

# Celebrate! *A Healthy You*

*A newsletter devoted to helping individuals of every size live in a healthy body*

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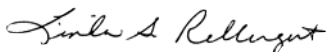
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## Inside

The Perfect Body—Who Decides?.....	2
Timely Tip .....	2
Activity Suggestions for April.....	3
Menu of the Month.....	4
Words to Consider.....	4

### *Celebrate! A Healthy You*

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## Home Cooking: Recipe for Healthy Eating

A major goal for this newsletter is to help people experience healthful and pleasurable eating. One of the best ways to achieve this goal is to cook and serve family meals.

Unfortunately, both cooking and eating family meals are in decline today in America. Some of the reasons given for this trend are time pressures, lack of skills or lack of interest. This article sets out some arguments in favor of getting reacquainted with the kitchen as well as the pleasures of healthy eating.

Let's start by dispelling some myths that keep people from giving home cooking a try.

### **Myth #1 Good taste is incompatible with good nutrition**

Nutritious foods do taste good—honest! If your experience with good nutrition has been limited to institutional cooking like that in schools or hospitals, reconsider please! Or, if you were forced as a child to eat your vegetables before dessert, cast aside those old feelings and give good nutrition a second chance. Fresh vegetables, served either raw or lightly cooked, properly seasoned with (gasp!) a little salt, pepper and (yikes!) butter are truly delicious. Ripe, luscious just picked fruit served on top of ice cream or pound cake—what could be better? Good food properly

prepared is tasty as well as good for you. Moderate portions of ice cream or cake as well as seasonings like salt and butter, can fit into healthy eating.

### **Myth #2 Cooking is too time consuming**

Buying, cooking and cleaning up meals does take time, but so does driving to a restaurant, waiting to order and then more waiting for your food. Many recipes have been developed using few ingredients to speed preparation and ease clean up. Plus, family meals need not be gourmet affairs. Simple soup and salad meals can be on the table in half the time it takes to get take-out. Small appliances like slow cookers, pressure saucepans and microwave ovens help cooks shorten actual hands-on cooking time. And, as with other skills, the more you do it, the better and faster you become.

Consider, too, that while preparing family meals you also have an opportunity to spend quality time with your children. While teaching them about nutrition and food preparation you are showing them that you care about them and their health. Share the work with other family members. Even very young children can help set the table,

*Continued on page 3*

## The “Perfect” Body— Who Decides?

Many people seem to have an idea or image in their minds of the “perfect” body. That image might generally be described as thin but large breasted for women. For men, the perfect body has extremely well-defined muscles with very little fat. Where has this image come from? Why is this the image of perfection against which we are to judge our own body and the body of others? Why do some of us feel compelled to compare ourselves to this image of perfection?

These are complex issues with no easy answers. Here are some thoughts and observations from a variety of sources.

- ◆ Desiring what is rare or unusual seems to be a human trait. In cultures and times of food scarcity, plumpness was desirable. For example, artwork from the 1600’s depicted the human form as soft, curvy, even fleshy but most people struggled to get enough food to survive. Or, consider that a number of female movie stars in the post-WWII era like Marilyn Monroe had voluptuous figures. Perhaps some of their popularity was a reaction to wartime deprivations. Today in mainstream America, food is cheap and plentiful, and the average person is heavier. At the same time, models and media stars are thinner. Compare Marilyn Monroe’s size 12 figure with Jennifer Aniston’s size 0 or 2.
- ◆ Advertising is so ubiquitous that many of us are not conscious of ads or consider the effect that advertising has on us beyond encouraging us to buy. Advertising promotes many of the ideas we hold about how we should live and what our lives should be like as well as how we should look. Advertisements are designed to make us believe that we will be happy, that every dream will be fulfilled if we buy their products. The power of advertising dollars is great in our consumer society.

Why do we allow physical appearance to be more important than other aspects of character and personality? We do not need to succumb to this way of thinking. Kathy Kater, author of [Real Kids Come In All Sizes](#), writes “Maintain your integrity as a human being. In spite of advertisements seducing you to believe that (image is everything,) NEVER forget that how you look is only one part of who you are. Develop a sense of identity based on all the many things you can do, the values you believe in, and the person your are deep inside.”



## Timely Tip #13

### Reap the Benefits of Gardening

This month’s Timely Tip comes from the Spring 2005 edition of the American Institute for Cancer Research Newsletter.

“Gardening is an ideal form of exercise because it combines all three types of physical activity—strength, endurance and flexibility. Because gardening is a weight-bearing exercise, it can help build the strong bones and muscles needed to combat osteoporosis. Pushing a wheelbarrow, raking leaves, or carrying bags of soil builds strength and endurance. Kneeling, twisting and reaching can improve both balance and flexibility.

Turn your weekly [gardening] chores into an exercise routine by stepping up the pace. Instead of puttering around, work at a steady, constant speed. Turn off your leaf blower and rake leaves the old-fashioned way. Use manual clippers, trimmers and lawnmowers if possible.

Create a regular garden exercise routine. Rather than saving up your yard work for one marathon weekend session, try to schedule at least 30-60 minutes of gardening two or three times per week. Be sure to change positions every 10 minutes or so to avoid overusing a particular muscle group.

Take extra precautions: sit on a portable stool, kneel on a cushion, wear a mask in dusty areas and use long handled tools if you have trouble bending.”

