Homefront

Issue No 3 - A publication for the Racially Conscious Home

Parents teach your children well!

The decline and absence of any pro-white history and heritage

Bonding with your child

Keep the face of your child animated

First Born Jealous

Now that your pregnant again....

The Summer Solstice

The celebration of the longest day of the year

Causes of Infertility

Become educated on this subject

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Editorial

Welcome to the third edition of HomeFront!

As a young publication, we experience a huge amount of growth between issues; our pool of contributors, our reader base, our experiences and our knowledge all expand over time. As life is a learning experience, it is our goal to pass what we find onto our readers so that they may enhance their own lives.

However, we are not so arrogant as to claim to know it all, nor do we take our readers to be naïve enough to believe such. Our staff comes together to decide what topics we would like to cover in an issue, and those ladies with pertinent experiences write about them while others conduct research as needed. The goal is to create a compilation of information in a single place for our readers to come to, and to create a database of knowledge related to home-life, peppered with our own experiences.

Sadly, there are those individuals out there who are determined to cause strife just for its own sake, people who go out of their way to discredit our efforts. We work diligently to share information with our readers that may not have otherwise been found, and credit is always given where credit is due. We will continue to provide this valuable resource to our Folk, in spite of the deconstructive actions of others. So to those with nothing better to do, enjoy putting every one of our articles in Google to try and find its source; in that amount of time, something productive could actually be done, but why bother when there is gossipy fun to be had?

That being said, we hope that our faithful readers enjoy this summer issue and find something new to enrich your own HomeFront!

Enjoy the third issue of HomeFront!

Faith ~ Folk ~ Family

Ask Homefront
Questions & Answers

(Q) Finding the right way to introduce a child to WN ideas is always a very personal decision for any proud aryan parent, and for the time being I've just been careful not to have a TV and to screen all the picture books and other literature, but now that my young daughter is starting to get out of the house a bit more often, and I'm having difficulty with little things like trips to the park or the sandpit. It's really the first time she'll be encountering non-whites, and I certainly don't want her mixing with them, playing together in the sandpit or in the playpark... I think it will make it harder to teach her that those simians are sub-human if she's been fooled by her earlier encounters. But there aren't enough WNs with kids in my area for her to socialize with. How can I get her to mix and play with some good pure white children her age, without having to expose her to all those dirty messy THINGS that the "ethnics" drag around with them? Or will she just have to be a bit lonely for the time being? Your help would really be appreciated :)
Yours,
Annie xxx

(A) Unfortunately – this is a very common experience most of us find ourselves facing as our children get older. Most of us don't have others with our political beliefs living around us. My first suggestion would be to start up your own playgroup – that way you get to pre-approve who gets to join. If you belong to a homeschoolers group – I would start there. If your child has any interests such as dance classes, music lessons, karate – whatever, you could try arranging play dates with some of those parents as well. If there are kids that you see at the park quite often, speak with their parents and see if they'd like to meet up at the park at a set time. Don't feel bad if you have to call your child aside if an undesirable tries to join in their fun. Explain to your child to be polite – but those people are not their friend.

(Q) My 2 ½ year old son has been refusing to eat his veggies – should I force him to eat them or just wait out this new phase?

(A) As tough as it may be, he needs those veggies. It's a sad fact that most kids today don't get anywhere near their daily nutritional requirements and we have a growing, worldwide obesity problem. Teaching your child to eat right, right from the start will be a lifelong benefit for him. Avoiding the daily battle by giving in and removing the vegetables will do more harm in the long run. He very well may keep that "ew – I don't like that" mindset throughout his entire life. Keep the veggies on his plate and have him try some, make sure it is clear to him that you expect vegetables to be a part of his meals. Mix it up and try new things with him often. Try to encourage his acceptance by using dips, sauces, salad dressings and most importantly – by setting a good example and eating them yourself. If he's a fan of Bob the Builder, make sure he knows that Bob got that strong by eating plenty of vegetables! I went through this stage when my oldest was about 2. We stuck to it and now salad, corn and peas are some of his favorite things!

Natural Home

Here are some natural care tips that the Staff of HomeFront have tested over the past few months!!

Great Hair Revitalizer

1/4 cup of olive oil
one egg white
1/2 a peeled cucumber

Blend it in a blender then warm it up in the microwave for 30 seconds. Stir it up and put it on dry hair and put a towel around your head. Leave it on for 15-20 minutes then shampoo it out. I tried this out this morning and it's awesome!

Anne

Vitamin E helps minimize scars

Many years ago a Skinhead girl from the USA came to visit us in Ireland and she recommended Vitamin E for small scars from chicken pocks, to mosquito bites, to scrapes and some bad cuts. I have used it many times; while they didn't all disapear it at least greatly reduced the visibility of them. And Vitamin E is very inexpensive!

Vicky

Dandruff

When I moved to a different state the humidity and harshness of water wreaked havoc on my hair and I ended up with dandruff, here are some natural remedies I used.

I added some Tea Tree Oil that I got from a Herbal Store to my shampoo and it worked a treat, here are some other remedies that the store recomended.

- Apple cider vinegar, pour it onto your hair and scalp, let it sit for about 30mins.

- Flaxseed and Vitamin E, apply to the hair at night and wash off first thing in the morning.

Janice

How much weight should i gain?

By Anne

Whether you're getting pregnant for the first time, or the 5th – weight gain during your pregnancy is lurking in the back of your mind.

Doctors recommend that you try and gain a minimal amount of weight during pregnancy, based on your pre-pregnancy weight. If you were underweight before getting pregnant, it is recommended that you put on 28 to 40 pounds. If you were overweight, you should only gain 15 to 25 pounds. If you were at your ideal body weight before becoming pregnant, a gain of 25 to 35 pounds is normal. If you are carrying twins, you should ideally gain between 35 to 45 pounds. You will be required to up your daily calorie requirement if you are expecting multiples.

The following is a breakdown on where all this weight goes during a normal pregnancy, provided by the March Of Dimes:

With a weight gain of 29 pounds – extra blood accounts for 3 pounds. Breast enlargement – 2 pounds. Womb enlargement – 2 pounds. Baby – 7.5 pounds. Placenta – 1.5 pounds. Amniotic fluid – 2 pounds. Fat, protein and other nutrients – 7 pounds. Retained water – 4 pounds.

Pregnancy is not a license to eat everything in sight. I couldn't count the number of times I've overheard a pregnant woman use the old "I'm eating for two!" as an excuse to have two deserts or polish off an entire bag of chips. Gaining too much weight can be harmful to both mother and child. It puts you at risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, delivering early or having too large a baby. Not to mention the long hard road you face regaining your pre-baby body.

On the other hand, gaining too little weight can be just as harmful to you and especially to your child. The fact is, you are eating for two – but instead of twice as much, you should concentrate on twice as healthy! Pregnancy is not the time to diet. If you fear you are packing on the pounds too quickly, talk to your doctor or midwife about making some healthy changes in your diet. On average, for a normal, single pregnancy - you should be taking in about 300 extra calories per day to cover the extra work your body is doing.

Talk to your doctor or midwife openly and honestly about your diet and your weight gain worries. Follow their advice on nutrition and exercise and weight gain shouldn't be a problem.

Weight Gain recommendations provided by The March of Dimes:

0-3 months

Tips for new parents

By ToDieFor14

My mother tried to tell me everything she could about having a baby, but you don't realize how difficult and overwhelming, yet rewarding, the whole experience can be for a first time Mommy and Daddy. I'd like to share with you some of my experiences and maybe you can learn from them.

Breastfeeding your infant can be challenging right after birth for a first time Mommy. Before I had my baby I thought it would be a piece of cake, you just put the baby on your breast and she would feed. I thought wrong! It was a complete nightmare. She wouldn't latch on and if she did it was painful. Don't get discouraged, that is one thing you have to tell yourself! I had inverted nipples, one thing you can do to erect your nipple is to put ice on them for a few minutes. This will make it easier for your baby to latch on. Another thing you can do is ask your nurse for a manual hand pump. You can pump your breast until your nipple is erect. If your baby doesn't open her mouth wide enough you can take your index finger and gently massage her lower cheek, that will cause your baby to open her mouth and then you can get her to latch on.

Giving your baby their first bath can be such a memorable experience. My husband and I learned the hard way; we took our time getting our daughter from the bedroom to the bathroom. I realized when I had a handful of poo poo in my hand that I had to find a better way! Now i put a towel down on the floor next to the bathtub and take her diaper off there. That way if she does anything I'm right next to the tub! Changing her diaper can be a challenge too. You should always have a clean diaper open right next to her bum and never take longer than a few seconds changing it!

Some people have a hard time burping their babies. I found the easiest way to burp my baby is to cup my hand (like you are trying to drink water from your hand) on his back and rock him back and forth. This brings all the air bubbles from his lower stomach and makes it easier for him to burp. Also, you should try to burp your baby after every 2 ozs.

Getting your baby to sleep for a nap can be difficult. Most babies love baths, I would try to give your baby a bath 30 mins before the time you would like to put her down. If you have a rocking chair, you could rock your baby and sing to her. Most babies like to eat larger amounts before their bedtime to prepare for the long sleep ahead. I would try and give your baby a little bit more food before bedtime.

I hope you and your baby can benefit from my mistakes. Remember patience is a virtue! 14!

How to reduce a fever

By Sarah1488

1. Give your child extra fluids to help prevent dehydration. Use cooled, boiled water.

2. A sponge bath with lukewarm water may help. Never put your baby in a cold bath. They will not enjoy it and the cold water will make them shiver, sending the fever right back up.

3. Make sure you haven't overdressed your child. Remove blankets and leave them covered with a sheet.

4. Open a window and let some cool air in. Try to avoid a cold draft. A chill can increase the fever.

By Anne

AIR BAG SAFETY

Frontal vehicle air bags can be deadly to children. I've seen first hand the damage that can be done. Some parents are still under the impression that an air bag is a soft, billowy pillow that pops out of the dashboard during a collision. Wrong. An air bag comes out of the dash at approximately 200 mph, in a fraction of a second, with unbelievable force. Air bag sensors are set to deploy in the 15mph to 25mph impact range. This means that it can be deployed even during a slight fender bender in a parking lot. A minor 15 mph bump can turn into a 140mph impact with an air bag.

Infants in a rear facing child seat should NEVER - under any circumstance - be placed in the front seat of a car with a passenger side air bag. A tiny baby's head and neck simply cannot handle the force behind a deploying air bag. Never place an infant facing forward - the baby's head and neck muscles cannot tolerate the crash forces. A baby should ride in the backseat, in a rear facing safety seat until about one year of age or 20 pounds.

Toddlers over one year old, weighing between 20 to 40 pounds, travel in a front facing safety seat. These seats can place the toddler several inches closer to the dashboard then the normal seating position. Just these few inches can result in tragedy. Toddlers riding in forward facing seats should also be placed in the back seat.

Children up to 80 pounds should ride in a booster seat, also placed in the back seat.

