



James City County Unit Newsletter

November/December 2007



Staying Safe and Healthy Through the Holidays



Beating the Holiday Blues



Holidays often bring high expectations. Although it's a time of joy, family, and celebration, the holiday season also often brings people, events, and financial burdens that create more stress than joy. For others, the holiday season reminds them of family members who are not around to celebrate for one reason or another. For this and other reasons many people become depressed during the holidays.

This year start preparing for all of the feelings that the holidays bring ahead of time. Be aware of family members, friends, and co-workers who tend to get depressed during this time. Be supportive and encouraging, but don't expect the holidays to be a "magical cure." Include them in holiday activities while giving them enough space to say when they need space.

When the schedule starts looking crazy and stress starts to rise, try the following tips to keep holiday stress in check:

- Keep a list and calendar of activities. Prioritize and organize your time.
- Establish a budget and stick to it! Include things like holiday groceries, gift wrapping supplies, cards (postage), travel expenses, entertaining, and decorating in addition to presents.
- Enjoy free holiday activities such as driving around to view lights and decorations.
- Don't drink too much. Excessive drinking will decrease your energy level, mood, and overall holiday experience.
- Spend time with people who are supportive and care about you. Make new friends if you are alone during special times.
- Recognize that life's challenges don't disappear during the holiday season.
- Find time for yourself!

Source: missourifamilies.org



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- Keep holiday expectations realistic. It doesn't have to be "the best ever."

Do You Know Your Debit Card?

Important facts about debit cards:

Debit cards look like credit cards. Know what type of cards your financial institution has given you. You may already have a debit card without realizing it. There is no grace period for a debit card purchase. Since it's directly deducted from your checking account, make sure you have the money available to cover the full transaction amount at the time of sale.

Some debit cards have monthly or per-transaction fees. Carefully review your cardholder agreement. Your issuer is legally required to disclose any fees you will be charged for card use.



Tips for Responsible Debit Card Use:

- Know your current account balance. Don't forget about checks that have not yet cleared your account.
- Always take sales receipts and carbon copies.
- Record your transactions in your check register as soon as possible. Remember to include any financial institution fees that may apply.
- Review your statements carefully. If you suspect a mistake, call your financial institution immediately. And always follow up with a confirmation letter.
- If your card is lost or stolen or you notice fraudulent transactions on your statement, contact your financial institution immediately.
- Choose a unique PIN. Avoid obvious choices such as your address, phone number, or birth date.
- Keep your PIN private. Memorize it. Don't write it down or write it on your card, and never tell it to anyone.

Source: practicalmoneyskills.com



Holiday Poisoning Hazards

Keep accidental poisoning from interrupting your holiday season. Stay alert to new and unusual items that will draw children's attentions. Here's a guide to help you know what is and is not a potential hazard in your home.



Mistletoe - although American mistletoe is not as deadly as the European type, ingestion of more than two or three of the berries can cause poisoning in small children.

Holly - the bright red berries are very attractive to a small child and can cause severe vomiting and diarrhea if more than a few are ingested.

Alcohols - children are especially at risk for poisoning from even small amounts of ethanol alcohol because their blood sugar may drop to low levels. Colognes and after shaves have high alcohol content and are dangerous to keep under the Christmas tree, within easy reach.

Batteries - yes, those battery-operated toys are a potential source of poisoning! Swallowed batteries can cause choking, intestinal blockages or injury, and poisoning from leaking contents.

Medications - these are a problem all year, of course. Family and friends can bring unexpected danger with them when they visit during the holidays. Luggage and purses left unattended are attractive to the curious child, who may be poisoned by the medications carried inside.

Poinsettia - accidental indigestion of this plant has not caused ANY cases of serious poisoning in children despite thousands of exposures each Christmas.

Tree Ornaments - most modern ornaments (including tinsel and icicles) are plastic, glass, or Styrofoam and are not poisonous. Many ornaments can cause choking if swallowed. Very old ornaments could be covered with lead-containing paints and should not be used in homes with small children. Dough ornaments may contain lots of table salt which can cause poisoning in children who eat more than a small amount.

"Don't let the holidays be a time of sadness because of poisoning---exercise caution, keep the poison center number posted and enjoy a happy and safe holiday season."

Virginia Poison Center's emergency number: 1-800-222-1222 or 804-828-9123 (Richmond Area)

Source: VCU Medical Center



Questions about Food Safety?

The USDA Meat & Poultry operating hours on Thanksgiving Day are 8:00am to 2:00pm.

