

# HEALTH

Los Angeles Times



## WATER WISE

Many Americans know they should drink eight glasses of water a day. But do they? A poll shows how some of us feel about water. S4

## HOW I DID IT

Faced with the choice of back surgery or losing weight, she lost the weight and kept on losing until she dropped almost 70 pounds. S2

## KATHY SMITH

At home, on the road and at work, senses are constantly being assaulted, fitness columnist says. Meditation does wonders. S3

## THE SECOND HALF

It's estimated that 4 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease; the number expected to rise significantly. A doctor's advice for families and caregivers. S5

SECTION 5 • MONDAY, JUNE 1

# An Open Letter to a Special Boy

By **BOOMER ESIASON**  
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

*Boomer Esiason led the Cincinnati Bengals to the Super Bowl and was the NFL's most valuable player in 1988. After four years with the New York Jets and Arizona Cardinals, Esiason, 36, returned to Cincinnati last season as a backup quarterback. This fall, Esiason makes another return to football—this time as a commentator on "Monday Night Football."*

*But always first with Esiason has been his son, Gunnar, who has cystic fibrosis, a disease that affects about 30,000 Americans.*

*Here, he writes a Father's Day tribute to his son.*

Dear Gunnar,

The two greatest days of my life are the ones on which you and Sydney were born. It's really difficult to express in words the love I have for you two.

For the short seven years that you have been around, we have experienced so much together. On the day you were born—April 6, 1991—I couldn't believe my great fortune. We had a beautiful baby boy!

Since that day, you have been a sweet, gentle little soul, never complaining. In addition to looking like your mom, you have her kindness and caring personality, which makes you very, very special.

Not only are you a joy and a treasure, you are also the bravest little boy that I know. With all you have been through—the needles, X-rays, physical therapy and nagging coughs—you have found a way to play and flourish in school and ice hockey. You are a terrific student, and I am proud of you as any dad could possibly be.

I pray that your life will be long and filled with happiness. You can always count on me to be by your side and to save that "special spot" just for you.

Since 1991, when you came into my life, Father's Day has truly been special. I love you, G-MAN!

Always,  
Dad

BRAD TRENT

Gunnar rides high on his father's shoulder. The 7-year-old son of football great Boomer Esiason has cystic fibrosis.

Please see S7 for facts about cystic fibrosis.

