

Help keep grandparent/grandchild relationship strong

NEWARK, Del. — The smell of fresh-baked cookies fills the house. Grandmother wipes her hands on her apron and calls grandfather in from the garden to see Susie and Tommy, who've stopped in for a visit on their way home from school. They all enjoy an afternoon snack together and discuss the events of their day.

This scene may come to mind when one thinks of an ideal grandparent/grandchild relationship. But it's often far from realistic. Many grandparents have full-time jobs, as do mothers and fathers, and children are often involved in after-school lessons and activities. Many grandparents don't even live in the same town as their grandchildren. The fact is, most grandparents and grandchildren don't have the luxury of enjoying each other's company on a regular basis. But that doesn't

mean they can't find other ways to express their affection.

"Grandparents may not be able to see their grandchildren as often as they'd like, for many reasons," says Sally Foulke, University of Delaware extension home economist. "It may be because of divorce, death, custody problems or simply geographic distance. In any case, the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is a special one with both parties suffering when contact is infrequent."

Whatever the cause of separation, the following tips from Foulke can help keep grandparent/grandchild relationships strong.

Storytelling can take place across the miles through cassette recordings. Stories taped while children are visiting will have the added bonus of their comments. If



Select foods from four food groups for good nutrition

PITTSBURGH — American ingenuity is alive and well in the health and nutrition field. Thanks to new research techniques and increasing interest in health and nutrition, we are benefiting from findings that will increase the quality and the length of human life. But meanwhile, back at reality, the ink is hardly dry on new research findings before there is someone with a pill or a book to meet our needs!

Take fiber as an example, something abundant in our food supply in whole grains and fruits and vegetables. By definition, dietary fiber is material from plant cells and is either non-digestible or only partially digested, making it available as roughage for the body. Fiber can help to prevent constipation and to promote a healthy digestive tract.

Cereals such as shredded wheat, bran or wheat flakes or even oatmeal are good starts for a fiber-full day. Add to this whole grain, breads and such foods as barley, buckwheat grouts, bulgar, cornmeal or even pasta, and you have more fiber.

In the fruit and vegetable case you find even more variety. From the common apple to the more exotic artichoke or garbanzo beans there is fiber to be found.

For years dietitians and nutritionists have been advising a minimum of four servings a day of a variety of fruits and vegetables and four servings a day of grain products. Obviously, the message is not as exciting to the public as the new rage of best sellers in the fiber line. Cereal that looks and often tastes like shredded bark; raw bran to sprinkle on everything that doesn't move; and of course books and articles to read. Suddenly fiber, something grandma called roughage, is "in" and anything "in" signals money to American ingenuity.

Another nutrient with the "in" appeal these days is calcium. It is as though osteoporosis was just discovered, something that is far from the truth. And good old American ingenuity is finding all sorts of easy ways for us to get calcium and ward off osteoporosis. Flour is soon to be fortified with calcium, extra calcium is being added to beverages and any product with calcium has a new

advertising pitch. Perhaps the height of the calcium fever is the announcement that a diet soda that has slipped in popularity may soon be laced with calcium.

Going back to the advice of dietitians and nutritionists, we all know that dairy products, certain green vegetables such as kale and broccoli, and soy products such as tofu are sources of calcium. In fact, one eight-ounce carton of milk on the cafeteria line offers almost 300 milligrams of calcium.

Considering that the daily need for calcium is between 800-1200 milligrams, one can be well on their way by following the advice of good nutrition. That is two servings of dairy products for young children and most adults, and three to four servings per day for teens and pregnant women. Add to this the calcium found in the other food groups and you have a start to building good bone health.

The issue with calcium, fiber and any number of other health and nutrition related "in" topics is not so easily solved solely by diet. It has been said that good nutrition will not ensure good health but bad nutrition will guarantee poor health. Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, most such health problems are complicated conditions. No one factor can cause, prevent or even cure.

Each of us brings our own genetic background, and we each have a past and present lifestyle that further complicate the picture. Smoking, lack of exercise,

weight control problems, failure to handle stress, as well as our food choices or "diet" are just some of the factors that contribute to health problems. Correcting diet can be a step to prevention but it is certainly not a guarantee.

Food is still the best source of nutrition. Isolating a single factor such as calcium, or fiber, doesn't allow the body the opportunity to have the mix of nutrients necessary for health. For example, calcium requires the presence of Vitamin D and the right acid/base mix for use in the body. Some of the calcium pills on the market offer neither. Fiber in large amounts can interfere with other nutrients or irritate the stomach or intestines.

One last word on experts. Freedom of speech and and of the press are treasured rights in our country. But, where does it say that what is said or printed has to be true? That means the public has to be wise decision makers. Remember to check the credentials of the "expert."

If you have a question go to a recognized expert such as the dietitians in local hospitals, nutritionists at the local Dairy & Nutrition Council or public health department or the dietetics staff at the local university.

And above all, remember that poor eating habits can't be counteracted by any known pill or by following the advice of the "expert" promising quick and easy results.

Recycling patterns saves on clothing costs

MEDIA — Tempted by fresh spring fabrics now in the shops? In need of new clothing for a new season but short on cash? With a little ingenuity, you really can sew and save, suggests Maryetta Dorricott, Delaware County Extension home economist.

