



Family Living IDEAS

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Greetings!

Fall has arrived! Cooler temperatures are a definite reminder that it is time to clean up the garden and prepare the flower beds for the winter....along with one last window washing, gutter cleaning or lawn mowing!

One fall activity that is just around the corner is Halloween. For those with children who may participate in the "trick or treat" activities keep these safety reminders in place:

- Make sure Halloween costumes do not impede vision or movement (such as tripping on parts of the costume or face masks that reduce vision)
- Take "treats" only from trusted sources; and/or inspect the treats before consuming. Toss any questionable items.
- Make sure children have a flashlight and that costumes have some reflective tape or feature. Black costumes wandering the sidewalks at night can be pretty scary, as well as hazardous!
- Once the treats are home, monitor their consumption. Put some away for later. Eating all the Halloween treats at one sitting is not a positive health practice. Spreading the candies out over several days or weeks can make the treats be even more special.

Right behind Halloween comes Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays! Favorite foods are also an important part of those family gatherings. This too, is a good time to plan holiday favorite foods to prevent our bodies from being overloaded with sugar, fat, and salt! If you know that your family will want their favorite holiday

treat, fit that into the plan, try to substitute lower sugar, fat, or salt ingredients whenever possible, and remember moderation.

Sincerely,

M. Christine Price

M. Christine Price, County Director
 WSU Extension Grant/Adams Area
 Family & Consumer Science Educator

The Family Treasure

A 6-year-old girl I'll call Sarah knocked over a display case that contained a much-cherished vase once owned by her great-grandmother. Her mom loved that vase and frequently referred to it as the family treasure. The vase hit the floor with a loud crash and shattered into pieces. Sarah, shocked and frightened at what she'd done, screamed and began sobbing.

Her mom came running into the room fearing the worst. Seeing the shattered vase, her heart sank. Then she saw Sarah sitting on the floor wailing. "I'm sorry, Mommy. I'm sorry, Mommy. I broke the family treasure!"

Seeing despair on her daughter's face, the mother's heart plunged further.

Faced with two powerful and conflicting instincts – one toward anger and blame, the other toward compassion and forgiveness, she sat next to Sarah, pulled her on her lap, and kissed her tears. "Sweetheart, when I ran in here, I was terrified that something bad had happened to our family's most precious

treasure. But thank God, you're okay. Sarah, you are the family treasure."

Sarah's mom turned what could have been a painful incident and a lifelong source of guilt into an enduring source of affirmation and worthiness.

I wonder if I would have had the presence of mind to realize in the instant after an upsetting event that I could choose my reaction and that my choice would have a permanent impact on someone I love.

The reaction of Sarah's mom was nothing short of heroic and stands as a reminder that, even in the face of powerful emotions, we do have choices – and they really matter.

This is Michael Josephson reminding you that character counts.

Michael Josephson commentary. *The family treasure*. Charactercounts.org. September 2009

Obese women have a higher risk of giving birth to a baby with heart defects

The largest study of obesity during pregnancy and babies with heart defects in the United States finds that women who were overweight or obese before they became pregnant had an approximately 18 percent increased risk of having a baby with certain heart defects compared with women who were of normal body mass index (BMI) before they became pregnant. Severely obese women had approximately a 30 percent increased risk, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The study, "Association Between Prepregnancy Body Mass Index and Congenital Heart Defects," published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, found a significant increase in several types of heart defects in babies born to overweight and obese women, compared to babies born to normal weight women. These included obstructive defects on the right side of the heart, and defects in the tissue that separates the two upper chambers of the heart

Obesity and overweight were determined based on the study's participants' BMIs. A BMI is a measure of weight in relation to height. For example, a woman who is 5 feet, 5 inches tall and weighs 190 pounds has a BMI of 31.6 which places her in the moderate obesity category.

"Congenital heart defects are the most common types of birth defect, and among all birth defects, they are a leading cause of illness, death, and medical expenditures," said Dr. Edwin Trevathan, director of the CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. "Women who are obese and who are planning a pregnancy could benefit by working with their physicians to achieve a healthy weight before pregnancy."

The study looked at 25 types of heart defects and found associations with obesity for 10 of them. Five of these 10 types were also associated with being overweight before pregnancy. Women who were overweight but not obese had approximately a 15 percent increased risk of delivering a baby with certain heart defects.

"These results support previous studies, as well as provide additional evidence, that there is an association between a woman being overweight or obese before pregnancy and certain types of heart defects," said Suzanne Gilboa, epidemiologist at CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, and primary author of the study.

