



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

EXTENSION

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Living Well in Baker County

Dear Extension Friend:

February 2007

Happy February to all of my extension friends.

Now that we've recovered from the holidays and are hopefully keeping all of the New Year's resolutions we made last month, its time to move on to some new topics. Again, this month in

Living Well, we will discuss a broad range of topics. In *Relationships* we will discover how to teach young children to love and better ways to show them

our love. In *Money Matters*, we'll talk about the advan-



tages of renting and the advantages of owning a home and how to decide what is best for you.

Healthy Lifestyles will discuss ways to increase your

activity levels. In *Food Safety*, we'll discuss food allergies and possible ways of avoiding those allergic reactions. And finally, in *House & Home*, we'll discuss alternatives to hazardous household chemicals.

If you have any questions about the information in this newsletter please contact our office or see the University of Florida's website at solutionsforyourlife.com

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Relationships: Teaching Young Children to Love

February is a special month of Love, but people need love every day of the year.

Everyone needs LOVE. Babies and toddlers needs lots of Love. A child whose needs are met; whose discomforts are promptly removed; and who is cuddled, caressed, played with, and talked to develops a sense of the world as a safe place to be and people to be loving and

trustworthy.

Mothers and fathers can show they LOVE their baby by holding and cuddling him or her when they feed the baby.

Mothers and Fathers can speak and sing softly to the baby when they change his or her diaper.

Mothers and Fathers can play games with the baby. Some

games to play with a baby are peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake.

Love makes a baby feel happy
Love helps the baby grow and learn

Love does not always keep a baby from crying. Babies cry to let their parents know that they have a need. Crying

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Special points of interest:

- February is American Heart Month
- February is National Children's Dental Health Month

Money Matters: Rent or Own

The questions of what kind of house, how large a house, or even whether or not to own a house are based on more than just economic factors. There are advantages and disadvantages in both owning and renting, but most people put a high value on home ownership. The desire to own one's home has long been a part of "the American dream." The following are some advantages of owning your own home. Home ownership represents a form of forced savings; many families would never accumulate assets otherwise. Mortgage payments contribute to an investment, particularly if the property is located where it increases in value over a period of years. Interest and taxes are legitimate income tax deductions. Equity in a home improves the credit status of the family and could be used as collateral for an emergency loan. Housing costs, with a fixed rate mortgage, are stabilized because present and future costs can be estimated and planned. Home ownership contributes to security, especially in retirement years when income normally decreases. Home ownership gener-

ally strengthens social and financial standing in the community. Home ownership contributes to general well-being and "roots" of the family, especially for children. There is freedom to change the house and surroundings as desired. Homeowners are generally more concerned about community affairs.



These and more reasons for home ownership can be cited, but many other factors must also be considered. Deciding to buy or rent will involve, perhaps, the largest amounts of money the family will spend and involves a long-term commitment of both time and money. In deciding whether to buy

or rent you should make some considerations about both. What sort of neighborhood is the home in? Consider the location, appearance, and safety and security of the neighborhood. Make sure the home is accessible for your family. Check its convenience to work, shopping areas, school, and church. Also be aware of the location compared with community facilities such as police and fire stations, parks and recreation areas, and schools and churches. You should also consider the cost of the home, your own family values and the actual dwelling itself. A family must decide for itself, how much house they can afford. No one can decide for your family to rent or buy; either way be informed.

Source: Peart and Hammer, University of Florida

The desire to own one's home has long been a part of "the American dream."



Healthy Lifestyles: Increasing Activity Levels

Being physically active can do wonders for your health and well-being. Many diseases can be prevented by keeping yourself active throughout your life. Regular activity can: give you more energy and improve your mood; firm your muscles and reduce body fat; lower your weight; reduce stress, anxiety and depression; and lower your risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure

Accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week. You don't have to work out vigorously in a fitness center to get the benefits of exercise. Daily activities performed at a moderate intensity like walking briskly, stair climbing, bicycling, house cleaning, and yard work are as good for you as working out at the gym. Use the time you're usually inactive to become more active - it won't require any extra time out of your day. You can do small amounts of moderate activity that add up to at least 30 minutes a day instead of doing it all at one time.



Plan physical activity into your schedule and set some realistic goals for increasing your daily activity and begin slowly to avoid injury and frustration. Start with 10 minutes a day and work towards a goal of at least 30 minutes a day. Plan specific activities you will do each day and write them on your calendar. List the type of activity and the length of time you plan to do it.

Be more active at home. Spend time usually spent in front of the TV being more active. Activities of moderate intensity that you can do around home include vacuuming, gardening, raking leaves, walking briskly and window washing.

Be more active at work. If your job involves mostly sitting, make an extra effort to get up and walk throughout the day.

Be more active during leisure time. Get yourself and your family involved in more activities that require you to move instead of sit.