All children under 12 should be in the back seat. A child that is improperly restrained or too small for the shoulder belts can be too close to the dashboard when the bag inflates. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Children are 29% safer riding in the back seat rather then the front. The safest place for all children to ride is the center of the back seat.

Shorter adults should be properly restrained and sit as far back from the dashboard as possible. Pregnant women should wear the safety belts positioned over the collar bone and under the abdomen, as low as possible on the hips – never above the abdomen. Drivers should try to sit at least 10 to 12 inches from the steering wheel. All vehicle occupants should always move the seat back as far as possible, wear their safety belt and put the back of the seat at a slight angle.

Air bags DO save lives – but certain precautions must be taken to ensure safety. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has updated its regulations to allow consumers to deactivate passenger-side air bags in two instances: 1) in two-seater cars or trucks and 2) when the child has a medical condition that requires close monitoring by the driver. If you meet either of these criteria, you can ask your dealer or mechanic to disable the passenger side air bag. Later model cars may include an on/off switch – check with your dealer, mechanic or owner's manual to see if you have this option.

For more information you can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Auto Safety www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

Healthy Bodies: Diet and nutrition

BY WAU NC

This is the second draft of this article; the first was getting so long-winded that I just trashed it. We all know what we should be eating- lots of vegetables, cut back on sweets, all that stuff. So I am scrapping all of that info that we learned in grade school and making the assumption that as responsible adults, we know our food groups.

Now that being said, I want to get across that I don't have some sort of miracle solution for losing weight here. If that were the case, I'd be rich and you'd be reading about this in a book rather than online. My purpose this time around is to push all the silly, gimmicky ideas aside and share with you the one thing you need to lose weight- common sense. OK maybe there are two, because willpower plays a mighty big role, but that goes without saying.

Losing weight is pretty simple when you break it down. You simply need to take in fewer calories than you expend. Because all of our bodies and activity levels vary, there is no miracle formula for figuring out how many calories we need. A very basic rule of thumb for women is to consume 10-15 calories per pound of body weight in order to lose weight, but no less than 1200 total. You can find all sorts of calculators online, but you're really just going to have to do some experimenting to find what works for you. You will need to find something that not only works, but is comfortable enough for you to stick with; if you restrict things too much, you may just end up binging and undoing everything you worked towards. So on to the pointers, to help you find that almost-happy medium.

1. Everyone and his uncle has given his opinion on how many meals you should have per day, when you should eat them, and even how many times you need to chew before swallowing. The two main options are to divide your calories between three "square" meals and perhaps a snack or two, and eat a regular breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Another way to go about it is to divide your food into "mini-meals" and eat smaller portions at shorter intervals throughout the day. I go with the latter, simply because it suits my schedule and my appetite. Try both, see if you prefer one method to the other, and work from there.

2. Eat when you are hungry. Don't eat out of habit, because it's lunchtime so you need to eat lunch, and don't eat out of boredom. But DO eat! If you are waiting until you are so hungry that you feel sick and/or lightheaded, you are waiting too long. Sure, eating less is going to make you lose weight faster, but if you feel ill, it's because there is something not quite right with your body, so listen to it! Starving your body will take away from your capabilities both mentally and physically, so keep fueling that fire as it gets low. It can be tempting to fall into the habit of not eating, but remember that this is about your health as well, and your body needs those good foods to keep going. The weight will come off; you just need a little patience to go along with that persistence.

3. Eat your protein! At each meal, I make sure to combine some form of lean protein with a carbohydrate; the two work hand-in-hand with each other to nourish you as well as to keep you feeling full. Try an experiment that I did a couple of weeks ago: If you have just a whole-grain in some form for breakfast, throw a little protein in there. I added ¼ cup of cottage cheese to ½ cup of oatmeal. I'll bet you will find that you are not hungry as soon as you usually are. On a bit of a side note, if you workout with weights, you should eat a serving of protein within 30 minutes of finishing to maximize muscle growth.

4. Fill up on vegetables. I know I said that I'd avoid the obvious, but vegetables are so low in calories and so high in nutrients and fiber that they are worth mentioning. A little trick is to try and incorporate as many different colors of produce as possible in your diet to get the widest range of nutrients. Do keep in mind that though veggies are low calorie and can be snacked on pretty much limitlessly, fruits contain more sugars and therefore more calories. A single banana can pack 110-150 calories as opposed to that 15 calorie carrot, so if you are just feeling munchy rather than hungry, you know which one to grab.

5. Treat yourself occasionally. Life without dessert is no fun, so if you want it, have it. It's not about the bad things you eat every once in a while; it's what you regularly feed your body that is going to make a difference. Plus, looking forward to something bad for you can make the week of sticking with your diet a little bit easier. We go out for a kids' cup-sized ice cream weekly, so when I have a hankering for something sweet, I know that's coming up. You can also find lower-calorie substitutes, such as sugar-free hot chocolate, to have when your sweet-tooth comes calling. Just try to limit artificial sweeteners to being as occasional as the real thing, because they are no better for you.

6. The very best bit of advice I can offer is to begin to write everything down as you eat it. That way, you will have a written record of your calories to compare to your weight loss and you can see what works or doesn't. Also, if you have to write down that you munched on a half-dozen cookies for breakfast and the number of calories you consumed in the process, the dread of seeing that in writing may be enough to help you stave off that craving. It sounds silly, but it works!

I hope something here can be of use; seriously, you don't need to eliminate major food groups or pay anyone to cook meals for you. Just put a little thought into what you are feeding your body, make the most of the calories you want to consume, and don't beat yourself up over the occasional splurge. If you eat something not-so-great at 10 AM, don't use that as an excuse to pig out for the rest of the day; everything you put into your mouth counts. Take the time to consider if you would rather have 45 seconds of satisfaction from a doughnut, or a cute butt. Then put the doughnut down, walk away slowly, and eat a carrot!

Bonding with your child

By AryanAngel

Everyday cannot be an adventure at an amusement park. Here are some ideas to keep the face of your child animated.

1. Experience - Everyday should be full of new things. A Child's mind needs to be stimulated and entertained.

2. Activity - Keep your children busy and encourage them to keep up with you. An active child is a happy child.

3. Laughter - Be a dork...be goofy. Laughing and giggling with your child is contagious.

4. Exploration - Opportunities are waiting to be discovered. Let the world become a theme park.

5. Amazement - Your child should be your super hero. Notice everything they do, even the small stuff.

6. Colors - Black and white are boring. Keep your home bright and decorate with your child's artwork.

7. Honesty - We are not perfect. Let your child know when you have made a mistake. It will make them less insecure when they mess up.

8. Safety - There have to be boundaries put into place. Re-assure them that guidelines are not to limit, but to protect.

9. Rescue - Don’t be afraid to let your family and friends take over when you need a break.

10. Love - If you have confidence, so will your child. Everything you do reflects through to your child. Believe in yourself and follow through.

Common Causes of Infertility

By Tina Stockton

Anyone who is infertile,by other than voluntary means, can tell you of the devastation it can cause both physically and mentally. It has adverse affects on your self-esteem and can destroy relationships. Nothing in this article is meant to replace treatment or diagnosis by a doctor. It is merely a tool to help you become educated on this particular subject.

I took this article because I have experience in this area. A little background history on me is that 4 years ago I had to have emergency surgery due to advance stage three ovarian cancer. I ended up with a hysterectomy and oophorectomy. As many of you know a hysterectomy is when the uterus is removed. An oophorectomy is when one or both ovaries are removed. It was by miracle that this condition was even found, as the specific type I had was very rare and even more rare in a woman of 23. The only reason we found out about this situation was because I had a miscarriage with my 5 month along son Riley. His life saved mine.

Now onto the article, let's find out the most common causes of infertility and ways to prevent it.

About 10% of all couples are infertile. Primarily infertility affects men and women 30 - 35 years and older. Of course in this article I will focus mainly on female infertility. Here are some of the more common reasons and an explanation of what each is caused by.

Endometriosis - Endometriosis is the presence and growth of endometrial tissue in places other than the uterus. One of the more common places for this tissue to grow is on the ovaries. It can cause damage, which may result in infertility. In simple terms this is when the tissue normally found inside the uterus grows on the outside. It goes through menstruation the same as if it were in the uterus and I can personally attest that it is extremely painful. Something to keep an eye out for is unusually painful periods. If you have to medicate heavily to be able to function on the first few days or even through out your cycle or if you are unable to get out of bed even after being medicated you should see your gynecologist. Explain to him/her in detail where the pain is (ex., lower back, abdomen, etc.) and what you do to alleviate the pain. How long it lasts and how heavy your cycle is.

This is difficult for most women to talk about but it is very important and early diagnosis can save a lifetime of pain and possible permanent infertility. Give as much information as you can even if you need to keep a journal to refresh your memory in between visits. You may also want to talk to your Obgyn about laparoscopic surgery to confirm whether or not it is Endometriosis. Laparoscopic surgery is a simple surgery where a small incision is made just above or below your belly button and a camera is inserted to view the exterior of the uterus and ovaries. If need be the doctor can use the micro tools to take a scraping of cells should anything appear out of the ordinary.

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) - With PCOS, your body has high levels of testosterone, oestrogen and Luteinising Hormone. This hormonal imbalance causes irregular cycles and ovulation stops. For this reason our ovulation tests will not work. You can read more about this condition at the following website: http://www.drmalpani.com/book/chapter15.html

Hormonal imbalances - Any sort of hormonal imbalance can affect your fertility. Most often, it will cause an ovulation, or the lack of ovulation. Sometimes it can affect the lining of your uterus and prevent a fertilized egg from implanting. This usually can be treated with hormone injections. There are also patches and HRT/HT pills. One thing to be informed about when making the decision to go on any kind of HRT/HT is that artificial hormones can put you at a higher risk for certain types of cancers such as breast cancer and ovarian cancer. Talk this choice over with your Obgyn and read the information provided with the medication. After my surgery I was put on HRT and took it for an entire year before reading that it put me at higher risk for certain cancers. For me personally, the temporary relief of menopausal symptoms was not worth the risk of getting another kind of cancer. You may also want to ask about natural alternatives such as soy products. HRT, even in the so-called natural forms is something you should always talk to your doctor about before starting.

Anovulation - Irregular cycles or the absences of ovulation are usually the biggest indicator that anovulation may be your problem. This can be the result of hormone imbalances, diet, stress or excessive exercise. To find out more about an ovulation and irregular cycles we advise you to read chapter 7 of Taking Charge of Your Fertility by Toni Weschler.

Blocked uterine tube - This is another common cause of infertility. You may be ovulating normally and everything else checks out all right. However, a blockage in one or both of your uterine tubes can prevent sperm from reaching the egg. You may never know that there is something wrong until it is too late. Blockages can also cause scarring of the fallopian tubes, which will also prevent ovulation. I used to tell my husband that the pain was so bad that it felt like one of my ovaries had flipped. I was closer to the truth than I could have ever imagined. When my surgery was preformed the doctor found that my tubes had indeed twisted up and had scarred from so much damage that he said my son was indeed a miracle child.

