Website: nytimes.com/section/well
Owner: The New York Times
Readership demographics: The Well section is aimed at Times readers interested in health and wellness.
Frequency of publication: Daily.
What they look for in a pitch: “A great pitch should have all the makings of a great Well story: it should tell us something surprising or compelling about our health, explore how a disease or issue in the medical system is affecting patients, scrutinize health claims that are too good to be true, or provide readers with actionable steps to live healthier, happier lives,” said senior editor Megan Thielking. “It should be grounded in science, and fall into one of Well’s coverage areas, which are wide-ranging. They include physical health, chronic disease, mental health, fitness, substance use, friendship and romantic relationships, health care disparities and more.”
Your pitch should give editors a sense of what’s exciting and fresh about your idea, how you’ll go about reporting it, and why you think the Times audience would be interested. It should have a news hook or time peg.
Well occasionally accepts first-person essays, but they should include reporting.
Do editors take pre-pitches: They prefer full pitches, but writers are welcome to ask an editor whether there’s general interest in a given subject.
What is the lead time for pitching: The lead time for a timely quick-turn story can be a few days to a week. For other stories, the lead time is generally about two or three weeks, but can be longer for feature stories.
Most common mistakes editors see with pitches: Avoid sending a pitch that is a subject and not a specific story, or one that addresses a topic Well has already covered without adding meaningful new reporting.
Best way to break into The New York Times Well: The best way to get editors’ attention is with a tightly focused, timely pitch for a story in their wheelhouse. “In a draft, we are looking for great quotes, surprising service, and clean, jargon-free writing that makes the reporting feel accessible to all readers,” said Thielking.