

# FAMILY LIVING IDEAS

December 2003

## THE VALUES OUR KIDS LEARN FROM OTHERS

Blessed with the opportunities and obligations of raising four young daughters, my wife Anne and I are profoundly aware of the importance of instilling good values that will help them become capable, honorable and happy adults. I think we're doing a pretty good job, but we know that isn't enough.

Frankly, we're worried about the values and character of your kids or anyone's children who may befriend or eventually date or marry our girls. And we worry about what our kids are learning in classrooms, playgrounds and sports fields about things like honesty and honor, respect and responsibility, kindness and compassion, and service and self-discipline.

Sure, parents are children's primary source of moral education. But the lessons taught at home—through example as well as words—may be confirmed or repudiated by peers or from the values explicitly and implicitly promoted in school and extracurricular activities. Contrary to uninformed or cynical assertions, there's ample and mounting evidence that well-designed efforts to instill and strengthen core ethical values can have a dramatic, positive impact on the attitudes and behaviors that constitute character.

That's why I'm such an ardent advocate of purposeful and pervasive character education. I want teachers, coaches and other adults who help shape the attitudes and habits of children to consciously and competently reinforce positive character traits like trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship.

*Source: Michael Josephson, Josephson Institute of Ethics*

## SEWING & STITCHERY EXPO

February 26-29 are the dates for the 2004 Sewing & Stitchery Expo to be held at the Western Washington Fairgrounds in Puyallup. Flyers will be available at the Extension Office and fabric stores in late December.



## Not Just Coffee

If you like caffeine for the lift it gives you, there's no reason to deprive yourself—unless perhaps if you're pregnant or trying to conceive. But if you think caffeine is robbing you of a sound night's sleep, or if you get jittery and nervous from it during the day, it makes sense to cut back. This chart will help you calculate your daily caffeine intake. Note: It's sometimes claimed that caffeine interferes with the body's use of calcium, but this effect is inconsequential.

	CAFFEINE (mg)
Coffee, drip or brewed, 6 oz	80-150
Coffee, instant, 6 oz	60-100
Coffee, espresso, 2 oz	90-110
Coffee, decaffeinated, 6 oz	2-5
Tea, 6 oz	20-100
Milk chocolate, 1 oz	1-10
Hot cocoa, 6 oz	2-20
Dark chocolate, 1 oz	5-35
Chocolate cake, 1 slice	20-30
Coca-Cola or Pepsi, 12 oz	35
Mountain Dew, 12 oz	55
Caffeinated water, 12 oz	60-125
Anacin or Midol, 2 pills	64
Red Bull, 8 oz	80
Excedrin, 2 pills	130
NoDoz, 2 pills	200
Over-the-counter diet pills, various brands	80-200

*Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, June 2003*

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

**S**ome popular crackers supply as many calories and as much fat per ounce as cookies or a candy bar. **Here are some shopping tips for crackers.** Look for whole grains: whole wheat or whole rye should be the only flour, or at least the first ingredient (don't be fooled by "hearty wheat," "stoned wheat," or "multigrain" crackers, which are made from refined wheat flour). Look for at least 3 grams of fiber and less than 4 grams of fat per ounce. The fat usually comes from hydrogenated oil, with its artery-clogging trans fat. **Some good options:** Scandinavian-style flatbreads or crispbreads (Wasa, Ry Krisp, Ryvita or Kavli, for example).

*Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, October 2003*

### **C**onsume adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D to help prevent tooth loss.

USDA researchers followed 145 people over 65 for three years, half of whom took supplements of calcium and D, the other half taking a placebo. Twice as many of the placebo takers lost one or more teeth. For those over 65, the recommended amount of calcium is 1,200 to 1,500 milligrams a day from food and/or supplements; from vitamin D, 400 to 600 IU a day.

*Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, October 2003*

### **How Do Food Manufacturers Remove the Carbs?**

How does a food that is defined nutritionally by its high carbohydrate content become low-carb? Baked goods are stripped of much of their naturally high-carbohydrate wheat flour and are replaced with ingredients that are much higher in protein—soy flour or wheat protein, for instance. They also contain fiber and other agents that fill in for the weight and texture of flour, along with high-fat ingredients like nuts. (No wonder low-carb foods aren't much lower in calories than high-carb. Protein has as many calories, gram for gram, as carbohydrate, and fat has many more!)

When it comes to sweets, sugar, a carbohydrate, is often replaced with ingredients known as sugar alcohols—maltitol, lactitol and sorbitol. These substances (all of which can cause abdominal discomfort and diarrhea in some people because of the way the body breaks them down) contribute half the carbohydrate of sugar, and Nutrition Facts labels reflect that. Manufacturers, however, argue that because sugar alcohols purportedly do not affect blood insulin—and blood sugar—the way carbohydrates do, they should not count as carbohydrates at all. In a separate section of the label, food producers often advise consumers to subtract all sugar alcohols to get "effective carbs" or "net effective carbs." Don't do it. The number on the Nutrition Facts panel is the right one.

Don't pay attention to claims like "low carbohydrate," either. It's not an approved term and therefore has no legal definition. You could call a pound of plain old pasta low-carb and not be running afoul of the law, even though almost all of pasta's calories come from carbohydrates.

*Source: Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter, October 2003*

### **Wild or Farmed Fish?**

There is uncertainty among the public whether farmed fish is less healthy than wild caught fish, particularly salmon. Claims that farmed fish have less omega-3 fats, more pollutants and pollute the ocean have been made. Some issues are easily settled while others are not. Theoretically, farmed salmon could have more pollutants like PCBs than wild salmon, primarily because farmed salmon has more fat and PCBs dissolve into fat. But several analyses shows the opposite. However, the level in both types is so low that it is not a health issue. Salmon farming is highly regulated in the US and fish cannot be farmed under any conditions that pose a hazard to human health by exposure to contaminants or infectious agents. The claim that farmed fish have less omega-3 fat is true only when expressed as a percent of total fat. Because farmed fish has more total fat, the omega-3 content is the same as in wild fish. The charge that farmed salmon are artificially colored is untrue. Wild salmon eat smaller creatures that contain astaxanthin and other carotenoids that turn their flesh orange. The same pigment is added to the fish meal fed to farmed salmon. Wild salmon have higher mercury levels than farmed fish but, again, the levels are low enough in both that this is not a concern. These are examples where statistically significant differences are exploited by some but are biologically meaningless. The bottom line is salmon is a healthy food and it really doesn't matter where your fish got fat.

*Source: The Topic Tickler, September 2003*

**It's Cranberry Season!**—Some of the best-looking cranberries in the country come from Washington! Although we produce the smallest volume of the five cranberry-growing states, our berries are known for their outstanding fruit color. Almost all Washington cranberry farmers sell their berries through Ocean Spray, a grower-owned cooperative. The tart berry was used by Native Americans to make many foods, including a corn-berry cake and pemmican (an early convenience food of deer, bear or moose fat, cranberries and dried meat pounded together and dried as cakes to carry with them). Early people were aware of the healing power of cranberries, which is now being confirmed by research. It's well substantiated that cranberry juice helps maintain urinary tract health, but it also appears to prevent stomach ulcers and promote dental health. All these work by the same mechanism: the condensed tannins (proanthocyanidins) in cranberries have an anti-adhesion characteristic that prevents bacteria from sticking. Keep in mind that bacteria have to bind to a cellular surface to multiply, and at a certain level they release a toxin. When bacteria enter the body, cranberries form a metabolite, which binds to the bacteria before it gets a chance to stick (to the bladder, stomach lining, gums). It competitively inhibits the binding site, and the bacteria exit the body. Since the bacteria aren't killed, just removed, people don't build up resistance as they do with antibiotics. The red pigment in cranberries has antioxidant properties, which appear to prevent oxidative damage that occurs right after a stroke and may be responsible for reducing risk for heart disease. Benefits aren't limited to cranberry juice: raisins and cranberry sauce are also effective.