Food Safety: Food Allergies

Food allergies generally develop at an early age, but may appear at any time. People who have had previous allergic reactions to foods or sometimes non-food items (insect bites, latex, etc.), or that have a family history of allergies are most susceptible. It is uncommon for a person to have an allergy to more than four different foods. A true allergy is caused by a person's immune system reacting to a food when first eaten. The body "remembers" that food and, when it is eaten again, the immune system overreacts in an excessive and potentially life-threatening way. Allergies can also be classic, also known as "atopic." Instead of an individual developing an allergy spontaneously, they inherit a predisposition to develop food or other allergies. Often, these individuals suffer from hay fever (allergic rhinitis), asthma, or rashes (atopic dermatitis) and are more likely to develop a food allergy.

If a person has an allergy to a particular food, any meal with that food present, even as a flavoring, may cause an allergic response. If a person is allergic to peanuts, they will be sensi-

tive to the consumption of any food that has peanuts or peanut products (peanut butter, peanut oil, chopped or diced peanuts, etc.) as an ingredient. Treatment or processing of a food does not affect its ability to cause an allergic response. It is important to carefully read food labels and ingredient lists if a person has a known food allergy.



ever, such a possibility is very unlikely. Allergies are only triggered by proteins; sugars and fats, for example, do not cause food allergies.

When cooking for others you should be aware of the food allergies that others have and modify recipes or the way that food is prepared in accordance to those allergies. For children, an emergency action plan should be created. Any caretaker, including family members and teachers, need to be aware of this plan to minimize the chances of a reaction and as a guideline for steps to take in the case of an emergency. Most importantly, the child needs to know the limitations of their menu options and how to help themselves should they require medical treatment.

With Valentine's Day coming up soon, you should also be aware if that special someone you would be buying chocolate for on Valentines has a peanut allergy since many chocolate treats have peanuts.

Source: Schneider, Goodrich, Mahovic, University of Florida

chance that a food allergy from childhood will remain, or that a new one will develop. The ability to out-grow a food allergy is believed to be attributed to the eventual maturation of an infant's initially under-developed immune system.

Almost any food has the potential to cause an allergy or a hypersensitivity reaction in a susceptible person, how-

Events for February:



Cardiovascular diseases, including stroke, are our nation's No. 1 killer. To urge Americans to join the battle against these diseases, since 1963, Congress has required the president to proclaim February "American Heart Month." Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. It affects men and women of every age and race. During American Heart Month, we encourage all Americans to join the fight against heart disease and to learn more about how to prevent it.



Good habits develop early in life, and teaching children to care for their teeth is essential to ensure a life time of healthy smiles.

An important part of preventative care is your child's first visit to the dentist. A child's first visit should be fun- yes, fun - to ensure the child's want to return to the dentist.

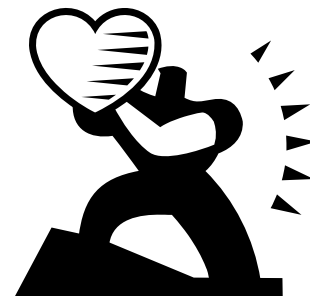
Healthy habits start early on in life, so be sure to get your child off to a good start with early dental visits, proper toothbrushing, and of course, a lot of smiling!

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babies need love too.

Remember, a baby needs LOVE everyday.

If you don't have a baby around, show love to each other and to others and you will see that what goes around comes back around.



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House & Home: Alternatives to Hazardous Household Chemicals

Many people believe that hazardous or toxic chemicals are found only in industries that manufacture plastics, pesticides, pharmaceuticals or automobiles. However, a wide range of products that we use in our homes contains chemicals that fit the definition of hazardous or toxic. Hazardous products line our kitchen, bath, utility and garage shelves. In most cases the concentration of the chemical products found in the home are much lower than the concentration of those found in the workplace. However, the potential for exposure to chemicals from household products in the home does exist.

Many common household cleaning products contain dangerous ingredients such as caustics or solvents, which when used, stored or disposed of improperly, could threaten your family's health or damage the environment. Caustic chemicals such as those found in oven cleaners (lye, sodium hydroxide), drain cleaners, scouring powders

or bleach can cause burns and severe damage to the skin and eyes.

Solvents are fast-drying substances that dissolve another substance. Inhalation of these vapors or accidental drinking can be harmful or even fatal. Long-term exposure to some solvents may cause liver and kidney problems, birth defects, central nervous system disorders and cancer. Furniture polish, silver cleaner, paint remover and wood floor wax contain solvents. You can reduce handling, use and disposal hazards associated with dangerous household products by substituting safer alternatives. Some of these alternatives are as simple as immediately mopping up spills with water or club soda. Full strength vinegar or lemon juice applied to rust stains or hard wa-



ter deposits will fade and perhaps eliminate the stain. In some cases these options may require more effort to get the desired results. Reducing the amount of hazardous products you purchase not only saves money, but also eliminates the threat of accidental exposure and pollution of the environment. You may decide to use latex water base paint, scrub your sink with baking soda, or spray your plants with a mixture of pepper water and garlic. Once you understand the basic substitutes, formulas and procedures, you can make your own decisions about tradeoffs. Fortunately, most households harbor the basic ingredients for safer substitutes for most of these hazardous household materials.

Source: Hammer, University of Florida