As I said, these are the most common reasons for infertility. A good pregnancy starts before conception, drinking, drugs, smoking, being a couch potato, eating an unbalanced diet all takes its toll. Drug use no matter how little can also prevent a couple from being able to have children. Smoking may also make

it more difficult to conceive. Being obese is also a factor that can cause infertility especially in women. Living a healthy life style is sometimes hard to do in this day and age but if you are genuinely interested in and trying to have a baby you will also have to make the effort to prepare yourself to carry a child. usually it is recommended that you start preparing your body to carry a child 6 months in advance. Folic acid is very important to prevent certain birth defects. During this time that you are preparing for a child you can keep a log of everything having to do with fertility and your preparation. This way should a problem arise you will have detailed documents to take to your doctor and the issue may be resolved sooner. Keep in mind that you may feel perfectly healthy and still be reproductively sick. My only warning sign was the immense pain during menstruation; however, because I had always had it I didn't know it wasn't supposed to be that bad until it was too late.

Being aware of your body, how it functions, and how it should function is vital to your health and fertility. Usually if a problem is discovered early enough infertility can be reversed. The longer the issue is there the less your chances become. This is why it is so important to monitor yourself and to talk to your doctor. It is always better to be safe than sorry and something that may seem normal to you or too trivial to talk to your doctor about may be a mistake you end up regretting the rest of your life. You don't need to be paranoid about every little thing, just be aware of every little thing. If you have a PAP come back abnormal do what your doctor tells you to correct it be that by taking medication or by making a chance in your lifestyle. Always go for a follow up at the end of the predetermined time of medication or lifestyle change.

Infertility in men is as common as it is in females with a ratio of men to women being just about 50/50. In an infertile couple the man should always be tested first because the tests are easier to perform and do not include surgery as with women. A good doctor will suggest this and if your doctor doesn't either get a new doctor or ask them why they aren't testing the male first. Asking your doctor questions is really the best way of finding out information. Some of the tests that may performed on a man are: semen analysis; simple, but embarrassing, to perform, this should be the first test administered to a couple physical examination, including visual and manual exam endocrine evaluation, performed by drawing blood · testes biopsy; less common, only in specific cases .

It is usually recommended that a couple go for fertility testing if they have not conceived after trying for 6 months to one year. Remember, getting pregnant may only take one time but sometimes that one time is hard to find. It is not a major deal if you do not get pregnant your first, second, or even third time trying. Issues such as stress can effect getting pregnant. The more you try and the more you worry about it the harder it becomes.

I will include some tips for men for getting it just right:

"Did you know that it is best to abstain from intercourse for 3-7 days before your partner ovulates?"
Yes, it makes sense to abstain from intercourse starting at least 3 days before your partner ovulates. This means that when she ovulates you will both be at your most fertile...!

"Did you know that too much sex could seriously reduce your fertility?"
Yes, having intercourse once every 2-3 days is about right, but if you have intercourse more frequently your sperm count is highly likely to become low and your fertility reduced as a result.

"Did you know you need 20 million sperm per ml to be considered fertile?"
Its an incredible number but the World Health Organization has defined a mans fertility on the basis of this concentration of sperm in semen. The FertilMARQ kit contains a unique home test that will tell you if your sperm concentration is greater or less than 20 million per ml A positive result is going to be good news although its not proof of fertility. A negative result is not all bad news because it saves you months of futile trying to have a baby - in this case we suggest you get along to the doctor for professional help and advice.

I hope this has helped you and good luck!

References: http://www.reallifesolutions.co.uk/index.htm

Raising a superior child:

By Amanda

Steps to Reading

My three year old can read, he has known his alphabet since he was two, and he will easily carry on a conversation composed of complete sentences. He knows his shapes, colors, numbers; heck, just yesterday he told me that Jupiter is the biggest planet. Though I'm proud of my son, my intent is not to brag, but to merely illustrate a point. Young children are like sponges, and they absorb more than we even realize. As parents, we are responsible for sharing our knowledge with our children, and in the process we may be amazed at how quickly they can learn. That has been our experience with our son and his reading.

The best move we have made so far was to encourage our son's love for books; he has been read to consistently since he was a baby and has always had his own collection of books. He looks at his books twice a day (I say looks because he obviously couldn't always read), once before naptime and again in the evening. We read a book aloud together every night. We've taught him to respect his books- that ripping pages, bending books, and so on, is unacceptable and that books are to be treated carefully. As a result, books are special to him, and he will read for an hour or more contently. We have set him on a path that will hopefully foster a lifetime love of reading.

Along with books, the most invaluable learning tool we have used thus far has been flash cards. These are very inexpensive and can help to introduce everything from the alphabet to opposites. We have about a dozen packs on the shelf, and our son loves them. We began with a set of alphabet cards that had a letter on one side and a corresponding brightly illustrated image on the other. We first used the upper-case letters, and began with just A through E or so. After those were mastered, cards were added a few at a time. The two keys here were consistency and also letting my son explore the cards for himself. We practiced daily with the same cards, in the same place. Once he named the letters, I would let him go through the whole deck, familiarizing himself with the letters and the pictures. Once he had the upper-case letters down, I began to match them up with the lower-case cards so he could see the relationship. We then went through the process of learning those. At the same time, I also used flashcards to teach numbers, colors, and shapes. Coupled with coloring books and worksheets, as well as educational books, they were a great tool and he picked up on the concepts very quickly. The final sets of cards were made up of simple words without any images. These have by far been the biggest, as well as the most surprising, help. My strategy was to teach him to read words that were not easily illustrated, more conceptual and abstract words. That way, when we picked up a book, he would know the small words and could pick up on objects, names, etc. from the illustrations. So, we began with the words "it," "is" and "in," and went from there. As with the alphabet cards, I added a new one each time he had mastered the deck. Once he knew 50+ cards, we moved on to books.

We've invested in a number of the first-readers type books, and during our "school time" I let my son pick a book he would like to read aloud to me. We work a page at a time, and I point to the words with a pointer while he reads them. After he finishes each page, I read it back to him so he can hear and understand the content and associate it with the illustrations. This helps him remember what he read and has proven to be a particularly useful tactic with him. We're making progress quickly and he will now read through two or three books with little to no aid. He's three and a half.

As I said, the key to our reading success has been consistency. Make reading fun, but make it a habit. The effort is going to have to be made on your part, but a mere 20 minutes a day dedicated to your child's education should not be too much to ask. There is no reason to wait for someone else to teach your child to read when he enters the first grade; start early, and give your child a head start- make him superior.

Splish Splash most of our babies love a nice bath. It's warm, it's soothing, and it's relaxing.

It's Bath Time

By Maria

They get to splash around and discover new sounds and feelings. Because babies love contact, giving them a bath offers them a great opportunity for fun interaction between you both!

How often should I give my baby a bath? The frequency of bath time depends on your climate and your baby's health. Sponge baths are a great idea until baby is about 6 weeks old.

Use warm water and a soft cloth / sponge to clean all those baby parts that need extra care and cleanliness. Start off with your babies face and then their neck, hands, and nappy / diaper area. When your little one starts to eat solid foods (at around 4 months), you'll need to give them a bath more often.

- You should sponge bathe your baby until their umbilical cord falls off.

- In the first few months, you may notice some flakes on your baby's scalp that are caused by cradle cap. Simply remove the flakes by gently brushing his hair with a soft brush after you've applied some Olive oil to their scalp.

- Get yourself prepared for bath time. Collect soap, towels, and other bath items so they're close at hand before you begin their bath.

- A wet baby is a slippery baby, so use both hands to bathe them. You can watch for their natural startled reaction to the water, which may cause them to wiggle out of your grasp.

- Your baby's skin is really sensitive, so use only mild, no-tears baby soaps and shampoos. Avoid using oils and lotions on your baby unless your doctor gives you the go ahead!

- Never leave your baby alone in any amount of water, not even for a second. Warn younger children against turning on taps while your baby is in the bath or sink to avoid accidental burns. As an extra precaution, set your water heater at 120 degrees to avoid a bad burn.

- When bath time is over, wrap your baby in a clean, soft towel and dry them off by gently patting (not rubbing) their skin and hair.

- Your baby can't regulate their body temperature as well as you can, so always bathe them in a warm room. The water should be at body temperature. Always check the bath water temperature with the underside of your wrist before you place baby into the water.

Adapted from Babies first bath by J. Bell!!

Kitty litter and pregnancy

By Buffy

Guess what? For the next 9 months, your partner is in charge of the scooping. if you must do it yourself, make sure to wear gloves and sanitize your hands afterwards. Toxoplasma is a parasite that hosts primarily in cats. Cows, pigs, chickens, goats and some birds also get toxoplasmosis. Studies have shown that about 4% of pregnant women acquire Toxoplasma while about 15% have antibodies. Even so, only a small will pass it along to their newborn even if untreated. About 10% of women have symptoms, which include muscle aches and pains, flu like symptoms, and swollen lymph nodes. They usually appear about 2-3 weeks after exposure.

Toxoplasma is one of the many congenital infections. Others include rubella, CMV, herpes, and syphilis. Symptoms of infections in children include eye infection with blurred vision, mono-like illness, jaundice, rash, seizures, enlarged liver, enlarged spleen and poor feeding. Some of the worse cases have shown mental retardation, learning disabilities, pre-term birth and even stillbirth.

Ways to Reduce risk

* cover outdoor sandboxes
* wear gloves when gardening & washing uncooked veggies
* don't let your cat jump on the counters
* keep all counters clean
* wash hands after petting cats
* keep outdoor cats inside until baby comes
* avoid rare meat, pork, lamb
* soak cat box with bleach for 5 minutes to clean
* empty cat box daily
* get an automatic cleaning box

You do not have to get rid of your cats but when you are expecting, it is not advisable to go out and adopt a new kitten. Especially one from the animal shelter. As long as your cats stay inside and you don't eat any raw meat (this includes sushi), your chances of contraction are low.

Sources: Center For Disease Control

How to take a great picture

By Anne

See – that photography course I took back in college for some easy credits wasn't a complete waste of time! Now that I have kids, I find myself with my camera in my hand at least twice a day. Here are a few tips to help you capture some of those great moments!

- Always be prepared! You can't get that great pic if your camera isn't within reach or the batteries are dead! Make sure your batteries are fully charged at all times. If your camera takes alkaline or lithium batteries, always make sure you have a spare set on hand.

- Get down to the level of your subject. For example – if you are standing up, taking a picture of your child, the picture will turn out at an odd, awkward angle. Kneel down and get level with your star!

- Learn from the pros – use props! A cute stuffed animal can just make a picture even more special.

- Plan your shot. Take a look around your subject – is there an odd shadow? Make sure the sun isn't behind your star. Is there a background color that will blend into the shot? Is there an odd shape that will add a third arm or "devil horns" to your star? Look beyond your subject and see the space around the subject of the picture.

