



Home & Family Update

Providing relevant, unbiased, science-based information for you and your family

Video Game Guidance

Ho, Ho, Ho! If you anything like me, you don't have a lot of spare time and the holiday time can be increasingly rushed and hectic. Believe it or not, the holiday season is here...and if you haven't finished filing out your shopping list, you may want to consider some alternatives for the teen, "tween", or youngster in your household this year. Video games are as popular as ever – but do you really know what you are getting?

Video games have come a long way since most of today's adults were challenged by Pac Man or Donkey Kong. Youth are playing and younger ages. The newest gaming systems are high tech with

mesmerizing graphics and exciting results. Add social networking to the gaming world and the possibilities are endless, but the risks are greater. If you think your child has the jump on you – not only playing but understanding the technology – don't feel alone. It's easy to get overwhelmed!

Whether you child plays video games regularly or seldom picks up a controller, it's important to understand a few basics. First, know the rating system and look BEFORE you buy. The Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) is the organization that rates video games.

- EC – Early Childhood – contents are suitable for children ages 3 and older and do not contain any material that most parents would find inappropriate
- E – Everyone – suitable for persons ages 6 and older. Includes minimal violence, some comic mischief, or crude language
- EC10 – Everyone 10 and older – Appropriate for youth ages 10 and older. You will find more cartoon, fantasy, mild violence, milk language and minimal suggestive themes
- T – Teen – Look for this to be for persons 13 and older. These may include violent content, milk or strong language and suggestive themes
- M – Mature – Suitable for 17 and older. Expect more intense violence or language
- AO – Adults only – May contain graphic images of sex and/or violence. Adults-only products are not intended to be sold or rented to anyone under the age of 18.

While it is important to consider the rating system, it should NOT replace your supervision and involvement in renting, purchasing and/or playing the games. Parents should "play" it first to make sure it is appropriate for the family.

For more information and for resources to spot video game addition and issues, please check out www.parentfurther.com.

Submitted by: Deb Rombough

Source: Parent Further.com; search-institute.org

Healthy South Dakota People!

The HealthySD.gov website was created to help South Dakotans become more physically active and eat healthier foods. This website offers tips to assist seniors, kids, teens, parents, worksites, schools, communities, health professionals, etc.

It features Small Steps to better health ideas, seasonal nutritional or physical challenges, Be Tobacco Free options, being a healthy hunter, and much more.

If your resolutions include being healthier in 2011 then check out the HealthySD.gov website *To live better and grow stronger!*

Submitted by: Nancy Pauly



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Home & Family Update

Preventing Falls

The fear of falling is real and for many older adults, that fear decreases their physical activity, well-being and independence. Research shows that the risk of falling increases as we age and is greater for women than men. Two-thirds of those who experience a fall will fall again within six months. A decrease in bone density contributes to falls and resulting injuries. Failure to exercise regularly results in poor muscle tone, decreased strength, and loss of bone mass and flexibility.

The causes of falls are known as risk factors. Many risk factors can be prevented if people know what to do. Eat or drink calcium-rich foods including milk, yogurt, fish, broccoli, soybeans, tofu and almonds to name a few. Be physically active to improve muscle tone, strength and flexibility. Exercising every other day for about fifteen minutes by walking can help you stay active

(always check with your health care provider before starting an exercise routine). Wear good fitting shoes with low heels or rubber soles. Keep vision clear and know side effects of medication that may affect your balance.

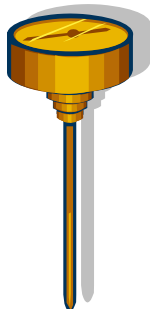
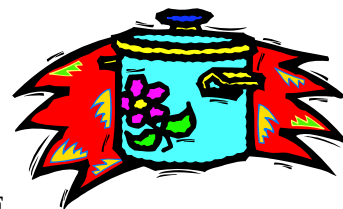
Removing environmental hazards from the home can help prevent one-third of falls in older adults. The most common hazard for falls is tripping. Other hazards in the home include poor lighting, loose rugs, lack of grab bars or poorly mounted bars and unsteady furniture. Keep commonly used items in the home within easy reach. Always keep electrical and other cords out of the way. Following these simple guidelines can help you stay safe.

Submitted by: Corrine Huber

Source: Preventing Fall in the Elderly, Colorado State Extension Bulletin Number 10.242

Remember Food Safety when Cooking with Crock Pots

Slow cookers or crock pots provide a convenient “for all day cooking with no looking.” Crock pots use very little electricity providing a low-cost way to prepare a meal. It is important to be sure the food inside the slow cooker reaches 135°-140°F or higher within 4 hours. A slow cooker can be tested to make sure it is heating properly by following these steps. 1. Fill cooker with 2 quarts of water 2. Heat on low for 8 hours 3. Check the water temperature with an accurate food thermometer. Do this quickly because the temperature drops 10-15 degrees when the lid is removed. 4. The temperature of the water should be at least 185°F. Temperatures below 185°F suggest that your slow cooker does not heat fast enough to avoid possible food safety problems. If your slow cooker does not pass this test, do not use it-replace it. The LOW setting is about 200°F and the HIGH setting is about 300°F.



- For food safety reasons, it is a good idea to cook on HIGH for the first hour to quickly bring the temperature up to 135°-140°F. Then turn the dial to LOW and finish cooking.
- Do not put frozen foods in the crock pot. All foods should be defrosted before cooking so the food can reach the temperature safe zone of 135°-140°F as soon as possible.

