mathias Davis
Jessica S. Jones
Julia Kirchgessner
Jodi Frances Kirk

Kelli Nakano Ha
Kaleigh M. Oswald
Tia R. Pilikian
Erica J. Soderlind
Matthew Edwin Wick
Anne E. Wooliscroft
Brenton G. Yuen

Molokai

Julie Ansell
Brianne R. Childs
Kyle J.H. Chun
Ryan M. Dadds
Olivia I. Gibson
Emerson Lau

Oahu

Shawon Akanda
Charles Akiona
Razel B. Alibin
Kamaree K. Altaffer
Alexander Anshus
Abigail Ryan Aplaca
Laura Badalucco
Courtney A. Betsock
Jenifer K. Bossert
Songmei Cao
Jason C. Celestino
Christy A. Ceraso
Kyle J.H. Chun
Lisa M. Chun Fat
Richard S. Chung
Ryan M. Dadds
Danielle Leigh De Longe
Keegan Duchicela
Matthew Isaiah Ebia
Mary A. Erwin
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Joseph Edward Franklin Jr
Rose E.P.M. Friedheim
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Melissa D. Giron-Bauer
David L. Glasser
Joseph D. Gomez
Laura Genevieve Gonzalez
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Hayley E. Griffin
Audrey Masako Hagiwara
Ann M. Haleakala
Kiira M.P. Harrison
Quinn Robert Masao
Hashimoto

Sabrina R. Helmer
Kalli Marie Sachiko Hirasa
Rhys Teruhide Ishihara
Melanie C. James
Amy W. Jenkins
Kristen N. Johnson
Shyretha Tawanee Johnson
Sharnelle N. Kamibayashi
Tajanay Sharron-Marie
Keaton-Chesson
Leah P. Kelly
Lorrie N. Kim
Zachary River Kim
Natalie Christine Kimber
Jodi Frances Kirk
Brandon Kobayashi
Micah K. Kobayashi
Benjamin Michael Kozak
Adriana H. Kruger Fouts
Natalie Kulongowski
Shirley Kwok
Samantha E.A.D. LandrySmith
Emerson Lau
John B. Lauron
Nancy L. Lautenbach
Tamara P.C.A. Lawrence
Jennifer Lee
Alexander J. Leeds
Dayle-Ann M. Lee-Roche
Jennifer Penn Lerner
Jenna Lewis
Jenny Liu
Maggie K. Long
Jennifer Leigh Longacre
Katrina T. Lu
Jesus Zamora Lucas
Jethro Tangonan Macaraeg
Daniel Phillip Magliulo
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Alana M. Taniguchi
Tanya J. Uyeda
Shayne Visser
Alise Ward
Lisa M. Watson
Aurielle C. Williams
Stanley E. Wipfli
Daisy-Kristina Ashley Wong
Emily B. Wong
Kaitlyn Mei Ann Yim
Abigail Adair Younger
Brenton G. Yuen

These providers joined
HMSA's network
between March 21
and June 20, 2025.

For a complete list of
HMSA participating
providers, contact
information, and plans
accepted, visit [Find a
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or scan the QR code.



patient experience

words David Frickman



Bryce Watanabe

Along with the medical staff, hospital patients have other employees dedicated to helping patients have a positive stay.

At Hawai'i Pacific Health, one of those groups is the Patient Experience team. The team works closely with the Patient Relations teams and the staff at each of its four medical centers, gathering and assessing feedback in order to help enhance comfort and satisfaction for patients throughout Hawai'i Pacific Health during hospitalization and beyond.

Island Scene had questions for Bryce Watanabe, Hawai'i Pacific Health's director of patient experience, about how the team helps patients.

How does the Patient Experience staff benefit hospital patients?

Our Patient Experience team focuses on service excellence and feedback for the organization. A big part of our job is figuring out ways we can listen intently to the voices of our patients. Much of that involves studying feedback that comes from interactions with our staff, patient surveys, and other processes.

Tell us about the collaboration needed from nurses, doctors, and administrative staff to support the patient experience.

Collaboration is one of our team's greatest strengths. Our Patient Experience team helps the organization

collaborate across departments, facilities, and disciplines to share our knowledge and leverage our strengths. We gather feedback to continuously improve what we do in our pursuit of service excellence.