For most of us, using a pattern is a one time thing, so putting that pattern to double use is a great way to extend your sewing dollar. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you go through your old patterns with an eye to using them again:

- Be aware of current fashion and your clothing needs for the spring and summer seasons.

- Sort through your patterns and evaluate each one according to its size, style, and whether or not it can be modified without major changes in construction.

- Save patterns that are still fashionable and suitable to your way of life. Remember that hem length changes, stylish accessories, and seasonal colors may do a lot to make a five-year-old pattern still useful.

- Save patterns that have details that are still appealing and flattering. You may love the skirt on a dress pattern but the bodice seems dated. Don't discard the whole thing. Use parts separately or combine them with elements of another pattern.

- Plan a new life for your discards. Exchange patterns with friends, sell them at a garage sale, or donate them to a local community group. But before you pass them along, be sure they're in good shape.

- Worn patterns can be strengthened by backing them with lightweight non-woven press-on interfacing fabric. You can also replace them by tracing onto tissue paper or a non-woven pattern duplicating material.

a story is taped in their absence, Foulke suggests grandparents personalize the tale by addressing children by name throughout the recording. These personalized stories can be played on long car trips, at naptime or whenever parents or grandparents are too busy to concentrate on reading aloud.

Give grandchildren a picture of grandparents to carry around, says the home economist. A photograph of grandparents holding a telephone can help little ones visualize them during a phone call.

When writing to grandchildren, consider using low-cost kiddie stationery made from leftover scraps of wrapping paper. Even children too young to read can enjoy hearts and x's drawn with

felt tip pen, Foulke says. A smiling face with glasses or another symbol can become grandma's or grandpa's special sign.

Older grandchildren enjoy receiving family news, says Foulke. Frequent one-page newsletters with copies going to all members of a far-flung family is a good way to keep in touch. Kids love to read about themselves and their cousins. And it's exciting for them to realize that grandparents admire their accomplishments enough to feature them in a family newsletter.

"Maybe all grandchildren can't eat homemade cookies and listen to tales of the 'good ole days' with their grandparents," says Foulke, "but it's possible to maintain a good relationship in many other creative ways."



BACK HOME

By Michelle S. Rodgers

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Travel Plans

Where will it be this week? That's the weekly question asked in regard to our vacation plans for the summer. It seems that we cannot come to some resolution of where we are going when! The only thing resolved so far is that we can't wait for a vacation.

Are you planning or looking forward to a vacation? Just the thought of enjoying some warm, sunny beach has helped to get me through the past two hectic and rainy weeks.

Vacations in my family involved big family planning. We spent three days camping with another family and those summer trips formed vacation memories that we still laugh about and enjoy. As young campers, one of the biggest thoughts on our minds was purchasing enough candy and gum to get us through the long ride to the campground. We'd enjoy packing up the pick-up truck with the gear and piling in for the ride.

Many people carry around the notion that young families must give up real vacations until the children are grown. Of course, some vacations are not at all suited to young children, but there are lots of vacations that can be fun and refreshing for the whole family.

Planning is the key word to a successful vacation. First consider where you are going. Will the sights be of interest to young children?

Preschoolers will not enjoy museums. School-age children may enjoy them as much as adults, but they tire much faster than adults. With very small children, it is best to keep some familiarity in the surroundings. A new bed, different water, and strange food all at the same time is quite a bit for any youngster to handle.

Decide how you'll get there. Long days of driving cross-country are hard on the patience of some adults and its worse for children. Planning stops at parks and playgrounds make the drive much easier.

Some airlines will make special provisions for babies and preschoolers if you notify them before take-off time. It's also a good idea to choose an uncrowded flight for children. That means more space for them to move around, and often more attention from the flight attendants. They may have special equipment, such as bassinets or youth seats, to help make your child more com-

fortable. It's no fun being sick on a vacation. If you take prescription medicines with you, be sure to have a copy of the prescription itself in case the medication has to be replaced. You may want to take along an anti-nauseant for those who have trouble with motion sickness.

If you have planned this far, your next stop is deciding what to take along. Check out the expected weather for your destination — don't assume that every place is warm in July! Plan what clothes everyone will need for the activities that you'll be doing. If you want to, run through your itinerary day by day to help you decide, then take just those things — don't over pack. I've learned that too much clothing just results in more to carry around and more wash upon return.

Children are naturally active, so you can expect them to be uncomfortable if they're asked to sit still for long periods of time. Allow them to take along a favorite toy or pack a variety of small surprise packages to be opened at intervals during the trip. However, make sure these surprise toys are compatible with the travel situation. Finger puppets, picture cards, washable foam blocks, or an art pad with washable crayons are good choices.

Well, most of your planning is finished to this point, but there is one more thing you can do to help your preschooler prepare for the trip. Talk about the trip casually several weeks before you go to get him used to the idea.

If he seems particularly anxious, you may want to sit down with him and explain, in as much detail as you can, what it will be like there and what you'll see. Young children are often concerned about things that adults take for granted. He may ask such things as, "Where will I sleep?, How will we know where we are?, Who will make supper for us?, or 'Will there be other children' there?" You should answer these questions to the best of your knowledge without making up answers. Although he probably cannot comprehend a time span in days or weeks, you may need to assure him that you will return home soon.

Careful advance preparations will make your vacation a lot more enjoyable for everyone. Now, if we just could agree on our vacation location we could get on with the planning!

