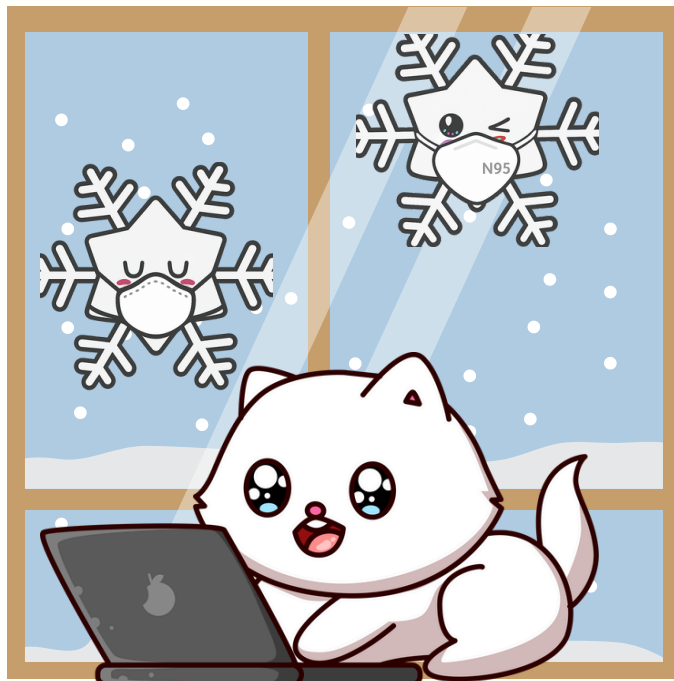


WORLD HEALTH NETWORK

KIDS' ZONE

COVID-CONSCIOUS MAGAZINE



CONNECTIONS EDITION

ADAPTING TRADITIONS

CHECK US OUT ONLINE AT:
WHN.global/KidsZone

CONNECTIONS IN THE BRAIN

CORRELATION VS. CAUSATION

STORIES AND RECIPES

... AND MORE INSIDE!



EXPLORE | SHARE | CONNECT



COVID-conscious: Keeping COVID risks in mind when exploring, sharing, and connecting with others.

Synonyms: COVID-cautious, COVID-aware, COVID-informed, Still COVIDing, COVID-safe, COVIDing-inclusive

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

ABOUT US

KIDS' ZONE COVID-CONSCIOUS MAGAZINE IS A FREE PUBLICATION CREATED BY THE WORLD HEALTH NETWORK'S PSYCHOSOCIAL CHILDREN'S GROUP.

OUR MISSION IS TO FEATURE MATERIALS FOR KIDS THAT HIGHLIGHT STORIES, ART, SCIENCE, AND LIFESTYLE OF COVID-CONSCIOUS FAMILIES.



FEATURING WORKS FOR AND BY KIDS OF ALL AGES. ADULTS CAN SUBMIT THEIR OR THEIR CHILD'S WORKS AT WHN.GLOBAL/KIDSZONE



= ARTICLES WRITTEN IN US-ENGLISH



= ARTICLES WRITTEN IN UK-ENGLISH

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*The contents of this magazine, such as text, graphics, images, and other material, are intended for informational and educational purposes only and not for the purpose of rendering medical advice.

The Month Ahead

Here's our pick of December's main events!

ALL MONTH:

UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH



1 DECEMBER WORLD AIDS DAY

3 DECEMBER UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

10 DECEMBER HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

14 - 22 DECEMBER HANUKKAH

21 DECEMBER WINTER SOLSTICE

25 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS DAY

26 DECEMBER BOXING DAY

26 DECEMBER - 1 JANUARY KWANZAA

31 DECEMBER NEW YEAR'S EVE



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Learn about connections in the brain, the science of winter solstice, and monkey mayhem

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Explore ways to identify misinformation

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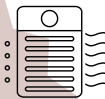
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Editor's Note:

Connections

by: Adam 



This month's issue is on the theme of CONNECTIONS.

We think this is a special theme because it applies to so many things about us.

The first thing I think about is the connections we have with other people - our families and our friends, people we know in other ways (like through Kids Connect Zone!).

Through our connections we are strengthened and supported. Any time we may be finding something difficult, chatting to someone can help you see things from a different perspective.

We can also share ideas, advice and solutions - this is one of the amazing reasons why WHN was created!

It can be a wonderful thing to be there for someone else when they need you.

Connections are very important in the natural world too!

Our modern world is built on technology - think about the electrical cables, water pipes, roads and railways, and of course the internet - all sorts of technology that links us together and lets the modern world work!

What other types of connections can you think of?

How do you **CONNECT** *safely?*

I connect with people with masks outside.

-E, age 9, United States

I like to connect with people over Zoom.

-S, age 9, Japan

My older sister connects with people over Schoolhouse.

-C, age 12, United States

I connect with people through virtual game nights!

-T, United States

We listen to the same CD while we make our Christmas dinners!

-A, 44, UK

STAYING CONNECTED OVER THE HOLIDAYS

EVEN WHEN WE'RE NOT ALL IN THE SAME PLACE



By Naomi Bromberg Bar-Yam

December is a time when many people celebrate holidays—like Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Yule, and New Year's. It's a season full of cozy lights, special foods, stories, music, and being together.

But sometimes, we can't all be in the same place. Maybe someone lives far away. Often, it's safer to stay local, especially since lots of people get sick during this time of year.

The good news is: you don't have to be in the same room to be connected.

There are so many ways to be close to people we love—across town or across the world!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CONNECT?

Connection means:



- Remembering, including, and caring about people who are important to us
- Sharing something with someone else; a story, a gift, a virtual or in-person hug
- Letting someone know “you matter to me.”

Connection isn't about distance. It's about attention.

STAYING LOCAL

Staying local for the holidays can be special too:

- Make your home extra cozy with lights, art, paper snowflakes, or decorations you create
- Cook something simple and delicious together
- Start a new tradition—like wearing funny socks or telling jokes before dinner
- Go for winter walks and look for interesting things: tree shapes, cloud colors, footprints in snow or mud



Togetherness doesn't have to be big to be real.

CONNECTING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS FROM FAR AWAY

Video chatting, texting, voice recording, picture sharing—they all help us stay close!

Here are some fun and meaningful ways to connect online:

Sing or play music together

Even if the timing is silly, the laughing together is the best part.