What are the day-to-day responsibilities of a Patient Experience staff member?

Our work varies greatly from day to day. We might be meeting with care teams to identify areas for improvement or recognizing outstanding team members, then conducting on-the-job training. On another day, we may be hosting a Patient Family Advisory Council meeting, where we work with our patients to design better experiences, or working with an internal team on a specific initiative.

How has the role evolved over the years?

When I first started the job, I was really focused on scores and rankings against national benchmarks and only centered around what was good for patients. Although that still rings very true today, we've gone beyond the scores and have focused on more proactive work. We are coaching and training our employees with relationship-building skills that foster safety and trust both within our care teams and with our patients.

for your benefit



Help to Kick Alcohol and Chemical Dependency

According to the U.S. National Institute of Health, the prevalence of heavy drinking among adults in Hawai'i is higher compared to adults in the U.S. (18.6% vs. 15.8%, respectively).

HMSA plans provide unlimited benefits for treatment of alcohol and drug abuse at parity with coverage for other medical conditions for all diagnoses related to substance abuse.

Specific benefits, such as deductibles, out-of-pocket costs, and the level of care required (e.g., inpatient, outpatient, or detoxification), depend on your plan. Your plan may cover treatment for co-occurring mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety alongside addiction under mental or behavioral health services.

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Weight Management Program

HMSA is contracting with CVS Caremark®, our pharmacy benefits manager, to pilot the CVS Weight Management program for eligible members of HMSA's Federal Plan 87, the HMSA plan for Postal Service Employees, and HMSA employees. This pilot aims to gather insight and feedback to explore opportunities to expand eligibility across our health plans.

Eligible members trying to reach and maintain a healthy weight can take advantage of a weight management program designed to help achieve lasting results. The program provides customized support to help members reach their health goals. A dedicated care team will provide clinical support and nutrition plans at no extra cost for eligible members.

More information is available at cvs.co/WM or by calling 1 (800) 207-2208 Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For TTY, call 711.

CVS Caremark® is an independent company providing pharmacy benefit management services on behalf of HMSA.





Health Plan Word Fun

Match the items on the left with the descriptions on the right to learn about your HMSA health plan and benefits.

A. eligible charge	1. A list of prescription medications covered under your drug plan.
B. open enrollment	2. An easy way to manage your HMSA membership online.
C. formulary	3. People who can be covered under your family plan, such as your spouse or child.
D. dual coverage	4. The amount that a doctor or other provider can charge based on their contract with HMSA.
E. copayment	5. The amount you pay for medical services and products before your health plan pays.
F. my account	6. The best health magazine published in Hawai'i.
G. premium	7. The dollar amount you pay out of pocket for medical services and products that are benefits of your HMSA plan.
H. deductible	8. The period each year when you can make changes to your health plan for the following year.
I. island scene	9. The regular payment you or your employer makes to HMSA for your health plan.
J. dependents	10. When you have coverage from two different health insurance companies.

Matching answers: A/4, B/8, C/1, D/10, E/7, F/2, G/9, H/5, I/6, J/3



playing it safe

words Earl Yoshii

art Garry Ono

It's a matter of keeping the players safe, according to Kamehameha Schools Kapālama assistant athletic director Wendell Say. With 44 years of coaching experience, 32 of them as head football coach at 'Aiea High School, he's seen a lot of changes in the way concussions are treated.

"Back in the day, if a kid got hit and looked dazed, we just told them to shake it off," says Say. "Now we know that a concussion is a real brain injury, and it has to be treated seriously."

Coaches are the first to see if something's amiss. If a child is hit hard and can't get up, if they're wobbly, or if they're just "not themselves," that's a warning sign. "Sometimes kids will say they're all right because they don't want to sit out," says Say. "But that's when we rely on our athletic trainers. They run the tests and decide."

Among them is Liana Finer, vice president of the Hawaii Athletic Trainers' Association. Her evenings are filled with sitting on the sidelines at high school games, tending to athletes. "We take a series of quick tests – memory problems, a balance test, response time," she explains. "Before the season begins, athletes have baseline testing, so we know their baseline. That way, if something happens, we can compare."