- Red eye problems? Position your subject so that the sun or a bright light is shining in their face.

- Love your digital camera but find the cost of ink and photo paper too expensive? Use an online photo center such as Clark Color Labs – www.clarkcolor.com - to order your prints at very reasonable prices. They will also tell you if your shot will make a good enlargement or wallet sized print.

With a bit of practice you'll be able to shoot like the pros!

Parents teach your children well

By kelticgirl14

How can we show our children where they came from? The Internet is a great place to start! You could look up your families' genealogy, and dig into your ancestors' particular customs, culture and history. What struggles has your particular ancestors been thorough? How did they overcome? How about your family members, if possible?

Parents teach your children well! As we have watched the face of education change, particularly over the last few decades, we have seen a HUGE decline and absence of any pro-white history and heritage. It has been said that the winners write history. This is indeed the case in the US! Whites seem to have lost the battle here on our own home front. Presently in the US, history books are being re-written to show Negroes as being far more involved in our nation's history. This is quite a disturbing fact when you look at the sacrifices our European ancestors made to settle in this country. Our ancestors fought and died here long before any Negro stepped foot on this land after being sold into slavery by their OWN people!

How many letters and flyers have come into your home that proclaim "African-American history Month" or "black History month" or "Hispanic history month" from your child's school? How many "White-American Month" or "European History Month" or, for example, "Scottish History Month" flyers come into your home? NONE! NO, not one here in the United States, that is for sure. Whites are being forced to abandon their own history in order to promote the other races and miscegenation. There is a song that comes to mind "Where have all the flowers gone?" it asks…. Well, I am asking, "Where has all the white, European history gone?" Why am I so concerned about our children losing their heritage? Well, if you take a good look at the alarming rate of whites committing suicide you may see why! Whites commit suicide twice as often as any other race. Why is that, do you think? While there are many reasons people commit suicide, it has been said that depression is the biggest problem. But WHY are they so depressed??? Well, I will tell you this … it has also been said that if you don't know where you came from, you can't know where you are going! This is true. It seems as though there is a hidden agenda to wipe out our history. All our children hear about is the suffering and plight of the Jews and the Negroes have their story told countless times. Pick up a newspaper and you will read at least one story about a Jew or Negro and how they were mistreated. But what of our people? How many stories talk of the injustices done to our people? If our White American/European heritage is wiped out, how will our children know where they came from and where they should be going and what their purpose is in this life? No wonder they are depressed!

Teenage suicide is a common occurrence in the United States. White male teens in particular seemed to be plagued by this fate. Our young white men are committing suicide at a far greater rate than other race. My theory is that they see they have no future. They feel it is hopeless. What jobs will THEY have? Affirmative action has made sure that "minorities" will get the job before them! Where will THEY live? If they can't get a good job how will they afford to live? Who will THEY marry and have a family with? Society tells them they can and should race mix! What if THEY choose to stand up for THEIR race! They are being constantly told that it is a bad thing and they are racist if they do, but they look around and see pride in all the other races but their own! What an internal dilemma this can cause within them!! It seems as though we are heading into oblivion, but they have no idea there is hope out there through THEIR ancestry!

I believe it is up to each one of us as people of European ancestry who understand the importance of our race and our heritage to show our youth our past so we can point them to their future. And to show them the future is something they can embrace.

How can we show our children where they came from? The Internet is a great place to start! You could look up your families' genealogy, and dig into your ancestors' particular customs, culture and history. What struggles has your particular ancestors been thorough? How did they overcome? How about your family members, if possible? Are there any stories they have that could show strength in your heritage? From your personal viewpoint, move out to our race of people. What as a race have we accomplished? It would be best to start to do this while our children are young, but for those of us, such as myself, who have come into this movement later in life with teens, anytime is a good time to start! So, my question to you is, "How important is your heritage?"

Buying a highchair?

By Natalie

Some high chairs come with padded seats, or you can buy padded seats that fit right into the chair for added comfort and security. The latter is recommended for babies that are still quite young.

You should consider how easy it is for you to get your baby in and out of their high chair and how easy it is to keep clean. A removable plastic tray is useful as it is easy to keep clean. Make sure it has a lip so that food doesn't fall off when your baby is trying to feed itself.

Make sure that your baby's highchair is stable. As your baby gets older they will enjoy leaning over and trying to grab at things. The chair must be strong enough to remain stable at all times. You must also have a seatbelt to strap your baby in! Make sure there are no gaps that could catch your babies fingers.

Pool safety tips

for parents

Never leave a child unsupervised near a pool.

Instruct babysitters about potential hazards to young children in and around swimming pools and the need for constant supervision.

Completely fence the pool. Install self-closing and self-latching gates. Position latches out of reach of young children. Keep all doors and windows leading to the pool area secure to prevent small children from getting to the pool. Effective barriers and locks are necessary preventive measures, but there is no substitute for supervision.

Do not consider young children "drown proof" because they have had swimming lessons; young children should always be watched carefully while swimming.

Do not use flotation devices as a substitute for supervision.

Never use a pool with its pool cover partially in place, since children may become entrapped under it. Remove the cover completely.

Place tables and chairs well away from the pool fence to prevent children from climbing into the pool area.

Keep toys away from the pool area because a young child playing with the toys could accidentally fall in the water.

Remove steps to above ground pools when not in use.

Have a telephone at poolside to avoid having to leave children unattended in or near the pool to answer a telephone elsewhere. Keep emergency numbers at the poolside telephone.

Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

Keep rescue equipment by the pool.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Good foot care

By Vicky

Your baby should only wear their shoes when they are outdoors. Try and encourage your little one to go barefoot on safe, nonslip surfaces in your home as it strengthens the muscles needed for walking.

Keep your babies toenails short; cut them straight across the top of the nail.

Shoes mold to your babies feet, so do not use secondhand shoes when your baby is learning to walk.

What are your children reading?

My son who is Dylan who is 12 years old is reading The Loch Ness Monster Story by Khaetidawne Quirk & Danny O'Flaherty, here is a brief description of the book. This is the story of the Loch Ness Family's frustration with pollution and lack of privacy. In the end, the world respects their wishes. The parents are once again happy and the children, Nestor and Nessette, are free to play.
Becky

Our family is currently reading The Glunk That Got Thunk by Dr. Seuss, we LOVE IT! And we highly Recommend it.
Sadie

My daughter who is 7 is currently reading The Viking at Drumshee and so far she loves it, we are looking for more books in this genre if anybody has tips..
Katie

I recently picked up a lot of Little Golden Books off of Ebay that were a great find. Some are books that I remember having as a child, which makes them extra special to share with my son. For $5, we got 22 books; after picking through them, I only had to toss out two or three that I didn't approve of. You can find some great buys on there, and by picking up a big lot at once you can quickly and cheaply expand your child's library. Just keep an eye on shipping to make sure the total price is worth it!
Amanda

First Born Jealousy

By Tina Stockton

Now that your pregnant again one of your main concerns may be first born jealousy. How do you make your home ready for another child without making your first born jealous? That is what this article will help you with.

Making your first born an active part of baby's life is an important step. So when you find out you are pregnant again getting your toddler involved is a great way to help him/her form a bond to baby before the birth. Jealousy in first born children usually comes from them feeling as if they are less important than baby or that baby is keeping them from doing things. If you keep your toddler busy and active in baby's life there won't be as much jealousy and resentment. Of course there will be some, as when baby is feeding and there is nothing for your first born to do, but I will get into that a little later. The thing to keep in mind is that even parents can become somewhat jealous of the attention baby gets, your first born is no different.

Here are a few ways you can get your toddler involved with the new baby:

Ask your toddler his/her opinion on small things such as a patterns for baby's nursery. Give them small choices, obviously they will not be able to plan the whole design of baby's room but, if you narrow the choice down to two designs and let your toddler pick the final one they will feel involved. You can also have your toddler help pick out furniture after you have narrowed it down. Having your little one pick out books for baby' is another great way to keep toddler involved. Take your toddler shopping with you when you pick out clothes for baby. Let them pick a special outfit just from them for baby. You can teach your toddler to help change diapers by getting a baby doll to practice on. No one expects toddler to change a diaper by themselves but they do like to help, even if it is just throwing the diaper away. Let your toddler pick out a special toy for baby that he/she can give to baby. If your child is a little older you can also let them help you wash all of the new items that will go in baby's room. Let them put the clothes or blankets in the washing machine. This is good even for younger children. My daughter was helping me with the laundry when she was 2 years old and she loved it because she was, "Such a good little helper!". Take your toddler to your OBGYN visits and let him/her hear baby's heart beat and see baby on the monitor. This will help establish a bond with baby. Also teach your toddler how to help bathe baby.

Remember to praise your first born for all the 'hard work' they are doing to help Mommy and Daddy get the home ready for baby. Try to avoid telling them that they are "too little" to help. This can make them feel inadequate and can cause resentful feelings towards baby. Another thing to keep in mind is that your first born has had all your attention since birth. Having to share time while baby is awake or be a little more quiet while baby is sleeping can be hard on a child who has never had to deal with that. So start helping your toddler adjust by setting aside a little time where your toddler must entertain themselves. Start with 15 minutes where toddler must find something to do. Then slowly increase the time to 30 minutes, then 30 minutes two or three times a day. Help your toddler learn to find something constructive to do during that time such as getting out a book, coloring, playing a game, or looking at family pictures. You can also take your toddler outside to play during this time. Actively ignore your toddler during this time. Active ignoring is a procedure commonly used in institutional settings to help clients gain independence. It isn't as bad as it sounds and obviously I am not suggesting that you turn your home into some sort of institution. What active ignoring is, is when you are present and keeping an eye on your toddler but not participating in the activities. It is not neglecting toddler but establishing to toddler that sometimes Mommy or Daddy cannot play but that they are still right there if they need them. This "alone" time will also help you toddlers imagination grow as they will have to entertain themselves. If toddler has something urgent such as having to use the restroom, obviously take the time then and of course need I even mention if toddler has an emergency, take the time. But for small things such as wanting you to participate or 'needing' something that they don't actually need right at that moment, actively ignore them. However, try to avoid saying things like, "Mommy is too busy right now" or "Daddy doesn't have time" or if baby has been born, "I'm busy with the baby" or "You know I can't because of the baby". You toddler is not dumb so explain to them that you have something you are working on right now but if they can wait just a little bit then you will be more than happy to help them/play with them. This helps to keep them from feeling like they are less important than whatever it is you are doing. It also helps to teach patience and keeps toddler from resenting baby's time.

