



Newsletter

Fall 2021

## WHAT'S NEW WITH APrON?

### Autumn Greetings

The APrON study team hopes that you had a great summer and that the return to school is going well. With the beginning of autumn upon us, we hope that you and your family will have an enjoyable Thanksgiving together. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the time commitment that you and your family have committed and for participating in the APrON study.

### COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact on Maternal and Child Health



We would also like to thank all mothers and children who have completed the COVID-19 questionnaires. This data that we are gathering will be essential for understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic upon the lives of APrON participants. We look forward to disseminating the study results in the near future.

#### Update: COVID-19 Mothers Questionnaire

All mothers who are currently participating in the APrON study have been invited to participate in the APrON COVID-19 Impact study, which is investigating the impact of the pandemic on work life, activities of daily living, finances, coping, and maternal and child physical and mental health outcomes. This study is also examining factors that contribute to risk and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and will identify pre-pandemic factors that predict functioning over time. The COVID-19 Impact Survey was sent out in May 2020, with mothers completing this survey from May - September 2020.

What we are trying to find out now, with the **repeated** COVID-19 surveys, is how the **chronic stress** of COVID-19 impacts children over time, after COVID-19. It's likely that a lot of kids will have mental health problems that persist after COVID-19, and the only way to get funds directed to that is to keep showing government the impacts. Accordingly,

the first wave of data collection for the COVID-19 Impact Survey was analyzed for the following report which examines the experiences of Albertan families with young children during the COVID-19 pandemic:

[http://allourfamiliesstudy.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AOF-APrON-COVID-19-Full-Report\\_30-Nov-2020.pdf](http://allourfamiliesstudy.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AOF-APrON-COVID-19-Full-Report_30-Nov-2020.pdf)

Mothers were then surveyed again at 6 months follow-up, from February - April 2021, regardless of whether they completed the first survey. This 6 month follow-up survey data is currently being cleaned. The 12 months follow-up survey occurred from May - August 2021.

### **Update: COVID-19 Child/Youth Questionnaire**

Essentially, we are interested in understanding how COVID-19 has impacted children and youth's mental health, well-being, and coping. We are interested in understanding their feelings about going back to school, worries, and feelings of sadness or isolation, but also how they might be thriving or coping during these stressful/uncertain times. It is anticipated that the APrON COVID-19 child/youth study will assist with developing strategies to improve maternal, child, and family health during COVID-19.

The first COVID-19 child/youth questionnaire was sent out in October 2020, with this survey being completed from October - December 2020. The dataset from the first wave of data collection is currently being cleaned and scored. Since April 2021, the COVID-19 child/youth questionnaire has been completed at 6 months follow-up.

Please refer to the following APrON study website link for important COVID-19 resources:

<https://apronstudy.ca/covid-19-resources/>

### **APrON Data Collection Update**

Since the last update, the Eight is Great questionnaire data collection has concluded. The Eight is Great questionnaire is part of the Alberta Births Common Data (ABCD), which has been looking into topics such as socioeconomic status, child behaviour, child health and development, early childhood experiences, parenting, maternal health and wellbeing, and much more among APrON participants. The ABCD study has brought together data from the APrON and All Our Families studies and linked data collected from mothers, fathers, and children starting at age 5 years. We are currently preparing the 13-year questionnaire data collection as part of the ABCD study. This wave of data collection will begin in summer 2022, when the earliest born APrON child/youth participant turns 13. We will send out more information about the 13-year data collection in the near future.

[Read more](#)



### **Join APrON's Participant Advisory Committee**

The APrON team is always looking for participants to join our advisory committee meetings and we want you to be a part of it! Share your ideas on how we can keep participants, like you, engaged and interested in our research. We want to hear from you. If you would like to learn more about this exciting opportunity, please contact us by email at [apron@ucalgary.ca](mailto:apron@ucalgary.ca).

---

## RESEARCH FEATURE

### The Better Brain: Overcome Anxiety

Bonnie J. Kaplan, PhD, and Julia J. Rucklidge, PhD



The author of *The Better Brain*, Dr. Bonnie J Kaplan, was the original principal investigator of the APrON study, launched in 2008. She is also Professor Emerita in the Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary (see [BonnieJKaplan.com](http://BonnieJKaplan.com)).