Wendell Say

The policy is clear: If there's suspicion of a concussion, the player is not sent back into the game.

"That's nonnegotiable," says Finer. "It keeps them from getting hit again and making it worse." Parents are then called, and, depending on symptoms, the athlete may be sent to the emergency room or told to schedule an appointment with their physician.

Going back onto the field is done gradually. Once a doctor has cleared a player, athletic trainers take athletes through the gradual process – light walking, light exercise, practice without contact, and finally full play. "We monitor every step," says Finer. "If signs appear, we stop and back up."

Recovery can take anywhere from a couple of weeks to more than a month. "Every concussion is different," says Finer. "That's why patience is key. You only have one brain – you've got to protect it."

Say agrees. After decades of coaching, he's seen the difference in how concussion awareness has helped provide further safety measures for athletes. "Sports are great, but at the end of the day, nothing is more important than the health of these kids." **IS**

"Every concussion is different. That's why patience is key. You only have one brain – you've got to protect it."

: Liana Finer



For more stories on the impact of concussions and how to protect yourself, scan the QR code or visit islandscene.com/more.



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March 2, 10-11 a.m.

HMSA Center in Pearl City

March 12, 10-11 a.m.



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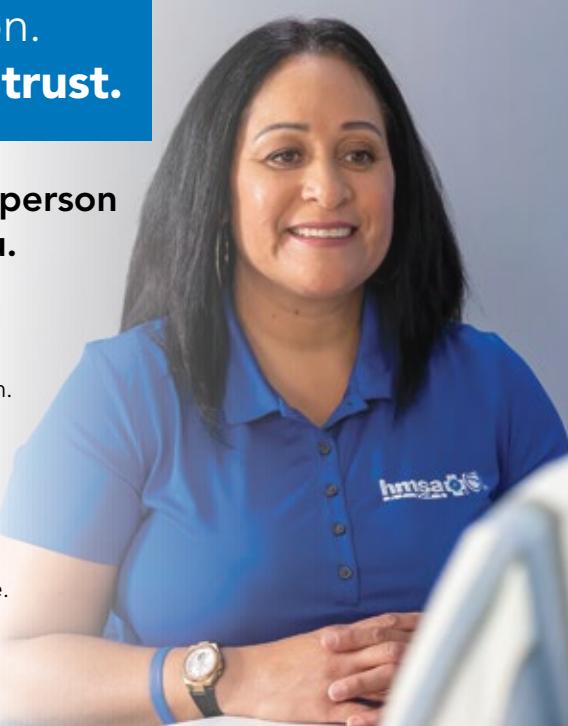
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new year, new hobby

words Summer Nakaishi

Start the new year with a spark of creativity! This collection of books will be sure to get your artistic juices flowing.



The Creativity Project: An Awesometastic Story Collection

By Colby Sharp

This book is what happens when you ask 44 children's book authors to each send in two creative prompts and contribute a response to another's prompt. This is a collection of author-answered prompts – poems, short stories, photographs, drawings, comics (or anything the creator dreamed up!) – and 44 new prompts for the reader. Colby Sharp's project is packed with inspiration, celebrating how ideas can be story seeds that take root and blossom.

Draw Every Little Thing

By Flora Waycott

Find charm in your everyday life and turn anything and everything into art with Flora Waycott's whimsical step-by-step projects. With a quick introduction to color theory, favorite tools and materials, and drawing and painting techniques, Waycott shares over 100 easy-to-follow tutorials that are sure to have you learn (or improve) your drawing and painting techniques and encourage you to romanticize your daily routine.

Making Things

By Erin Boyle and Rose Pearlman

If you're looking for a crafting book that won't have you spending an arm and a leg in startup costs, this one is for you. With easy-to-follow tutorials, novice crafters can weave potholders from old T-shirts, assemble old magazine pages into an origami box, or use your own fingers to braid a dog leash. This accessible guide will have you turning ordinary materials into beautiful objects while you rethink the way you look at trash.

