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EXTENSION

Family Matters

Improving Health Together

**December 2019
Newsletter**

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Play and Move More

*By Glenda Wentworth, Family & Consumer Science Extension Agent,
Eagle County*



Living an active lifestyle, including regular play and movement provides many health benefits for your children. Children are naturally active; they love to play and move. Yet, young children are spending more time playing on electronic devices for entertainment and less time being physically active.

In today's technological world, it may be a challenge to find a balance between being active and allowing children to be entertained with electronic devices. In addition, family lives are often busy, making it hard to find time. However, with just a little planning and effort, parents or caregivers can make physical activity and health a priority and help encourage children to be active.

Children who play and move more are also likely to:

- Develop stronger, healthier bones, muscles and joints
- Develop a healthy heart and lungs
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Be more flexible
- Sleep well
- Develop brain function with vital connections, leading to improved concentration and thinking skills
- Improve mental health
- Have less symptoms of stress and anxiety
- Have a lower risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes and some kinds of cancer
- Perform better at school and have better school attendance
- Have an overall better outlook on life

The biggest takeaway is to move more and sit less.



Helping families increase physical activity and enjoy healthy foods ...

Let's Talk

Parents play a key role in encouraging their children to being active. First of all, parents need to be a role model. If you and your children are inactive now, start slowly. Gradually increase the amount of activity each week so your body adjusts to being more active without becoming discouraged by sore muscles.

Key messages:

- "Moving your body helps your body grow strong and healthy."
- "Moving your body makes your heart, muscles and bones stronger."



Tips for getting started:

- Find fun activities for the whole family. Activities don't always mean organized sports. The more your family enjoys time together, the more likely you all will remain physically active.
- Consider activities that are right for a child's age. A child will be frustrated if the activity is too much for them or they may be bored if the activity is not challenging enough.
- Plan and make physical activity a normal part of the daily routine.
- Turn off the TV, tablet, or phone. Limit the use of screen time. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 1 – 2 hours of total screen time. Screen time includes TV, videos, computers, and games.
- Plan activity breaks during commercials or after every 30 minutes of inactivity.
- Consider how you can be active in your own living room. Think about the activities such as dancing, walking on tiptoes, marching, yoga, aerobic routines, hide-n-seek, etc.

Recipes for Health

Chicken and Rice Soup (perfect for a cold winter day)

Recipe from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/chicken-and-rice-soup/>

Serves: 6

Serving Size: 1 ½ cups

Ingredients:

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|--|---|
| 1 pound chicken (boneless, skinless) | 4 cups reduced sodium chicken broth |
| ¾ cup rice (brown rice or wild rice) | 2 cups water |
| 1 cup celery, sliced (2 large stalks) | 1 teaspoon ground black pepper |
| 2 cups carrots, sliced (4 large carrots) | 1 ½ teaspoons garlic powder |
| 1 cup onions, diced (1 medium onion) | 4 ounces cream cheese (1/3 less fat Neufchatel) |



Instructions using a slow cooker:

1. Place chicken, rice, vegetables, chicken broth, water, ground black pepper, and garlic powder in a slow cooker. Stir.
2. Cook on high for 4 hours or low for 8 hours.
3. Remove the chicken from the slow cooker and shred with a fork. Return shredded chicken to the soup.
4. Cut the cream cheese into cubes and stir into the soup until melted.

Instructions using a stovetop:

1. Combine chicken, rice, vegetables, chicken broth, water, ground black pepper, and garlic powder in a large saucepan.
2. Cover and heat on high until boiling. Reduce heat to medium low and simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Continue with steps 3 and 4 as written above.

Options: Add vegetables such as chopped kale, frozen corn or peas. Add seasonings such as oregano and thyme.

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