

Cook's Question

(Continued from Page B8)

ANSWER — A Pennsdale reader wanted instructions on canning potatoes. Thanks to Joyce Hoffman, East Berlin, for sending the following recipe.

Canned Potatoes

Wash, scrape, and rinse freshly dug potatoes. Dice or slice potatoes and pack into clean jars. Add water to rim and add ½ -teaspoon salt to each pint or 1 teaspoon to each quart. Put lid and band on and process 45 minutes in boiling water bath. Nellie Strite writes that she processes them for three hours.

These are great for soups, scalloped potatoes, or breakfast. Just rinse off when you open the jar and they are ready to use.

Correction — Nellie Strite said that the recipe for Christmas Pickles should have read that the pickles can be used two days after preparing and not 21 days. For those who missed the recipe, here is one from DeeDee Myer's, a well-known cook. Thanks to many other readers for sending recipes.

Christmas Pickles

- 3 cups vinegar
- 3 cups sugar
- ½ cup salt
- 1 tablespoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon whole celery seed
- 1 tablespoon mustard seed

Let set until sugar dissolves, slice, and layer into a gallon jar:
6 large cucumbers
3 onions
2 green peppers

Pour cold liquid over the pickles and put in refrigerator. It is not necessary to process them. They are called Christmas pickles because they keep well in the refrigerator until Christmas.

Here is an entirely different recipe which results in red pickles. Mary Davis, Ebensburg, writes that she has used the recipe for 10 years and people can not believe they are eating cucumbers.

Christmas Pickles

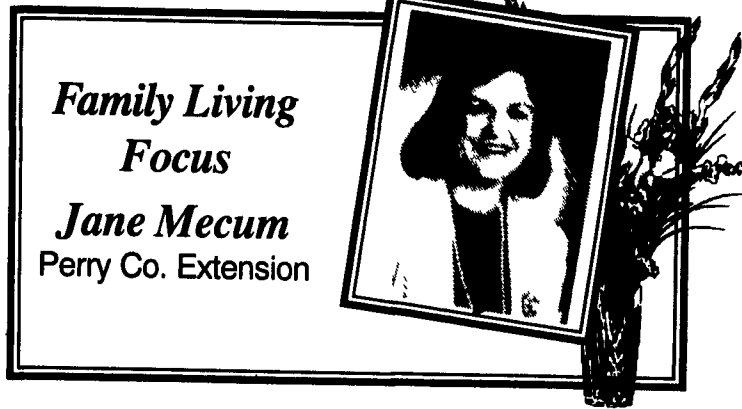
- 8 or 9 large, ripe cucumbers
- 7 cups white vinegar
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon oil of cloves
- ½ teaspoon oil of cloves
- 3 jars maraschino cherries

Peel cucumbers. Remove seeds, cut into 1-inch pieces. put into large enameled or stainless steel kettle. Add water to cover, simmer until barely tender, about 10 minutes. Remove, drain well, put into large glass or crockery bowl. Combine sugar, vinegar, oils, and bring to a boil.

Pour over cucumbers. Cover and let stand overnight at room temperature.

Second day: drain off syrup and bring to a boil. Pour over cucumbers and let stand overnight.

Third day: Put cucumbers and syrup in large kettle. Bring to a boil. Add 3 jars of maraschino cherries and their juice (add more if you want a redder color pickle or add red food coloring). Return to a boil. Ladle into hot pint jars, leaving ½ -inch headspace. Seal and process in boiling water canner for 10 minutes after water is boiling. Yields: 7 pints.



Brain Development: Parents And The Neuron Connection

When babies are born they appear so helpless, yet thousands of brain cells are already connected. These early connections involve all the basic body functions, recognition of sound, light, and touch, and the groundwork for the development of a physical, mental, and social human being.

Through new brain-imaging technology, scientists have given parents the opportunity to understand how the brain functions and how important a child's environment is especially during the first three years. We have only begun to understand the complexities of the growing brain but the research can begin to answer the age old question of nature versus nurture?

Only about 20 years ago, neuroscientists believed that the genes we are born with determine the structure of our brains and how individuals interact with the world. Today we know that heredity may determine the basic number of neurons (brain cells) children are

born with and their initial arrangement; however, this is merely a framework. A child's environment has enormous impact on how the circuits of the brain will be laid. Nature and nurture together — not either alone, determines the outcome of our lives.

When a child is born, the brain produces trillions more neurons and synapses (connections) than ultimately needed. Positive interactions with caring adults simulate a child's brain profoundly, causing synapses to grow and existing connections to be strengthened. Those being used become permanent fixtures; those that are not used tend to be eliminated. If a child receives little stimulation early on, synapses will not sprout or develop, and the brain will make fewer connections.

During the early months of life, the brain connections grow quickly in response to outside stimulation. Scientists have determined that the neurons for vision begin sending messages back and forth rapidly at two to four months;

therefore, it is important to provide vivid and varied images for young children. Language is also an important connection made during the first six months. Children will respond with equal interest to the sounds of all languages, but soon develop "perceptual maps" that direct them toward the sounds of the language they hear most frequently. This perceptual map eventually accounts for regional accents as the first sounds focus on vowels. Studies show talking to an infant increases the number of words that will be recognized and eventually come to understand.

A word of warning, research does not suggest drilling children in alphabet songs from different languages or using flash cards to promote rote memorization of letters and numbers. Children learn any language best in the context of meaningful, day-to-day interactions.

Research has also found that children who are emotionally neglected or abandoned early in life are more likely to have difficulty in learning. It is also suggested that these children may have more trouble experiencing empathy, attachment, and emotional expression in general. This emphasizes the importance of providing caring, interactive caregiving for young children.

While scientists have found that the early years may be even more important than anticipated, human development continues throughout the life span. Be aware and take advantage of these critical periods of development that nature has provided.

As parents, grandparents, and caring adults, it is critical that opportunities are created for children to reach their potential by helping them make all the connections possible. Take time to talk, listen, and be with children in a nurturing environment. These early connections have lasting impacts for everyone.

For more information on parenting young children, call your local county Cooperative Extension office.

ANSWER — A Shippensburg reader wanted a recipe for stromboli. Thanks to Elam Ebersol, Bird-in-Hand, for sending a recipe.

Stromboli

- 1 tablespoon yeast
- 1 cup warm water
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons oil
- 3 cups bread flour

Dissolve yeast in warm water, slowly add flour and remaining ingredients. Let rise for 30 minutes. Roll in three long strips, wide enough so you can overlap each side.

Pour pizza sauce in middle then layers slices of ham, cheese, bologna, and cheese again.

You can use any kind of meat. Or you can add peppers, onions, and mushrooms or whatever suits your taste.

Overlap one side then the other side and press ends to close. Rub with vegetable oil on top and sprinkle with seasoned salt. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until it tests done. Happy Eating!

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