Bake at the same time

Pick a recipe everyone can make. Share pictures or cook together on Zoom or FaceTime!

Online game time

Play charades, drawing games, trivia, or scavenger hunts ("Find something blue!").



Story night

Read a favorite book out loud to each other. Take turns with voices!

Art swap

Make a card or drawing and mail it—or take a picture and share it instantly.



Voice messages

Record a message with your special way of saying: "I'm thinking of you." A tiny message can warm someone's whole week.

MAKE IT FEEL SPECIAL

Connection is strongest when we slow down and really listen.

Try:

- Putting away other screens while chatting
- Asking questions like:
 - “What was the best part of your day?”
 - “What’s something funny that happened recently?”
- Giving someone your full attention

These are all ways of saying,
“I’m right here with you.”



YOU MAKE CONNECTIONS HAPPEN

Being someone who reaches out is a superpower.

When you choose kindness, quiet time together, or a moment to share laughter, you’re building something that lasts—long after the holidays.

You are never too young to help someone feel loved, remembered, and connected.

ACTIVITY: CONNECTION STARS

Cut out paper stars. On each star, write the name of someone you’re connected to.

Hang the stars in your room or window.

Your room becomes a map of your heart network—a reminder you’re surrounded by love.



However you celebrate this month, may your days be full of warmth, creativity, and connection—near or far.

ADAPTING FAMILY TRADITIONS



December is often associated with gathering, holidays, and celebration. For many, December brings with it annual traditions. A tradition is something that people do the same every year during a special event. However, since COVID began, many people have had to alter their traditions. Let's explore some ways that people have adapted their holiday traditions to be COVID safe(r).

Do you have a tradition that you have adapted?
Share it with us at <https://whn.global/KidsZone/>

Pages 11-12
**Christmas
Traditions**

Page 13
**Hanukkah
Traditions**

Adapting Family Traditions



by Adam

Holiday times are often a good time to strengthen family connections. We often do similar things each year. These can become traditions, which can be comforting and enjoyable to re-enact each year. An example of a tradition is the giving and receiving of gifts. Or it might be something as simple as watching a favourite movie together or going to a restaurant you like.

It's worth remembering that many people celebrate different things according to their religion, but there are also many traditions which are not religious.

My Christmas tradition with my parents and grandparents used to be to celebrate Polish Wigilia on Christmas Eve. Our version was perhaps not the same as many other Polish families, as we adapted it to our own preferences.



Our Polish Wigilia in 2004!



**Barszcz
(aka
borscht)**

I think the traditional Wigilia supper was meant to include 12 different dishes! We only ever made two courses, and the key parts to our Wigilia supper were:

- **barszcz** (soup made with beetroots and other veg - you may know it as red borscht)
- **pierogi** (boiled pastry parcels - we make them with fillings of either mushrooms or sauerkraut)
- a fish course



**Pierogi, filled and crimped,
ready to be cooked!**

The **barszcz** and **pierogi** are eaten together. They are only meant to be a starter, but we always made so many they were the main part of the dinner!

The only part better than eating this lovely food was making it together with my family - something we would never normally do except for the pierogi - and we'd have some music on like traditional carols to help the work along.

We would have a 'production line' to cut out the pastry shape, then someone to add the fillings and carefully fold them. The hardest part is to seal the filling inside the pastry by 'crimping' it along the edge with your fingers. Too little filling, and the pierogi would be too small. Too much filling, and it would leak out and the pierogi would fall apart while cooking!



Can you count them?



A perfectly crimped pierogi?



Preparing the barszcz

My grandparents are no longer here, and as we are COVID-cautious, we needed to find new versions of a tradition that still works for us.

In the years since COVID, we now take more caution and now visit my family, but wearing masks, and we stay in a nearby house so we can visit them for several days over Christmas.

My own attempts at making pierogi last year were rather poor! This year I hope to make pierogi much more successfully! I will take a bit more care with the right ingredients for the dough and the fillings.

Creating a Unique ^{STILL COVIDING} Hanukkah



Hanukkah Candles *by NB*

Hanukkah is coming, starting December 14 this year, and it lasts 8 nights and days. To celebrate, we light colorful candles each night; one candle on the first night, two on the second night, till we get to the 8th night, 8 candles. We put the Hanukkiyah (Hanukkah candle holder) in the window, so the flames light our homes and the neighborhood.

Hanukkah is a wonderful winter family and friend time, for most of us, indoors. COVID safety makes it hard to do right now. So our family and others have created some new COVID-safe ways to celebrate Hanukkah together.

Since COVID began, my grandchildren and I Zoom every evening, and they choose what color candles we will light. Then sometimes, we light them and sing Hanukkah songs together, their candles in their home and our candles in ours.



The 9th candle is called the "shamash" and is used to light the other candles. "Menorah" is another name for the candle holder.

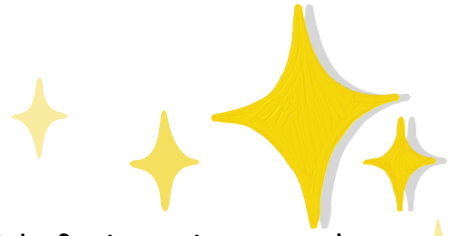


Sometimes we have Zoom Hanukkah dinners together with family members. And we've even played dreidel on Zoom. Dreidel is a fun game where we spin a special top with letters on each side to remind us of the story of Hanukkah. Each person gets a few nuts, chocolates, coins, whatever you want. Then, depending on which letter is on top when it stops spinning, you get to take from the nuts, chocolates, coins in the pot, or put into the pot.



Happy Still COVIDing Holidays!

INTERNATIONAL WINTER FOOD VOCABULARY



Mince Pie- A sweet Christmas pie from England, filled with fruit, spices, and sometimes nuts.

Pavlova- A light, fluffy dessert made from whipped egg whites (like a crunchy marshmallow) topped with whipped cream and fresh fruit. Popular in Australia and New Zealand.

Bûche de Noël- A rolled cake shaped like a chocolate log. A popular French Christmas dessert.

Tamales- A Mexican dish made of soft corn dough wrapped in a corn husk or banana leaf and steamed. Inside there can be meat, cheese, or sweet fillings.

Latke- A crispy potato pancake that's fried in oil and eaten during Hanukkah.

Christmas Pudding- A dense, sweet dessert from England made with dried fruit and spices.

