

Growing Healthy Families

WIC Newsletter • Spring 2016

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VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH • 1-800-649-4857 • www.healthvermont.gov



Signs of spring!

What signs of spring do you see?

The saying goes that March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. In Vermont, we know that March can also come in muddy and go out with a splash of maple. After a long winter, kids are ready to shed some layers and get outside to play. What can you do with their pent up energy? Look for signs of spring!

Bring along a paper and marker to write down what you find. What can you and your child find that's a sign of spring? When you get home, your child can draw pictures of the favorite things you found on your hunt for signs of spring.

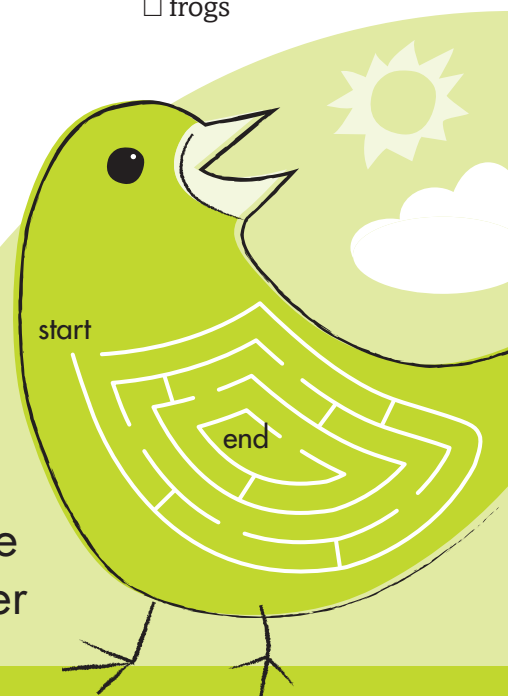
eWIC update

We have reached the end of our eWIC journey. All Vermont WIC families will be shopping for their WIC foods at the grocery store by May 1. Families who are already shopping for WIC foods are enjoying the increased flexibility and many more choices within each WIC food category.

See how many of the following you and your child can find...

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> melting snow and ice | <input type="checkbox"/> sound of birds singing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> maple sugaring | <input type="checkbox"/> dandelions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> caterpillars | <input type="checkbox"/> bird's eggs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bird's nest | <input type="checkbox"/> rain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ducklings | <input type="checkbox"/> frogs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> green grass | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> buds on trees | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> crocuses | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> daffodils | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> robins | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> puddles | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tulips | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mud | |

Puzzle
Corner





Play every day

Kids need to be active every day, all year round. This can be by simply going outside to play, helping out around the house, walking the dog, raking leaves or shoveling snow. Try to get outside to play every day and include a variety of activities in your daily routine. Children need 60 minutes or more each day of unstructured playtime, where they are free to be active. Just going outside is a great way to encourage this kind of play.

We all need to be active. Small amounts of physical activity throughout the day adds up, play several times each day to meet the goals for your child and for yourself too. Children like to be active, keep them moving as much as possible every day. Your child doesn't need to play for 60 minutes all at once — most young children do best with shorter periods of active play throughout the day.

Take advantage of your child's natural activity level by teaching him to help you inside or outside. Helping around the house teaches children responsibility and respect. Children like being helpful! At first it will take some effort on your part, but it will pay off in the long run. Helping around the house is a good alternative to watching TV. And keeping the house and yard picked up leaves a clear space for kids to play safely!



ChopChop magazine just for WIC!

The next time you are in the WIC office, ask for a copy of *ChopChop* magazine. This fun and colorful magazine is perfect for WIC families like yours. It is created by a non-profit organization whose mission is “to inspire kids to cook real food with their families.”

Check it out on the web:
www.chopchopmag.org

Curried Spinach Salad *ChopChop magazine*

Open your mind to this salad — even if the ingredients sound strange! The curry flavor of the dressing goes really well with the sweet fruit, and the sesame seeds make it just a little crunchy. Spinach is one of the very healthiest things you can eat, so be sure to try plenty of different recipes for it!