Do not use the slow cooker to reheat leftovers because it doesn't bring the temperature up high enough for safety.

Submitted by: Sharon Guthmiller

Source: Family Food Cent\$ Newsletter, SDSU EFNEP/FNP



Make Family Time Active Time

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. One third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives; many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma.

I don't know about you, but that is something that I don't want for my children and their families. Now is the time to take action. Encourage every member of your family, regardless of age, to increase daily physical activity while having fun at the same time.

Make Time

- Identify available time slots. Monitor your daily activities for one week. Identify at least three 30-minute time slots you

could use for physical activity. Then, identify two of them that work as family activity time.

- Add physical activity to your daily routine. For example, walk or ride your bike to work or shopping, organize school activities around physical activity, walk the dog with your children, exercise while you watch TV, park farther away from your destination.



- Make time for physical activity. For example, walk, jog or swim during your lunch hour, or take fitness breaks instead of coffee

breaks. Try doing something active after dinner with your family, especially on weekends.

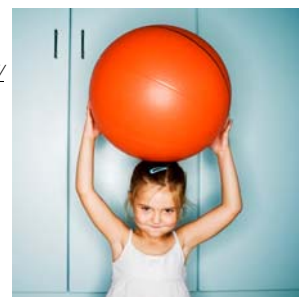
- Select activities requiring minimal time, such as walking, jogging or stair climbing.

Make the Most of All Conditions

- Develop a set of regular activities for you and your family that are always available regardless of weather, such as indoor cycling, aerobic dance, indoor swimming, stretching and strengthening movements, stair climbing, rope skipping, mall walking, dancing and gymnasium games.
- Look at outdoor activities that depend on weather conditions, such as cross-country skiing, outdoor swimming and outdoor tennis as "bonuses" – extra activities possible when weather and circumstances permit.

"NEARLY ONE IN THREE CHILDREN IN AMERICA ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE."

Submitted by: Amanda Larson
Sources: White House at <http://www.whitehouse.gov> and US Department of Health & Human Services National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute & National Institutes of Health at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/get-active/>



Tips to Prevent Fraud at Home

There are steps you can take at home to protect yourself from fraud, too. Remember these helpful tips:



- Keep track of credit card, debit card and ATM receipts. Never throw them out in the trash, or if you do, shred them.
- Check your Social Security Earnings and Benefits statement for suspicious activity. It usually comes in the mail about three months before your birthday.
- Review your credit card statements carefully for unexplained charges.
- Store personal information in a safe place and shred or tear up documents you don't need.
- Keep duplicate credit cards in a safe, locked place.

Computer fraud is growing every day. There are a number of ways to avoid being a victim.

- If you receive e-mails from senders you don't know, delete them immediately without opening.
- If you get any unsolicited email or pop-up message that asks for personal information, don't respond to it.
- Never send any personal or sensitive business information via unsecured e-mail. If so, it can be stolen.
- Install and keep antivirus software updated.



Submitted by: Karen Slunicka



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Saving \$ Is As Easy As Changing A Light Bulb!

Switching from incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) is an easy way to save on your energy bill and help the environment.

ENERGY STAR-qualified CFLs use up to 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs. They cost more, but last up to 10 times longer and will save \$30 or more in electric costs over their lifetime.

How do CFLs help the environment? The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports if every American home used just one CFL, it would save more than \$600 million in annual energy costs. This savings would be enough to light more than 3 million homes and would prevent release of greenhouse gases equivalent to emissions from 800,000 cars per year.



The main source of mercury emissions into our environment is from burning coal to produce electricity. Since CFLs use less electricity than incandescent bulbs, less mercury is released into the environment. Even though CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, it is significantly less than the mercury avoided by burning less coal.

Are CFLs dangerous? CFLs contain very small amounts of mercury, an average of 4 milligrams. By comparison, older thermometers contain about 500 milligrams. In the past year, CFL manufacturers have reduced mercury in the lights to as low as 1.4 milligrams. No mercury is released unless the bulb is broken.

What if a CFL breaks? (1) Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes. (2) Scoop up the glass with a piece of cardboard. Then wipe the area with damp paper towel. (3) Do not vacuum. Use sticky tape to pick up glass fragments from carpeting. (4) Seal glass pieces and paper towel in two plastic bags. Follow disposal guidelines for hazardous wastes.

How do I dispose of CFLs? The EPA recommends taking CFLs to a hazardous waste or recycling facility. Contact your solid waste agency for local recycling options.

If no recycling facility is available, seal the bulb in two plastic bags and put it in your outside trash container. *Never incinerate fluorescent bulbs.*

Where should I use CFLs? CFLs come in a variety of sizes, shapes and colors. Special bulbs are available for dimmer and three-way switches. Read the package to find the right bulb. A 25-watt CFL will replace a 100-watt incandescent bulb.

CFLs are sensitive to frequent on-off switching and high temperatures. They will last longest where lights are on 15 minutes or more and in fixtures or lamps with good air flow. High humidity in bathrooms may shorten the life.

Some CFLs have less mercury and a longer life. ENERGY STAR bulbs meet strict standards and have a limited two-year warranty. If a bulb burns out early, contact the manufacturer on the base for refund information. In the future, save receipts to document date of purchase.

CFLs are one of the efficient lighting options available to help you make saving energy, saving money and saving the environment as easy as changing a light bulb.

Submitted by: Ellyn Eddy

Source: University of Missouri Extension Service