The Magic Words

Joseph Fasano

Are you a poet and didn't know it? With 50 fill-in-the-blank prompts that explore themes like friendship, forgiveness, grief, gratitude, and loneliness, this workbook will have you connecting with your feelings in ways you may not have imagined. With examples from real-life people, ages 7 to 83, as well as "Notes from a Poet," the pages will guide writers of all ages to unlock their creativity and bring out their inner poet.



how to deal with picky eaters

words Courtney Takabayashi

photos Earl Yoshii

"I don't wanna eat it!" "I don't like it!"

"It tastes yucky!" If your child is a selective eater, you've probably heard these dramatic declarations countless times. However, during this formative time in life, it's important that your keiki eat a variety of foods to get proper nutrition. We asked Honolulu pediatrician Vinson Diep, M.D., for tips on ways to help a picky eater.

Diversify their plate

When dealing with a picky eater, Dr. Diep suggests introducing a variety of foods. "The variety keeps things interesting for kids," he says. "Be sure to hit all the food groups: carbohydrates, protein, fruits, and vegetables." He suggests starting at a young age if possible. "When you're first introducing foods to your baby, focus on variety instead of sticking to just one food group."



Vinson Diep, M.D.



Capture their attention

Sometimes, it's all about presentation. "For toddlers or preschool-age kids, you might try putting foods on a colorful plate or a plate with a character or show that they like," says Dr. Diep. "This may make it more enticing and fun for them."

Be a good role model

Children tend to learn and imitate behaviors from observation. "It's helpful when parents demonstrate good eating habits, too," says Dr. Diep. "If kids see their parents eating a variety of foods, they're more likely to follow."



For reader tips on dealing with picky eaters, go to islandscene.com/more.

Minimize distractions

"Lots of children are distracted while eating and this may contribute to them being picky," says Dr. Diep. "It's a good idea to remove distractions like phones, TV, etc. (this includes parents, too!)." Establish mealtime as a special time to engage in conversation.

Don't give up

"Realize that taste buds and food preferences change over time," says Dr. Diep. "Just because they don't like eggplant one day, doesn't mean you should stop trying eggplant altogether." He suggests preparing it a different way or introducing it again later.

When it comes to selective eaters, try to be understanding and patient. And check out our recipes for picky eaters on page 56. **is**

keiki corner

Kid-friendly temaki

Temaki, Japanese for “handroll,” is the perfect lunch for kids. It’s portable, customizable, and delicious! We have a few recipes to get you started, but you can use anything your keiki will eat. We used brown rice and skipped the vinegar, but feel free to make your temaki to your child’s liking.

Pro tip: To keep the nori crispy, you can pack the rice and prep the ingredients separately and your child can assemble the temaki themselves.

Basic roll

Ingredients

- Cooked brown rice
- 7"x 8" nori sheets cut in half

Instructions

Place nori shiny side down. Add a small scoop or two of rice to the bottom half of the nori and spread out so it’s even. Place ingredients (suggestions below) on rice. Starting from the bottom of the nori, roll tightly. Enjoy!

California roll ingredients

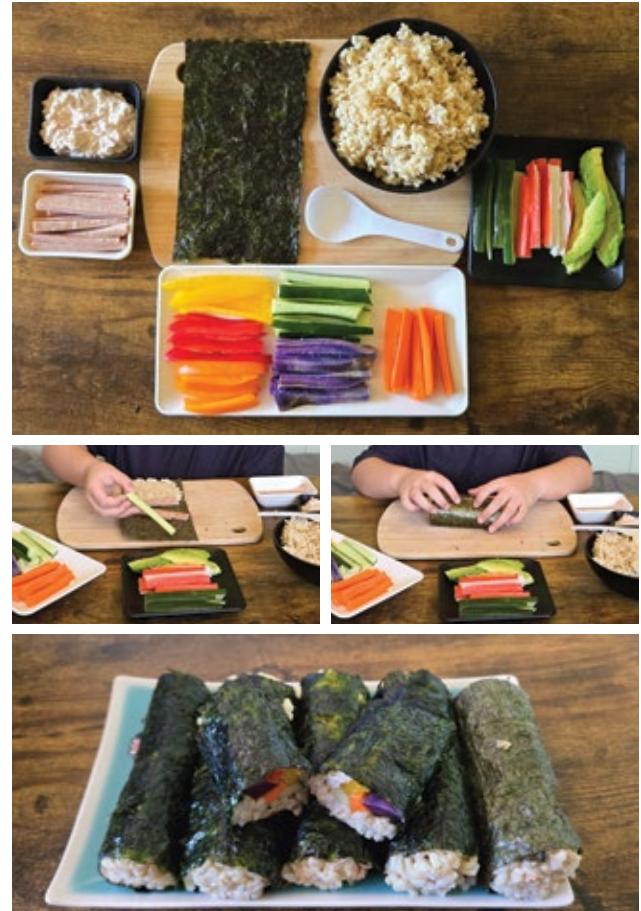
- Avocado, sliced
- Cucumber, sliced
- Imitation crab sticks, sliced

