



Family & Consumer News To Use Holiday 2010



Friends,

As the winter and the cold seem to keep blessing us with their presence, I hope you are all staying warm. In this issue there are tips for staying fit and healthy during the holidays! There is also a recipe for wonderful fudge and a tribute to Santa. Happy Holidays!

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In This Issue:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| The Magic of Books | 1 |
| Tame the Tube | 2 |
| Stay Well During Flu Season | 3 |
| Stay Fit/Keep Spirits Bright | 3-4 |
| Develop Regular Eating Routine | 4-5 |
| Fudge Recipe | 5 |
| Tribute to Santa | 5-6 |
| Winter Storm Kit | 6 |
| Flavor that Food/Safety Tips | Extra |

Bring the Magic of Books to Life

Books make a wonderful Christmas gift. There's magic in children's books. They bring fun and wonder. They build dreams. They help children learn about the world and themselves. Reading together draws you closer.

Here are some ways to read with your children:

Before reading the book... Pick stories with action and interest. Read the book first yourself. Knowing the story will help you know what comes next. Choose a regular story time. Bedtime, nap or quiet times are great. Find a cozy, quiet place to read the story. Call it your reading spot.

While reading the book... Make sure children can see the pictures. Hold the book up or lay it in your lap. Watch children as you read the book. Are they happy, sad, interested? See how they follow the story. Try using fun voices. Make the word scared sound scared, or the word tired sound tired.

Have them guess what happens next. Involve them in saying repeated words or phrases. Ask questions like these as you look at the book:

- What do you think will happen next?
- How do you think the boy feels?
- Is it winter? How do you know?
- Are there any square shapes in the picture?
- How many red things do you see?

Page 2- News To Use

Books continued:

After reading the book...

Encourage children to talk about the stories.

Ask questions like these:

- What did you like best about winter?
- Have you felt the same way?
- What would you do if you were in the story?

Keep time short enough to leave them wanting more later. Look for ways during the day to add to messages in the story. Have fun reading the story. Give your children the best present of all... your time.

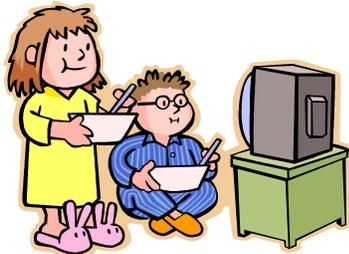
(Source: "The Magic in Books", by Randy Weigel, Univ. of Nevada)

Tame the Tube

Now that winter is here, children spend more time sitting in front of electronic screens (screen time) than in any other activity besides

sleeping. This means they spend more time in front of screens than they do in school. The average time spent with various media (television, computer, video games) is more than five hours per day. Even the very youngest children, preschoolers age 6 and younger, spend as much time with screen media (TV's, video games, and computers) as they do playing outside. That means several hours of inactivity and, in the case of television viewing, hours of exposure to advertising for high-fat, high-calorie foods. Many of these ads are aimed directly at children. Too much screen time affects **children's brains and bodies**.

Children who spend a great deal of time in front of a screen have less time for playing and talking with other children and adults. Language skills are best developed through reading and



conversation. Excessive screen time can interfere with growth in this area. Children who watch less television do better in school and perform better on standardized tests.

Perhaps most alarming is the effect of too much screen time on children's bodies. Most children do not get the recommended amount of physical activity each day, and one reason for this is the number of hours spent inactive in front of a screen. There is a link between overweight in children and television viewing. Children who watch more TV tend to be heavier than children who watch less TV. Children who live in families in which television viewing is a normal part of the meal routine eat fewer fruits and vegetables and more pizza, snack foods and sodas.