Longevity Noodles- Extra-long Chinese noodles eaten on birthdays or New Year to bring good luck and a long life.

Borscht- A bright red soup made from beets, popular in Eastern Europe.

Sufganiya- A jelly-filled donut, covered in powdered sugar that is eaten during Hanukkah.

Doro Wat- A spicy chicken stew from Ethiopia, often eaten with spongy bread called injera.

Panettone- A tall, fluffy Italian Christmas bread filled with raisins or candied fruit.

Jollof Rice- A tasty West African dish made by cooking rice with tomatoes, onions, peppers, and spices. It turns a bright reddish-orange color.

WINTER HOLIDAY FOOD MATCH

Match the terms from page 14 to the food pictures below

























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2025-2026

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featured on the cover of a
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SUBMIT YOUR CREATIONS BY:

January 3, 2026

TO:

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THE SCIENCE OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE

by Rachel L.



Have you ever noticed that some days are darker than others?

In the winter, the sun goes down early and it gets dark outside before dinnertime. But did you know there is one special day each year that has the shortest amount of daylight? It's called the winter solstice!

What is the winter solstice?

The **winter solstice** is the shortest day of the year. It happens around December 21st every year. On this day, we have the least amount of sunlight and the longest night.

After the winter solstice, something amazing happens – the days start getting longer again! Each day has a little more sunlight until we reach summer.

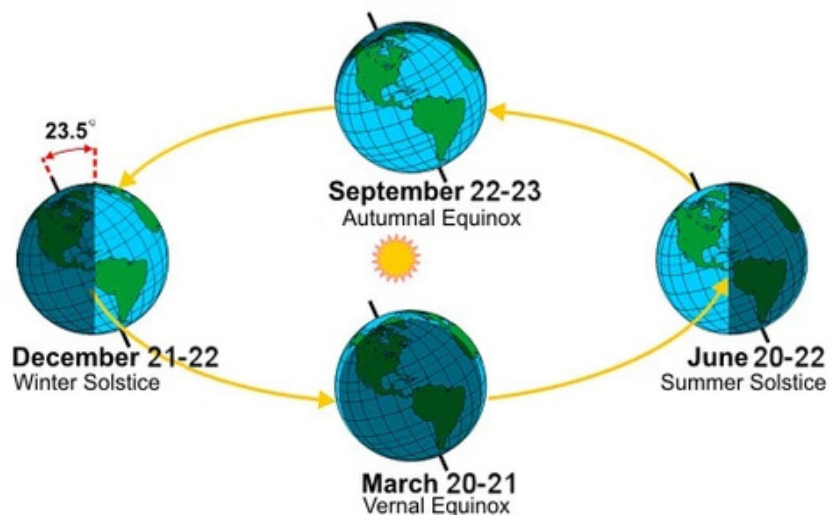
Why does this happen?

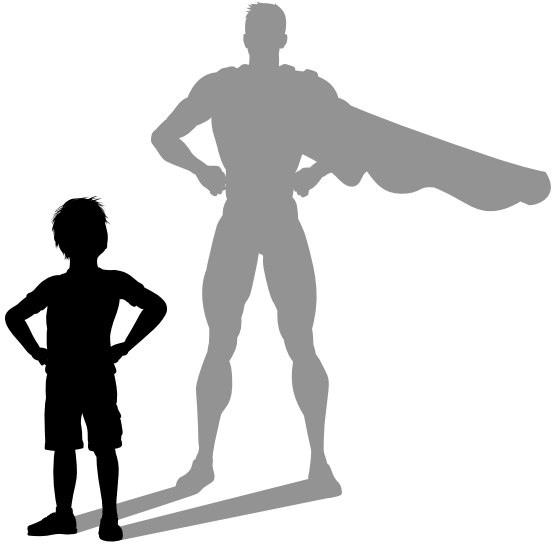
The winter solstice happens because of the way Earth moves around the sun. Earth is like a spinning top that's tilted to one side. As Earth travels around the sun, different parts of Earth get more or less sunlight.

During winter in places like the United States, our part of Earth is tilted away from the sun. This means:

- The sun looks lower in the sky
- The sun's rays hit us at an angle
- We get less sunlight each day
- It's colder outside

On the winter solstice, our part of Earth is tilted the farthest away from the sun. That's why it's the shortest day!





On the winter solstice:

- The sun rises later in the morning
- The sun sets earlier in the evening
- We might only have 8 or 9 hours of daylight (instead of 12 or more in summer)
- The sun stays low in the sky all day
- Shadows are very long

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE WINTER SOLSTICE

- In some places near the North Pole, the sun doesn't come up at all on the winter solstice! It stays dark all day and night.
- In some places near the South Pole, the sun doesn't set at all! It stays light all day and night.
- Ancient people built special buildings to mark the winter solstice, like Stonehenge in England.
- The word "solstice" means "sun stands still" because the sun seems to pause before the days start getting longer again.



ALL ABOUT... MONKEYS

It's World Monkey Day on
December 14th!

Here are some fun facts about
monkeys!

by Rachel L.



Snow monkeys in Japan love hot baths! Japanese macaques live in cold, snowy mountains. They soak in natural hot springs to stay warm during winter, sitting in the steamy water with snow on their heads!



Monkeys are super smart problem solvers. Capuchin monkeys use rocks as tools to crack open nuts. Some monkeys even wash their food in water before eating it!



Not all monkeys have tails. Most monkeys have long tails for balance, but apes like gorillas don't have tails at all. Some monkeys have such tiny tails you can barely see them!



Howler monkeys are the loudest land animals. These monkeys can be heard from 3 miles away! They howl super loudly to tell other monkey groups "this is our territory!"



Spider monkeys use their tails like an extra hand. Their tails are so strong they can hang from branches by their tail alone! The bottom works like the palm of your hand to grip things.

Connections in the earth

by Adam



I saw many mushrooms growing around trees

Most of the fungus grows underground! The mushrooms you see above the surface are actually the 'fruiting' part of the fungus - they produce **spores** which allow the fungus to reproduce.



← *Some mushrooms hiding inside a hollow log*

Last month, during my walks, I saw lots of interesting mushrooms!

Mushrooms are sometimes called by their more scientific name of '**fungi**' (or 'fungus' for a single one). Fungi may seem like a type of plant, but they are an entirely different '**kingdom**' of life (other kingdoms include animals and plants).



