

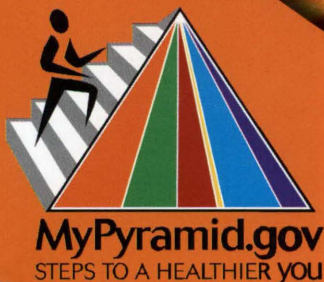
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Smart Choices for YOUNG FAMILIES

October

A Newsletter from the EFNEP/SCNEP Programs of Virginia Cooperative Extension

Welcome to the October Issue of ***Smart Choices for YOUNG FAMILIES***. This issue will give you important tips on ways to have a healthy Halloween. This issue also covers problems that may result if adults and children eat too many sweets. At least 60% of adults and 20% of children and teens in the United States are overweight. One cause is the large amount of high-fat, high-sugar snacks and desserts that adults and kids are eating. Frequently eating sweets and refined carbohydrates can also lead to tooth decay and gum disease. This issue discusses things you can do about these problems.



Nutrition and Health Tips For Today

Satisfying that Sweet Tooth: October brings Halloween, which means candy and lots of it! Candy is a major source of excess sugar, along with cookies, cakes, pies, regular soft drinks, fruit punch, and other sweet drinks. These foods and drinks are often referred to as “junk food” because they provide lots of calories and few nutrients. Eating too much of these will deprive the body of needed nutrients and can lead to overweight or obesity. Also, eating sweets frequently promotes tooth decay. Buying too many of these foods is not a good use of food money or food stamps.



This doesn't mean you have to completely avoid foods with added sugar. Instead, eat smaller amounts and eat them less often. Think of these as “sometimes foods,” not “everyday foods.” Here are some suggestions for sweet treats without added sugars:

- Mix 100% fruit juice with club soda for a sweet, fizzy drink.
- Top fruit with low-fat yogurt for a dessert or snack.
- Add raisins or a banana to breakfast cereal, instead of sugar.
- Make popsicles from 100% juice.
- Eat fruit as a dessert or snack.
- If these or other foods are not sweet enough, add Nutrasweet, Splenda, or another sugar substitute.
- For healthy, low-sugar Halloween treats, see the Children's Corner.

Staying Healthy For A Lifetime

Keeping Your Child's Beautiful Smile. Your child's smile is probably one of the joys of your life! Healthy teeth are a must for a beautiful smile. It is never too early to teach your child habits that help develop and maintain healthy teeth.

Keeping teeth healthy:

- Helps you and your child chew and enjoy food.
- Builds self-esteem.
- Encourages more smiling throughout life.
- Reduces need for costly dental work, such as fillings, crowns and bridges.
- Reduces bad breath!

Here's how to do it:

1. Begin your child's tooth care early.
 - Before teeth appear – clean gums with a damp cloth.
 - When teeth appear – brush with a soft child's toothbrush.
 - When two teeth appear side by side – gently floss between.
 - When your child is 2 or 3 years old – start teaching him/her to brush teeth.
 - By age 3, take your child to the dentist. Call the dentist in advance and ask how to prepare your child for the first visit.
 - On a regular basis – have the dentist check your child's (and your own) teeth. Ask the dentist about the need for a fluoride supplement or tooth sealant to prevent cavities.

2. Make good dental care a family habit.
 - Set a good example by you and your children brushing your teeth together.
 - Use toothpaste with fluoride (in an amount the size of a pea).
 - Brush teeth twice a day for 3 minutes. Teach children to hum a child's song that lasts 3 minutes.
 - Floss every day (have a dental hygienist show you the proper way).
3. Choose foods and drinks for yourself and your child that promote healthy teeth.
 - Teach your child to eat a variety of foods from all the groups of MyPyramid, especially the Milk Group (see page 5).
 - Limit refined carbohydrates and sticky foods (candy, cake, sugar-coated cereals, white bread, and cookies), as these promote tooth decay.
 - Limit drinks that contain lots of sugar or acid (carbonated drinks and fruit drinks). Acids and sugars erode enamel and lead to decay. Even nutritious fruit juices should be limited to one or two times per day.
 - Drink milk and water with meals and snacks.

(Adapted from *Nibbles for Health*, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/Resources/nibbles.html>)

Staying Fit and Having Fun

Treat Yourself to a Healthy Body. Poor nutrition, obesity, and unhealthy lifestyle habits increase your risk for cancer and several chronic diseases. You can reduce your cancer risk by as much as 30% by adopting a physically active lifestyle. Low physical activity is especially related to colon and breast cancers.

Physical activity recommendations:

For adults

- Engage in moderate physical activity for 30 minutes or more, on 5 or more days of the week.
- Engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity for 45 minutes on 5 or more days per week to further reduce your risk of breast and colon cancer.