*Source: Take 5, November 2003*

## FIVE COMMON PESTS

**Houseflies.** *Instead of hanging pest strips, try the following:* Repair/install window and door screens; seal garbage in plastic; cover or seal foods. Never leave dirty dishes in the sink. Kill flies with sticky nontoxic flypaper or a flyswatter.

**Fleas.** *Instead of flea foggers, toxic collars and powders, try the following:* Bathe pet with baby shampoo or soap; wash bedding; comb fur with flea comb and dump fleas in soapy water. Vacuum infested areas (change bag frequently), steam-clean rugs. At night set a gooseneck lamp on the floor aimed at a container of soapy water: fleas will be attracted to the light and will drown.



**Cockroaches.** *Instead of pesticide sprays, try the following:* repair leaks and dripping faucets (roaches need water). Caulk cracks, cover food, sweep up crumbs, keep area dry, don't leave pet food out overnight. Try sticky traps and toxic baits (not harmful to humans, but children and pets should not play with them). Try dusting boric acid or silicon dioxide (diatomaceous earth) in cracks and behind cabinets. Children should not swallow these powders.

**Moths.** *Instead of mothballs, try the following:* Moths feed on tiny soil spots, so dry-clean woolens frequently, and don't store without dry-cleaning; keep in sealed plastic bags. If you do store without cleaning, brush garments well and hang in bright sunlight for a day. To kill moth larvae in small garments, seal the item in plastic and freeze for about five days. This kills moths at all stages. Cedar is no protection. Vacuum thoroughly to keep down the lint, where larvae hide; keep floors and walls of closets clean.

**Ants.** *Instead of pesticide sprays, try the following:* Follow ants to entry point, and seal cracks and crevices. Wipe up invading ants with soapy water to erase their odor trails (used by other ants.). Try ant traps. Dust boric acid or silicon dioxide into entry points. Keep these substances out of children's reach.

*Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, October 2003*

## Did you know that...

**...marriage may increase your Social Security benefit?** In dual-income married couples, each spouse earns as much Social Security as he/she qualifies for based on his work history. Each individual also qualifies for Social Security based on his spouse's earnings. You receive the higher of the two benefits.

*Source: John Clark, public affairs officer, US Social Security Administration*

**...The three-day "cooling-off" period** does not apply to all purchases? This federal rule applies only to cash or credit transactions of \$25 or more made away from a company's regular place of business, for instance, through door-to-door sales or at fairgrounds or facilities rented by the seller temporarily. More information: Federal Trade Commission, [www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buying/cooling.htm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buying/cooling.htm).

*Source: Sheila Adkins, associate director of public affairs, Council of Better Business Bureaus*

## How To Ward Off Mold

- Keep indoor humidity below 50%. Use air conditioners in warm weather.
- Install and use exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchen.
- Don't lay carpet in kitchens or bathrooms. Wallpaper may be a bad idea in damp climates.
- Be sure that sprinkler spray does not hit the house. Remove dead leaves and outside debris. Mold loves piles of leaves.
- If you use a humidifier in the winter, clean and disinfect it frequently.
- Be sure all leaks are repaired, all appliances properly vented.

Molds are fungi. They live everywhere; homes and other buildings damaged in floods or tropical storms are particularly susceptible. Molds thrive in moisture and warmth, producing microscopic spores, which travel easily through the air. Many molds actually do useful work, breaking down dead materials. Most molds, even if you can smell them, are not harmful, except for people with asthma, allergies, or certain severe lung disorders, those in frail health, those with compromised immune systems—or those exposed to massive amounts of molds (farm workers, for example). In these people, in particular, mold can produce cough, congestion, eye irritation, skin rashes and other allergic symptoms, or trigger an asthma attack.

*Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, October 2003*

**Despite popular belief, it's not possible to rupture the eardrum by blowing your nose too hard.** The sensations you may feel in your ears while blowing are due to vibrations resulting from pressure changes. But if you blow hard enough, you can give yourself a bloody nose by breaking blood vessels in your nose. And if you're suffering from an upper respiratory infection and have heavy nasal discharge, forcefully blowing your nose may send bacteria from the nose to your ears and so contribute to an ear infection. **The best advice is still to blow gently.**

*Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, October 2003*

## Military Dads

Military deployment makes it difficult for dads to stay connected to their kids. Staying involved in their children's lives despite distance and time away from their families is a special challenge. Many military fathers are concerned about the changes that they will miss in their children, such as first steps, first words or the first birthday. The military offers many ways to stay connected: video and cassette tapes, video conferencing, phone calls, postcards, letters, e-mail and web sites. Families should use the ones that work for them and use them as much as possible. Deployment can also scare and worry kids. It's important for dads to talk calmly with their children and to allow them to ask questions and express their fears. To help kids and dads stay connected, the National Fatherhood Initiative has created a "Drop Dad a Line" e-mail service at: <http://www.fatherhood.org/drop-dad-a-line.asp>. Children can either send personal messages to their dads or have messages posted on a public board.

*Source: The Topic Tickler, September 2003*

## Don't let an Electrical Mishap Spoil Your Holiday Cheer

The holiday season is one of the most joyous times of the year. But it's also a time when accidents and household fires are on the rise. To ensure your home and family are safe, be sure to follow these recommendations.

- Don't overload circuits with holiday lights. Signs of an overloaded circuit are lights that flicker or dim; a TV screen that shrinks in size; an outlet or switch that feels warm to the touch and circuit breakers that trip or fuses that blow.
- Before hanging holiday lighting, check the condition of each light strand. If you find broken or cracked sockets, loose connections, or frayed or cut insulation, it's best to discard that strand and replace it with a new one.
- When shopping for lights or other electrical decorations, make sure they have the UL safety-approved label. Don't purchase outdoor lights for indoor use. They usually burn hotter than indoor lights.
- Unplug tree lights when you're not home and when you go to bed. Never use them on a metallic tree.
- For outdoor decorations, choose only lights rated for outdoor use and make sure they are plugged into a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) receptacle, preferably one with a weatherproof while-in-use cover.
- Don't overload extension cords. After plugging your decorations into an extension cord, check to see if the cord is warm to the touch. If it is, unplug some of the decorations or use an extension cord with thicker wires.
- Make sure extension cords bear the UL label. Don't run extension cords under rugs or carpets and never use indoor extension cords outside.
- Use one long extension cord rather than linking several shorter cords together.
- If you have young children, make sure that holiday decorations and extension cords are out of their reach. Install outlet caps over exposed outlets to prevent children from coming in contact with the receptacle or install tamper-resistant outlets and wallplates.
- Keep your pets away from holiday decorations and candles. *Source: Leviton Institute, Fall Safety Issues 2003*



There will be no Family Living Ideas Newsletter in December.  
The next one will be in January.



### Family Living Ideas Newsletters

are available electronically. The exchange of electronic mail and creation of electronic newsletters are the fastest and least expensive method of communication available from the Extension Office. If you would like to receive future newsletters as an e-mail attachment, please contact Laurie Berens at 754-2011, extension 413, or at [berensl@wsu.edu](mailto:berensl@wsu.edu). You may also access the newsletter on the Grant/Adams WSU Cooperative Extension Website at <http://grant-adams.wsu.edu>.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



GRANT AND ADAMS AREA

*Betty J. Meloy*

**BETTY J. MELOY - Family Living**

M. Christine Price - Chair - 4-H/Youth

John L. Kugler - Agronomy/Forages

Karen M. Lewis - Tree Fruit

Andy McGuire - Ag Systems

Gary Q. Pelter - Vegetables/Vegetable Seed

Sarah Smith - Animal Science

**Helping You Put Knowledge To Work**

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Cooperative Extension is implied.

Cooperative Extension  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Washington State University  
Pullman, Washington 99164-6230  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
EPHRATA, WA 98823  
PERMIT #11