



OUTREACH & EXTENSION  
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI  
LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Vol. 4, No. 4 • July/August 2002

# Life Times

*A bimonthly publication to enhance the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities*

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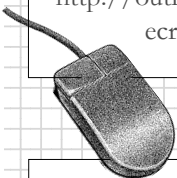
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### We're on the Web!

This *LifeTimes* newsletter is now available on the Web at <http://outreach.missouri.edu/ecregion/lifetimes/>



### Extension's Mission

*University Outreach and Extension serves Missouri by extending research-based knowledge and high-quality educational programs to address the high-priority needs of citizens at the local level.*

## Plan ahead for back-to-school shopping

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It's that time of year when we head to the malls to prepare for back-to-school shopping. Before taking the shopping trips, parents should have a frank discussion about budget limitations with their children.

Some of my past experiences while shopping with my own children when they were in their teens have given me some insight into avoiding embarrassing situations. I have witnessed some serious arguments between parents and their children when parents could not afford a popular brand of clothing or tennis shoes.

To avoid this kind of unpleasant situation, parents should visit with the children before the shopping trip to make them aware of financial limitations for the item they are planning to purchase. Tell the child you can afford to spend \$50 to \$65 on the purchase of the shoes and no more.

Be prepared to answer additional questions about the family spending plan. Many children have no idea what is happening in the area of family financial management. Being willing to share specifically about money can help to avoid conflict and make the shopping day into a fun event for the entire family.

Before heading for the mall to shop for school clothing, here are some other suggestions:

- **Inventory the present wardrobe.** Clean drawers and closets to see what is outgrown.
- **Decide on a price limit for each item.** This saves time and helps to cut down on overspending.
- **Make sure markdowns are real.** Know merchandise, quality and prices.

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## Summertime

### Try Spinach Salad!

This salad from our diabetes education program explodes with color and phytochemicals. The dressing is used with a light hand to keep fat calories low. Artificial sweeteners are called for, but 4 teaspoons sugar could be substituted.

#### Dressing

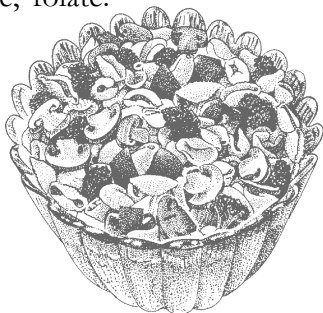
(shake together in a pint jar):

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 2 packages artificial sweetener

#### Salad

- 2 cups cooked, cooled bowtie or rotini noodles
  - 2 cups torn raw spinach
  - ¾ cup sliced celery
  - ¼ cup sliced green onions
  - 1 medium tomato or 1 cup cherry tomatoes
  - 1 cup seedless red grapes
  - ½ cup raw snow peas
  - ½ pound cooked shrimp or 8 oz. grilled chicken breast, cooled and chopped
- Serves 4.

Each serving: 276 calories, 32 g carbohydrate, 8.5 g fat, 18 g protein, 85 mg sodium. Excellent source of vitamin C, beta-carotene, folate.



## Paint your plate with a rainbow of fruits and vegetables

Cynthia Fauser, MS, RD, LD

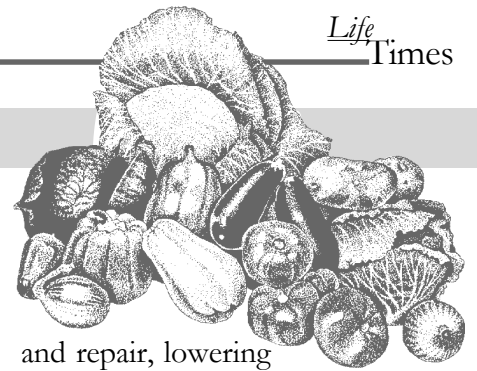
Nutrition Specialist

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We hear daily about foods we should avoid or eat less, but the message about fruits and vegetables is consistent. “Enjoy eating more fruits and vegetables every day - five to nine servings a day is protective of good health.”

We are beginning to hear the message. More people report getting at least the minimum five a day, but room for improvement remains. Much of our consumption is of the least protective, least pigmented varieties, such as iceberg lettuce, bananas and white potatoes. While there is nothing wrong with these choices, they lack the protective punch of their more colorful cousins, such as darker leaf lettuces or sweet potatoes.

The pigments that make brightly colored produce so attractive are just the most visible members of a large collection of “phytochemicals.” They will not be found in any Recommended Dietary Allowances or nutrition facts labels, but their colors give them away. Take advantage of summer’s bounty and choose from the full spectrum of the rainbow. Phytochemicals work best together helping cells regenerate



and repair, lowering risk of many cancers and heart disease. Aim to include at least one colorful fruit or vegetable in each meal or snack. The more variety the better!

Here is a color-by-color commentary of health benefits. Be sure to eat fruits and veggies both raw and cooked. Heating destroys some phytochemicals but releases others in a more available form.

#### Deep yellow or orange.

Carrots, winter squash, sweet potatoes, apricots, mangoes, cantaloupe are good sources of beta-carotene, a carotenoid that is converted to vitamin A in the body. The deeper the color, the higher the level of beta carotene, which fights cancer, helps with vision, and supports the immune system.

**Red.** Lycopene is the carotenoid that makes tomatoes red and appears in lesser amounts in watermelon, guava and pink grapefruit. Cooked tomatoes provide more lycopene than raw. Lycopene may be the most potent antioxidant of all the carotenoids. It has been linked by many studies to reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and many types of cancer, especially prostate, lung and stomach.

Red peppers are rich in beta-carotene. Red grapes supply lutein and zeaxanthin, two carotenoids that help protect our eyes from macular degeneration.

