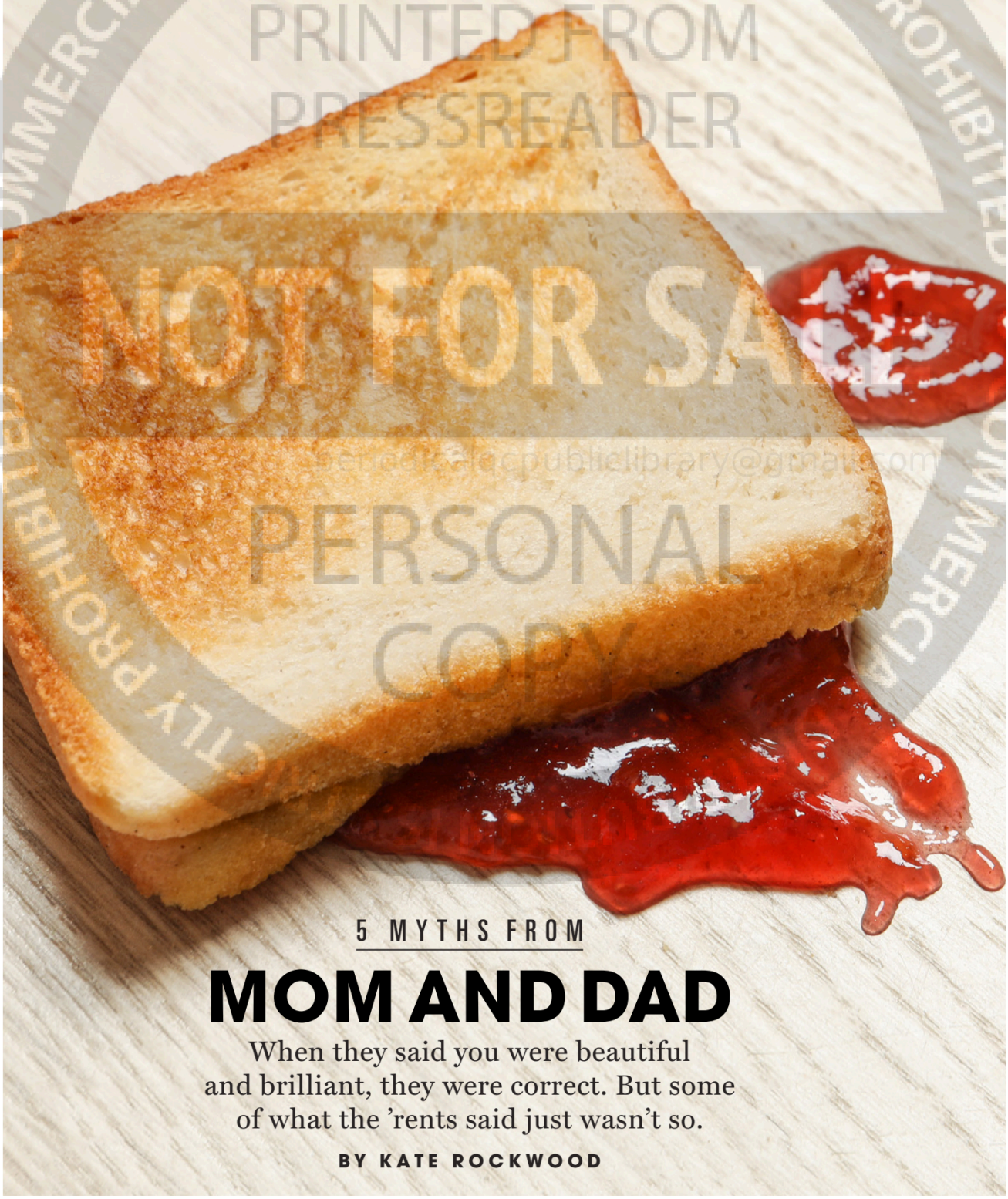
- Mythology

PREVENTION

WELLNESS



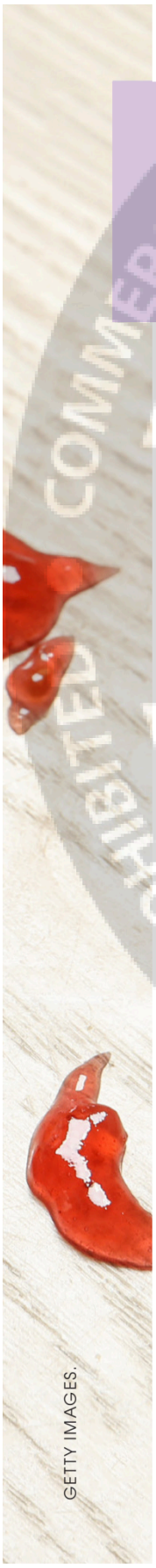
PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER
NOT FOR SALE
PERSONAL COPY
DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

5 MYTHS FROM

MOM AND DAD

When they said you were beautiful and brilliant, they were correct. But some of what the 'rents said just wasn't so.