Luncheon meat ingredients

- Low-sodium luncheon meat, sliced

Colorful roll ingredients

- Carrots, sliced
- Cucumbers, sliced
- Red, yellow, and/or orange peppers, sliced
- Sweet potato, cooked and sliced



Tuna salad ingredients

- Canned tuna, drained
- Light-mayonnaise
- Salt and pepper

Mix canned tuna and mayonnaise. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Note: When incorporating perishable ingredients like mayonnaise, be sure to include an ice pack in the lunch bag.

Bento word scramble

Can you unscramble all the bento ingredients?

buurecmc hekmice _____

daameme _____

smuibu _____

usihs _____

tho odg _____

obakakom _____

geg lorl _____

eyirtaik kitcss _____

diref nihkcce _____

hpmirs petmuar _____

istphoccks _____



Healthy snacks word search



Need an idea for a yummy and healthy snack? Check out our suggestions below and see if you can find them in the word search.

APPLE
BANANA
CARROTS
CELERY

COTTAGE CHEESE
CUCUMBER
GRANOLA BAR
GRAPES

HUMMUS
NUTS
ORANGE
POPCORN
PRETZELS
STRAWBERRIES
YOGURT



J	S	U	A	P	O	P	C	O	R	N	I	M	P	W
I	X	Q	C	Y	O	G	U	R	T	G	T	B	W	P
Q	C	O	T	T	A	G	E	C	H	E	S	E	B	
U	S	G	S	V	G	O	U	Z	N	M	V	J	D	S
S	T	R	A	W	B	E	R	R	I	E	S	C	D	L
R	B	A	T	B	A	N	A	N	A	A	A	U	E	E
J	N	P	C	A	P	P	L	E	U	O	L	C	B	Z
T	R	E	O	A	H	K	M	U	G	T	X	U	G	T
O	B	S	Y	C	R	H	R	V	A	O	S	M	E	E
H	X	V	X	H	G	R	A	N	O	L	A	B	R	
H	U	M	M	U	S	M	O	T	W	J	Z	E	R	P
C	C	E	L	E	R	Y	L	T	G	S	R	R	Q	X
O	R	A	N	G	E	M	R	J	S	K	Y	Z	L	I
D	Y	P	S	Z	J	W	W	C	M	T	I	C	F	P
J	S	U	A	P	O	P	C	O	R	N	I	M	P	W

fueling up when you're feeling down

words Summer Nakaishi

If you've wondered whether the most accurate saying is "feed a fever, starve a cold" or "feed a cold, starve a fever," you can breathe easy – neither is correct. According to John Hopkins Medicine, the best advice to combat sickness is to feed both. And spoiler alert: Starving away illness is more myth than medicine.

Most importantly, when battling an illness, staying hydrated is the main priority. Drinking water or electrolytes may help with fluid intolerance and reduce the likelihood of vomiting. Colds and flus are caused by viruses, meaning there's no immediate cure except to let the illness run its course. However, you can support your immune system with proper hydration, rest and good nutrition.



Kaipo Pau, M.D.

"For most people who are sick, their appetite is not great. During an illness, it's important to consume adequate protein, especially in the setting of reduced caloric intake," says Kaipo Pau, M.D., and registered dietitian at Queen's University Medical Group. "It usually comes down to eating foods that you can tolerate."