'Kingdoms' of life

Plants

Fungi

Animals

Other tiny things!

Fungi that produce mushrooms live in the soil or in dead or rotting plants and trees, but you also can sometimes see them growing from parts of living trees!

Soil structure

Many people who grow vegetables actually try to avoid deep digging of the soil. This is because deep digging can break up the **network of fungus strands** that grow in the soil.

Did you know?

The study of mushrooms is called '**mycology**'. Someone who studies mushrooms and fungi is called a '**mycologist**'.



*This one was almost shaped like a bowl
- it had collected leaves and water*

Essential partners

Why should we care? Surely soil is just soil!

Some types of fungus in the soil actually grow in association with plant roots. They work in a kind of special partnership: the network of fungus strands help provide the plant roots with water and nutrients from the soil, while the fungus benefits by taking some sugars from the plants.

Networks of these '**mycelia**' can help transport water and nutrients. They are vital to agriculture and are important to almost all species of plants

Nature's connections in the soil below
Recycle nutrients, help water flow.
While autumn works its way to winter,
Logs and branches break up and splinter,
Leaves fall and things decay.
Nature's work is constant in its own way.

Flowers gone, almost forgotten
Many plants now are rotten.
Birds swoop and begin migrating
Furry animals think of hibernating
Nature's connections, they're taking care,
For the next year, they help prepare.

Warning!

Never touch or pick wild mushrooms. Many are poisonous and they can make you very ill! You can buy edible mushrooms in a food store (those ones are safe). Enjoy how they look, but you should never touch them! Leave that to the expert adults (mycologists!)



← From the
Wikipedia
article on
mycelium

[https://
en.wikipedia.
org/wiki/
Mycelium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mycelium)
CC BY-SA 3.0

Did you know?

The largest organism in the world may be a fungus!

A species of honey fungus (*Armillaria ostoyae*) is estimated to cover more than 2,000 acres of forest in Oregon.

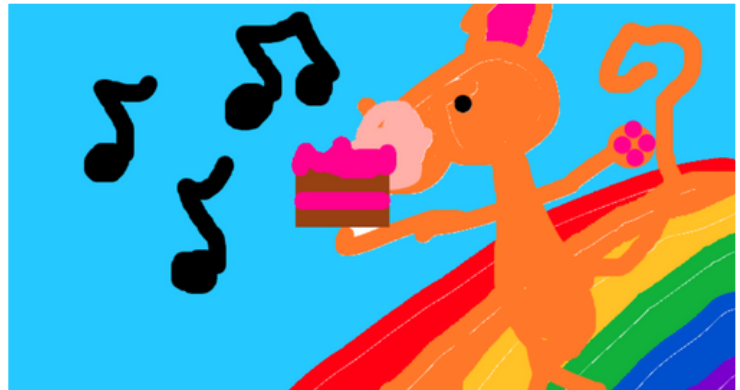
We think that the fungus has survived for over 2,400 years, on living and dead wood.

CONNECTING THROUGH ONLINE GAMES *at the* KIDS CONNECT ZONE

Every Tuesday, the Kids Connect Zone meets over Zoom to bring together kids from around the world who are taking COVID precautions.

Together we talk, share stories, and play games. We love playing Gartic Phone, Skribbl.io, CrashWords, and more!

We hope you can join us soon!

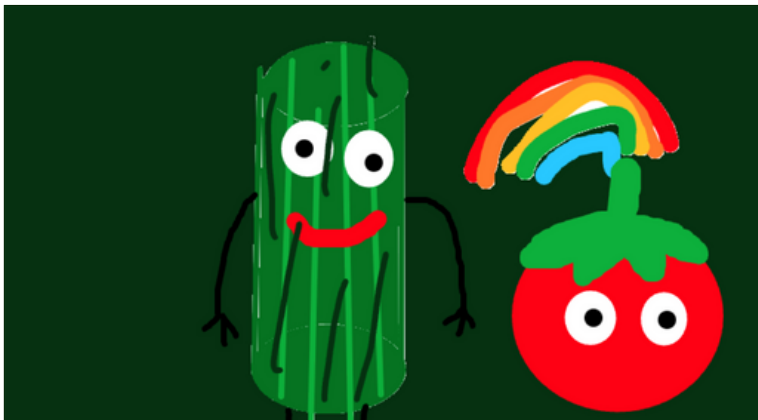


Sign up to join us at the links below!

The calls are every Tuesday

[10am Eastern US Time](#)

[6pm Eastern US Time](#)



WOULD YOU RATHER

by
Rachel L.

Connections Edition

have one best friend

or

have 5 best friends

talk to someone
face to face

or

communicate over text
or email

comfort a sad
friend with a hug

or

comfort a friend with
kind words

sit with someone
eating alone at lunch

or

sit with a group
of your friends

show someone you care
by making them
something

or

spending time with them

solve an argument by
talking it out

or

by taking space first

be the friend who
listens

or

be the friend who gives
advice

celebrate a
friend's success

or

help support them
when they fail

hang out unmasked
outside with friends

or

hang out masked
inside with friends

cheer up a sad friend by
making them laugh

or

just sit and be with a
friend who is sad

have friends who
are similar to you

or

have friends who are
different

show kindness to
someone
who is kind to you

or

show kindness to
someone who needs it
most

share a room with your
sibling

or

have your own
room

help your parents
cook a meal

or

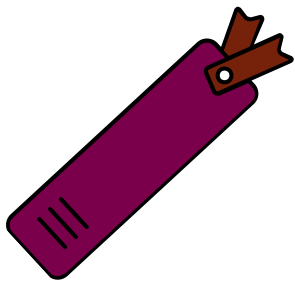
or help with outdoor
yardwork

talk about your day over
dinner

or

share about your day
one on one with a parent
before bed

THE NOT-SO-FRIENDLY FRIEND



BOOK REVIEW: HOW TO SET BOUNDARIES FOR HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

by Rachel L.

Have you ever had a friend who wasn't very nice to you?