Ways to Limit Screen Time

1. Plan how much TV you and your family are going to watch. Limit screen time to one to two hours a day. Planning the amount of television you watch and selecting certain shows helps you get the best out of what television has to offer.
2. Set clear limits and be a good TV role model. Setting limits for the whole family is important. Children need to be taught how to have a good media diet.
3. Choose not to keep the TV on all the time, and instead tune into specific shows. With cable channels numbering well into the hundreds, you could surf for hours and never watch a show.
- If the TV is on, this is likely to happen. However, if you have a TV plan and you know what shows you are going to watch, the set goes on when that show is on and off when it is over.
4. Get the TV out of the bedroom. Having a television in the bedroom allows children to watch more television unsupervised. The same goes for video games and computers; put these in a common area of the home.
5. Eat together as a family without the TV. Have media-free meals as a family. Turn off the TV, cell phone, pager, and MP3 player, and talk about your day.
6. Make a list of activities you want to do instead of watching TV. Get help from the children to create fun activities to do instead of sitting in front of the television, computer, or video games.
7. Watch with your children. Discuss the shows and the advertising. Help your children learn about the tactics advertisers use to sell unhealthy foods.

Stay Well During Flu Season

Despite what you may see advertised, there are no miracle foods or vitamins that can help prevent or cure the H1N1 or any other flu. There are, however, plenty of smart things you can do to keep your family as healthy as possible this season.



1. Keep your hands clean.

One of the best ways to stay healthy is to wash your hands properly and frequently. Washing your hands well will help protect you from all germs, including seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus. Use soap and warm water – and wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand wipes or gel sanitizers.

2. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Produce is packed with the nutrients that your immune system needs to fight viruses and bacteria of all types. Go for all types of brightly colored fruits and veggies. They will have more of the disease-fighting antioxidants, like vitamin C and beta-carotene. Fresh, frozen, dried, canned in juice, and 100% juice can all offer health benefits.

3. Drink plenty of fluids.

Water is always a refreshing choice. Tea, especially antioxidant-rich green tea, can be a nice way to warm up and stay hydrated anytime. 100% orange or other juice is also good, but don't overdo it: A small glass a day is plenty. Drinking enough fluids (6 to 8 cups a day) will help keep your mucous membranes moist and able to fight off germs.

4. Choose nutrient-rich snacks.

During flu season, your body needs every drop of nutrition it can get, so don't waste your calories on 'empty' snacks. Skip the chips, cookies, and colas. Feed your body well with a variety of tasty nutrient-rich items. In addition to fruits and veggies, go for sunflower seeds, nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews, etc.) low-fat yogurt, and beef jerky.

5. Consider a multi-vitamin/mineral supplement.

This is the right time of year for a little extra nutrition insurance, a basic vitamin/mineral pill with

100% of the Daily Value (DV) for most nutrients. Although super-expensive supplements with mega-doses are mostly a waste of your money, you may want to look for a supplement with 1000 IUs of vitamin D. While the DV is still 400 IUs, many experts are recommending an increase for optimal health and well-being.

(Eat Right Montana-Healthy Families)

Stay Fit and Keep Your Spirits Bright

Unless you have a real fairy godmother, wishing and hoping for stress-free holidays is probably going to be a waste of your precious time.

However, if you want to do a better job of coping with any stress that does come

your way, there is one habit that practically guarantees better physical and mental health – any time of year! That is physical activity-aka exercise. (If using the “E” word makes you think of something sweaty and unpleasant, try calling it “moving your body.”) In terms of your health, almost any kind of movement has benefits. For optimal results, aim for at least 10 minutes of activity at a time, at least 30 minutes per day, at least 5 days a week.



Put activity on your busy schedule.

When something is important to us, we write it on our calendar or type it into our PDA. So, make physical activity just as important as your other business and social obligations. Write it into your schedule. Figure out where you can carve out time to spend in the yard, at the gym, at yoga class, or just walking around the block – and then put it in writing. Planning ahead to be physically active makes it much more likely that you will get into the habit of moving your body every day.

Celebrate with active parties.

Think of all the wonderful ways that you can celebrate the season – and be active at the same time. Dancing is always a great place to start, even if you are just rockin' to some tunes while cleaning the house. Depending on weather, there are lots of delightful options: building snow men, making snow angels, or sledding; walking through the neighborhood to carol or look at holiday lights; or

Page 4 – News to Use

active indoor fun for people of all ages, with games such as *Twister*® and *Hullabaloo*®.