Many of us say to the siblings that they are getting a new brother or sister to play with but this isn't always healthy to do. When you stop and think about it your toddler sees playing as things like catch, and tag, hide-n-go-seek, toddler toss (throwing toddler up and catching him/her), and coloring, etcetera. Obviously baby

cannot play like that. If you tell your toddler that they will have a new baby to play with what happens when baby comes and they try to play with baby like they know how to play? That's right, you find yourself always having to say "no", "don't", "stop", "be careful", and things of that nature. Toddler will become confused because basically you are reprogramming what playing means to them. Also those are all negative words. As I mentioned, toddlers are not dumb by any means so take the time to explain to your first born what playing with baby entails. That babies like back rubs, you can use your diaper training doll to show and teach toddler how to rub baby's back without hurting baby. Show them how to play with baby's toys to interact with baby. Teach them how to feed baby (if a bottle is the choice you have to use). Let them know that baby won't be able to play like they can until he/she is older like them.

Letting them know that baby cannot do the things they can is another way to get your toddler involved. Teach your child that they are the person baby will look up to and learn from. That baby cannot walk yet but when it comes time for baby to walk that they can help them since they already know how to do it. This will make toddler feel that they are also important to baby. Including them in baby's life gives your first born an important role to play and can start teaching responsibility to your toddler. Everyone likes to feel like someone needs them and a new baby is a great way to let toddler know that other people need them. Mommy and Daddy need their help and baby needs their help.

A lot of "child experts" say to give your first born "extra love" but I say that any good parent will already be giving their first born all the love they have and then some. I disagree that "extra love" is a positive thing. You want to keep your child's life as normal as possible to keep from resentful feelings towards baby. Making time just for your first born will be easier to plan when baby arrives and you get some semblance of a schedule going. Then you can have some one on one time while baby is napping.

Keep toddler involved with baby as much as possible and soon as baby grows so will your toddlers love for the baby. Before your toddler knows it baby will be chasing them around the house playing tag, catch, and hide-n-go-seek.

Is your baby ready for solid foods?

By Vicky

All babies are different and progress differently; my mother told me I was a hungry baby and never seemed to be full, so she introduced me to solid foods when I was 4 months old. Most doctors recommend that your baby be 4 to 6 months old before introducing solids, but not all babies are ready at that age. Rely on your baby to let you know when she needs more food, not her age; if you introduce her to solid foods too early she might have an allergic reaction. Babies can't chew or swallow foods at a young age, so waiting until they are at least 4 months is recommended. Their digestive system also needs to mature so it can handle the new additions to their diet.

Before you introduce your baby to solid foods, ask yourself these questions:

· Has baby doubled her birth weight?

· Does baby consume 32 ounces or more of breast milk or formula each day?

· Can baby sit up with little support and turn her head when she's full?

· Can baby move a dab of thinned baby cereal to the back of her tongue and swallow it? This is a signal that baby has the ability to swallow non-liquid foods.

· Does baby frequently put things in her mouth?

· Is baby interested in trying new tastes and textures?

· Does baby watch with interest as you eat, perhaps even opening her mouth and leaning forward as if to ask for a bite?

If you can answer yes to these questions, baby may be ready to start solid foods. Just remember, until your baby is about a year old, her main source of nutrition should still be breast milk or iron-fortified formula.

References: Your baby today

Foods to avoid while pregnant

By Stacey1488

It is very important to know which foods are safe to eat and which you need to avoid while pregnant. Here is a list we have compiled from various sources and books!

Raw meats such as sushi, seafood (especially shellfish), rare or uncooked beef or poultry should be avoided due to the risk of coliform bacteria, toxoplasmosis and salmonella.

Fish containing accumulated levels of mercury in their fatty tissues such as tilefish (also called golden or white snapper), swordfish, shark and king mackerel. When you consume large amounts of mercury, your baby could suffer brain damage resulting in developmental delays (for example, delays in learning to walk or talk).

Caffeine is a substance for which the verdict isn't completely in on. There has been no strong evidence of harm to the baby from caffeine. For good health in general, it is recommended to keep caffeine intake below 400 milligrams/day – the equivalent of about 3 (8 oz) cups of coffee. If you are not a big coffee drinker and can easily avoid it while pregnant, do it. If not, consider making your coffee a latte to also provide a little calcium and keep portions moderate

Unpasteurized cheeses, which may carry listeria (a bacteria that is killed by the pasteurization process). Eating foods containing listeria increases the risk of a miscarriage. Check the label when you buy cheeses to find out if it is unpasteurized. If you are unsure - however appetizing it looks - it is probably best to avoid it.

Liver contains high levels of vitamin A that can cause foetal abnormalities if eaten in excess. Foods containing high amounts of liver, such as pate are therefore best avoided during pregnancy.

Raw eggs – like raw meat, raw eggs have the potential to carry bacteria, particularly salmonella. Believe it or not raw eggs are in a number of various products including some forms of Caesar dressing, mayonnaise and even ice cream. If you are uncertain about whether or not something you are eating contains raw eggs, avoid it unless you can find out for certain whether or not it is harmful.

Family Recipes:

Blueberry Turnovers

By Vicky

Blueberries are a very popular fruit in the United States because of their unique flavor, small edible seeds, and ease of preparation. Blueberries can be eaten fresh or used for jelly, jam, pies, pastries, or juice. Blueberries are also low in calories and sodium, contain no cholesterol, and is a source of fiber. A major constituent of the fiber is pectin, known for its ability to lower blood cholesterol. Blueberries contain measurable quantities of ellagic acid, which has inhibiting effects on chemically induced cancer in laboratory studies. Blueberry juice also contains a compound that prevents bacteria from anchoring themselves to the bladder, thereby helping to prevent urinary tract infections.

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 cups shortening
5 tablespoons cold water
1 3/4 cups of fresh blueberries
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1 tablespoon margarine
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
1/3 cup water
1 tablespoon flour
1 teaspoon sugar

PREPARATION:

Mix salt and flour. Cut in shortening. Add water a tablespoon at a time. Form ball. Roll out on floured surface. This dough will dry out quickly, so use immediately.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Bring fruit and water to a boil in a saucepan. Lower heat and simmer for about five minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients, except butter, and bring to a boil once more. Boil for a minute, then add butter. Cut your pastries into circles or squares and fill. Bake on a greased cookie sheet at 425 for about 20 minutes or until golden.

Optional: drizzle a confectioner sugar and water glaze over turnovers. Enjoy!

Blueberry Turnovers

By Amanda

The following is adapted from a muffin recipe found on the back of Hodgson Mill brand oat bran cereal. The original had too much sugar and oil for my taste and looked like it would be lacking somewhat in flavor, and my changes resulted in the recipe below. These are really good and, as the name indicates, hearty!

Ingredients:

1 ½ c oat bran hot cereal
1 c unbleached white flour
½ c whole wheat flour
¼ c natural cane sugar
1 ½ tsp baking powder
1 ½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp nutmeg
2 eggs, slightly beaten
1 c applesauce, chilled
2 Tbsp vegetable oil
2 Tbsp milk
½ tsp vanilla extract
¼ c raisins

Preparation:

In a large bowl, combine the dry ingredients, excluding the raisins. In a separate bowl, mix together the wet ingredients. Add to the dry, mixing well; gently fold in raisins. Allow to sit for 10 minutes to soften the oat bran; while this sits, preheat the oven to 400°F. Divide batter between 12 muffin tins that have either been greased or lined with paper cups; bake for 12-15 minutes until golden brown.

After coming up with this recipe, I found that substituting the 2 tablespoons of milk for half of the oil resulted in a slightly dry, crumbly muffin. I personally prefer it this way, but you can always use 4 tablespoons of oil instead and leave out the milk altogether. Also, the original recipe called for all white flour and twice as much sugar; simply tweak it yourself until you find what works for your tastes and your family's health! Enjoy!

Whole Wheat Pretzels

By Amanda

The following recipe has been adapted from Healthy Foods for Hungry Kids, published by Better Homes and Gardens, 1987. These pretzels are a staple in our household; every few weeks I make a batch and my son has them for a snack along with some apple juice in the afternoon. They are perfect for a child who loves to help cook, and though they are somewhat time-consuming, they are not overly difficult and the taste is well worth the effort!

INGREDIENTS:
2 – 2 ½ c unbleached white flour
1 package active dry yeast
1 ½ c milk
¼ c natural cane sugar
2 Tbsp vegetable oil
½ tsp salt
2 c whole wheat flour
¼ c chopped sunflower nuts
1 slightly beaten egg white
1 Tbsp water
¼ c chopped sunflower nuts

PREPARATION:
In a large bowl, combine 1 ½ cups of the white flour and yeast. Heat the milk, sugar, oil and salt until warm in a saucepan; add to flour and yeast. Beat on low speed for 30 seconds, followed by high speed for 3 minutes. Stir in the whole wheat flour, sunflower nuts, and as much of the white flour as needed to form a solid dough. For the sunflower seeds, I buy a pack of roasted sunflower kernels, and pour half into a plastic baggie, which should be about ½ cup total. Then I crush the nuts with a rolling pin, and pour about ¾ into the dough, rather than half. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead for 6-8 minutes, until smooth and elastic. Shape into a ball and turn once in a lightly greased bowl; cover and let rise until double, about an hour and a half. For my dough, I turn on the oven to warm and turn it off and put a pot of boiling water on the bottom rack; then I cover the bowl with a damp towel. This keeps the air moist and warm and provides a good environment in which the dough can rise.

Punch down the dough and recover it; let it rest for ten minutes. Turn it out onto a floured surface and roll into a rectangle, about 12 x 10 inches. You will need to cut the rectangle into twenty even strips (I only make 18 some weeks); a pizza cutter is an invaluable tool and if you have one, it will make the process a lot easier. Have two greased baking sheets nearby and preheat your oven to 475° F. To form a pretzel, take one strip and lengthen it until you have a rope about 16 inches long- just think making a snake with playdough. You can form your twists whichever way is easiest for you; I hold mine in the air by the middle with the ends hanging down an even amount, take the ends and twist them twice, then fold the twists over the loop. You'll have to give it a shot a few times before you get the method down, but once you do it is easy as can be. Kids will love helping make the twists! Place each pretzel on the baking sheet as it is formed. Bake in the oven for 3-4 minutes, and then reduce the heat to 350° F.

Prepare a pot of boiling water, about three quarts. Place three pretzels in the water at a time; boil for one minute each side, then remove to a rack to drip dry a bit. Return to the cookie sheets. Mix together the egg white and water; brush onto each pretzel and sprinkle with the remaining sunflower nuts. Bake for 20-30 minutes, until a nice golden brown. These freeze very well and you can reheat them just as you would a boxed variety from the grocery store; enjoy!

The Summer Solstice

By Vicky

The Summer Solstice, also known as Litha, Midsummer's Eve, or St. John's Day, happens on the 21st of June. On that date we celebration of the longest day of the year and the beginning of summer. This is such a wonderful day, and for some reason it always fills me with new hope.

It has also been a time for Pagan tribes to gather, and we have been doing so for centuries. The Christian religion converted this day of "Jack-in-the-Green" to the "Feast of St. John the Baptist," often portraying him in rustic attire, sometimes with horns and cloven feet (like the Greek demi-god Pan).

