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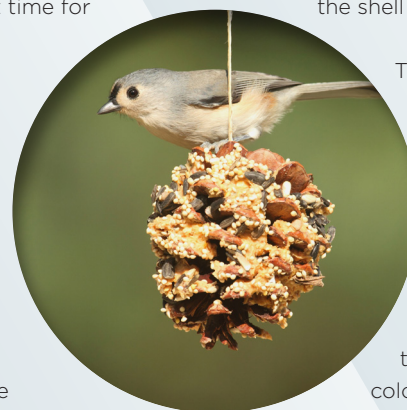
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SPROUT YOUR KIDS' IMAGINATION

With spring officially underway, April showers starting to bring May flowers, and Earth Day on April 22, now is a great time for outdoor family activities.

ONE FOR THE BIRDS Making a pine cone bird feeder is a fun and inexpensive project. In addition to creating and hanging your bird feeder, you'll get hours of extra entertainment from watching the birds it will attract to your yard. If your kids are older, take photos of the birds or note their colors and features and look them up in a field guide or online.



This craft just requires a pine cone (the bigger the better), peanut butter, and some twine or string. Top the peanut butter with "sprinkles" of mixed birdseed or small pieces of nuts and fruit to appeal to even more birds. For full instructions, visit [TheSpruce.com](https://www.thespruce.com) and search "pine cone bird feeder."

AN EGG-CELLENT PLANTER Save those eggshells from breakfast (and the paper carton, too!) and use them to start a garden! Your little ones will enjoy planting some seeds, watering them, and watching them sprout and grow into something new. When the

sprouts are big enough and it's warm enough outside, you can plant the shell and carton directly into the ground!

This easy project just requires rinsed eggshell halves, some lightly moistened potting soil, and seeds of your choosing. Note that smaller seeds, like those for herbs, lettuces, peppers, or tomatoes, work best for this project. For full instructions, visit [GardenBetty.com](https://www.gardenbetty.com) and search "starting seeds in eggshells."

STICK WITH MAGIC Nature is a magical place. Many kids know this instinctively and often point out things adults take for granted or overlook, like bright-colored leaves, fun-shaped rocks, and acorn "hats." Making a nature wand is a great way to let your kids explore their environment, whether that's in your backyard, on a neighborhood walk, or in your favorite park. Let their imaginations run wild with what their magic wand can do!

This simple project starts with a stick and masking tape. Your kids add all the extra flair by hunting for natural treasures and sticking them onto their wand. Complete instructions can be found at [LaughingKidsLearn.com/nature-wands-outdoor-play](https://www.laughingkidslearn.com/nature-wands-outdoor-play).



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HAPPY (BAD) HAIR DAY!

At the beginning of the month is April Fools' Day, and I talk about that a bit in this newsletter. But right now, I want to discuss another great April holiday, and this one comes at the end of the month. I'm talking, of course, about Hairstyle Appreciation Day! Most people will add "bad" to the front of that name, so we can definitely go there, too. But bad or good, hair is important — and it was a great excuse for me to poll my team and my family on their own "hairly" history. To hear more about our worst hairdos as well as why hair matters so much, read on!

For some of us, our "worst hairdo" is heavily tied to a time and place. Awndria says hers was a perm because at the time, that was the style. She says it wasn't a good look on her, too short in some places and too long in others. That sounds a bit like my own — well, I don't know that I'd call it my "worst" haircut ever, although I suppose others might ... I'm talking about the mullet I was rocking back in the late '80s and early '90s. The mullet is often ridiculed, but I actually kind of liked it. I even earned the nickname "Thor" after my flowing locks during high school. And I really liked that it stuck out from the bottom of my football helmet, making me easy to spot on the field. In the mists of the distant past, warriors would grow their hair out to intimidate their enemies — I suppose I was just following in their footsteps!

Funnily enough, Paige says that about half of her male friends have mullets of their own today. That's right, folks, the much-maligned mullet has made a comeback!

Other "unique" hairdos are the result of personal expression and often personal experimentation, too. My daughter can attest to that after recently giving herself a set of bangs without mommy or daddy's permission. You can imagine how they came out, and she's

been regretting it ever since. The other day, I was getting her ready for school picture day and she finally said to me, "Please, just do *something* with it that looks good!" I get her frustration, but there's not much you can do when it's too short to get into a ponytail but too long for anything else.



I think there are a lot of at-home hair disasters happening these days. Not everybody is like my sister, who's been doing her hair every color of the rainbow for years now. "COVID cuts" is the phrase I'm most familiar with. On the one hand, it's sad people can't always get the hair care they want. On the other hand, we've got plenty to celebrate this Hairstyle Appreciation Day!

What is it with hair, anyway? Why do we spend so much time taking care of it, growing it out, trying to have it look the same as someone else, or wanting to make sure our hair is all our own? The impulse behind self-expression is an important part of who we are. After all, shouldn't we have the right to decide how we look? As someone who helps people do exactly that every day, I completely understand why my son puts a fair amount of effort into his hair, even though others might just see a mop. He's going for a specific look with that mop and headband, and I'll be darned if he doesn't pull it off exactly right. He's happy, and that makes me happy, too.

What kind of hairstyle are you rocking these days? Are you thinking about a change as barbershops open back up and salons lift their shutters? Maybe a new summer do? This month, I hope that you can laugh at the bad cuts of the past while finding something you love about your hair in the present. And if the look you want is about more than hair, I'm only a phone call away.