Dr. Kaplan has published widely on the biological basis of developmental disorders and mental health – particularly, the *contribution of nutrition to mental health*. Her efforts to include nutrition knowledge in the care of people with mental health challenges has earned her a variety of awards, including the 2019 Dr. Rogers Prize for Excellence in Complementary and Alternative Medicine; and in 2017 she was selected as one of 150 Canadian 'Difference Makers' in Mental Health, in honour of Canada's 150th birthday. In 2021 her book *The Better Brain*, written with Professor Julia Rucklidge (University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand), was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

WHAT IF half of all children struggling with ADHD and difficulty regulating their emotions could be treated effectively and safely with nutrients? Two placebo-controlled randomized trials indicate that this is possible, especially the emotional reactivity part. One was conducted in New Zealand (1,2), and the second was a multicentre trial (Oregon Health & Science University, Ohio State University, and University of Lethbridge\*\*) (3). If parents knew about this research, and were given a choice, many would probably opt for nutrients and delay (or totally avoid) psychiatric meds for their child.

These results do not stand in isolation: there are now approximately 50 peer-reviewed showing benefits for mood, anxiety, ADHD, irritability, explosive rage. And there are another 30 or so studies showing benefits of whole-of-diet education, and of B complex enhancement of resilience. In other words, there is a truly large body of scientific evidence from the last two decades which is worthy of our attention.

Then why are parents not informed? And why are the results not covered by the media? Or taught to our physicians? Wouldn't the public benefit from this information?

The reality is that articles on *mental* health only rarely touch on nutrition. In fact, looking back over the last 20 years, I can think of only one study on nutritional treatment of mental disorders that was covered by the national media, and it was one on adult depression published in 2017.

It was the lack of public awareness that led me to write *The Better Brain* with my former student Dr. Julia Rucklidge. I retired five years ago, but Julia currently has the most active research program in the world, for evaluating micronutrient treatment (primarily minerals and vitamins) for mental health challenges. Her laboratory is at the University of Canterbury, in Christchurch, New Zealand. A New York publisher Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt saw the value of educating the public about this topic so they published our book in late April.

[Read More](#)

To request APrON publications please contact us at [apron@ucalgary.ca](mailto:apron@ucalgary.ca)

**Click here** to view all of the APrON publications to date, or by following the link below:

[https://scholar.google.ca/scholar?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C5&q=apron+study+team&btnG=](https://scholar.google.ca/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=apron+study+team&btnG=)

Summaries of APrON articles can be viewed at the following link:

<https://apronstudy.ca/journal-articles/>

---

### Send Us Your Feedback!

If you have any comments or questions about the APrON Newsletter, we want to hear them! We would also like to hear your ideas for future newsletters. Please contact us at [apron@ucalgary.ca](mailto:apron@ucalgary.ca). We truly value your feedback!

### Help Keep Our Files Up-To-Date

Staying in touch with our participants is a key part of our work. When we lose touch with people we lose our ability to answer important health questions. If you have moved, changed your phone number or have a new email address, please take a moment to let us know of these changes. Keep in mind that we can send you surveys and keep you up-to-date with the APrON Leaflet no matter where you live, even if you are outside of Alberta or Canada.



#### apronstudy.ca

Questions? Email us at [apron@ucalgary.ca](mailto:apron@ucalgary.ca)

Please add [apron@ucalgary.ca](mailto:apron@ucalgary.ca) to your address book to ensure our emails reach your inbox.

You have received this message because you are a member of the {{lead.Email Address}} Mailman list at the University of Calgary.

Don't want to receive this email? No problem. To unsubscribe from future messages like this, [click here](#).



#### APrON Calgary

The Owerko Centre 3rd Floor  
Child Development Centre  
University of Calgary  
355-3820 24 Avenue NW  
Calgary, AB  
T3B 2X9  
Phone: (403) 441-8471

#### APrON Edmonton

4-126 Li Ka Shing Centre for Research  
University of Alberta  
11203-87 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB  
T6G 2H5  
Phone: (403) 441-8471