Obese and overweight women have a higher risk of giving birth to baby with heart defects. Parenting. www.extension.org. October 2009.

What are the right words to use to negotiate a lower interest rate on a credit card?

Call your existing creditors and speak pleasantly but assertively. Phrase your request for a lower interest rate as a statement rather than a question that requires a "yes/no" answer. For example, instead of asking, "Will you lower my interest rate by 5 percent?," begin your request with a statement such as "I'm calling to request

that you lower the interest rate on my credit card from 18 to 13 percent."

Hint to the company representative that you have other credit cards that you can use instead of theirs and, if you have a good credit history over time, include this as a "selling point" in the conversation as well. If the first company representative that you speak to says no, ask to speak with his or her supervisor. Many credit card companies will reduce interest rates, at least temporarily, to avoid the expense of having to replace an existing customer with a new one.

What are the right words to use to negotiate a lower interest rate on a credit card? Personal finance. www.extension.org. October 2009.

What's it like to be a one-month old baby?

At first, your baby stares at objects. If an object is just 7 to 8 inches away, she can focus on it pretty well. Later, she begins to watch and follow objects with her eyes. To help your baby learn to lift her head, lie on your back and put your baby on your tummy. Call her name and encourage her to lift her head to see you.

Encourage your baby to track your face. As you move from left to right, see if she will follow you with her eyes and turn her head. Talk to your baby from different places in the room. As she searches for you with her eyes, she will start to learn how to coordinate sight and sound.

Hang a mobile over your baby's crib. Select one without string or elastic that could entangle her. Place the mobile on one side of the crib for a few days, and then move it to the other side. This will help your baby look in both directions. Say simple nursery rhymes to your baby. She will enjoy the sound of your voice and the repetition of the words.

You and your baby are learning together. Most of the baby's time is spent crying, eating, and sleeping, while most of your time is spent figuring out the best way to meet your baby's needs. If you have questions or doubts, call your doctor. It is better to get the correct information from a professional than to worry whether you're doing the right thing. Taking care of a

newborn is a challenging job, especially the first time around.

Just in time parenting eNewsletters. Month 1. www.extension.org/parenting.

Halloween gingerbread sandwich cookies



Celebrate Halloween with these tasty gingerbread cookies, but beware: Seconds and thirds will surely be in high demand. Yields: 20 cookies, Prep Time: 45 min, Cook Time: 8 min, Oven Temp: 350

Cookies:

- 2 1/4 cup(s) all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup(s) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon(s) pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon(s) baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon(s) salt
- 1/4 cup(s) mild molasses
- 1/4 cup(s) boiling water
- 1/4 teaspoon(s) baking soda
- 1/2 cup(s) unsalted butter, softened
- 1/3 cup(s) (packed) brown sugar
- 1/3 cup(s) granulated sugar
- 1 large egg

Filling:

- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese
- 1 cup(s) marshmallow cream

Directions:

1. **To make the cookies:** In a bowl, whisk flour, cocoa, spice, baking powder, and salt. In a cup, stir together molasses, water, and baking soda. In a large bowl, with mixer on medium, beat butter and sugars until fluffy. Beat in egg until blended. With mixer on low, alternately beat in flour mixture and molasses mixture until dough forms. Divide dough in half; place each half between sheets of waxed paper. Roll out to 1/8-inch thickness. Stack on baking sheet; freeze 30 minutes, until firm.
2. Heat oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment. Working with 1 portion of dough at a time, peel away 1 sheet of the waxed paper to completely release from dough; pat paper back into place.

Turn dough over; peel off second sheet and discard. Using 3-inch Halloween-shaped cutters, cut out 20 cookies. Transfer cookies from waxed paper to prepared cookie sheets with a small spatula, spacing them 1 1/2 inches apart. (For bat, use a skewer to cut out eyes; for jack-o'-lantern, use a small knife.) Reroll scraps; freeze. Cut out the remaining 20 bottom cookies.

3. Bake each sheet 8 minutes. Cool on sheet 2 minutes; remove to a wire rack to finish cooling.
4. **To make the filling:** Beat both ingredients until smooth. Spread a heaping tablespoon of filling on each of bottom cookies; place top cookies over filling; gently sandwich together. Decorate with icing.

Frank P. Melodia. Redbook. Halloween Gingerbread sandwich cookies. www.delish.com. October 2009.