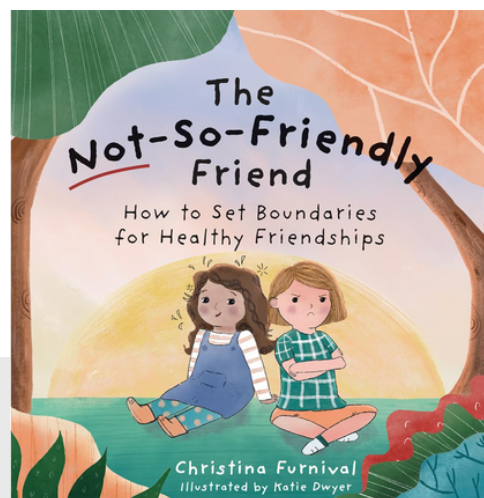
This book can help!

"The Not-So-Friendly Friend" tells the story of a girl who starts at a new school. She tries to be kind to everyone, but one kid keeps being mean to her. No matter how hard she tries to be friendly, this person keeps hurting her feelings.

The girl learns an important lesson: real friends don't make you feel bad about yourself. She discovers that it's okay to set boundaries, which means telling someone "I won't let you treat me that way." She learns to stand up for herself in a kind but strong way.

This book has beautiful watercolor pictures and a rhyming story that's fun to read. At the end, there are questions for you and your parents to talk about together. It helps you understand what makes a good friend and how to protect your feelings when someone isn't treating you right.

If you've ever felt confused about a friendship or had someone be mean to you at school, this book is perfect for you!





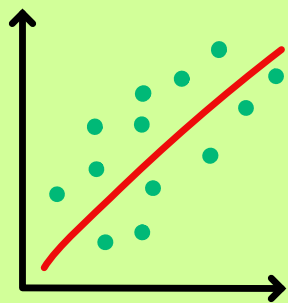
Medical Misinformation

And how to Spot it

by Rachel L.

When Things Happen at the Same Time

Have you ever noticed two things happen together? Maybe every time you eat cereal, the sun is shining. Does your cereal make the sun come out? Of course not! They just happen at the same time. Scientists have special words to talk about this. Let's learn what they mean!



What is *Correlation*?

When two things happen at the same time, we say they have a **correlation**. That means they go together.

Here's an example: Every morning when the rooster crows, the sun comes up. Does the rooster make the sun rise? **No way!** They just happen around the same time. That's correlation!



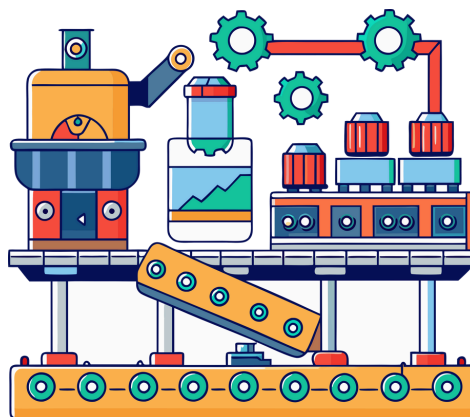
What is *Causation*?

When one thing makes another thing happen, we say it causes it. This is called **causation**.

- You push a ball. The ball rolls. Your push caused it to move.
- You water a plant. The plant grows. Your water caused it to grow.

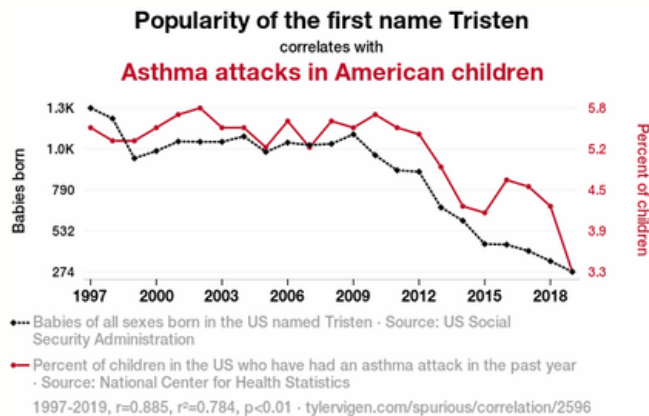
Why does this matter?

Sometimes people think that if two things happen together, one must be making the other happen. But that's not always true! We need to be careful and think about what really causes things.



Funny CORRELATIONS

From Tylervigen.com



Here, the popularity of the name 'Tristen' and the rates of asthma attacks went down at the same time!

Does that mean choosing different names made kids have fewer asthma attacks?

NO!

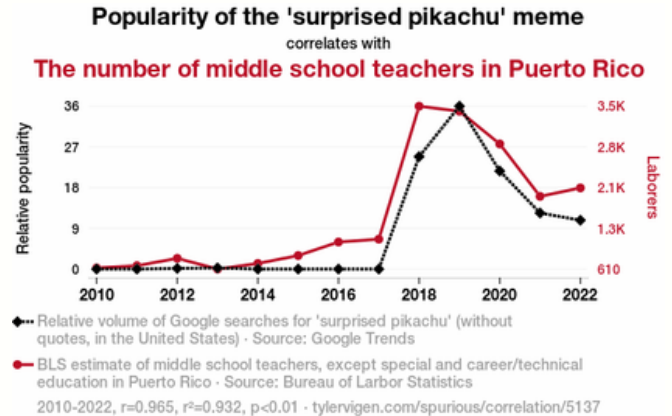
These two things just happened to decrease at the same time.
This is called CORRELATION.

How might AI misunderstand and explain this correlation as a causation?

AI might misunderstand and think that fewer Tristens meant less air was being taken up by dramatic sighs, thereby reducing the overall respiratory distress in the country.

THIS IS JUST SILLY!!

DON'T MISTAKE CORRELATION FOR CAUSATION.



In this case, the numbers of middle school teachers in Puerto Rico increased and then decreased at the exact same rate as the popularity of the Pikachu meme!

Does that mean that Pikachu meme caused more teachers to teach in middle school?



The Pikachu meme and teachers in Puerto Rico are not related in any way.
This is called a CORRELATION.

How might AI misunderstand and explain this correlation as a causation?

