

# FAMILY LIVING IDEAS

December 2004

## I've Dedicated the Season to You

I've known Ron a long time. But we live in different cities and I didn't know about Anthony, a young man he's been a Big Brother to for six years. I found out that despite Ron's tremendous travel schedule, he's made the time every week or so to be with Anthony and he wanted to tell me what just happened.

He told me that Anthony had a bitter history of rejection and abuse, and that even though he's spent a great deal of time with Ron, he is still very reserved and emotionally distant. Apparently, Anthony recently got into a community college where he became a starter on the school's football team.

Ron said he was pleasantly surprised when Anthony invited him and his wife Sally to watch him play. After the game, Ron rushed onto the field to congratulate Anthony for playing well. Anthony was muddled and tired.

"Do you really think I played well?" he asked.

"Why, that last block saved the game. I'm proud as can be," Ron answered.

Anthony smiled broadly and said, "That's really good to hear, because I want to show you something."

Ron got teary when he said that Anthony pulled the neck of his muddy shirt aside and revealed a picture taped to his shoulder pad. It was a picture of Ron and Sally. Anthony said, "I just want you to know -- I've dedicated this season to both of you."

Yes, Ron gave a great gift to Anthony, but Anthony's gift was easily as great. He gave Ron and Sally the kind of feeling you can't get from money, status or power. He gave them gratitude.

*Source: Michael Josephson, Josephson Institute of Ethics*



Be a dreamer.

They make things happen.

## What's On the Menu?

• **Turkey, gravy, butter and salad dressing** (oil-based stains). Recipe for removal: Pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Launder in the hottest water that's safe for the fabric.

• **Cranberry sauce, apple cider and pumpkin pie** (fruit-based stains). Recipe for removal: Treat these stains promptly. Remove excess fruit and run the fabric under cold water. Wash the item as soon as possible using the warmest water and bleach that are safe for the fabric.

• **Coffee, tea, wine and soft drinks** (beverage stains). Recipe for removal: Soak or sponge stain in cool water. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent. Launder using oxygen bleach or chlorine bleach, if safe for fabric.

• **Colorful cakes and desserts** (food-coloring stains). Recipe for removal: Sponge stain promptly with cool water. If this doesn't remove stain, soak stain in cool water for at least 30 minutes. After soaking, pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent, then launder.

*Source: Cleaning Matters, Nov./Dec. 2004*

## Did you know?

The first Thanksgiving in North America is believed to have been held in 1621 and most likely included wild fowl, venison, fish, fried corn cakes, boiled pumpkin, cranberries and plums. Not included were potatoes, considered by many to be poisonous; and pumpkin pie, as sugar had long since been depleted. The first national Thanksgiving Day, proclaimed by President George Washington, was celebrated Nov. 26, 1789; President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed it a national holiday in 1863 as the last Thursday in November; and in 1941 Thanksgiving was permanently declared a national holiday to be held the *fourth* Thursday in November by act of Congress.

*Source: Take 5, November 2004*



## Washington Grown

**Cranberries** — Washington State is a significant producer of cranberries, and November and December are perfect months to promote this local food. A lovely free brochure by the

Cranberry Marketing Committee, *Cranberries: They make it easy to be good* briefly describes the health benefits of cranberries, shows the amount of cranberry products needed each day for benefits (it's less than you might think), includes a couple of recipes and tells some folklore about the cranberry. The Cranberry Marketing Committee's website provides interesting history about the cranberry and recipes at [www.uscranberries.com/eng/consumer.cfm](http://www.uscranberries.com/eng/consumer.cfm). Cranberry photos can be downloaded at [http://www.cranberryinstitute.org/news/news\\_photo.htm](http://www.cranberryinstitute.org/news/news_photo.htm). For scientific background on nutritional benefits, go to the Cranberry Institute at [www.cranberryinstitute.org/healthresearch.htm](http://www.cranberryinstitute.org/healthresearch.htm). (Contact for free copies while supplies last of *Cranberries: They make it easy to be good*: Diana Steeble, Publicis Dialog, 206-285-4637, [diana.steeble@publicis-usa.com](mailto:diana.steeble@publicis-usa.com))

## Liquid "Meal Replacers"

The ads for liquid "meal replacers" make them sound like the all-in-one answer. Some were originally designed for people too sick or weak to manage solid food, as well as for very obese people in doctor-supervised weight-loss programs. Other drinks were originally targeted at athletes who want "high-energy" supplements. Now these liquid meals are being aggressively marketed to the general public, young and old.

There's nothing magic about these drinks. Most contain non-fat milk, sugars, vegetable oil, thickeners and flavoring agents, plus added vitamins and minerals.

A closer look at the claims:

**"Energy drink":** Energy simply means calories—usually 200 to 350 calories per can. A lot for a snack, very little for a meal.

