

April 2014

Kindred *Spirits*

Join national screen free week

Rethink screen time in your household

Reducing screen time

Ways to reduce screen time:

- ◆ Set a two hour per day limit.
- ◆ Take television sets out of bedrooms.
- ◆ Turn off the TV during meals.
- ◆ Plan TV viewing rather than just automatically turning it on every night after dinner.

Enjoy these activities with your grandchildren instead of screen time:

- ◆ Create crafts.
- ◆ Get involved in school or community activities.
- ◆ Play board games, cards or other games.
- ◆ Read a book.
- ◆ Walk your dog.
- ◆ Jump rope or skate.
- ◆ Bake cookies for a neighbor or friend.
- ◆ Play dress up.

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National Screen Free Week is May 5-11. During this week, grandparents, parents, children, teachers and others across the country turn off screen media — including TVs, video games, computers, tablets, e-readers, cellphones and smartphones — and get in touch with being unplugged.

What a great time to take a look at your family's screen habits. How many hours are spent in front of a TV or computer screen compared to other activities?

According to Linda Rellergert, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, "Research clearly shows that when children and teens watch more than an hour or two of television per day they are more likely to make unhealthy food choices, be less physically active and spend less time working on school assignments."

Here are some points about TV watching that may cause you to rethink screen time in your household.

- There is no waking activity that people do that burns fewer calories than watching TV. This includes other sedentary activities like playing video games, reading, talking on the phone.
- The typical youth sees 40,000 advertisements per year on TV alone. Many of them are for

foods which are high in calories and low in nutrients like sugary cereals, snack foods and chips.

- The more TV watched, the more likely youth are to snack between meals, eat foods advertised on TV, and try to influence what foods their parents buy.
- Children who watch TV at mealtimes eat far fewer fruits and vegetables.
- Having a television turned on while sleeping, even if the sound is muted, disrupts healthy sleep patterns and contributes to chronic fatigue.
- Students who watch more than 1-2 hours of television per day are less interested in school activities and have lower academic scores.
- The average American child sees 200,000 violent acts on television by the time she or he reaches 18.
- Youth who see violence on television are more likely to find violence as an acceptable way to solve problems.

Play More, Watch Less has more than 55 creative, fun ideas for activities families can do instead of sitting in front of a screen. Check it out for ideas for young children, teenagers and adults at <http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/>

Pears + Kids = Delicious Health!

A healthy recipe for fun

Pears are great food choice for your grandchild's health. Pears provide vitamin C, fiber, and are cholesterol and fat-free.

According to Susan Mills-Gray, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, "Vitamin C helps your grandchild build strong muscles, blood vessels, bones, and teeth." Fiber reduces constipation, which is a struggle for many children; fiber also reduces cholesterol and reduce risk for heart disease.

Nutrient-dense pears are an

excellent choice when it comes to weight management. Pears provide fiber and water, which help fill up small tummies. Pears are also portion-controlled and portable, for a healthy snack. Most kids love to eat, but maybe they don't love to eat the healthiest foods.

Adding pears to their favorite dishes or as a snack will increase the nutrition content of their diet without a lot of added time or trouble! Kids also love to help select food and prepare recipes with you, so include them in the kitchen and watch as they eat up their creations.

Ingredients:

- 1 pear half
- 2 raisins
- Maraschino cherry or cinnamon candy
- 2 slivered almond pieces
- 1 small scoop low fat cottage cheese
- Lettuce leaf

Directions:

1. Place pear half, cut side down, on individual lettuce leaf.
2. Making small slits to help hold in place, add red hot for nose, raisin halves for eyes, almonds for ears, and cottage cheese for tail.

(Source: USA Pears, Pinterest, USDA)

Cottontail Bunny Salad

Non-candy Easter treats for kids

With Easter just around the corner, thoughts are turning towards spring, bunnies, and chocolate. According to Saralee Jamieson, MU Extension human development specialist, "Since my childhood, we've gone from sugar laden treats to more healthy choices."

Replace the candy without replacing the fun! These candy-free Easter treats will make your kids smile, and you can relax knowing that you are keeping the extra sugar out of their Easter baskets.

Fill plastic eggs with small toys, trinkets, dried fruit, coins, stickers, cute easers, and small whistles. Make a goldfish carrot by stuffing clear, disposal decorating cake bags with orange snack crackers, tie off the bag with green ribbon and you have a carrot-shaped treat.

Of course, Easter means more than bunnies and sweets.

University of Missouri Extension

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