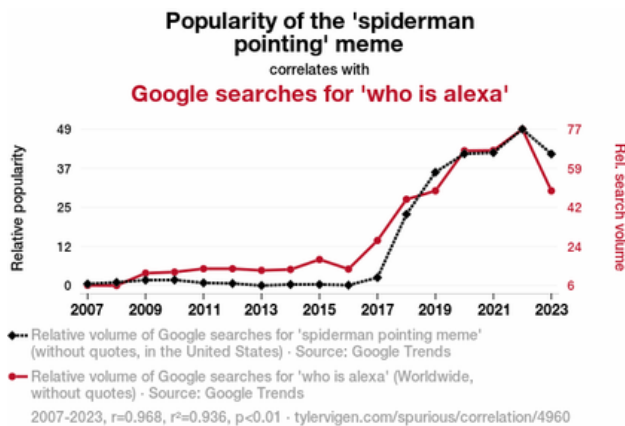
AI might misunderstand this situation and think that the meme caused more internet use, which caused a need for more internet in Puerto Rico, which caused an investment in jobs, which caused more people to be teachers.

DON'T MISTAKE CORRELATION FOR CAUSATION!

(more)

Funny CORRELATIONS

Remember, a **correlation** is when two things happen at the same time



In 2017, the rates of searches for 'Who is Alexa?' and the popularity of the spiderman pointing meme both increased!

Does that mean that the spiderman meme caused people to search "Who is Alexa?"



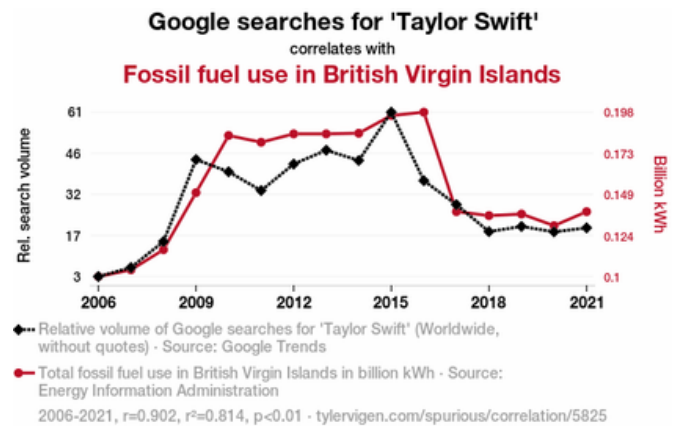
The rates of popularity of this spiderman meme and curiosity about Alexa both just happened to increase around the same time.

How might AI misunderstand this correlation as a causation?

AI might misunderstand and think the pointing meme caused people to point at things more. Eventually people pointed at Alexa and wondered what she was.

THIS IS JUST SILLY!

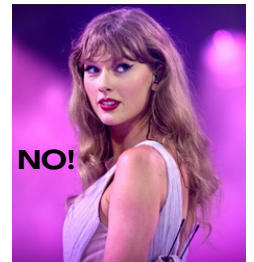
The popularity of both of these things just happened to increase at the same time. They are entirely unrelated.



In 2006, the rates of Google searches for Taylor Swift were the same as the fossil fuel use in the British Virgin Islands!

Does this mean that more people searching for Taylor Swift caused more fossil fuel use in the British Virgin Islands?

NO!



The popularity of Taylor Swift and the fossil fuel use in the British Virgin Islands are entirely unrelated. These two things just happened to increase at the same time.

How might AI misunderstand and think these two unrelated things are related?

AI might be a huge Taylor Swift fan and think that her music stirs people's emotions and make them dance more! And because of this, AI might think that this caused people to crank their air conditioners

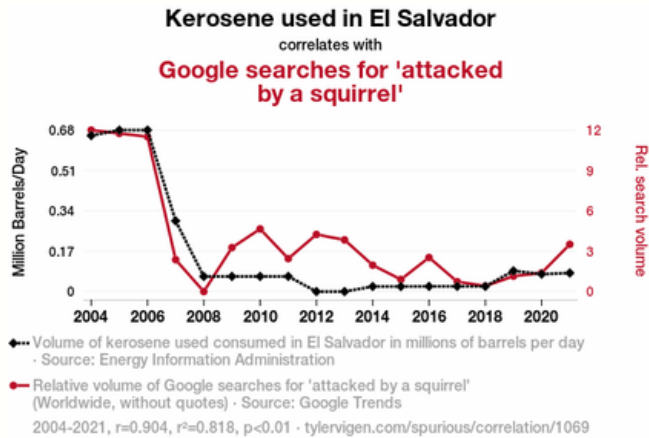
NOT TRUE

Taylor Swift music might make you dance more, but these things are unrelated

(more)

by Rachel L.

Funny CORRELATIONS



In 2006, as Kerosene use decreased in El Salvador, people searched less often for 'attacked by a squirrel' at the exact same rates!

Does that mean that reducing kerosene use in El Salvador caused a global decrease of squirrel attacks (and searching about squirrel attacks)?

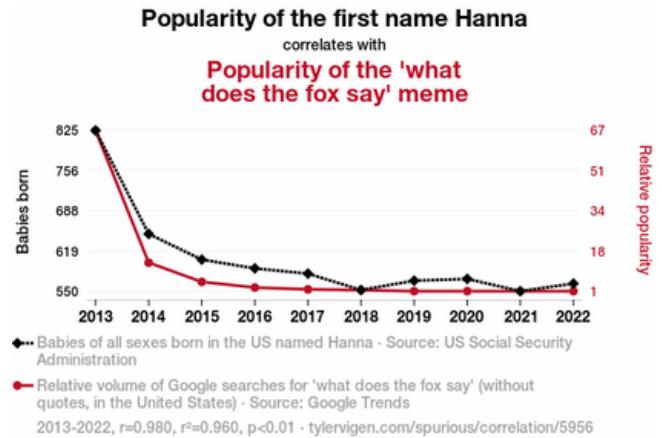


These two entirely unrelated things just happened to decrease at the same time. They are completely unrelated.

How might AI misunderstand and think these unrelated things are related?

AI might think that less kerosene use in El Salvador caused fewer open flames to attract power-hungry squirrel overlords. This led to a decrease in the squirrels' organization and resulted in fewer attacks on humans.

This is just silly! These two unrelated events happened at the same time.



Starting in 2013, the popularity of the name Hanna decreased at the exact same rate as the popularity of the 'What does the Fox Say?' meme!

Does that mean that when parents stopped naming girls Hanna, this caused a global shift and people stopped liking this meme?



There is absolutely no relationship between these two events. It is just a funny coincidence that they both decreased at the same time. This is **CORRELATION**.

How might AI misunderstand this data and think these things are related?

AI might think that more girls named Hanna like this meme and that naming Hanna caused the meme to become less popular.

