



**Amy Braun**

## Why Your Kids Have More Energy Than You (And How To Change That)

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### SUMMARY KEYWORDS

energy, students, school, stress, adults, eat, teens, healthy, mental resilience, curriculum, lesson, energy levels, meal, core, exercise, kids, brain, barriers, affect, health

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Hello, welcome back to the optimal performance summit. I'm your host, Dr. Patrick Porter. Our next guest is passionate about all children receiving an excellence in education, and a fulfilling childhood. She's the chief executive officer and health core. Dr. Oz's nonprofit, which is one of Brain Tap, charities we support. She's going to help us to understand how health care strategies nutrition, fitness and mental resilience is changing the discussion in schools. And you'll learn how to take this curriculum home yourself at the end of this at the end of this summit interview. Amy is going to share that with you. So Amy Braun, welcome to the summit.

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Thank you so much, Dr. Porter. I'm so happy to be here.

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Yeah, we're talking primarily about why kids have more energy. And then then we might have and how we can change that. So just just to start the basics. Just tell us a little bit about why do kids have so much energy in adults seem to be falling behind? What's up?

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Yeah, absolutely. So at health core, you know, we work with teams every day. So since 2003



our Organization has been working in high need middle school, middle and high schools across the country. What began as a lunchtime program to adjust childhood obesity by providing nutrition lessons and in New York City school cafeteria has actually grown into a national program with curriculum addressing mental resilience, physical activity, nutrition, and actually community engagement to as you had called out, so one of the things is, you know, we see the way habits can negatively affect energy levels in our students who are visibly tired, stressed or unfocused at school. And indeed, 75% of high school students nationwide report not getting enough sleep on an average school night 14% don't eat breakfast at all during the span of a week. And only 90% eat fruit and even less eating vegetables. 14% eat vegetables three or more times a day. So the reason I bring all that up is because these are the building blocks to optimal health. And they become increasingly harder to attain as we move through added adolescence into adulthood. So as we think about our community today You know, this is especially true when we haven't established healthy habits. So we targeted to adolescence because we believe that we can really target those behaviors early. So we begin to deal but as adults, you know, we begin to deal with busier schedules, work, financial issues, family stressors, and taking care of our bodies, and our minds just doesn't really become part of our day. So we really, as adults actually have to make time for it, which can be hard. And the really crazy thing is in our work, we actually see this scenario play out every day in our schools. Because if there's a group of individuals that can't spend enough time on their own wellness, it's actually school personnel, teachers, admin school staff. So we really know that and we've learned that adults also benefit from our lessons. So we provide staff with important health and wellness tips as well. So through a program, we've been able to shift the culture of schools where we work to one that reflects wellness for the entire school community, adults and kids, but by recognizing you know, some of the stressors that actually affect kids lives and why they have less energy, we're really able to see how that translates to adults that have a lot less energy as well.

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Right. So some of our viewers might be wondering what the question is, how do we get more energy? what's the what's the real secret there?

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Absolutely. So, throughout our classroom lessons, we talk a lot with our teens about how to treat your body, and how you treat your body has a direct impact on your day to day lives. So what you eat, how you move your body, how you take care of your mind, all of these affect your mood, they affect your quality of street sleep, excuse me, your strength and endurance, your ability to focus and of course, your energy, which is I know something that Brain Tap knows a lot about as well. So though was not always directly you know, we frequently emphasize energy as a benefit to overall balanced, healthy lifestyle. So our students, like everyone here today, want



to succeed, and they understand that their energy levels can help them pursue their passions. And that's the principle of health that we focus on are therefore inextricably linked linked to their success. We provide a tangible and, and affordable steps to take as they progress along what we call the healthy me journey.