-Dr. Mike

HOW INTUITIVE EATING CAN HELP YOU QUIT DIET CULTURE

The concept of mindfulness has fully saturated mainstream culture at this point. Though it's more likely to conjure up an image of someone sitting cross-legged with closed eyes than sitting at a table looking wide-eyed at mealtime, it'll serve you just as well on your dinner plate as it will on your yoga mat.

WHAT IS INTUITIVE EATING? Eating mindfully, also known as intuitive eating, is trending in the health and wellness world. But it couldn't be more different from fad diets or other trends like fasting and cleanses, which have restrictive lists of rules and foods to eat or avoid. Intuitive eating starts by simply tuning in to your body's needs and cues, but it goes further than that. As a Harvard Medical School article put it, "In essence, mindful eating means being fully attentive to your food — as you buy, prepare, serve, and consume it." And that includes focusing on how different foods and eating habits make you feel, both physically and mentally.

While this may feel ... intuitive ... it's easier said than done in a culture with consistent and often confusing messaging around what constitutes healthy eating. Even the tried-and-true method of calorie counting has raised doubts in recent years due to inaccuracies in calorie calculations for the nutrition labels and research on how calorie restriction can backfire by changing your hormone levels and even slowing down your metabolism. Kristen Smith, a registered dietitian and the spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, says it's also linked to disordered eating habits. Intuitive eating may just be the antidote. Singer Demi Lovato, who has been open about her struggles with an eating disorder and body-image



issues, credits a more mindful approach to eating with helping her overcome harmful eating patterns.

HOW DOES IT LEAD TO BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES? Having a regular exercise routine and eating well have long been known as the two pillars of physical health. When it comes to the latter, intuitive eating helps you create healthy and *sustainable* eating habits. The upshot is that when you eat better, you'll feel better. Being attuned to that connection is the foundation of mindful eating. Most of us know that we should eat whole foods, including lots of fruits and vegetables, but *feeling* the outcome of increased consumption of these foods will help you stick with and build the habit.

A LITTLE 'XTRA' MENTOR IMPLANTS WORTH A LOOK

Bikini season approaches! That means it's time to start strategizing the beach bod you want and the steps you'll take to get there. We all know that diet and exercise have to start months ahead of time to get you there, but it's important to remember that time is a factor with medical procedures as well. Appointment slots start to fill up quickly this time of year, and any procedure will take a little time to complete. Similarly, different processes take different times to heal.

One procedure that's quick to accomplish and relatively easy to heal from is breast augmentation with implants. In fact, I've done a procedure in the morning and had a patient tell me she was out at dinner that night! Of course, the full healing process takes longer, but for most women, it's not particularly painful or arduous, making this a good choice this season.

Another positive aspect of our breast augmentation procedures is the kind of implants we use. One of my favorites is the Mentor Moderate Xtra full line that seems to work for a wide variety of women. The result is a rounder breast, as compared to a more pointed one, and that means it's very full looking. The material is the perfect density, with projection that gives out-of-this-world cleavage.



If you've been interested in augmentation for a while but had hesitations of comfort, feel, or longevity of implants, you'll be amazed at the options we have today — including the Mentor Moderate Xtra full implant, which I'd love to discuss with you during a consultation. Remember, though, that while this procedure is fast, spots are filling up even faster. Give us a call today to secure yours.

'IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?' DR. MIKE TALKS HUMOR AND HEALTH

April is national humor month — it starts with all those pranks on April Fools' Day and just keeps rolling! I've always loved to laugh, and I realized from a young age that when things are difficult, humor can really make a difference — especially in a medical setting.

One of my favorite comedians is Howie Mandel. Most people know Howie as a game show host, but I've seen him live enough times to tell you that he does things few comedians can pull off!

Howie may have an act written, but a lot of that script must just say, "Tell jokes to and about the audience," because he spends so much time asking people in the crowd about themselves and then just riffing on that good-naturedly! He can find the funny stuff in any job or subject, and he is he quick on his toes!

Howie does have a few standby bits, though, including asking, "Is there a doctor in the house?" and then he makes whoever raises their hand his next target. He'll ask them about a very scary, complicated medical situation. After they respond, he'll say, "No, that's all wrong! Here's what you do ..." and then proceed to explain how his TV character Dr. Wayne Fiscus (from "St. Elsewhere") would handle the situation instead. Then, once the laughs have finally died down, Howie will say, "No folks, I'm just kidding. You should listen to what this real doctor says to do!" I have a personal connection to this "bit"

because one time in Vegas, the "doctor in the house" was *my wife* — courtesy of me calling her out, of course! I doubt we'll ever stop laughing at that memory.

Joking aside (get it?), humor is important, and we all need it from time to time. I may not have a standup routine, but I do have a pretty standard speech I give patients during consultations, and when we turn toward some of the more vulnerable moments, I try to crack a corny joke and show my patients that I'm human too and that I care about their comfort — even if the "doctor in the house" is ME!



CLEAN AS SPRING RAIN

BANFI SAN ANGELO PINOT GRIGIO A DELIGHT

As the weather turns and tumbles from rain to sun and back within the hour, I think all of our minds are on the summer to come. Sometimes, it's hard to stop and enjoy a month like April — but I'm trying to do just that with a glass of this delightful pinot grigio in hand.

This wine is grown under the Tuscan sun and has a full, flavorful taste with fruit notes. It's very crisp, and the warmth breaks into a long, smooth finish. By the end, you almost forget the full-bodied flavor you started out with. And then the process starts all over again with the next sip! Sound a bit like spring weather to you?

I've been savoring this all by itself, but I wouldn't hesitate to serve it with seafood or salad. Perhaps you'll join me in a toast to spring!



INSPIRATION

When everything feels like an uphill struggle, Just think of the view from the top