The Goddess manifests as Mother Earth and the God as the Sun King. Summer Solstice colours are blue, yellow, and green; this is a great excuse to once again change the colours in my home. It is a festival of folk, community, sharing, and a time to honour our planet and environment. Make a pledge to Mother Earth; promise to help improve the environment and to aid animals that are facing extinction! HomeFront staff will be planting trees in honour of our fallen, and we will also be getting involved and active in many eco-friendly projects; watch out for updates in the next issue!

Agriculturally, our crops are in full growth. They are reaching maturity and coming closer to harvest time. A large percentage of wild herbs are fully mature by Midsummer and this is a traditional time for gathering magickal and medicinal plants to dry and store for winter use. We have stored many since last Midsummer and have used them for gift baskets to new mothers; this year we will focus more on medicinal plants.

In Wales, Midsummer is called "Gathering Day" in honour of this practice.

Traditional foods for the Summer Solstice are fresh fruits and vegetables; try to use organic fruits and veggies for your meals that day! !

Baby Proofing your home

By Tina Stockton

So your pregnant, now what? In all the hustle and bustle of preparing for a new baby one thing that should never be over looked is baby proofing. A lot of people choose to wait until baby is bigger to baby proof. So they put this off and then it becomes something that just never seems to get done. Baby proofing your home is something that should be done along with preparing your nursery. When preparing your home the best thing to do is to not only think of what baby needs now but plan for when baby is walking, talking, and exploring.

So how do you baby proof your home? There are some very simple but important things you can do to keep baby and toddler safe at home. I will go over some products that are useful when you start baby proofing your home. Safety 1st is the company I prefer to use in my own home and is the only product that I send in packages to expectant mothers. All products that I will talk about can be purchased through Safety 1st retailers. I will also try to include some 'home remedies' as alternative to having to buy the products. This of course won't apply to all products but certainly to some and can help save money.

Here are a few ways you can get your toddler involved with the new baby:

Outlet plugs are small plastic 'stoppers' that fit directly into the outlet to prevent your little one from inserting anything in the outlet and getting shocked. This is the most common item when people think of baby proofing and it is a very important one to remember.

Cord Shorteners are useful to keep excess cords from becoming a hazard. Most can accommodate up to 4 feet of excess cord. This is something that is usually over looked but it can prevent baby from pulling something down on top of his/her head. It also keeps the excess off the floor so that baby can not get tangled in the cord and fall over and get hurt. Zip ties can also be used to tie up excess cord. Preferably you should use two or three zip ties. Once you have gathered the excess cord put a zip tie at both ends and if the cord is large enough put one in the middle as well. Make sure you have pulled it tight enough to prevent any part of the excess from slipping out.

Another type of cord to remember is the window blind cords. There are many accidental hangings and other injuries due to blind cords. Even if you have your cords cut in two they can still become tangled enough to strangle baby. What I do in my home is to lower the blinds to the base of the window and then cut the cords to hang 6 inches from the top while the blinds are lowered. However, when you raise the blinds the cords dangle, so getting a window blind winder is very important. What that does is provides you a place to wind the cord while it is not in use. You can also accomplish this by inserting a nail at least half way up the window and winding the cord up and out of the way on that. Leave about 1/2 inch of the nail protruding so that you have plenty of space to wind the excess cord. Keep it high enough that baby cannot reach it but for your own safety I suggest that you place the nail at the top of the window. This way you will not get scraped by it if you walk past too closely and you will not get an eye injury if you bump into it. It is then safe for everyone in the family.

Night lights are useful to keep accidents from happening during the night. You can get auto sensor lights that will turn on at a certain darkness and off during the day. This is very helpful because it helps keep electricity usage down and you don't have to remember to turn on the night light. It will always be on when needed. You should place night lights along the pathway to the rest room and to Mom and Dad's room for baby. One in baby's room, bathroom, and

Mom and Dad's room. usually one in the hallway is enough but if you have a larger house you may want to put two in the hallway.

Bi-Fold Door locks are great for closets with two doors that pull out or fold back. This will keep baby from getting into anything that may be stored in a closet. It clamps over the trim on both doors at the top and prevents baby from pulling the doors open. You could also use a rubber band to bind the knobs together this is not as effective as the door lock but a small child will not be able to pull the doors apart. This is usually better to use as a quick fix since it can be aggravating to open yourself.

Baby Gates are most important at stairways to prevent baby from falling down the stairs. You can also use baby gates to block off certain rooms from baby. For example if you have just cleaned the kitchen floor and you want to keep baby from getting the wet chemicals on him/her, placing a gate in the doorway will keep baby out of danger without restricting their movement to that of a playpen. There are different kinds of gates. Pressure gates are gates that use an sdjusting arm to force the gate open and hold it in place. Fixed gates are ones that are mounted directly into the wall. For stairways fixed gates are the best choice. When baby is big enough sometimes if they lean on the pressure gate it can topple over. While that is rare to happen with a smaller child it is a risk not worth taking. So at stairway tops the fixed gate really is the best choice.

Spout covers in a tub are designed with padding to fit over the water spout to prevent baby from being injured by bumping their head on the steel of the spout. Remember that a baby can drown in less than 2 inches of water so never leave baby unattended in the bathroom.

You can get toilet locks but the safest thing to do is to keep baby out of the bathroom unattended. Always pull the door shut when the bathroom is not in use.

Medicine cabinets and drawers should have safety locks to prevent the doors from being opened. Keep in mind that even with inside mounted cabinet locks baby can still reach in and get a hold of products. While most product containers are too large to fit through a couple inch gap it is still possible for baby to get out smaller products.

Another bathroom baby proofing less thought of is the hot water. Baby can be seriously burned if he/she manages to turn the faucet on. Set your hot water at or slightly below 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Mix baby's bath water with your hand to ensure there is no spots of hot or cold water but that it is equally warm. Even though I check the water manually sometimes we as adults cannot tell what is hot to baby so keeping a meat thermometer for checking bath temperatures is the easiest way to make sure baby's water is safe. These are easy to read and use and can be the difference between a nice soothing bath and a scalding accident.

Corner padding is important if you have sharp cut corners to prevent injury if baby should fall into the corner. When choosing your furniture you should always consider the possibility of one day having a baby in the home. Try to buy as much furniture as possible without the sharp edges. If you must buy furniture with sharp edges, make sure to pad them when baby does come along.

Keep nick knacks in a China cabinet when ever possible as baby can reach up on tables and pull things down on top of themselves. Side tables and other small and lighter furniture should be secured to the wall when ever possible to prevent baby from tipping it over. As baby starts to walk they will use furniture and other large objects to pull themselves up on or for balance when walking. Making your home as safe for baby as possible is vital to preventing many unfortunate accidents.

Keep toys with smaller parts away from baby. Have a toy box with a lock on it to prevent baby from accessing toys that he/she may choke on. Along these same lines if you allow your children to eat candy make sure that it is not something baby can choke on. The best kind of candy, in my opinion, you can give your little one would be safety pops. This is a lollipop that has a looped 'stick' so if baby should swallow it you can retrieve it with relative easy by hooking your finger into the looped 'stick'.

One thing many people do not know is dangerous to baby is iodized salt and vanilla. Items we use to cook with can be as dangerous as chemicals that can be found in the kitchen. What I prefer to do is to keep all of

my cleaning products in a locked hallway closet rather than having cleaning chemicals in every room of your home. If you must keep products in each room make sure they are up high and secure. Keep all cooking products up in top cabinets and make sure to have some type of cabinet lock on those particular doors.

One thing I do in the kitchen when I am cooking or baking is to place a folding gate around the area of the stove. Turning pot and pans handles inward on the stove can also help keep baby from pulling down a hot pan or pot onto themselves. I use the gate to prevent baby from getting close enough to the stove to pull anything down or to brush against the oven front and get burned.

Baby proofing your home doesn't just stop in the home but extends into your vehicle as well. What I used as a car seat was one that was mounted on a base. That way the base, once properly installed did not have to be removed and I still had the convenience of being able to take the seat out if my daughter was sleeping. Your baby should be in a rear-facing car seat from 0 - 1 year of age and weighs a minimum of 22 pounds, after that you can switch to a front facing car seat. Always make sure that your child is compatible with the specs on the car seat you choose in both height and weight. In many accidents babies have been thrown from the vehicle because their car seat was not properly installed. Most police stations will double check this for you with no hassle. If need be ask a friend or family member to check to make sure it is properly installed. Remember to always buckle baby up no matter how short a distance you plan on traveling. Most accidents occur within 50 miles of your home.

In baby's bed keep out all excess items such as comforters, toys and stuffed animals. Pillows are not recommended for baby. I used a baby blocker to keep my daughter from becoming entangled in her blanket. I believe the baby blockers are also known as positioners. It is two pieces of foam covered with cloth that you place on either side of baby to prevent rolling and suffocation. Make sure that the blanket you use for baby is light weight and breathable.

While you can add pillows and toys to the crib when baby is not in it, they pose a danger to baby while sleeping. Only add toys that can be secured in place to a crib to prevent accidents where something could fall on to baby. Keep all mobiles out of reach of the crib. Baby will be able to see them if they are up a little higher than the top of the crib and this way baby cannot pull on the parts and bring it down on top of themselves.

These are some of the simple things you can do to make sure baby is safe in your home and vehicle. Remember these children are our future, let's keep them safe enough to get there.

You can find a store that sells Safety 1st products by visiting their website. The URL to get directly to the retailers is: http://www.safety1st.com/retailers.asp

References: www.safety1st.com

Teach Your Kids to be Pet Prepared for Disasters

By Julie

"Hey kids do you know what a disaster is? A disaster is a hurricane, tornado, flood, earthquake or fire. " So this article is all about how to prepare you and your pet for disasters. So let's start planning now because "your pet depends on you for their safety." During a disaster, if you see an injured or stranded animal that needs help, don't try and help it yourself. It might be scared and try to bite. Tell your parent or an adult. Disasters tend to stress and upset your pet so they will need extra care and attention.

Leaving your Home

The first thing we need to talk about is if the disaster is major enough to make you leave your home. If you need to leave your home, ALWAYS TAKE YOUR PET WITH YOU. BUT, some emergency shelters do not allow pets (unless they are service animals, like dogs for blind or epilepsy.) Since your pet cannot go with you to these shelters, you need to plan ahead.

Pet Friendly places

* You can always ask your friends or relatives to help out too.

* Prepare a list of boarding facilities and vets who can shelter your critters. Keep this list in your emergency kit.

* Prepare a list of pet friendly hotels and motels. Keep this list in your emergency kit.

If it is a disaster warning only, it's best to keep your pets inside with you so you don't have to look for them later. Be sure you pets are wearing collars and updated identification tags.

Birds

Move your bird in a secure travel cage or carrier. Depending if the weather is going to be hot or cold is going to depend on which supplies you should take along. If the weather is cold you will take a blanket to wrap over the carrier and if the weather is warm carry a spray bottle to spray your birds' feathers once in a while. Fruit or vegetables with high water concentrate should be put in the carrier instead of water. Keep your bird carrier in a quite place to keep your bird nice and calm. Do not open the cage incase your bird flies off because of all the stress and the confusion. Carry a photo of your bird to identify it if it happens to fly off.