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And you

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know students at the focus of our program are those who experience disparities in health outcomes based on their socioeconomic status, geographic region, race or ethnicity, through different accesses to resources, environmental or community influences, and health literacy levels. Among many other factors. The populations we serve, typically experience higher rates of chronic disease and lower measures of quality of life and life expectancy. So societies increase scientific understanding prevented or factors of disease have not yet translated to practice in every corner of our country. There are barriers we all face, some more than others. So when trying to help yourself get more energy, it's important to look at what you eat, how you move, how you Take care of your mind and the barriers that prevent you from making those healthy decisions. It's not just one single habit that's going to turn you into the Energizer Bunny. And you know, just as a cut, this is a combination of it has zapped your energy, a combination of factors are really going to help you restore it

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Amy when when people always ask the question, How can I eat whatever I want? They'll have energy. What do you tell?

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Absolutely. I mean, so and we get that a lot from our teens, right? I mean, we know that the teens want to eat whatever they want. So one of our lessons is actually the food mood connection, and another one is Power Up To Play. So we teach teens about how certain foods help recharge your batteries and how other foods slow you down, right? They make you sluggish they affect your energy. And this starts this really starts with understanding that food is literally the fuel to our bodies. A calorie is really a unit of energy. It's a measure of how much energy is in the food we eat, how much energy our body's used to carry out its normal functions, as well. Engaging in the physical activity. So when someone under fuels or doesn't eat enough calories, they can experience feelings of fatigue because they haven't given themselves enough energy. But the type of fuel matters too. So the macronutrients we consume carbohydrates, fats, proteins, you know, are all important and most of our food and meals are a combination of these nutrients. But think about it when you eat a really dense meal. So a large portion of one or



the other of a fat, a protein or fiber, you have a lot of digesting to do, right. So your blood flow and your energy, your blood flow, your energy needs to be focused there. So that can make you feel sluggish. And with less blood flow available for movement. it you know, it obviously decreases your energy. So you know, next time you may want a big helping of mac and cheese or a burger, make modifications. This is actually what we tell our cheat teams. So when talking about meals that our students enjoy, we noticed that a theme emerged Right, the meals we often enjoy are not the healthiest for us. So how do we use this as a teaching experience? How do we use this to make sure that we can still eat the food that we want? And what we say is we just say start by changing a few ingredients. So actually, during COVID-19, when many of our students were home, oftentimes alone, families, you know, financially struggling, and still many are you and then on top of all that our communities actually face limited access to healthy groceries. So when we were talking with our students, we found that many of them were turning to package ramen, which is an easy, affordable, go to meal that we know you feel, you know, fills you up. But it doesn't give you good energy. And it doesn't give you those macronutrients that we know that you need. So we actually taught a lesson and I think this goes to your to the audience too, is that simple changes can make that unhealthy meal healthy, so reduce the amount of the flavor package you use in that ramen. add a vegetable in there, maybe a protein and meat or in you know, meat or and egg. And these simple small changes, take a non healthy meal and make it healthy and really turn it into an energy rich meal. So, you know, by expanding on on how healthy ingredients affect a student's mental and physical well being is really about eating that balanced diet really affects their performance in school, and you know, will really affect their performance, your all your performances in life and energy as well.

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That's great. That's a great tip right there. So what role does it was exercise playing energy because I know, exercise is something they're taking away in schools, which is a weird thing, because when I was in school, it was an hour and we had also we had we had an hour for Phys. Ed, we also had play time at recess.

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Absolutely. And you know, with COVID-19 unfortunately, we're getting even less exercise in schools and our students have been struggling with finding the ability to get exercise and I'm sure all of us as adults have also been struggling So in our lesson, you know why get physical, we help students understand that, you know, movement, any movement really has an impact on your body and your energy. So when you engage in movements, you increase your heart rate, you're also increasing your blood circulation to deliver nutrients and energy throughout your body, including your brain. And those muscle groups you act that you activate, the higher the energy demand created by your muscle cells, and the more physical muscle power contributing to efficient blood circulation. So movement also signals alertness or energy, which is why short