Give yourself a time out.

An active 10-minute “time out” will probably be more energizing than a donut break or a nap. Give yourself a 10-minute break to do some yoga stretches, a few Pilates moves, or just to take a walk. Simple brisk walking is one of the activities most often recommended by fitness experts – and all you really need are comfortable shoes. So, keep a pair at your desk or in the car – and you can take ten around your office building, around the block, around the park, or around the ranch.

Get into the laugh habit.

Is laughing a form of physical activity? You bet! Many studies confirm that laughter is powerful “medicine” indeed, with both short and long term benefits. A rollicking good laugh can relieve tension, soothe stress, and reduce aches and pains throughout your body (especially in your stomach and head). How to get your holiday laughs? Almost any game or silly dancing with small children is a great place to start! Or, how about a stroll-and-giggle with a funny friend?

DID YOU KNOW-OUTDOOR ACTIVITY MAY BE BETTER THAN INSIDE EXERCISE?

A small, but growing, group of studies have shown that outdoor activities may have more mental benefits than indoor ones. So called “green” activities, such as outside walks and gardening, may be more effective at reducing tension, relieving stress, and improving concentration in children with attention disorders. Maybe it’s time to put on those comfortable shoes, grab your jacket and a hat, and head outdoors for a brisk, energizing walk.



12 Reasons to Develop a Regular Eating Routine

1. Food is everywhere: From the gas station to the mall, from the candy dish at work to the chips at home. Without a regular eating routine, it can be hard to resist temptation.

2. Grazing can lead to overeating: Without an eating routine, it’s easy to graze on whatever food you find. Many people keep picking at food – without every feeling satisfied.

3. Skipping meals can lead to overeating: Trying to eat less by skipping breakfast or lunch often backfires – and you end up eating more calories in snacks and dinner.

4. Getting over-hungry can lead to overeating: When you are really hungry, it is hard to make healthy choices. It’s also hard to eat slowly and to stop when you are satisfied.

5. Mindless eating can lead to overeating: It’s also hard to make healthy choices and to stop eating – when you are doing other things, like driving, reading, and watching TV.

6. Television can lead to overeating: TV advertisements and shows are full of food cues – especially designed to make you want to eat whether you are physically hungry or not.

7. Routines help maintain a healthy weight: Establishing regular times and places to eat helps to prevent overeating- and helps you balance your eating with your activity level.

8. Routines help build healthy habits: Develop a routine of cutting up fruit after dinner. You can enjoy some for a naturally sweet dessert and pack the rest for tomorrow’s snacks.

9. Routines help with planning and shopping: When you have a regular pattern of meals and snacks, it is easier to plan healthy choices – and easier to make shopping lists.

10. Routines help save money: Buying food on impulse is usually more expensive. It’s much cheaper to plan ahead – and to have healthy choices available when you want to eat.

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Page 5 – News to Use

11. Children do better with a regular eating routine: A regular pattern of meals and snacks helps children maintain the ability to eat when hungry and stop when satisfied.

12. Different patterns work better for different people: Some people feel better with three meals and a snack; others prefer five smaller meals.

Choose the best pattern for you!

(Source: Eat Right Montana)

Recipe Corner

This fudge recipe is a favorite of mine for the holidays. Thanks to Amanda Williams for this yummy addition to my recipe box!

Marshmallow Cream Fudge

1 -7 oz. jar marshmallow cream
1 ½ cup sugar (granulated)
2/3 cup evaporated milk
¼ cup butter
¼ tsp. salt
2 cups chocolate chips
½ cup chopped nuts (optional)
1 tsp. vanilla

In medium saucepan, combine marshmallow cream, sugar, evaporated milk, butter and salt. Bring to full boil, stirring constantly over moderate heat. Boil for 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, remove from heat and add chocolate chips and stir until melted. Stir in ½ cup chopped nuts and vanilla. Pour into 8" square pan. Chill until firm. ENJOY!

A Tribute to Santa Claus – Why Santa isn't such a bad guy..