Lizards and Reptiles

Lizards and Reptiles should be moved and cared for the same way as birds are.

Snakes Move your snakes in a pillowcase when you have to evacuate. Take a carrier with you to place them in later when you reach you a safer place. If you need to feed your snake take food with you. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking your snake as well as a heating pad.

Pocket Pets

Pocket pets, like hamsters or gerbils, should be moved in cages or carriers. Take their bedding materials, food bowls and water bottles.

Leaving Your Pet Home

When you have to leave your pet home, make sure there is a way for them to get into a safe, secure room. That would be a room without windows allowing enough air for the pets to breathe. (Like a big bathroom). Enough food and water should be left to last for up to three days. Water should be put in spill proof containers. "Leave a faucet dripping into a bathtub or sink (with the drain open!)". Leave your pets their favorite things to make them a little more comfortable like bedding, blankets and their favorite toys. Don't lock your dogs or cats in the room together. Have your parent leave a notice that your pet is there and the phone number where you will be reached.

Never, never, never leave your dog tied up outside!

Pet Disaster Kit ~ "Your pet disaster kit should include:"

* Pet food and treats

* Drinkable water in plastic bottles

* Can opener for canned food

* Pet medications and medical records in a waterproof container

* Sturdy leashes, harnesses and/or carriers so you can move your pets safely and they can't escape (remember they may be scared and may act different than usual)

* Current photos of your pet in case they get lost

* The name of your veterinarian

* Pet beds and toys, if there is room.

Make sure your pets have updated identification tags and collars on.

Resource: www.femagov/kids/pets.htm

By Glory

Homeschooling:

"Middle and High School"

Most parents have no problem finding a wealth of different curriculums to choose from while they homeschool their young children. But when it comes to the middle and high school years finding the right materials becomes tricky. The biggest problem I ran into was that most curriculum wasn't secular in nature. It comes to no surprise that the religious organizations who reintroduced America to the concept of homeschooling in the first place, seem to have cornered the market on materials. But religious and non-religious alike should not despair. There are resources to fit everyone's tastes, but of course this article slants towards what I liked and didn't like, as well as what works regardless of one's personal theology.

For math we did find that the Singapore New Elementary Mathematics series was a good bet. I am certainly not good at math in my opinion, but I took several years of it in college, so at least I have a certain comfort level. Singapore has a nice solutions manual and fairly good examples in the teacher and student texts, but although this series worked for us, it's not for the weak at math parents. It is certainly NOT a student driven course and you will be required to plan lessons. My daughter is horrible at math and she completed the first book with no real problems, so though the series seems to be good for kids at all levels, it will be severely limited by the effectiveness of the teacher.

There are two other programs that I have heard good things about, both of which ARE student driven plans. The first is Math Relief and the second is Video Text Algebra. If we were going to do it all again, I would pick one of these programs instead of Singapore. They vary greatly in price, so check them out first.

For science I know that some of you are not going to like my main pick, but hand's down, it's the easiest and most effective upper grade science available. Dr. Jay Wile writes the texts for Apologia Science and although it IS Christian based, his books are well worth putting up with the religion part. The science is solid and there are plenty of cool labs to keep all the kids interested. My second grader always wanted in on his sister's labs last year. Another BIG plus to this curriculum is that they sell lab kits at Home Science Tools online. Any supplies not included in the kit are basic household materials. My daughter hates science and she had a blast last year doing this program.

Sorry, I wish I could recommend another alternative upper grade science curriculum, but I can't. Get Apologia.

OK here comes History! My daughter's favorite subject. I stumbled on the Early Times series by Suzanne Strauss Art during our first year homeschooling and they are great. They really don't go past grade 9, but if you have a middle schooler, give these books a try. One little problem is that these books are very hard to find and they don't have a teacher's manual. This is the home website http://www.waysidepublishing.com/History.html These books are a FUN way to learn about The Middle Ages, The Renaissance, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Rome, and Ancient Greece. There are quite a few more on Amazon than the publisher sells, so it's worth checking out. The reason we liked these books so much is because she writes in very clear language and there are questions at the end of each chapter as well as projects. My daughter loved them.

If you read my first article on the elementary years then you know that I loved Memoria Press for Latin instruction. After using it for a full year, my opinion still holds. I made supplemental worksheets for my daughter, but if your kid is diligent about doing the drills, and mine wasn't, then you probably won't need to make more worksheets. We got the DVD set and although my daughter bitched and moaned about them, they DID work and sometimes that was the only way for her to understand the grammar. I recommend the DVD's if you have the money to spare.

One program she hated with a passion was Traditional Logic from the same company. Not that the program is bad, I don't think it is, she just didn't care for the subject matter and getting her to complete just one semester of it was a huge pain in my ass and I finally relented and put it away.

English was a tough subject for us for some reason. Maybe some of you have found the ideal high school English curriculum, but I never did. It was a complete mismatched hodgepodge of materials, most of which was taken off the web. One text we used consistently through middle school and high school was Vocabulary From Classical Roots. It's a SAT test prep type vocabulary building series. I liked it and it was challenging for all grades. All the other stuff was just reading novels, poems, and short stories. I basically picked classics and she read them and then I went to a website like Book Rags to find free study questions and background material. English was hard for me to teach because it has a huge time commitment on the teaching end and I have zero time to do anything. I started using Learning Language Arts Through Literature The Gold Book, but again, my problem was time. I just didn't have the time to keep up with it.

My last bit of advice is to do your research before you decide and DO NOT be put off by Christian based curriculum. Sure some of it is preachy, but there are some really excellent texts out there worth taking advantage of.

The following links hold a wealth of information so check them out.

Home Science Tools
http://www.hometrainingtools.com/

Homeschool Reviews (see what parents think about all the different curriculums)
http://homeschoolreviews.com

Homeschool Discount (curriculum store)
http://www.homeschooldiscount.com/

Donna Young (free printables)
http://www.donnayoung.org/

Homeschool High School
http://www.quailhaven.com/academy/hslinks.htm

http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/olderkids/OlderKids.htm

Homeschoolers in the News

Does your baby have a stuffy nose?

By Vicky

My niece always seemed to have a stuffy nose when she was a baby, and it can make life hard at times for both parent and child; the poor baby was miserable and all she could do about it was to cry.

When my niece's nose was stuffed, we had success using a nasal bulb aspirator a few times, but on occasion when it didn't work we used a salt-water nasal pump. Check the label before you buy any nasal spray for an infant or a small child - even the "children's" cold medicine will usually have something on the label about not using it on a child under six years old.

You could make your own if you are desperate and very handy. Make your own saline nasal spray by mixing eight ounces of warm (boiled first) water with one-half teaspoon of salt. Pour into an empty OTC nasal spray bottle (you may have to remove the nozzle with pliers) and shake. This spray is good for relieving a stuffy nose caused by colds or allergies and for moistening dry nasal passages. It is also much cheaper than medicated OTC sprays.

Saline sprays containing menthol or eucalyptus should not be used for babies since it is reported that the respiration of a baby can be slowed down or even stopped if menthol or eucalyptus (or peppermint oil) is close enough for the baby to even breathe it.

References: Health911 and Baby Care by Jan Smith

Choosing the right plant

1. You won't have to spend as much time caring for your plants if you choose plants that are suited to your environmental conditions and gardening style.

2. Watering: Test the soil in your containers every day with your finger. If it's dry an inch below the surface - water. If you can't water your plants on a regular basis, consider self watering containers.

3. Fertilizer: Mix a dry, time-release fertilizer into the soil when planting, and use small amounts of liquid fertilizer for regular feeding every few weeks.

4. Fighting Pests: Inspect plants regularly for fungus, insects, bugs, etc. Remove any diseased or dying leaves. Spray insects with water or other natural repellents to get rid of them.

5. Pruning: Don't be afraid to cut or trim plants to keep their shape and encourage growth - just leave at least 2/3 of the original plant intact so it'll have enough surface area to absorb sunlight. Pinch (aka. deadhead) faded flowers regularly to encourage more blooms on annual plants. Keep in mind that every plant is different. Take some time to read up on your plants and learn as much as you can about their individual needs. A little time spent reading and planning now can save you a lot of time and disappointment later.

Source:Morning Glory Flowers!

Essential Oils

By Francesca

My sister is obsessed with her home smelling clean. Every time she enters her home, her first comment is to ask if I can smell the horrible smell, but I never can. Now that I am a homeowner and I have a pet, I have been cursed with the same first comment as I enter my own home: "Can you get that horrible smell?"

If a product exists to make your home smell fresh, I have tried it. The only things that stop me from obsessing over bad smells are essential oils! My husband and I have even started to make our own. Here a few tips we have found in various books and forums about how to best use your own essential oils:

- Put a small dab of essential oil on your light bulb while it is cold, and when it heats up from use it will fill the air with a wonderful scent; I use this tip for the lamp by my bed!

- Dip some cotton wool balls in essential oils and put them in your drawers, but make sure they don't touch your clothes; I sit mine in a small opened box in the corner. Lavender will deter moths!

- Put some essential oils in your humidifier.

- Put six to eight drops in 600 ml of water in a fine spray bottle, and spray into the air as an air freshener and towards carpets and curtains. Do not spray onto velvet or silk, and avoid spraying directly onto wood.

- Clean your fridge with one drop of orange, mandarin, mint, lavender or lemon oil added to the final rinse water.

Sources: The Natural Family and A Guide to Natural Cleaning!

70 USES for Vinegar

Vinegar for personal care

Vinegar in the bath. Add one-half cup of vinegar or so to warm bath water when bathing and get double benefits: softer skin and a cleaner bathtub with less work!
Hair conditioner. Vinegar makes a simple, inexpensive conditioner for your hair and helps remove the sticky stuff shampoo can leave behind. About a tablespoon will do it.
Dandruff treatment. Simply pour a few tablespoons of vinegar on your hair and massage into your scalp. Wait a few minutes, then rinse and wash hair like normal. Try this for a few days until you see results.
Weight loss. Vinegar naturally helps to remove fat from the body. Apple cider vinegar is especially good for this. Drink some in a glass of water a few times a day. Add a little lemon or honey for a nicer flavor. This will also help reduce your appetite.
Dry skin repair. Smooth a little vinegar on cracked, dried skin to help it heal.
Clean dentures. Soak dentures overnight in Heinz White Vinegar, then brush away tartar with a toothbrush.
Facial spritzer. Mix apple cider vinegar and water in a 1:1 ratio in a spray bottle. Refreshing!
Hair cleanser. Use one cup of vinegar in some warm water to rinse your hair after you shampoo. Vinegar adds highlights to brunette hair, restores the acid mantle and removes soap film and sebum oil.