While you're reaching for the tissues or curling up in bed, things like meal planning and cooking may feel a bit unsavory. Here are two simple comfort food recipes our team enjoys that may help you increase your caloric intake when your body starts craving more than water.



Ochazuke (Tea over rice)

Cooked rice

Hot green tea or broth

Tofu, leftover cooked or canned salmon, or leftover grilled chicken.

Optional toppings: Nori, furikake, wasabi, ume, green onions, sesame seeds, or soy sauce.

Warm leftover rice, protein, and toppings. Brew tea or heat broth and pour around edges of rice.

Nutrient analysis depends on toppings.

Egg drop soup

1 large egg

1½ cups chicken or vegetable stock

½ Tbsp. cornstarch

½ Tbsp. cold water

½ tsp. sesame oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Green onion or vegetables, optional

Beat egg in a medium bowl until smooth and set aside. Add cornstarch and cold water to small bowl and set aside.

Pour vegetable or chicken stock (and white part of green onion, if using) into a pot. Cook on high until simmering. Once simmering, reduce heat to medium-low and gradually stir in cornstarch and cold-water mix until soup thickens. Add the egg in a circular motion from above into the pot. Add salt, white pepper, and sesame oil and mix until the salt is dissolved. Transfer to bowl and garnish with green onion.

Approximate Nutrient Analysis per serving (not including salt to taste): 150 calories, 8 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 190 mg cholesterol, 800 mg sodium, 6 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber, 1 g sugar, 14 g protein

hidden veggie recipes

words Courtney Takabayashi

photos Lew Harrington

food styling Marjie Beaton

If your keiki only wants to eat processed food, they're not alone! The National Institutes of Health estimate that 13%-22% of children are picky eaters.

So how do we help our kiddos get vitamins and nutrients from their diet? Here are three easy recipes that incorporate hidden vegetables that even the pickiest of kids may be willing to try.

Bonus: Have your kids help you in the kitchen so they feel a sense of accomplishment. Perhaps they'll be more interested in eating their creations!





Hearty marinara

2 Tbsp. olive oil
3 cups vegetables of choice like onions, carrots, butternut squash, sweet potatoes, bell peppers (any color), celery, or cauliflower (roughly chopped)
24-oz. jar marinara sauce
1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
Baking soda, optional
1 lb. cooked pasta
Parmesan cheese, optional

Heat oil in a medium skillet on medium heat. Add vegetables, stir, and cover. Cook 10 minutes or until tender. Remove lid and stir in marinara sauce. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat to medium low, and place the lid so it's mostly covering the pot but not a tight seal. This will let some steam escape but will protect your cooktop from splatters. Simmer 20-25 minutes or until everything is tender.

Puree with an immersion blender or regular blender. Add Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper. If the sauce is too thick for your liking, add a little water or pasta water. If the sauce is too acidic, sprinkle some baking soda. Serve with cooked pasta and Parmesan cheese, if desired. Makes 4 servings.

Zoodle bonus: If you have a vegetable spiralizer, you can spiralize some zucchini and toss with or replace pasta for an extra veggie boost.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving (not including optional Parmesan cheese): 620 calories, 2 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 1100 mg sodium, 107 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 13 g sugar, 19 g protein

Salmon and veggie hearts

1 quart water
1 cup broccoli florets, chopped
1/2 medium white onion, chopped
1 large carrot, peeled and grated
8-oz. skinless salmon fillet, diced
1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
1 cup panko breadcrumbs
Squeeze of lemon juice
1 Tbsp. fresh dill, chopped
1 egg yolk
2 Tbsp. reduced-fat or fat-free mayonnaise

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add broccoli and boil 2-3 minutes until tender. Drain well. Put onion and carrot into a food processor and blend for a few seconds. Add the rest of the ingredients and pulse until everything is smooth.

Depending on how big your cookie cutter is, scoop the mixture, roll into balls, and flatten on a parchment-paper lined baking sheet. Use your cookie cutter to create hearts (or any shape you have). Repeat until you use all the mixture. Bake 15 minutes or until lightly golden and cooked through. Let cool and serve. Makes 12 mini-hearts (depending on size of cookie cutter).