Prostate cancer awareness

One of the concerning issues with prostate cancer—the most common cancer in American men and the second leading cause of cancer death, behind lung cancer—is that there are frequently no warning signs or symptoms in its earliest stages, when the cancer is treatable. Therefore, it is especially important to understand the risk factors, to screen preventatively and to make lifestyle choices that lower your risk of developing the disease.

The prostate

The prostate is a gland about the size of a walnut in the male reproductive system, which produces fluid that makes up part of the semen.

Risk factors

- **Age:** About two out of every three prostate cancers are found in men over the age of 65.
- **Race:** More common among African-American men.
- **Nationality:** Most common in North America and northwestern Europe.
- **Family history:** Increased risk if a close relative had prostate cancer.

- **Diet:** Men who eat a lot of red meat or high fat dairy products appear to have an increased risk.

Advanced symptoms

- Blood in the urine or semen
 - Loss of bladder or bowel control
 - Trouble having or keeping an erection (impotence)
 - Painful ejaculation
 - Pain in the spine, hips, ribs, or other bones that doesn't go away
 - Weakness or numbness in the legs or feet
- Note: Problems with urinating can be a sign of advanced prostate cancer, but more often this problem is caused by a less serious disease known as BPH (benign prostatic hyperplasia).

Lowering your risk

- Eating a healthy, balanced diet with an emphasis on whole grains, fruits and vegetables while limiting fat and red meat.
- Talking with your doctor about taking nutritional supplements or medication aimed at prostate cancer prevention.
- Getting screenings done as early as recommended by your doctor. Early screenings, i.e. before age 50, are often recommended if anyone in your immediate family has had prostate cancer.
- Working with a healthcare professional to address any concerns you may have about your risk of developing prostate cancer.

Prostate Cancer Awareness. National Cancer Institute. <http://www.cancer.gov>.

*In a houseful of toddlers and pets,
you can start out having a bad day,
but you keep getting detoured.*

Harvesting and storing pumpkins and winter squash

To insure a long life, pumpkins and winter squash must be harvested, cured, and stored properly. Immature fruit are poor quality and cannot be successfully stored. Mature fruit that have been removed from the vine are still alive. Proper curing and storage slows the rate of respiration and prolongs the storage life of the fruit. Harvest pumpkins when they have developed a uniform orange color and have a hard rind. Mature winter squash have very hard skins that can't be punctured with your thumb nail. Additionally, mature winter squash have dull-looking surfaces. Harvest all mature pumpkins and winter squash before a hard freeze. A light frost will destroy the vines but should not harm the fruit. However, a hard freeze may damage the fruit.

When harvesting pumpkins and winter squash, handle them carefully to avoid cuts and bruises. These injuries are not only unsightly, they provide entrances for various rot-producing organisms. Cut the fruit off the vine with pruning shears. Leave a 3- to 4-inch handle on the pumpkins and a 1 inch stem on the winter squash. Pumpkins and winter squash are less likely to rot when they are harvested with a portion of the stem attached to the fruit. Do not carry the fruit by their stems. The stems may not be able to support the weight of the fruit and they may break off. After harvesting, cure the pumpkins and winter squash (except for the acorn types) at a temperature of 80 to 85 F and a relative humidity of 80 to 85 percent. Curing helps to harden their skins and heal any cuts and scratches. Do not cure acorn squash. The high temperature and relative humidity during the curing process actually reduce the quality and storage life of acorn squash.

After curing, store pumpkins and winter squash in a cool, dry, well-ventilated location. Storage temperatures should be 50 to 55 F. Do not store pumpkins and squash near apples, pears, or other ripening fruit. Ripening fruit release ethylene gas which shortens the storage life of pumpkins and squash. (Actually, the best storage temperatures for most apples and pears is 30 to 32 F.) When storing pumpkins, place them in a single layer where they don't touch one another. Good air circulation helps to prevent moisture from forming on the surfaces of the fruit and retards the growth of decay fungi and bacteria. Periodically check pumpkins and winter squash in storage and discard any fruit which show signs of decay. Properly cured and stored pumpkins should remain in good condition for 2 to 3 months. The storage life of acorn, butternut, and hubbard squash is approximately 5 to 8 weeks, 2 to 3 months, and 5 to 6 months, respectively.

Richard Jauron, Department of Horticulture. Iowa State University. *Harvesting and storing pumpkins and winter squash.* www.ipm.iastate.edu. September 2001.

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Layout and design provided by Jenelle Kerner, a member of the WSU Grant/Adams Extension team.

World Class. Face to Face.

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