Serves 4

3 tablespoons vinegar (any kind is fine)
¼ cup olive, canola, or vegetable oil
½ teaspoon curry powder
½ teaspoon dijon mustard
½ teaspoon salt
6 cups flat-leaf or baby spinach, washed well
1 large apple, scrubbed or peeled, and diced
½ cup raisins
2 tablespoons lightly toasted sesame seeds

Put the vinegar, oil, curry powder, mustard, and salt in a bowl. Stir well with a fork or whisk. Add the spinach, apple, raisins, and sesame seeds and toss to combine. Serve right away.

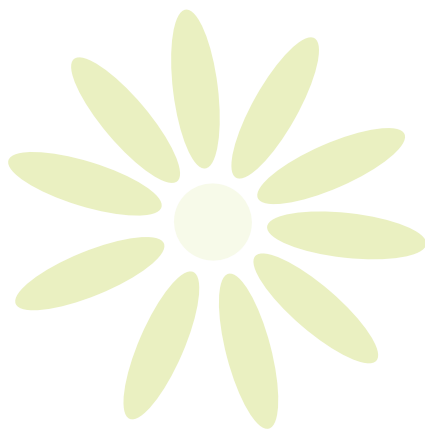
Nutrient analysis per serving: calories 258, protein 3 grams, carbohydrates 25 grams, fat 16 grams, sodium 370 grams, fiber 4 grams

Turn routine housework into a game

The helping activities listed below are perfect for your 3- to 5-year-old. Start with the easiest ones and work your way up to harder jobs.

Your child can help with indoor and outdoor helping activities such as:

- picking up toys
- making beds (pull up the covers, fluff the pillow)
- sorting, folding and carrying laundry
- help wash, dry and put away dishes, pots & pans
- clean floors (sweep, mop, vacuum)
- dust furniture
- carry and put away groceries
- help cook (wash fruit, make salad)
- set the table for family meals
- water house plants
- feed and care for pets
- sweep the porch
- pick up the yard
- rake leaves
- shovel snow
- hang out the laundry
- carry out the trash and recycling
- wash the car or brush off the snow
- stack firewood or pick up kindling
- walk the dog



Ask Dr. Lewis First

Q: How much screen time is too much?

Dr. First: Let me screen out the facts from fiction to provide some information.

To start — there is little good data published to date that shows watching television or using apps on a smart device will improve a child's development.

However, there is good data suggesting that children who spend more than two hours a day watching television or using a smart device like a computer, phone or tablet to play games and do other online activities, have an increased chance of becoming overweight and obese. Why? Because children who sit watching programs or playing online games are too sedentary and don't get the physical activity they need. They are also snacking (often on unhealthy foods) while sitting, and being exposed to advertisements for unhealthy products that encourage them to eat even more of these unhealthy products.

Thus, the current policy of the American Academy of Pediatrics is for infants or toddlers under 2 years of age to not have any exposure to screen time whatsoever, and then to limit screen time for other than school work to *less than* two hours a day for children over two. This policy sounds simple enough but may be hard to implement. Here are some tips I recommend:

- Like anything else in your young child's environment, if you can't keep your young child away from these devices (which would be ideal), set limits on their use.
- Choose quality programs, apps, and games with the help of organizations like Common Sense Media.
- Don't pop in a video for them to watch while you do something else, and don't use screen time as a "time-occupying pacifier." Screen time should never be used as a substitute for human interactive playtime.
- Promote family social interactions, bonding, and learning by being with your child while he or she watches television or uses an app.

Hopefully parents will use these tips so that we all do a better job of helping young children stay fit while their minds develop.

Lewis First is Chief of Pediatrics at Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care.

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Spring has returned.
The Earth is like a
child that knows
poems.

~Rainer Maria Rilke

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