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving (based on 12 mini-hearts and reduced-fat mayonnaise): 100 calories, 4.5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 105 mg sodium, 8 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 1 g sugar, 6 g protein



Semi-homemade zucchini muffins

Cooking spray

1 13.25-oz. box yellow cake mix

1/4 cup coconut oil

1/4 cup skim milk

3 large eggs

2 cups zucchini (1-2 medium zucchini), shredded and pat dry

1/4 cup walnuts

1/2 cup semi-sweet mini-chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray muffin pan with cooking spray. In large bowl, combine cake mix, oil, milk, and eggs until well-blended. Add zucchini, walnuts, and chocolate chips and mix until all ingredients are incorporated. Add mix to muffin pan.

Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until center is cooked through. Remove from oven and let muffins cool on a wire rack at least 15 minutes. Makes approximately 12-18 muffins.

Approximate nutrient analysis per muffin (based on 12 muffins and used a 13.25 oz. yellow cake mix): 260 calories, 13 g fat, 7 g saturated fat, 45 mg cholesterol, 250 mg sodium, 33 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 20 g sugar, 4 g protein

For tips on dealing with picky eaters, see page 50.

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cooking with miso, a local favorite

words Michelle Liu

photos Rae Huo

food styling Cedric Fujita

Miso isn't just for soup (although it is delicious)! While we love it as a broth base, miso is an incredibly versatile ingredient that adds a savory, umami-rich flavor to all kinds of dishes. The possibilities are endless!

Miso Glazed Eggplant

1 tsp. white miso paste
1 Tbsp. sugar
1 Tbsp. mirin
½ Tbsp. water
2 globe (round) eggplant
1 Tbsp. toasted sesame oil
2 stalks green onion, thinly sliced
2 tsp. toasted white sesame seeds
2 cups cooked rice, optional

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Combine miso, sugar, mirin, and water; mix until combined. Set aside.

Remove eggplant stem and calyx (green, leaf-like part surrounding stem). Cut eggplant in half lengthwise. Score eggplant by using a knife to make shallow, diagonal incisions in a crosshatch pattern across inner flesh. Soak eggplant in water for 10 minutes. Blot with paper towels. Brush cut surface with sesame oil. Place eggplant cut-side down on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes until flesh is soft and skin is brown and slightly shriveled. Remove from oven.

Preheat broiler. Turn eggplant cut side up. Coat flesh with miso glaze. Place eggplant under broiler for 3-5 minutes until glaze begins to bubble and caramelize. Sprinkle eggplant with green onions and sesame seeds. Serve with rice if desired. Makes 4 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving (without rice): 130 calories, 4.5 g fat, 0.5 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 70 mg sodium, 23 g carbohydrate, 8 g fiber, 13 g sugar, 3 g protein

Niku Miso and Tofu Stir-fry

¼ cup white miso paste
1 Tbsp. sugar
3 Tbsp. mirin
1½ Tbsp. shoyu
2 Tbsp. water
2 tsp. potato starch
1 Tbsp. sesame oil
1 lb. ground turkey
1 14-oz. block extra firm tofu, drained and cubed
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 stalks green onions, chopped
Furikake, for garnish
2 cups cooked rice, for serving

In a small bowl, mix miso and sugar until combined. Set aside. In another small bowl, mix mirin, shoyu, water, and potato starch until combined. Set aside.

In a large saucepan over medium heat, add sesame oil. Once hot, add ground turkey, using a spatula to break up the meat. Cook until turkey is no longer pink, about 10-15 minutes. Add tofu and garlic to pan. Cook until heated through and fragrant, about 1-3 minutes. Add miso and sugar mixture. Stir until combined. Pour sauce into pan and cook on medium-low heat until heated through, about 1-3 minutes. Garnish with green onions and furikake. Serve with rice. Makes 4 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving (without rice): 380 calories, 18 g fat, 3.5 g saturated fat, 80 mg cholesterol, 900 mg sodium, 21 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 10 g sugar, 35 g protein



For a video on how to prepare the Niku Miso and Tofu Stir-fry recipe, scan the QR code or visit hmsa.com/MisoRecipe.