**"High-protein":** The cans contain 10 to 20 grams of protein. But most Americans get more than enough protein. And protein by itself won't build muscle.

**"Complete nutrition":** A can typically supplies 15 to 50% of most vitamins and minerals, but doesn't contain the other potentially beneficial substances in foods, such as the carotenoids in fruits and vegetables. In addition, most brands contain no fiber.

**"Easy and convenient":** perhaps, but what could be easier than grabbing some low-fat yogurt, fruit juice and/or a banana?

**"Delicious":** Some people may be able to find a brand or flavor they like, but, most will find they taste overly sweet, oily and sometimes medicinal.

**"Doctor-recommended":** Doctors may recommend these drinks if you're undergoing chemotherapy, have AIDS or are in a hospital and can't eat enough food, but rarely for other people.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, November 2004

## When A Little Means A Lot

Taking off pounds is a losing proposition, as the old joke goes. The frustrating part is that if you're 20 or 30 pounds overweight, losing may loom as an impossible task. It's hard enough simply not to gain any more weight, let alone really slim down.

Yet here's good news: if you're overweight, dropping just a little weight can pay amazing health dividends. I know this from my own practice as a physician. "You can't imagine how much better you'll feel," I can hear myself saying, if you could lose just 10 pounds—and how much positive impact that would have on your cholesterol levels and blood pressure."

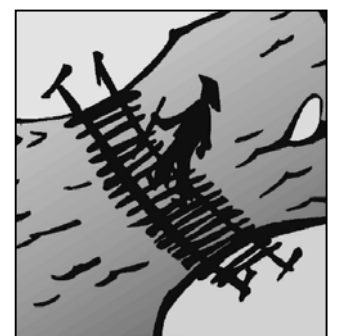
That advice isn't just guesswork. Right now on my desk, I have a stack of articles from leading medical journals, all reporting the same good news: even modest weight loss (5% of your total body weight, about 10 pounds if you weigh 200) is a big step forward. It will reduce your total blood cholesterol and triglycerides, and raise your HDL ("good") cholesterol, according to British researchers. It can reduce the pain of knee arthritis. Modest weight loss can result in "clinically significant, long-term reductions in blood pressure," according to a study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. For every 2 pounds of weight you lose, your systolic blood pressure goes down 1 point, on average. If you lost 10 pounds, that might bring your blood pressure back into the "normal" category. It might mean not having to take blood pressure medication, or taking less of it. Even more important, it might mean not having a heart attack or stroke.

In one study of obese people, modest weight loss improved blood sugar levels and reduced the risk of diabetes. Modest weight loss, as shown in a group of middle-aged French people, reduced the risk of heart disease. Episodes of sleep-disordered breathing (such as sleep apnea) decrease in frequency when a person loses even a small amount of weight.

"Easier said than done," you may say. Try cutting just 350 calories a day—that way you'll lose a pound in 10 days. Switch to nonfat dairy products. Reduce your portion sizes a bit, and say no to second helpings. Have fresh fruit for dessert instead of cake or pie. Cut empty calories, such as white bread, pastries, sodas. Go easy on high-calorie salad dressings. Take a daily walk. The payoff for losing even a few pounds will be real health benefits. You may even want to lose a little more.

As the Chinese aphorism says, "a journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step."

Source: John Swartzberg, M.D., Chair, Editorial Board, UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, November 2004



## Cleaning Questions

### Q: Is it true that washing dishes in the dishwasher helps fight germs?

**A:** Yes, an automatic dishwasher helps fight the spread of germs in the kitchen. How is it done? With the use of heat, mechanical wash action and detergent. Some newer models may have a certified "sanitize" option, which assures that 99.99% of bacteria typically found on dishes, glasses, and utensils will be removed during the cycle.

Make sure the water in your dishwasher is hotter than 140° F or bacteria can survive. If the water temperature is lower than that, bacteria can spread to other items in the dishwasher. Also, avoid spreading germs back onto clean and sanitized items by remembering to wash your hands prior to unloading the dishwasher.

### Q: I've read about using chlorine or color-safe bleach to remove laundry stains. What's the difference between the two?

**A:** Chlorine bleach *removes* color, generally whitens fabrics and disinfects. Color-safe bleach *maintains* color and whiteness. It can be used on most fabrics, but does not disinfect. Both chlorine and color-safe bleaches can be excellent stain removers. Always read and follow both garment care labels and bleach label directions before laundering.

### Q: I just used my cutting board to prepare raw meat for a holiday feast. How should I clean the cutting board to help prevent foodborne illness?

**A:** Raw meat, poultry and seafood can contain harmful bacteria. To help prevent the spread of bacteria, you should thoroughly wash the cutting board – and any other dishes and utensils that came in contact with these raw foods – with soap and hot water. You can also disinfect the cutting board using chlorine bleach.