Vinegar for cleaning

Glass cleaner. Mixed with water or simply sprayed full strength on glass and mirrors, vinegar does a great job quickly and easily. Spray on and wipe windows dry with crumpled-up newspapers, and watch your windows sparkle.
Car cleaner. Use vinegar full strength to polish car chrome with a cloth, and see it shine! Use it on your car's windshield and windows, too.
Clean drinking glasses. Soak cloudy drinking glasses in warmed white vinegar for a few hours to remove the film. Simply wipe clean, rinse and dry.
Clean the washer. Periodically run a gallon of distilled vinegar through your washing machine to clean it thoroughly, get rid of soap scum and clear out the hoses. Run the machine through the warm water wash cycle empty and then add the vinegar during the rinse cycle.
Furniture polish. Make your own furniture polish with one part vinegar and three parts lemon oil or olive oil.
Remove price tags or stickers. Paint stickers with several coats of vinegar and let it soak in. Depending what you are removing them off, most will slide off easily but some may require a little heavier rubbing.
Clean the iron. Pour vinegar into your iron's water compartment and let the iron steam itself clean. Remember to flush it with water when you are done.
Clean paintbrushes. Simmer paint brushes in pure vinegar, then wash in hot soapy water.
Wash walls. Wipe down your walls with a vinegar-water mixture, which helps absorb odors and clean surfaces.
Remove spots from glass. Use a vinegar-soaked cloth to remove spots from glassware or crystal.
Unclog drains. Pour boiling white vinegar down clogged drains to remove the clog.

Clean jars. Remove odors and stains from jars by cleaning them out with vinegar.
Clean old lunchboxes. Soak a piece of bread in vinegar and let it sit in the lunchbox overnight.
Clean and deodorize the garbage disposal. Make vinegar ice cubes and feed them down the disposal. After grinding, run cold water.
Clean the tea pot. Boil a mixture of water and vinegar in the teapot. Wipe away the grime.
Clean the dishwasher. Run a cup of vinegar through the whole cycle once a month to reduce soap build-up on the inner mechanisms and on glassware.
Clean the microwave. Boil a solution of 1/4 cup of vinegar and 1 cup of water in the microwave. This mixture will loosen splattered-on food and deodorize the microwave.

Remove smoke smells from clothing. Add a cup of vinegar to a bath tub of hot water. Hang clothes above the steam.
Clean eyeglasses. Wipe each lens with a drop of vinegar.
Remove stains from furniture and upholstery. Remove stubborn stains from furniture upholstery and clothes. Apply Heinz White Vinegar directly to the stain, then wash as directed by the manufacturer's instructions.
Natural air deodorizer. Heinz Vinegar is a natural air freshener when sprayed in a room.

Remove rust. Soak the rusted tool, bolt or spigot overnight in undiluted Heinz White Vinegar.
Clean the toilet bowl. Pour in one cup of Heinz White Vinegar, let stand for five minutes and flush.
Brighten fabrics. Add 1/2 cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle.
Natural cleaning wipes. A cloth soaked with vinegar sanitizes kitchen counters, stove and bathroom surfaces. This is just as effective as antibacterial products and does not promote resistant strains of bacteria like commercial products can. This is also a cheaper and greener way to protect your loved ones.
Remove lint from laundry. Add 1/2 cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle.
Remove grease from suede. Dip a toothbrush in vinegar and gently brush over grease spot.
Remove perspiration stains from clothing. Apply one part vinegar to four parts water, then rinse.
Clean coffee or tea stains from china. A mixture of salt and vinegar will clean coffee and tea stains from chinaware.
Clean coffeepots and coffee makers. Vinegar can help to dissolve mineral deposits that collect in automatic drip coffee makers. Fill the reservoir with vinegar and run it through a brewing cycle. Rinse thoroughly with water when the cycle is finished.
Longer-lasting pantyhose. Add one tablespoon of vinegar to the rinse water when washing, and your pantyhose will last longer.

Vinegar for food and cooking

Cheese storage. Cheese will last longer if you store it in a vinegar-soaked cloth.
Whiter cauliflower. Add a teaspoon or so of white vinegar to your cooking water while cooking cauliflower. It will retain a

whiter color.
Stretch ketchup. Only have a little ketchup left in the bottle? Add a bit of vinegar and give it a good shake -- you'll have a bit more!
Boiling eggs. Add a bit of white vinegar to the water you're boiling your eggs in, and the shells won't crack.
Cooking cabbage. Add a bit of vinegar to the water you're cooking your cabbage in to remove that stinky cabbage smell.
Fluffier meringues. Add 1 teaspoon of vinegar for every three egg whites, and you'll have fluffier meringues.
Tenderize meat. Soak in vinegar overnight.
Unsticky rice. To cook rice without sticking, add a spoonful of vinegar.
Remove onion odors. Eliminate onion odor on your skin by rubbing vinegar on your fingers before and after slicing.
Disinfect and clean cutting boards. Clean and disinfect wood cutting boards by wiping with full-strength vinegar.
Make buttermilk. Add a tablespoon of vinegar to a cup of milk and let it stand five minutes to thicken.

Vinegar for gardening and yard care

Clean clay pots. Remove white salt buildup on old clay pots by soaking them in full-strength vinegar.
Kill grass. Undiluted vinegar kills grass between bricks and sidewalk cracks.
Kill weeds. Spray full strength on weeds, but be careful not to spray it on the surrounding grass because it will kill that, too.
Deter ants. Spray vinegar around doors, appliances and along other areas where ants are known to gather.
Keep cats away. Sprinkle vinegar in areas you don't want the cat walking, sleeping or scratching.
Freshen cut flowers. Add 2 tablespoons of vinegar and 1 teaspoon sugar for each quart of water.

Vinegar for health care

Soothe sore throats. Suffering from a sore throat? Mix a teaspoon of vinegar with a glass of water. Gargle with the mixture and then swallow.
Remove calluses. Try soaking your feet in a combination of white vinegar and warm water nightly, and watch your feet soften noticeably.
Sunburn and bee stings. Soak a washcloth in vinegar and gently apply it to sunburned skin for cool relief. Reapply as needed as it evaporates. Besides sunburn, vinegar also soothes the itch and irritation of bee stings.
Arthritis tonic. Take two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar in a glass of water several times a day.
Jellyfish stings. Dot the irritation with vinegar to relieve itching.
Sinus infections and head colds. Add 1/4 cup or more vinegar to the vaporizer.
Wart removal. Mix one part Heinz Apple Cider Vinegar to one part glycerin into a lotion, and apply daily to warts until they dissolve.
Soothe an upset stomach. Drink two teaspoons of Heinz Apple Cider Vinegar in one cup of water to soothe an upset stomach.
Mosquito bites. Use a cotton ball to dab mosquito and other bug bites with Heinz Vinegar straight from the bottle.

Vinegar for pets and animals

Pet drinking water. Add a teaspoon of vinegar to your pet's drinking water to encourage a shinier coat and reduce odor.
Remove skunk odor. Use vinegar straight to remove skunk odor from your pet's fur.
Stop your cat's scratching furniture. Sprinkle or spray vinegar on areas you don't want the cat scratching.
Fish bowl cleaner. Eliminate that ugly deposit in the gold fish tank by rubbing it with a cloth dipped in vinegar and rinsing well.
Remove pet stains from carpets. Blot up urine with a soft cloth, flush several times with lukewarm water, and then apply a mixture of equal parts vinegar and cool water. Blot up, rinse and let dry.

Source:Kitchen Crafts and more.

Make your own toothpaste

By Amanda

Since the first installment of this column, I've made a few changes to my "green" cleaning arsenal; the ammonia is long gone, vinegar is my new best friend, and my bathrooms just met Borax. I have an unopened box of washing soda on my shelf that I will add in eventually, but it remains a mystery to me at this point.

While ammonia may not leave a lingering odor, the fumes it produces while in use are enough to result in its expulsion. I noticed that I was getting a headache while cleaning my bathroom, even with the fan on, and decided to look for an alternative general cleanser. Meet vinegar.

Armed with a spray bottle of a 50/50 vinegar/water mix, I took on my old nemeses, bathroom germs and soap scum. The vinegar did the trick, and even doubled as a chrome and glass cleaner, leaving everything with a beautiful shine to it. Alas, the love affair lasted but a short time; my son complained enough about the smell that I had to admit the truth- vinegar stinks. It works wonders on glass and chrome, and is great for wiping down the kitchen; but in a small, poorly-ventilated area such as the bathroom, another solution was needed.

Just two hours ago I tried out borax for the first time; in a new spray bottle, I mixed a solution of 1 tablespoon borax and 1 quart of hot water. It worked well on soap scum, and though it wiped the chrome clean enough, it did not leave that sparkle that vinegar produced. There was no noticeable odor though, and that was my ultimate goal. I also used borax to disinfect the toilet bowl, as opposed to baking soda and vinegar; I flushed once to moisten the inside of the bowl and poured in ¼ cup borax. I scrubbed and let it sit for about thirty minutes, and it got the bowl quite a bit whiter than vinegar did. If you choose this option, make sure to close the lid to the bowl if you have beasties who like to drink from it; also, make sure you store your borax out of reach of children and pets!

The final change I've made was getting rid of dryer sheets; the result was clingy laundry, but we've all been able to live with that. The only problem that presented itself was solved just this afternoon- clingy towels with fuzz from the bathroom mats. I always wash them together after cleaning the bathroom, and the static produced without dryer sheets was driving me crazy. Today I added ¼ cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle of the washing machine, and voila! No static! There was also no discernable odor from the vinegar, so I will be trying this tip out with my regular laundry as well.

So to sum up this issue's cleaning finds:

· For bathrooms, use a spray bottle with 1 tablespoon borax dissolved in hot water; spray and wipe clean.

· For toilets, pour ¼ cup borax, scrub and let sit with lid shut.

· For glass and chrome, as well as sinks and kitchen countertops, use a spray bottle with 50/50 solution of vinegar and water.

·For linoleum floors, use ½ cup vinegar in 1 gallon of hot water (from last issue)

·To replace dryer sheets, add ¼ cup vinegar to rinse cycle of wash as you would liquid fabric softener

Green Cleaning *Part 2*

By Amanda

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Creating A First Aid Kit

By Buffy

Many of us do not have the extra money to buy a fancy first aid kit. By creating your own, you can customize it to your family's needs. Here are just a few tips for some should haves.

Paper and pencil

Acetaminophen and ibuprofen

Hydrocortizone cream

Antihistamine

Benzocaine spray

Scissors

Tweezers

Tongue depressor blades

Tube of petroleum jelly

Blanket

Water

Thermometer

Ice pack

Distilled Water

Sterile gloves

Hydrogen peroxide

Rubbing alcohol

Tissues, cotton swabs, and cotton balls

Antibiotic towelettes

Sterile dressings to stop bleeding

Adhesive bandages

Medical tape

Nonstick Sterile Pads

Ace bandages

Saftey Pins

Syrup of Ipecac-only when directed by the Poison Control Center

Keep emergency numbers inside and store out of the reach of children.

Sources: Dept of Safety AZ

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