Contact the USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline at:

1-888-MPHotline(1-888-574-6854) Or email: mph hotline.fsis@usda.gov

Their food safety specialists can answer your questions about safe storage, handling, and preparation of meat, poultry and egg products. Regular (non-holiday) hours M-F, 10:00am to 4:00pm.



Ellen Ford, SCNEP/EFNEP Program Assistant

Test Your Diabetes IQ

What is diabetes?

- a disease in which the body doesn't produce or properly use insulin, the hormone needed to convert food into energy. Without enough insulin glucose builds up in the blood and wreaks havoc on many body systems and organs.

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What causes diabetes?

- Although the exact cause is unknown, it is known that heredity and behavioral risk factors play a role.

Who is at risk?

- Individuals who are over 30, overweight, and have a family history. These risk factors can compound, but family history does not have to be a factor in people who are over 30 and overweight and it can be the only risk factor.
- Women who have had a baby weighing more than 9 pounds at birth

What are some warning signs of diabetes?

- frequent urinations
- unusual thirst
- extreme hunger
- unusual weight loss
- extreme fatigue
- irritability
- frequent infections
- slow-healing injuries
- blurred vision
- tingling/numbness in hands or feet

What is the toll of diabetes?

- diabetes is the fourth-leading cause of death from disease in the U.S.
- many people don't know they have diabetes until they have symptoms or develop one of its life-threatening complications
- uncontrolled diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in people ages 25-74
- 10% of all people with diabetes develop kidney disease
- uncontrolled diabetes is the most frequent cause of leg or foot amputations
- people with uncontrolled diabetes are 2-4 times more likely to have heart disease and 5 times more likely to have a stroke

What can you do?

- get screened annually if you have a family history or are over 30
- talk to a health care professional if you experience symptoms listed above
- eat healthily to avoid becoming overweight or to lose excess weight
- adopt a daily exercise routine and faithfully stick to it
- educate yourself on diabetes and how to control and treat it

Source: Virginia Cooperative Extension Healthy Features: Healthy Lifestyles Handout 7

American Diabetes Association, 1660 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314



Upcoming Programs

How to Make Your Money

Go Further

Thursday, November 29
6:00p.m. to 8:00p.m.
EOC Building - Toano, VA



Do you have a handle on your household expenditures? Have you identified financial goals to gain control of your spending?

Make plans to join us and learn how to:
Develop a Budget and Get Out of Debt

Registration is required, please call 564-2170

4-H Winter Teen Weekend

December 7-9, 2007
Jamestown 4-H Education Center

The 4-H Winter Teen weekend is a residential, interactive camping program that will allow youth (ages 14-18) to participate in hands-on activities that teach leadership, community, and citizenship. Activities may include: dance, talent show, sports, crafts, seminars, and games.

To Register Call 253-4931 by December 1



If you are a person with a disability and desire assistance or accommodation for any of the programs listed in this newsletter, please notify the Virginia Cooperative Extension, James City County Office, at 564-2170 ten days prior to the event.

Confusion on the Breakfast Cereal Aisle



Cereal is a favorite family breakfast food. Cereals are grains and grains are naturally low in fat; they are the best source of fiber, protein, folic acid, zinc, iron, and the B-vitamins. Choosing a cereal can present a challenge on a cereal aisle today. There are cereals with health claims, cereals with fruits, cereals with weight loss claims, and cereals with novelty ingredients. With a few guidelines you will be able to maneuver through the glitz of catchy names, claims, and box designs to choose a nutritious cereal that your family will eat. The information you will need is found in the ingredient list and the Nutrition Facts found on the back or side of the box. The Nutrition Facts information is for a single serving of cereal (which may be smaller than you think.)

- Whole grain should be the first ingredient (e.g. whole wheat or whole wheat flour) not wheat or wheat flour.
- Sodium should be less than 300 milligrams per serving.
- The protein should be at least 3 grams per serving.
- The grams of sugar should be less than five per serving.
- The Dietary fiber should be at least 2-3 grams per serving.

Avoid the following ingredients:

- Hydrogenated (including partially) oils
- Dyes or artificial colors
- Chemical preservatives

How many of these guidelines does your favorite cereal meet? If not all or most, maybe it is time to think about choosing a different cereal.

Can't give up the frosted cereals? Try mixing half and half your frosted cereal with a high fiber whole grain cereal.

Ellen Ford, SCNEP/EFNEP Program Assistant

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