

# Consuming Thoughts

by  
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Did you know that good nutrition plays an important role in the prevention of lead poisoning. Although nutrition does not cure lead poisoning, studies show that poor eating habits can contribute to the absorption of lead.

Emphasis should be given to calcium, iron, vitamin C and fat, because of their absorption mechanisms. Another important recommendation is the consumption of regular meals and snacks.

**Calcium:** As we all know, calcium helps build and keep strong bones and teeth. If the diet is low in calcium the body takes calcium from reserves in the bones. When lead is absorbed it is primarily stored in

the bones. A diet adequate in calcium will prevent lead from being pulled into the bloodstream, where it can damage other sensitive organs. Good sources of calcium include milk, cheese, and yogurt.

**Iron:** The lower the iron content in the diet the more lead would be circulating and utilized in place of iron, which means that less hemoglobin is formed. It is important to assure that there is enough iron to compete with lead and prevent its absorption. Dietary iron can be found in lean red meat, dried fruit (prunes, raisins) spinach, poultry, and fish.

**Vitamin C:** The role of vitamin C is to help in the absorption of iron thus preventing ane-

mia. Eat plenty of citrus fruit, strawberries, and cantaloupes.

**Fat:** If the diet is high in fat more lead is absorbed since fat slows down the digestive system giving more change for lead to stay in the stomach and be absorbed. However, children younger than 2 years of age should not have low-fat diets. The recommendation is similar to the Recommended Dietary Guidelines and the Food Guide Pyramid which is to have only 30% of calories from fat or using it sparingly.

The three groups that are at the most risk for lead poisoning are children, pregnant women and lactating women. The absorption rate of lead for children is higher than for adults. It is recommended that lead screening should be done twice a year for children 6 months to 3 years and once a year for 3-6 year old children.

**Sources of Contamination:** Lead based paint is the most common source of lead. Before 1980 lead was added to paint. Old houses, cars, and toys may still have layers of lead-based paint. Leaded paint becomes a risk for children when they eat paint chips or when lead paint is deposited into soil around the home. Therefore it is important

to maintain clean floors and window surfaces and encourage children to wash their hands before eating.

Tap water can also be another source of lead. Although water levels of lead are low, it may be contaminated within the distribution system. It is recommended to let the water run for 3-5 minutes in the morning, before using it. This practice will help to eliminate the water stocked overnight that may have obtained lead from plumbing or solder used to connect water pipes.

Lead, soil and your vegetable garden - some soils can be contaminated with lead. This can occur next to older homes painted with lead based-paint, in orchards where lead-based insecticides were used, and near traffic corridors where lead was contained in automobile exhaust.

Gardeners should be aware that when grown in lead-tainted soils, leafy vegetables (lettuce, spinach, collard greens) and root vegetables (carrots, potatoes) can contain high levels of lead. Above-ground vegetables and fruits (tomatoes, strawberries) will contain lower amounts of lead.

For a free brochure called "Lead Poisoning and the Importance of a Proper Diet" call your local extension office or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Lead Poisoning, Fay B. Strickler, Berks County Cooperative Extension, 1238 County Welfare Road, Leesport, PA 19533-0520.

## Get MOOovin' with Milk!



### Brownie

(Continued from Page B12)

In microwave-safe container, melt 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips and 1 teaspoon shortening until melted and smooth. Place in Ziploc with small slit and drizzle over white chocolate dipped cookies.

Store in tightly covered container. Makes five dozen cookies.

**Lisa Jones' Pizza Brownies**  
6 tablespoons baking cocoa  
2 tablespoons oil  
2 ounces unsweetened chocolate squares  
1/2 cup butter  
2 cups sugar  
3 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 cup flour  
1/2 cup chocolate chips  
1/2 cup creamy peanut butter  
1-2 squares white chocolate

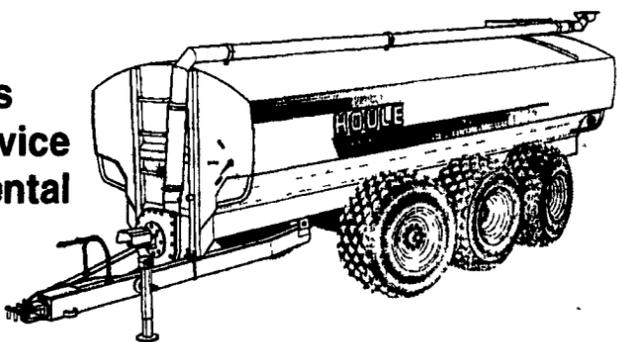
Heat oven to 350 degrees. Put chocolate squares and butter in large bowl and microwave on high until melted, about 2 minutes. Stir until chocolate is completely melted. Mix in cocoa and oil until blended. Stir sugar into chocolate until well mixed. Beat eggs in small bowl. Mix eggs and vanilla into chocolate mixture. Stir in flour until well blended.

Spread mixture into a 13x9-inch pan sprayed with cooking spray. Bake 30-35 minutes. Let cool slightly. Before totally cool, put chocolate chips on top, let sit until melted then spread over top of brownies. Let cool totally. When cool, spread peanut butter on top of brownies. Shred white chocolate on top of peanut butter for cheese.

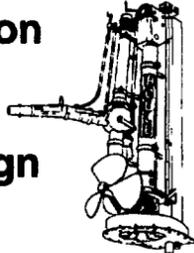
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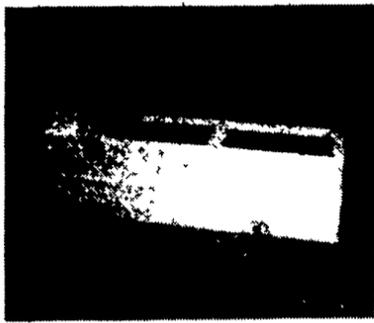
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