Sheet Pan Miso Chicken and Sweet Potato

Olive oil spray
1/4 cup miso paste
2 Tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature
2 Tbsp. mirin
2 tsp. five-spice powder, divided
1 large orange sweet potato, peeled and cubed
1/2 cup olive oil, divided
Sea salt, to taste
1 1/2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
1 shallot, sliced
1 medium red onion, sliced
Fresh arugula

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Lightly spray sheet pan with olive oil. Set aside. In a small bowl, whisk miso paste, butter, mirin, and 1 teaspoon five-spice powder. Mix until smooth and creamy.

In a medium bowl, toss sweet potatoes with 1/2 teaspoon five-spice powder, 1/4 cup olive oil, and a pinch of sea salt. Set aside.

Arrange chicken thighs on prepared sheet pan. Spoon miso glaze over each piece. Place sweet potatoes around chicken. Bake 20 minutes. Meanwhile, in the same bowl used for sweet potatoes, add shallot and red onion. Season with remaining five-spice powder, remaining olive oil, and a pinch of sea salt. Toss to coat. After 20 minutes, remove sheet pan from oven. Add onions around chicken and sweet potatoes. Return to oven and bake an additional 10 minutes, or until chicken is fully cooked and vegetables are tender. Serve over fresh arugula. Makes 4 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving: 600 calories, 48 g fat, 11 g saturated fat, 145 mg cholesterol, 1100 mg sodium, 22 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 8 g sugar, 34 g protein





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In the next few months, you may receive a survey in the mail called CAHPS® (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) from a company called Press Ganey (a company approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services). If you are randomly selected to receive this survey, please take the time to complete it.

The survey should take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Your responses are confidential and will provide us insight on the quality of care and services you've received. We appreciate hearing your thoughts about what we're doing right and what we can improve.

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miso in love

words Michelle Liu

Miso is a key ingredient in local favorites like misoyaki butterfish and miso soup. Did you know there's even a Hawaiian-style miso, which is mild and relatively sweet?

There are so many reasons to love the traditional Japanese seasoning that's a beloved staple in Hawai'i.

How it's made

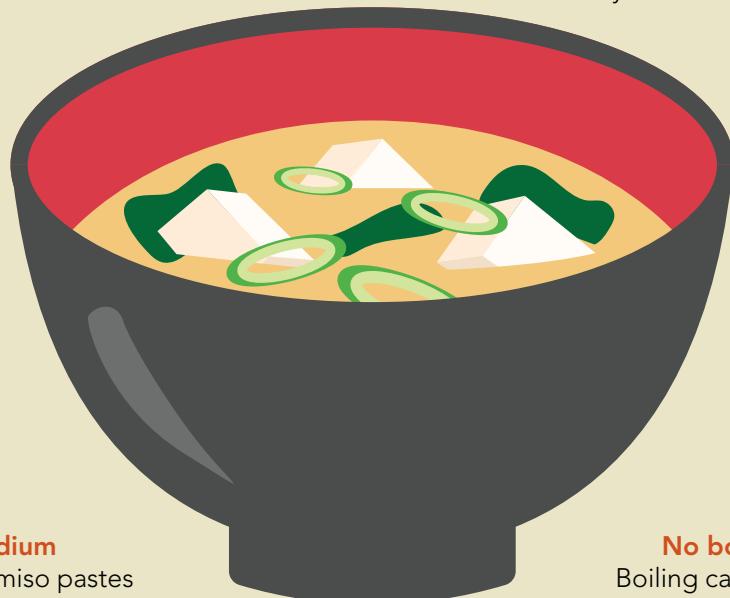
Miso is a thick paste made from fermented soybeans, salt, and the fungus *Aspergillus oryzae* (koji grown on rice or barley).

Good for your gut

Miso contains probiotics and may help promote gut health and digestion.

Red, white, and yellow varieties

White miso is sweet and mild; red miso is dark and potent; yellow miso falls in between.



High in sodium

Sodium levels of miso pastes can vary, so check nutrition labels and monitor how much you use in recipes.

No boiling allowed

Boiling can kill the probiotic bacteria in miso and affect the flavor.

Soul-warming soup

Miso is perhaps best known for being used as the base of miso soup. For other 'ono miso recipes, check out "cooking with miso, a local favorite" on page 60.



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