This is silly. These things are unrelated.

How Do I Think Like a Scientist?

When someone says two things are connected, ask yourself:

- Does this make sense?
- Could it just be by accident?
- Is there proof?



Remember:

Just because two things happen at the same time doesn't mean one causes the other!

Correlation does not mean causation!

Scientists do careful tests to find out what really causes what. That's how we learn the truth about our world!

Correlation

means two things happen at the same time. They go together. Like when the rooster crows and the sun comes up – they happen together, but one doesn't make the other happen.

Causation

means one thing makes another thing happen. Like when you push a ball and it rolls. Your push caused the ball to move.

The big idea: Correlation is when things just happen at the same time. **Causation** is when one thing really makes the other thing happen.

Kitchen Dance

by Naomi Bromberg Bar-Yam

illustrations by Tirsiyah Lightfoot and Cinderella Lightfoot

I padded into the kitchen in my socks, and the floor was cool under my feet. From the kitchen window I could see the sun was just beginning to dip in the winter sky. It felt like the kitchen was waiting — like the holiday was just behind a door, ready to step in.

Mama was by the fridge, tying her apron.

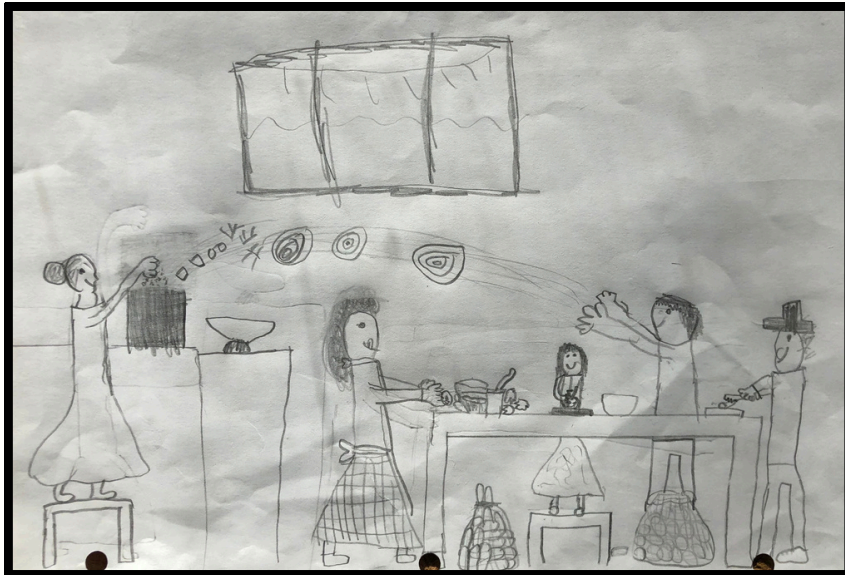
She looked up and smiled.

“Hey, Holley,” she said. “Are you ready for the Kitchen Dance?”

I grinned. “Always.”



Before every holiday, my family does the Kitchen Dance. We move together - chopping, stirring, singing, laughing. A dance made of hands and feet, food and spices. I think it's the best part of any holiday.



Papa came in next, humming something with no real tune. Tommy came in after him, dragging onions, potatoes and vegetables from the basement. Grandma shuffled in last, her hair up in a bun that looked like a cinnamon roll, and grabbed her favorite apron.

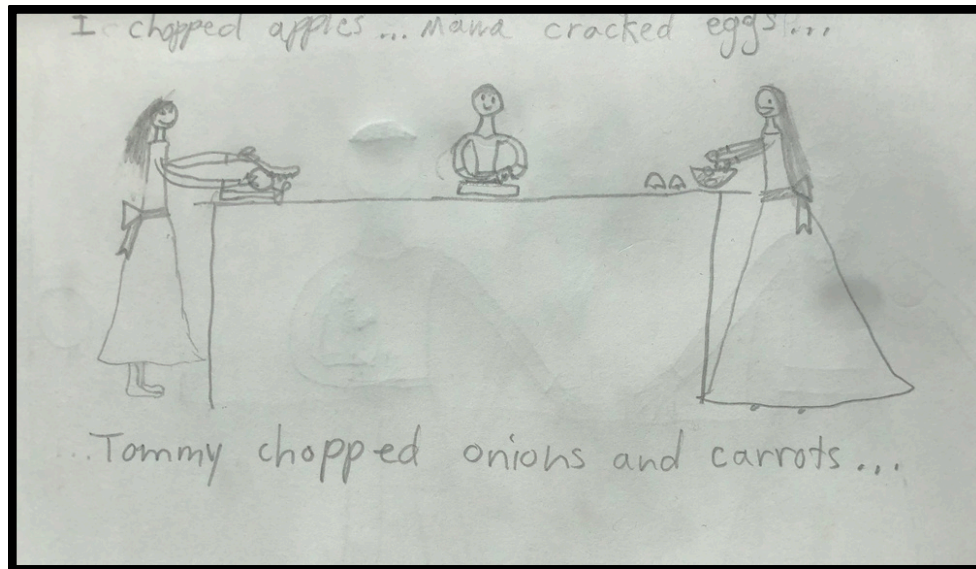
Papa tapped a wooden spoon against the soup pot — **tap, tap, BOOM** — like a drum saying Here we go.

And the Kitchen Dance began.

I chopped apples for our apple pie while Mama cracked eggs and mixed them together with flour and butter for the crust. **Chop, crack, mix, mix**

Tommy chopped onions and carrots for the soup. Papa tossed them in the big pot with some oil. The pot hissed as the vegetables started to cook — **sizzle, shake, sizzle**. Then Grandma added the water and dropped in a little bundle of herbs tied with twine. She closed her eyes and breathed it in, like she was smelling a memory.

Tommy rolled his eyes and said, "These smells are making me soooo hungry." He says that every year.



But then Grandma said quietly, "We are missing someone."
We all knew who she meant.

Auntie Liza, Uncle Joe and baby Becky couldn't come this year. Too far to travel. Too many germs going around. Too much risk of someone getting sick. I'd tried to be okay with it, but every time I thought of Auntie's laugh or Becky's little fists waving in the air, I was sad again.

Mama wiped her hands and grabbed the tablet.

Beep...

Bloop...

Ping!

And there they were.