For children and teens

- Engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day on at least 5 days per week.

Moderate activity includes: walking fast; dancing; bicycling; playing volleyball, softball, or badminton; mowing the lawn; and doing housework.

Vigorous activity includes: jogging, running, aerobic dance, jumping rope, swimming, and basketball.

To keep a healthy weight throughout life:

Balance your calorie intake with your physical activity. At least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days can help prevent weight gain. But about 60 minutes per day can help you lose weight. Losing weight is one way to reduce your risk for cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and many other chronic diseases. **So, treat yourself and your children to healthier bodies by increasing the amount of physical activity that you and your children do! You're worth it!**

Children's Corner

Will Halloween be a "trick" or a "treat" for your child and your neighbor's children? The answer depends on what you choose to give as a treat. Consider giving these healthy treats:

- Sugar-free gum
- Cheese sticks in sandwich bags
- Boxes of juice
- Small packets of nuts or raisins
- Apples

Also consider giving non-food treats such as stickers, balloons, crayons, pencils, colored chalk, erasers, whistles, baseball cards, or rubber spiders or worms.

Make sure your kids eat something before going trick-or-treating. This will keep them from eating treats before they get home. It is better to eat trick-or-treat candy over several days. Use it as a dessert after a healthy meal or snack, along with water or milk to help wash sugar off the teeth. **See the "Keeping Food Safe" section for Trick-or-Treat Safety Tips.**

When your child says "Mom, I want a snack!"

Snacks are an important part of a child's food intake. The problem is that we have shifted from eating healthy snacks

to eating high-fat, high-sugar items. Instead of prepackaged snacks (chips, candy, cookies) that are high in sugar or fat, make your own snacks. Make this a fun family activity. Trail mix is one great choice. Start with a whole-grain cereal like Cheerios or Chex. Then add dried fruit (raisins or dried apricots, bananas, or apples). Also add pretzels, peanuts, or other nuts. This mixture can be stored in an airtight container for up to a week. Another good snack choice is fresh fruit or raw vegetables such as apples, carrots, and celery. Wash and cut the fruit or vegetable into bite-size pieces. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for an instant snack. Make this an adventure by giving children fruits or raw vegetables that they have not had before.

Sugar-free Do's and Don'ts for Children:

- Don't reward your child's good behavior with candy or other "junk" food. Do find other ways to reward good behavior, such as praise and placing a star on a chart on your refrigerator.
- Don't pacify a whining child with sweets. Do try to identify why the child is whining and find a non-food solution. Using food as a reward for good behavior can lead to over-eating and overweight later in life.



Saving Money at the Grocery Store

Penny Pinch with Label Sense: “Read the fine print” is good advice in the business world. It’s also good advice for food shoppers who want to get the most for their food money or food stamps. First you need to plan menus and write a grocery list. Then it’s off to the store. As you begin to fill your cart, think about whether or not you are making nutritious, money-saving choices.

Many adults and children are eating too much of foods that are high in sugar, total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, salt/sodium, and calories. At the same time, they are not getting enough calcium, iron, fiber, vitamin A, and vitamin C. By reading and using food labels, you can make wise food choices that help you serve low-cost, nutritious meals and snacks. This guide can help you make healthy food choices that fit your food budget.



Look for this on the food label:

- **Health Claims** – Is it low-fat, high in fiber, enriched with more vitamins and minerals, or heart healthy? Does it have calcium to build strong bones?
- **Serving Size** – Look at portion/serving size and the number of portions per container. Is it enough to feed your family members? Also compare cost per serving among brands. Store brands are often lower in cost, but are just as nutritious and tasty as national brands.
- **Calories and Fat** – Compare similar foods and buy those with lower calories and fat. The number listed is for **one serving**, so pay attention to the amount you eat. If you eat twice the serving size, you will get double the calories and fat.
- **Percent Daily Value** – Important nutrients are listed so you can compare similar foods. Choose those with high percents of these nutrients: vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, calcium, folic acid, potassium, and fiber. Limit those with high numbers for these: sodium, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, and sugar.
- **Ingredients** – Remember that they are listed in order from the largest to the smallest amount. Beware of ingredients to which you or family members are allergic. For the most nutritious breads and cereals, look for those with a whole grain listed first.