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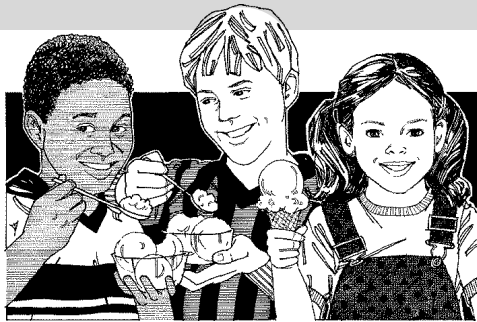
## Home alone: Preparing children for self-care

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Now that school has let out for the summer, parents and children need to make plans and help develop "home alone" skills. The *Home Alone* movies portrayed a young boy's adventures and misadventures while he was home alone. There are many situations when parents leave their children home alone in a self-care situation.

Working parents may leave their school-age children home alone before and after school because of a lack of supervisory programs or childcare facilities. Research shows children also may be left home alone when parents are coping with an emergency situation or doing routine errands. These home-alone and on-your-own situations do not have to be misadventures for the school-age child.

Preparing your child for self-care will require careful planning and practice. Unfortunately, no magic age exists when children develop the maturity and good sense they need to stay alone. Many children prove their ability to care for themselves between the ages of 10 and 12 years. Other children may need more time to prepare. Parents and



children need to work together to form a specific plan of action for the child when home alone.

### A plan should consist of the following:

- An evaluation of the child's readiness for self-care
- A discussion of fears and concerns of both parent and child
- A clear set of house rules and responsibilities
- Preparation of all family members for handling emergencies

**How can you tell if your child is ready?** First your child should indicate a desire and willingness to stay alone. Children who are easily frightened or who do not want to stay alone are probably not ready for this responsibility. In addition, children should accept responsibility, be aware of the needs of others, and be able to consider alternatives and make decisions on their own.

### These are some of the skills children will need to care for themselves.

Do your children:

- Get ready for school on time?
- Solve problems on their own?
- Complete homework and household chores with a minimum of supervision?

- Remember to tell you where they are going and when they will be back?

You and your child may decide to start with short periods of time, such as 30 minutes to an hour, while you run an errand. Next, build up to staying home alone after school for a few hours, and eventually staying home alone for longer periods of time. Your child should be able to talk easily with you about interests and concerns. Good parent-child communication ensures that any fears or problems that arise because of staying alone can be discussed and dealt with quickly.

### Several other factors must also enter into your decision:

- What is your neighborhood like?
- Are there other adults available nearby?
- How long will your child be alone?

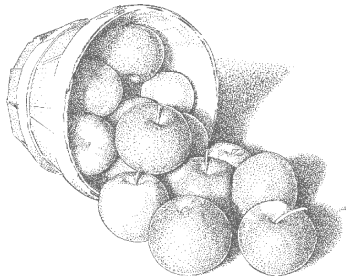
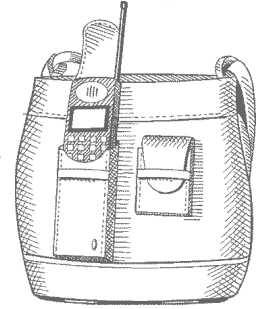
If your neighborhood is unsafe, or if there are no adults nearby to call in case of an emergency, or if your child must remain alone for a very long time, it is best to continue to use some other form of child care, even if your child seems ready to stay alone.

When children are prepared for the self-care situation, they are at less risk of a misadventure. The better prepared for being home alone and the more successful experiences of being home alone, the better children will feel about themselves.

*(continued on page 4)*

# Plan ahead for back-to-school shopping (continued from page 1)

- **Look for signs of good workmanship.** (Double stitching, reinforced knees.)
- **Consider the cost of upkeep as a part of the garment price.** Dry cleaning significantly increases the cost of the garment.
- **Shop in stores that have a reputation for good quality and fairness to customers.**
- **Measure the price against use.** Pay more for items that are used more frequently and less for occasional items.
- **Spend time comparing quality and price in different stores.** The best quality at your price is the best buy for you.
- **Buy less and wear it longer.** Natural and synthetic blend fibers wear longer and continue to look new.
- **Make repairs on the present wardrobe to help garments last longer.** Sew on buttons, repair ripped seams and replace zippers to add additional life to a garment.
- **Be alert to what is available and to trends in style.** A few garments of the “latest style” can add pizzazz to a tired wardrobe.



## Paint your plate with a rainbow of fruits and vegetables

*(continued from page 2)*

**Dark green.** Dark green vegetables, such as broccoli, leaf lettuce, spinach, brussel sprouts, and green peas, are excellent sources of lutein and zeaxanthin, as well as folate. Folate helps prevent neural tube birth defects and is also pro-

tective against heart attack, stroke and cancer. Many dark green vegetables are also good sources of beta-carotene.

**Purple.** Anthocyanin pigments color the dark red, purple or blue fruits and vegetables, such as eggplant, red potatoes, blueberries, beets, raspberries and red grapes. Members of a larger group of powerful antioxidants known as “flavonoids,” anthocyanins seem to reduce heart disease risk.

**White.** Strong-flavored white vegetables like onions, scallions, leeks and garlic contain sulfides. There is evidence they may suppress tumor growth and fight bacteria.

## Home alone: Preparing children for self-care



*(continued from page 3)*

If you would like more information on this topic, *At Home Alone* (MP 636) is a home study guide that families may use to prepare their children for self care. This publication is available at your local University Outreach and Extension Center for a small fee. Or you may order online (<http://muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/miscpubs/mp0636.htm>).

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