Auntie Liza smiled so big that her eyes almost disappeared. Becky squealed, crawled out of Uncle Joe's arms and slapped the screen with her palm, giving us all high fives.

"Happy almost-holiday!" Auntie shouted.

We talk to them every week, but having them there for Kitchen Dance felt so good. Mama set the tablet where Auntie, Uncle and Becky could see everything. They did the same in their kitchen. Now we had two kitchens, but one dance.

We moved together:

I rolled out the pie shell and Mama spiced the apples: **roll, shake, roll**

Papa stirred the soup: **slow circles**

Grandma sprinkled herbs: **lift, scatter, smile**

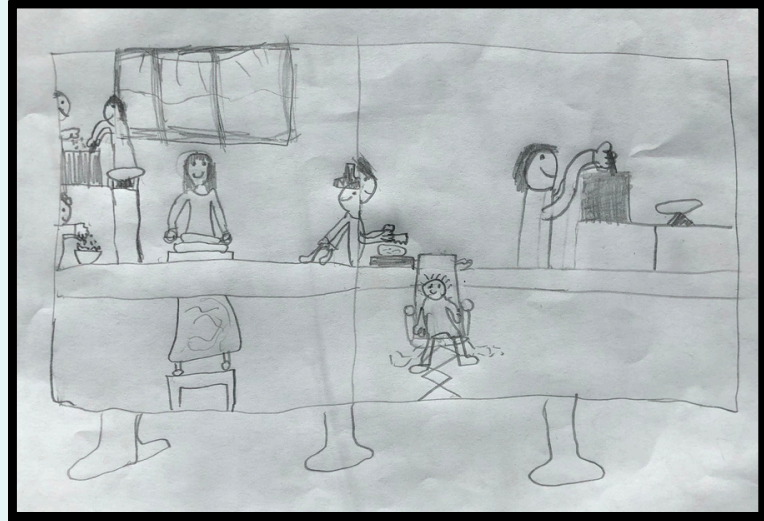
Tommy beat out rhythms on the counter:

tap-tap-ta-tap

Auntie cut vegetables far away for their delicious shepherd's pie. I could almost taste it through the tablet!

Uncle stirred their soup.

And baby Becky kicked her legs to Tommy's drums. She was kitchen dancing, too.



And we all sang our Kitchen Dance song:

**Stir it with kindness, cook it with care,
Food tastes best when everyone's there.
Even if "there" means far away—
We share this moment anyway.**

I felt warm all over — not just from the soup steaming on the stove, but from something that stretched from our kitchen to Auntie and Uncle's kitchen to every kitchen where someone was cooking with love.

When we were finished, Mama kissed the top of my head.

"I love our Kitchen Dance," I said.

Mama wrapped her arms around me. "Me too," she whispered. "It reminds me that love knows how to travel."

And it does.

Because even though we weren't all in the same room, we were together.
Really, truly, together.



Stories from our Readers

The Story of Hades

**A Retelling of a Greek Myth
By Camille Alexander, age 12**



Hades, the oldest son of Kronos, was separated from Mount Olympus. He had spent one of the longest times in his father's dark stomach and he felt most at home in the dark. He built a palace of obsidian down in the underworld. He liked being down in the dark instead of being on top of Olympus, but Hades grew lonely.

Zeus, Hades's brother, told Hades to find Persephone, Demeter's daughter. Hades took Persephone down to his obsidian palace where she would be his wife.

Demeter learned that her daughter was missing and began to search across the entire world for her. In her despair, the plants on the earth began to die of frost. Demeter couldn't find her daughter anywhere, but she did meet another goddess. Hecate, the goddess of magic and crossroads, took Demeter to Helios. The giant sun god told Demeter that he couldn't see what happened because clouds covered the sun. Clouds sent by Zeus.

In a rage, Demeter ran at Zeus, telling him to return her daughter.

Below the surface, Hades took Persephone to a secret cave where the walls were covered in diamonds.

Hades handed Persephone a pomegranate when they were in his orchards, but before she could eat any, Hermes appeared. Taking Persephone's hand, Hermes brought Demeter's daughter back to Mount Olympus.

Demeter happily embraced her daughter, but despite Persephone's happiness, she missed Hades.

“Persephone, you didn’t eat any food from the underworld, did you?” Demeter asked. Persephone thought about the pomegranate. She had eaten six seeds while she was walking into the Mount Olympus throne room.

“Yes, I did,” Persephone admitted.

“What did you eat?” Demeter gasped.

“Six pomegranate seeds,” Persephone tilted her head. “What does that mean?”

“You’ll have to stay in the underworld for six months out of every year!” Demeter collapsed into her throne in despair. “How can I stand this?”



“It’ll be fine, mother,” Persephone assured her mother. “I like it down there.” With that, Demeter and Persephone went down to the earth. They both drew their fingers through the earth, and behind them appeared a row of flowers. The plants bloomed across the entire earth, pushing through the frost and appearing again. Six months later, Persephone returned to the underworld.

“I thought you were gone forever,” Hades said when he saw her.

“Nothing’s that simple,” Persephone gently chided him. She sat in the throne beside him. “Are you ready to rule, husband?”





RECIPE:

POMEGRANATE JEWEL CANDY

by Rachel L.

Ingredients

- Pomegranate seeds
- Dark chocolate chips
- Miniature muffin papers
- Flaky salt (optional)



Instructions

1. Place the chocolate chips in a Ziploc bag and submerge the bag in a bowl of hot water. Allow the chocolate to melt completely.
2. Once melted, cut a small corner off the Ziploc bag to create a piping tool.
3. Arrange miniature muffin papers on a tray or plate.
4. Layer the pomegranate seeds and chocolate 2-3 times in each muffin paper, squeezing the chocolate out in a thin ribbon. Swirl the chocolate to create a nest-like appearance.
5. Finish with pomegranate seeds on top. Sprinkle with flaky salt if desired.
6. Place the tray in the refrigerator to allow the chocolate to harden.
7. Once set, enjoy! Store in the refrigerator for up to one week.



TO FEEL INTRIGUED ENERGIZED AND ENGAGED

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WHN.global/KidsZone

Welcome to the World Health Network Kids' Zone Magazine! Although COVID-19 is a serious topic, living a COVID-conscious lifestyle can be fun and rewarding. In this magazine we highlight the many ways kids explore, share, and connect!

LET'S JUMP INTO THE KIDS' ZONE!