BY KATE ROCKWOOD



GETTY IMAGES.

1

MYTH:

If you pick up dropped food within five seconds, it's safe to eat.

MYTHBUSTER

Uh, nope. "The five-second rule is very much not real," says Donald Schaffner, Ph.D., a professor in the food science department at Rutgers University. In fact, it takes less than a second for bacteria to transfer onto dropped food, his research shows. Which bacteria can do so depends on whether you wear shoes indoors and what (poop? gum?) you stepped in, says Carolyn Forté, Home Care and Cleaning Lab executive director at *Good Housekeeping*. Then there's road salt (in winter), mud, and dirty water, all of which are "laden with bacteria and other germs," Forté says. The longer food sits on a germy surface, the more bacteria it picks up, and a small number of certain germs can make you sick, Schaffner says. There's no practical way of cleaning the food. "Washing food is not a very effective way of removing bacteria," Schaffner explains. The message? Let it go.

2

MYTH:

Sugar makes kids hyper.

MYTHBUSTER

Multiple large studies say no. That slice of birthday cake is likely not what makes kids bounce off the walls—the perceived connection could come down to overstimulating parties and holidays or dopamine release in anticipation of a reward. And some research has found that a small number of kids may be sensitive to food dyes that are common in sweets. Also, perception can play a role: In one small study, parents who were told their kids had been given a sugary drink described them as more hyperactive even if the drink was sugar-free. There are other reasons to limit kids' sugar, of course: Too much puts them at risk for obesity, tooth decay, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes, the American Academy of Pediatrics reports.

COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED PRINT DRM PRESSREADER NOT FOR SALE PERSONAL COPY



3

MYTH:

After shaving, hair grows back thicker and darker.

MYTHBUSTER

Shaving doesn't change hair's color or texture or create more follicles, says Kurt Stenn, M.D., a former professor of pathology and dermatology at Yale University School of Medicine and the author of *Hair: A Human History*. So why does it sometimes seem as if your legs feel like a hedgehog's coat a few days after shaving? Hair is somewhat thinner and lighter at the ends, and when you shave, you cut off those parts and leave the darker and thicker base exposed. Genetics, hormone levels, aging, meds, and nutrition *can* affect hair color, thickness, and growth, Dr. Stenn says—factors that are often out of our control.

GETTY IMAGES.

COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED • • PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER



4

MYTH:

Gum stays in your stomach for seven years.

MYTHBUSTER

No, there's no giant wad of gum in your gut, and there never has been. Gum is just like other things you eat that aren't digested very well, such as corn kernels: It comes out in your poop in a few days, says Elena Ivanina, D.O., a gastroenterologist and director of the Center for Integrative Gut Health in New York City. But it is a potential problem to swallow a lot of gum at once or in a short time, and it's still a good idea to avoid swallowing gum in general, as a large wad could cause a blockage in your gut, leading to bloating, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and your being unable to pass gas or have a bowel movement, Dr. Ivanina says. That's a medical emergency and requires attention—stat.

DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

5

MYTH:

It's not safe to swim too soon after eating.

MYTHBUSTER

It may be uncomfortable, but it's not risky, Dr. Ivanina says. A review of multiple studies by the American Red Cross found no connection between pre-swim eating and drowning risk. So where did the idea originate that eating before swimming was unsafe? From the mistaken belief that when extra blood is sent to the stomach during digestion, it leaves other muscles weakened and prone to cramping. "Now we understand that the body is a much more intelligent, complex machine that can multitask," Dr. Ivanina says. Still, exercising after eating can cause acid reflux or an upset stomach, so you still might want to hold off on doing laps after a big meal.



STOCKSY.

COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED • PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER • NOT FOR SALE • PERSONAL COPY



COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED
PRINT FROM PRESSREADER
NOT FOR SALE
PERSONAL COPY