*Source: Nancy Bock is Vice President of Education for The Soap and Detergent Association*

## Did you know that...

...**credit card fees** are going up? The average tab for late payment is about \$32, nearly \$2 more than a year ago and nearly triple what it was a decade ago. The average bank fee for exceeding the credit limit has risen to almost \$30.

*Source: Robert McKinley, CEO, CardWeb.com, Inc.*

...**the term "bear market"** dates back at least three centuries? Middlemen called bearskin jobbers would sell skins of bears not yet caught, wait for prices to drop, then buy lower-cost ones and keep the difference. A bear market came to mean a market with falling prices.

*Source: Newsweek*

...**drowsy driving** kills 1,500 and injures 40,000 people in the US each year? *Recent survey:* More than one-third of drivers admitted nodding off behind the wheel at least once. A drowsy-driving incident typically happens when a driver has slept for less than six hours within the past 24 hours and has been driving for less than three hours.

*Source: Statistics from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration National Center for Statistics and Analysis, Washington, DC*



**F**ree checking accounts aren't really free, warns consumer advocate Ken McEldowney. Legally, "free" means no minimum-balance requirements and no activity or maintenance fees, such as monthly service charges. But banks quietly impose other fees—for using your debit card...closing an account before a certain period...even calling to inquire about your balance. For some accounts, you even may be charged for talking to a teller. *Self-defense:* Before you open an account, ask for a list of fees. If your bank charges for debit card purchases, use the card only for ATM services at your bank's ATMs.

*Source: Ken McEldowney, executive director of Consumer Action, [www.consumer-action.org](http://www.consumer-action.org)*

## Should We Live Together?

Cohabitation is replacing marriage as the first living together experience in the U.S. More than half of brides walking down the aisle in the 1990s have already lived together with a boyfriend. For today's young adults, the first generation to come of age during the divorce revolution, living together seems like a good way to achieve some of the benefits of marriage and avoid the risk of divorce. According to national surveys, nearly 60% of high school seniors say it's a good idea to live with a person before marrying. But is this a good way to prepare for marriage or avoid divorce? Research indicates that living together increases the risk of divorce by about 46% and poses risks for women and children. Women in cohabiting relations are more likely than married women to suffer physical and sexual abuse. One of the greatest problems for children living with a cohabiting couple is the high risk that the couple will break up and the number of personal and social difficulties parental break up entails. Three quarters of children born to cohabiting parents will see their parents split up before they reach age sixteen, compared to about one third of children born to married parents.

*Source: The National Marriage Project, January 1999*

# Did you know that...

**...85% of baby boomers won't receive an inheritance?** It has been reported that some \$10 trillion will be inherited over the next 40 years—but most of those assets will go to only a small number of people. *Reason:* Most boomers' parents have a lot of income that is not transferable, such as annuities, pensions and Social Security.

*Source: John Gist, associate director, AARP Public Policy Institute, Washington, DC*

**...there is 400 times more bacteria** in your office than on a toilet seat? *Areas with the highest levels of bacteria:* Telephones, water-fountain handles, microwave-door handles and computer keyboards.

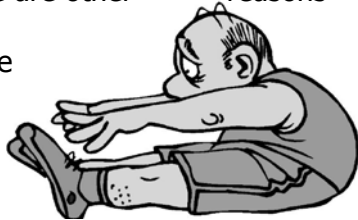
*Source: Charles Gerba, PhD, microbiologist, University of Arizona, Tucson*

**... storing clothes in a cedar closet** won't protect them from moths forever? The cedar oil evaporates over time. Instead, dry-clean woollens frequently and always before storing. *Also:* Vacuum closet floors and walls frequently to reduce lint buildup, a common hiding place for moth larvae.

*Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, September 2004*

## Don't stretch before exercising simply because you think it will prevent injuries.

Many athletes believe it does help, but studies have found that it does not reduce the risk. Runners who never stretch before running are no more prone to injury than those who stretch. It is true that cold muscles are more likely to tear than warm ones. That's why you should always warm up before exercising—that means running in place for a couple minutes or simply doing your activity at low intensity. Still, there are other reasons to stretch: It improves flexibility, relieves muscle tension and stiffness and is often an effective treatment for injuries. And it feels good.



*Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, November 2004*

**Whooping cough is back.** The potentially deadly bacterial infection pertussis, characterized by severe coughing spasms, is coming back, in part because some parents who were concerned about the long-term effects of the diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus (DPT) vaccine didn't have their children vaccinated. These concerns have been dispelled by scientific evidence. Unvaccinated children who contract whooping cough may infect vaccinated adults whose immunity has dropped, as well as infants who have yet to be immunized. For children, the best defense is a DPT vaccination or a diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis (DTaP) vaccination, a newer version of the vaccine. Adults exposed to pertussis can take antibiotics immediately after exposure as a preventive measure.

*Source: David A. Relman, MD, associate professor of medicine, microbiology and immunology, Stanford University School of Medicine*



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