movement breaks throughout your day can really help make you feel more energized and boost your mood. So that's one of the things that we tell our students all the time is, you know, take those small movement breaks, right and everybody knows that exercise is good for you. Our students have heard it from the teachers they hear from TV, hear from Dr. Oz, you know, I'm sure all of you out there hear it all the time. But there's so many barriers that we find in our day. to getting that movement and so some of what we teach our kids is that it's incredibly important to just break down those barriers. Right. So set the timer to make yourself move, have a walking zoom meeting, and you know, set yourself availability to try and even get those small movement breaks in. Because even just a little bit amount of movement really help help speed up your energy level and make you feel much better.

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That's great. Now one of the one of my favorite videos that I saw at one of the Dr. Oz events was where they were showing the kids how much sugar was in the sodas in that in that just blew me away. I knew that already. But to learn that in high school is really incredible because usually you have to wait to you're at a weight loss program somewhere and you gained all this weight by drinking sodas, but what kind of foods do you teach them that give you good energy throughout the day?

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Yeah, absolutely. I love I love that. You mentioned that because that was one of the things to talk about. That's actually I think before you drink lesson and I would encourage all Have you out there, if you haven't taken a chance to do it, what we do in that lesson is we actually look at the drinks that we consume, and even some of those healthy beverages that you may think are healthy, that are full of fruits and veggies, I would urge you to take a look at how many grams of sugar are actually in those drinks. And measure that out, take a scooper and actually look at how much sugar is in your beverage. Because you'll be very surprised and our students often are as well, um, that you know that we really do consume a lot of sugar before we drink. But so we you know, we really teach our teens that it's again, it's about balance, and that you balance your meal and snacks for sustained energy. So right, it's that combination of proteins and carbohydrates, and you need to eat enough through the day as well, right? So you've got to time your meals and snacks with your exercise or you know, your schedule in mind. But it's really about that balance. And, you know, again, it goes back to what we were talking about earlier is that identifying those barriers No many of us don't like to eat breakfast, right? We skip it, we don't have the time. One of the things we do with our kids is we actually ask them to think about what breakfast means the actual word, which is break fast, right? You've just haven't eaten for 12 hours. And so, you know, it's that the idea is that in the morning, you do really need to break that fast, you really do need to get some of those healthy whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nutrients to help you keep your energy up throughout the day. And I would say, you





know, one other thing that we really look to as well, when we talk about, you know, healthy eating for energy is actually water. Right. So hydration water is a super important part of making yourself healthy and have a ton of energy. So we actually at health core, host hydration challenges, not only in our school, but as as like the staff as well in our own organization when we're having long day conferences or meetings. Because you know, it's staying hydrated, it's just so Important and particularly during a long day of meetings, or even at a conference like this one, it goes a long way in helping you stay energized. Plus, the benefit is that you typically have to have frequent trips to the restroom, which keeps you moving. So that's another big important piece of keeping your energy up.

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I know also, one of the big keys to Health Core's mission is mental resilience. So tell me a little bit about how does the brain affect these energy levels?