I have quite a few people write to me and tell me that there's too much Santa in Christmas. In the sense that we equate Santa with commercialism, I think they're right. But



I like to believe there's a bit more to jolly old St. Nick than the shopping malls would have us to believe.

The character of Santa Claus is copied from the life of a real person, a saint named Nicholas. Saint Nicholas was a Christian saint – and he was very REAL. He was the bishop of a city named Myra in Turkey in the early part of the fourth century.

The most common story told about St. Nicholas has to do with three young sisters who were very poor. Their parents were so poor that they did not have enough money for the daughters to get married. Every young girl needed money to pay for the wedding and to set up house for themselves. Nicholas heard about this family and wanted to help them, but he did not want anyone to know that he was the one who was helping them.

Saint Nicholas climbed up on their roof three nights in a row and threw gold coins down their chimney so that they would land in the girls' stockings, which had been hung by the fire to dry. After two of his daughters had been able to marry because of the money mysteriously appearing in their stockings, the father was determined to find out who was helping them, so he hid behind the chimney the next night.

When he was discovered, Bishop Nicholas asked the father not to tell anyone else, but the father wanted everyone to know what a good and generous man the Bishop Nicholas was, so he told everyone he knew. That is how we have the story and tradition of stocking full of gifts today.

Add gifts for the poor to your list of Christmas to do's. Help your children make presents for others to stress the giving side of things. Even little things like baking cookies for Santa and leaving carrots for the reindeer can show them how wonderful the anticipation of giving can be (Will Santa like my cookies? or Will the reindeer eat the carrots?).

Santa is about giving, hope and faith. Keep him that way in your household and he just may begin to grow on you.

Francis P. Church described Santa of today the best:

Little eight year old Virginia O'Hanlon, of 115 West 95th Street in New York, wrote to the New York Sun, in 1897, and said that some of her friends said Santa does not exist. She went on, 'Papa says, 'If you see it in The Sun, it's so'. Please tell me the

Page 6 – News To Use

Continued:

truth, is there a Santa Claus?' And this is what editor Francis P. Church wrote:

Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give your life its highest beauty and joy.

Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias.

There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We would have no enjoyment except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

(From: www.dltk-kids.com)

Winter Storm Kit

No one plans to get stuck in the snow, but it happens. You can buy a winter storm kit for your car at the store or you can make your own by putting the following items into a box stored inside your car.



A winter storm kit should contain:

1. Sleeping bag, space blanket or two or more blankets. A box of newspapers can provide layer of insulation and make a good substitute.
2. Two empty 3 pound coffee cans with lids. One can be used for sanitary facilities, and the other to burn candles for heat. Use a catalytic heater if available.
3. Matches and candles.
4. Winter clothing coats, scarfs, boots, gloves and caps.
5. Large box of facial tissue.
6. First aid kit with a pocket knife.
7. Flashlight with extra batteries.
8. Small sack of sand or kitty litter works great.
9. Tow chain (about 30 feet).
10. Shovel

11. Food supply of high-calorie, non-perishable food (candy, canned nuts, raisins, etc.)
12. Tools – screw driver, pliers, adjustable wrench.
13. Plastic scraper.

14. Transistor radio, with extra battery.
15. Battery booster cables.

You may never get stuck but wouldn't it be great to know that you were prepared in case you did?

Gifts You Can Give All Year Long...

***The Gift of PRAISE:** Mention, right in front of others superior qualities or a job well done.

***The Gift of CONSIDERATION:** Be careful of the other person's feelings. See other's view points and say, "I'm wrong."



***The Gift of GRATITUDE:** Say "Thank you" and mean it.

***The Gift of ATTENTION:** Listen attentively. If words are directed to you personally, meet his eyes squarely.

***The Gift of INSPIRATION:** Plant seeds of courage and action in the other person's heart. Help them strive for greater accomplishments.

***The Gift of YOUR PRESENCE:** In sickness, in trouble, or in a day of great joy, there is nothing equal to your personal expression of sympathy or congratulations.

Season's Greetings

