

SPRING 2017



NEWSLETTER

IT'S SPRING! TIME TO GROW YOUR OWN GARDEN!

Spring is here and what better time of the year to start a garden? According to the latest research on gardening therapy, pleasant outdoor environments can reduce pain, anxiety, emotional stress and improve the overall feeling of wellness.

Gardening also benefits kids' health and well-being. It captures their interest, gives them a sense of pride, and introduces them to healthful foods. As early as age 3, kids can actively learn about science, math, and nutrition.

The many benefits associated with gardening include the following:

- **Boosts Self-Esteem/Sense of Control:** Knowing that your hard-work and commitment can create beautiful flowers, fruits and vegetables gives a sense of pride at your own ability.
- **Eases Stress/Improves Mood:** Focusing your mind on gardening rather than other stressors in your life helps to lower stress. Chopping and pruning can act as a great way to relieve pent-up anger and frustrations.
- **Speeds Recovery from Illness:** The sight of gardens has been shown to lower the level of pain and problems that occur after surgery.
- **Promotes Social Interaction:** Home gardens encourage the joining together of friends and neighbors; people share gardening tips as well as their flowers or produce.

- **Promotes Exercise:** Potting or planting seeds is a gentle exercise for all age groups! Weeding, digging, raking, and moving around the yard is a great aerobic exercise that can burn calories.
- **Provides Fruits & Vegetables:** Benefit your health in many ways.
- **Tips on how to start a produce garden,** visit <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/starting-your-vegetable-garden>



“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” - The World Health Organization (WHO)

KIDS DIY PROJECT: SIMPLE FRUIT GARDEN

Materials Needed:

- Seeds from small fruits (e.g. oranges, limes)
- Dish of water
- Plant pot
- Potting soil
- A sunny location

Steps:

1. Place 8-10 fruit seeds in a small dish with water and soak the seeds for 1-2 days.
2. Fill a plant pot with soil.
3. Bury the seeds about a ¼-inch deep in the soil, and slightly water.
4. Over the next few weeks, watch your seeds carefully. Keep the plant pot in a sunny place (6-8 hours of sunlight per day), and water the seeds every couple of days.
5. As the plants get bigger, you may want to separate them into bigger pots or plant them outdoors, if the weather is warm enough.



More Kids DIY gardening projects go to <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/5-do-it-yourself-gardening-projects-for-home-or-school>

CALM BREATHING TO KEEP STRESS AT BAY

Calm breathing or diaphragmatic breathing is a technique that helps slow down your breathing when feeling stressed or anxious. This type of breathing is done naturally by newborn infants, and practiced among singers, wind instrument players, and yoga practitioners.

In addition, calm breathing can soothe the mind and body in general. Many people use breathing exercises for anxiety, but calm breathing can decrease every day stress. Breathing exercises take practice, so the more you practice, the better you'll get, and the easier a time you'll have relaxing yourself when anxious or stressed. For more information on calm breathing, go to <https://www.anxietybc.com/sites/default/files/CalmBreathing.pdf>



SKIN SAFETY FOR SUNNY DAYS

Sun protection is essential to skin cancer prevention. About 90 percent of non-melanoma skin cancers and 65 percent of melanomas are associated with exposure to UV radiation from the sun. The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends a complete sun protection regimen that includes sunscreen, seeking shade, covering up with clothing including a wide-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.

Always look for the Skin Cancer Foundation's Seal of Recommendation, which is awarded to sun protective products that meet criteria for safety and effectiveness. For more information on sun safety visit <http://www.skincancer.org/prevention/sun-protection/sunscreen/sunscreen-safety>



HOW TO KEEP KIDS MOVING EVERYDAY

Regular physical activity is one of the most important activities you can do for your health and your kids' health. Daily exercise can help maintain healthy weight, reduce risk of many diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes. In addition, exercise strengthens your bones, improve your mental health, and improve your mood.

As caretakers, parents, and teachers you can shape your kids attitudes and behaviors toward physical activity. Each day we should encourage, our kids to get at least one hour each day of exercise, with activities ranging from informal, active play to formal organized sports.

The following are eight (8) tips to get your kids moving:

1. Be a positive example-- lead an active lifestyle yourself
2. Make physical activity a daily part of your family's routine
3. Offer toys and equipment that encourage physical activity
4. Expose kids to places where they can be active - public parks, community baseball fields or basketball courts
5. Encourage participation in sports and try new activities
6. Make physical activity fun and vary the recreational activity

7. Switch from watching TV after dinner to group play activity or games
8. Wear protective equipment-- helmets, wrist pads or knee pads and make sure the activity is age-appropriate.

For more information getting kids to move go to <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adding-pa/activities-children.html>



HOW MUCH SALT SHOULD WE EAT?

Sodium is a mineral regulated in the body by your kidneys. It helps control your body's fluid balance, sends nerve impulses and affects muscle function. Salt or table salt is a combination of sodium and chloride. About 1 teaspoon salt equals 2,300 mgs sodium. More than 75 percent of the sodium we eat comes from processed, prepackaged, and restaurant foods. The top six sodium sources in the U.S. diet are breads and rolls, cold cuts and cured meats, pizza, soup, sandwiches and poultry.



The American Heart Association recommends no more than 2,300 milligrams (mgs) a day and no more than 1,500 mg per day for adult African Americans, older adults and those diagnosed with high blood pressure. Cutting back salt daily can significantly improve blood pressure and heart health. To read more on salt, track your salt intake and learn about the American Heart Association salt reduction initiative, visit https://sodiumbreakup.heart.org/how_much_sodium_should_i_eat

YUMMY LOW FAT DAIRY DRINKS

Dairy foods provide an important source of nutrients for growing children. Milk and other dairy foods are great sources of protein, calcium and loaded with many minerals and vitamins for adults, seniors and athletes, too.



Adults and kids need three serving of dairy to meet their calcium need daily. One 8-ounce serving of milk provides up to 30% of your daily need for calcium. Calcium helps build and maintain strong bones and teeth, aids in body's growth and red blood cell production. A serving of milk provides 8 grams of protein, which builds and repairs muscle tissue.

Choose the 1% low fat, skim or fat free dairy in your recipes for dairy smoothies and beverages to reduce saturated fat in your healthy eating plan. Simply drink chilled low fat milk or try these tasty dairy drinks to help meet your daily calcium need. Go to <http://southeastdairy.org/category/recipes/beverages/> for more information.

Healthy Wellness Initiative
Alabama Department of Public Health
The RSA Tower
201 Monroe Street, Suite 710
Montgomery, AL 36130



NEWS AND EVENTS



21ST CENTURY AS CELEBRATING 2017 NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH (NNM)

Each March the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) focuses on the importance of informed food choices, and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. This year's theme was entitled, "Put Your Best Fork Forward." Participants from new grantee, Piney Chapel in Limestone County learned the importance of moving every day and going forward in eating colorful fruits and vegetables daily and putting their "forks up" for good nutrition!

OBESITY TASK FORCE MEETING

Network with AL partners across the state to combat obesity issues

June 6, 2017 Time: 9 AM – 12 PM

United Way of Central Alabama, Birmingham, AL

<http://adph.org/obesity>

ALABAMA EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

June 13 – 15, 2017

Hoover High School, Hoover, AL

<http://alex.state.al.us/aetc/>

MEGA CONFERENCE 2017

July 10 – 14, 2017

Mobile Convention Center, Mobile, AL

<https://www.alsde.edu/>

NATIONAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SCHOOL SPORT INSTITUTE 2017

Sherrill Center, UNC Asheville

July 24 – 26, 2017

Asheville, NC

<http://nationalpe.com/register/>