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Absolutely. And I know you know tons about how the brain affects these energy levels. But for us, you know, when we we look at our teen population, you know, there's a growing concern in terms of what's happening in our teens brains. One third of teens say that stress makes them overwhelmed and depressed. And, you know, we know that teen depression and anxiety and suicide rates are up across the country and have been on a high trajectory for quite some time. And then of course, with the recent closer of school, the stay at home orders and many other stressors that have been brought on by COVID-19. The stress that I'm sure all of us as adults are feeling. And our children are feeling it too. And it's just becoming crushing. So we actually have lessons like Bust our stress, where we talk to teens about how stressors and anxiety have a significant impact effect on your physical body. Right? So it's a lesson that adults often forget as well. You know, many adults say I thrive on stress, I'm great under stress, but they forget that there are you know, incredible impacts on your physical and your physical body and your energy level when you're stressed out. Um, so, you know, there's many things that we can do to help handle our stress. And so some of the things that we do with our teens is and I believe that they work for adults is, you know, prioritize sleep, right. I know Brain Tap has a ton of different resources as well to talk about getting better sleep, but talk or walk with someone you trust. Do something that makes you love laughter is an incredible, you know, de stressor for kids and adults. One of the other things that we've seen, you know, is also releasing creativity journaling. This is a big part of helping, you know, reduce stress and and share your feelings during COVID-19. Actually, we created an ice breaker kind of worksheet for our teens that says, you know, how am I feeling on the tip of the iceberg and what's happening in all the ways underneath and this is really one of the tools that helps them start to talk and articulate the feelings that they're having. Because sometimes we exhibit stress in many different ways, but we don't really understand what the causes of those those stressors are, which really, you



know, again, of course, impact our energy and our and our levels. But so with health core, you know, at each of our schools, we create stress busting tests, testing kits for the classroom with tools like bubbles to help you control your breathing. those coloring coloring pages to help draw out nervous energy. And we even actually include lavender is essential oils to help induce feelings of calm. We've gone as far as securing funding for school gardens, which you know, goes beyond nutrition and education and actually becomes a Zen space for students in a moment of need. And you imagine having a student come up to your desk and tears, they're overwhelmed with school and personal life. But the school and the school surroundings are overwhelming, oftentimes, just the same way that our work environments are. But if you have a place to walk, or place a talk, or need to reprieve, to take a few breaths, that also you know, has been very helpful for us. And then of course, one of the things that we actually teach our kids is meditating or deep breathing techniques and methods that lower your heart rate. And you know, they increase You know, you're gonna butcher the sport a little bit but they increase your parents and sympathetic or rescue responses during high stress. moments. And and you know, as we know, with Brain Tap and performance, mindfulness, there's the kind of the same ideas behind the great work that you're doing is you know, those breathing, recognizing those breathing exercises, really help lower your heart rate and reduce reduce those stress inducing factors.

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No, it sounds like healthcare is doing some really incredible work out there in the schools. I know, that's why we support them. And we feel like this is something most adults wait until they have a breakdown at 35/40 years old to learn, you know, and now, you know, nobody teaches this in school. So I think you've, you're teaching the missing curriculum, because when people graduate, if they go to college, they might learn a little bit more. But if they don't go to college, they have to learn through their mistakes. So you're teaching them so that's to be commended. And let's tell let's tell the audience a little bit more about the programs and how they can get involved because, of course, brain taps involved, we want to be even we want to be more actively involved. We want to get our community involved because you're helping A lot of schools maybe can tell us how many schools you're helping and the reach you have, and then how they can get involved.

18:05

Yeah, absolutely. So, excuse me. Over the last 17 years, we've actually worked in over 240 schools across 23 straight states, we've impacted over two and a half million students, in large cities, rural towns, and even in tribal nations, we actually have a partnership with the Chickasaw Nation where we've been there for quite a few years as well. And you know, as you said, it's really about educating our students and our communities about making healthy lifestyle choices to really combat chronic lifelong diseases like heart disease, obesity, diabetes. And you know,