Keeping Food Safe

Trick or Treat Safety Tips:

- Young children should always be accompanied by an adult.
- Plan and know the route taken by your children. Stay in familiar neighborhoods.
- Only approach houses that are well-lit.
- Accept treats only in the doorway. Children should not enter any houses unless the parent or other responsible adult has gone along with them.
- Costumes should fit well, be flame retardant, and not drag the ground.
- Children should avoid wearing their masks while walking from house to house. Masks can block vision. Try face makeup instead.
- Carry a flashlight and use reflective strips or tape on costumes.
- Have children wait until they get home before eating any treats. Parents or caretakers need to inspect all goodies. Tell children not to eat or accept any treats from an un-

known person. When inspecting treats, discard any home-made or baked goods, unless from a known neighbor or friend.

- Parents of children age 3 and younger should remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, small toys, and similar items.
- Throw out anything that looks suspicious. Look for signs of tampering such as tears or pinholes in wrappers or discoloration of the treat.
- For Halloween parties, make sure cider is pasteurized or otherwise treated to destroy harmful bacteria. Untreated cider should be labeled as unpasteurized.
- If children receive too much candy, don’t let them eat it all right away. Store it in covered containers, at a temperature of around 60 to 70 degrees. Most individually-wrapped, store-bought candy will last up to six months.



Cooking Corner

Devil Pumpkin Muffins

(Makes 18 muffins)

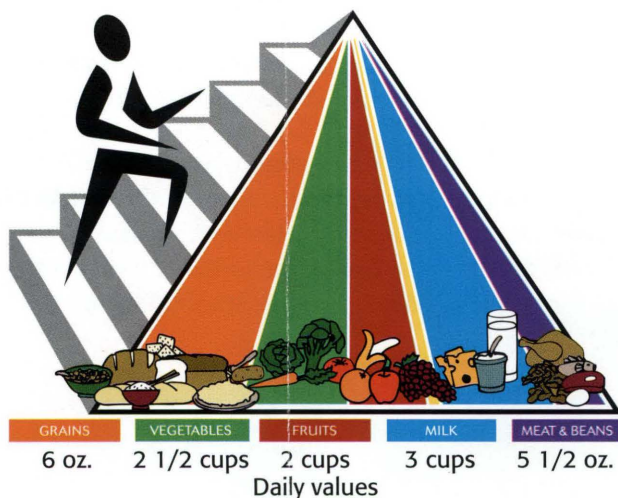
Ingredients:

1 can (15 1/2 oz.) pumpkin

1 box devil's food cake mix, or other chocolate cake mix (any brand will work)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400°. Stir together pumpkin and cake mix until well mixed. Spray muffin tins (for 18 muffins) with vegetable cooking spray. May use cupcake liners, instead of spray, if available. Spoon mixture evenly across all muffin cups. Bake for approximately 18 minutes. Cool about 10 minutes and remove from tins.



Feed your family daily from all food groups of MyPyramid.

Sloppy Goblins

(Makes 8 Servings)

Ingredients:

1 pound lean ground beef or ground turkey

1 small onion, chopped

1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper

1 can (8 oz.) tomato sauce with basil, garlic, and oregano

1/2 cup bottled chili sauce

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce (optional)

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon black pepper

8 whole-wheat hamburger buns

Toppings: choose some from these

Green or black olives, sliced (use to make spiders, cats, or witches)

Banana pepper slices or orange, red, or green bell pepper, cut in thin strips) (use olives and pepper to make spiders)

Carrot curls (to make horns)

Green onions (to make witches' brooms)

Directions:

1. Brown ground beef, onion, and bell pepper in a large frying pan until no pink shows. Use a nonstick pan or coat with nonstick spray. Drain off fat and discard.
2. Stir in tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and black pepper.
3. Allow to simmer, uncovered, for 3 to 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Place bottom half of 8 buns on a platter. Distribute meat mixture evenly on the buns, then top with the other half of the buns.
5. Allow children or others to decorate tops of buns with toppings listed above, to make Halloween characters (witches on brooms, devils, spiders, cats, etc.)

October Word Puzzle

Solve the puzzle by using the following codes to transfer the numbers to letters.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Example: P E A N U T S
16 5 1 14 21 20 19

6	18	5	19	8
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6	18	21	9	20
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4	18	9	5	4
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6	18	21	9	20
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18	1	23
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22	5	7	5	20	1	2	12	5	19
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12	15	23	-	6	1	20
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25	15	7	21	18	20
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23	8	15	12	5	-	7	18	1	9	14
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3	5	18	5	1	12
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These are all examples of . . .

8	5	1	12	20	8	25
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19	14	1	3	11	19
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If you have access to the Internet, go to these sites:

Healthy Futures Series: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/healthyfutures/>

MyPyramid Food Guide at: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/index.html>

Food Stamps in Virginia: <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/foodstamp.html>

www.ext.vt.edu

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The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. Call this toll-free number, 1-800-552-3431 (M-F 8:15-5:00, except holidays), to learn how to apply for food stamps and to get other useful information about services.

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