Continued from page 1

tear lettuce for a salad and wash fruits and vegetables.

### Myth #3 Cooking is boring.

Cooking can be creative and enjoyable. Try watching some of the cooking shows on TV to see why people like to cook. Instead of tackling an entire meal, buy some prepared foods and just fix the salad or vegetable to go with them. Play some upbeat music while you cook to liven up the kitchen. Be adventuresome and try recipes for exotic foods you've sampled on vacation. Form a cooking club with other parents or friends to make cooking a more social event. The March 2005 issue of Better Homes and Gardens magazine has recipes and advice to get you started.

### Myth #4 Cooking for just one or two people is too much trouble.

Good nutrition and good tasting food are essential for the health of all. Consider some of the advantages of cooking for one or two. No need to cater to the likes and

dislikes of others. You can fix whatever you like, however you like it. More expensive foods that might be out of the question for a larger family can fit into the food budget at least occasionally. No need to cook as often—just freeze leftovers in meal-size portions to serve later.

If you still need more reasons to give cooking a whirl, consider these arguments:

- ◆ Home prepared food is likely to taste better than restaurant or packaged meals. When you cook, you control the choice of recipe, the amount and kind of seasonings and quality of ingredients.
- ◆ Home prepared foods are likely to be more nutritious for the same reasons. You can use less salt and more herbs or lower fat ingredients. You can add nutrition boosters like more meat and vegetables, and whole grains.
- ◆ Home prepared meals are likely to be more varied. Even

if you eat Mexican one night, Italian another, Chinese a third, and so on, the possibilities for meals cooked at home are endless. Restaurant menus vary little from season to season or year to year.

- ◆ Home prepared meals are less expensive than eating out. The biggest expense for fast food and other restaurants are the people who work there. By supplying the labor—yours and other family members—you cut food costs dramatically.

For more ideas or inspiration to get you cooking, visit your local library to look at cookbooks and magazines for new recipes. Alice Henneman, an Extension Educator in Lincoln, Nebraska has a wonderful web site loaded with ideas and helps for home cooks. Check out Cook It Quick at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq.htm>. Local newspapers and other newsletters are another source of cooking inspiration, as are commodity groups, grocery stores and other Internet sites. Bon Appetit!

## Activity Suggestions for April



**Join a team!** Perhaps your church or employer sponsors a softball team. This year join the fun and sign up to play. You'll make some new friends, get some exercise and have a lot of fun.



Go for a **wildflower walk** at any state park or a county park with walking trails. If you take along a copy of Missouri Wildflowers (available for a small charge from MO Department of Conservation at Busch Wildlife or Powder Valley Nature Center—also good places to find wildflowers) you'll be able to identify the blooms you see. Keep a list of the flowers you see along with where and when you walk to compare with sightings on next year's walk.



**Celebrate Earth Day.** Get outdoors and do something good for the environment, whether as simple as picking up trash in your neighborhood or participating in a community event. In the St. Charles area, check out Earth Day Extravaganza, Wednesday, April 20, 10 AM – 1 PM in front of the Executive Office Building, 100 N. Third. There will be exhibits, food and free giveaways.

## Menu of the Month

With more daylight hours, milder temperatures and welcome sunshine, we want to spend as many of our waking hours outdoors as possible in April. Quick and easy dinner menus help us get a tasty, healthy meal on the table in minutes. **Easy Calzones** are hearty and include lots of yummy vegetables. This recipe makes use of some of the time saving ingredients featured in February's issue of Celebrate. Pick up a bag of salad to toss with reduced-fat dressing and a container of blueberries to layer with flavored yogurt for dessert to complete the meal. Why not get out the patio or deck furniture and dine al fresco so not a minute of precious springtime is wasted indoors?

### Easy Calzones

8 oz. chicken or turkey sausage  
 ½ cup chopped green or red pepper  
 1 ½ cup thinly sliced mushrooms  
 Cooking spray  
 4 9-inch flour tortillas, preferably whole wheat  
 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese  
 1 cup prepared spaghetti or pizza sauce



Brown crumbled chicken or turkey sausage, green pepper and mushrooms.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 425°F. Lightly spray baking sheet(s) with cooking spray. Place tortillas in single layer on prepared baking sheet(s). Divide mozzarella evenly among tortillas, making sure to get cheese to the edge. Bake at 425°F until cheese melts.

Portion meat-vegetable mixture onto tortillas and fold in half forming a calzone. Using a fork, crimp edges together. Bake until crisp, about 5 to 7 minutes. Top with prepared spaghetti or pizza sauce.

Makes 4 servings. Nutrition information per serving: 374 calories, 22.5g protein, 29g carbohydrate, 17.6g fat, 221mg calcium, 1101mg sodium, 92IU vitamin A.



### Words to Consider

“Life is a magic vase filled to the brim, so made that you cannot dip from it nor draw from it; but it overflows into the hand that drops treasures into it. Drop in malice and it overflows hate; drop in charity and it overflows love.”— John Ruskin

“Health, happiness and success depend upon the fighting spirit of each person. The big thing is not what happens to us in life - but what we do about what happens to us.” — George Allen

“Get well cards have become so humorous that if you don't get sick you're missing half the fun.” -Flip Wilson

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