it's really about working to provide coping and stress reduction techniques to manage the trauma, anxiety and depression that a lot of our teams are actually going to end up facing. You know, there's this incredible statistic that one mile difference in where you're born and your zip code can actually take 13 years off your life. depending upon where that mile is, so health core really works to make sure that no matter what zip code you're you're born into, you get to live a long and happy life. And actually, you know, 84% of our students make a change in at least one of their other targeted health behaviors, just within one year of receiving health core programming. So you know, we know that it works. And as you said, you know, many of them may never, you know, have access to this type of education. And so it's really important to help them understand what type of not just not just to learn the information, but to understand really what type of behaviors and changes do I make in my life, to help me live that long, strong, healthy life, and the great thing is, is we see them go back to their families, they talk to their families about the food that they're trying, the exercises that they're doing, they can share the stress, you know, relief activities that we do with them. So we really see that it goes far more than just Beyond the students that we actually get our day to day contact work with. But for everyone, we would love everybody to get involved. You know, we provide the resources to our students and communities. And we're actually deeply looking at kids getting ready to go back to school. So we do know that the Fall is coming. And schools, as I'm sure many of you have had been hearing from your different schools and students across the country are figuring out what school is going to look like this fall. And there's a lot of stress and trauma that's going to come with that and adjusting to back being in school, how much school How do I manage that? So Health Core right now this summer is really dedicated to building out our lesson plans and toolkits to make sure that our coordinators and our students are really ready to tackle that head on and make sure that, you know, our kids are ready to learn and our kids are ready to be healthy. But there's many ways to get involved from talking about us and introducing us to school partners. You know, we We've got many different boards that can be joined in terms of helping us grow our network and, you know, really impact even more kids. So you can also find all this information at [www.healthcore.org](http://www.healthcore.org). And then I know we'll be sending home in the free gift bags of some of our resources that I've talked about today to make sure that you can take some of those learnings and energy, energy building resources home with you.

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Right, and if they go to when they go to that site, I'm going to encourage everyone to go there. And I'm going to encourage anyone watching this today. Remember, for the next 24 hours, this summit is absolutely free to anybody so anybody who's a parent is a has a child or just wants to know about health and well being they should go to the website [healthcore.org](http://healthcore.org). And you can see their curriculum there. You can click on it, you can actually start doing these exercises in your home. I mean, right now what if you're still not doing much, these are things you can do, they're already done for you. I mean, I love the way you've put together everything they need to





So you don't, even if healthcore isn't in your school right now, you could, as a teacher, if you're watching this, you could start implementing some of these techniques with your students, and then hopefully show the results and then bring a greater presence there. So it's it's a great gift, just getting them access to that. Because that curriculum, I know what it costs to put together a curriculum. So the funding that you've gotten so far, a lot of it went into that, and I know they've been perfecting it over 17 years. And it's really clean. I mean, people go there, you have the three core curriculums that you have as far as nutrition and mental resilience and those things, but you can kind of search that out, find out what's going on. So is there anything you want to leave our viewers with today? And you this has been very insightful.

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Yeah. And I just wanted you actually made a great point. Dr. Porter, thank you. So so you know, if you follow us on our social media channels, that's where we're actually also introducing constant resources as well for teachers and parents that are again particularly geared towards what's happening right now in COVID. And that will take you to the resources page on our website where you can access all of that information and, and get it for free and we hope to make really impactful changes in your lives. But I, you know, I think I think the most thing that I would love to leave you with today is just remember to, when it comes to energy, make the time in your life to eat, right? Make the time for energy, you know, for energy boosting movements, if you can, it's all about breaking down those little barriers, because the small little changes that you make do really add up a lot. And even you know, 20 minutes a day with bring up all of that kind of those changes that you make really impact your life and your energy levels.

23:41

Well, Amy, thank you for sharing that wealth of information. And I hope that our viewers will help support healthcore, the first way you can support is just start using the free information. Get it out there, start sharing it with family members, friends, coworkers, let's start sharing sharing this information. You're so gracious to give it out The world right now and getting people on it. And then of course, if you want to help them out monetarily, then we'll make sure there's a link available. So you can do that as well so they can carry on their mission. So thank you. Amy

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thank you, Dr. Porter. And thank you for letting us be part of this great summit. And for all the work that Brain Tap does across the world. We're very, very proud to be partnering with you.

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Thank you very much. Now, if you're waiting for the next speaker, there'll be right along very quickly, please remember you can share this for the next 24 hours totally free, just send them the link. Let them watch this gain the information the next week. We'll be right with you. Thank you