

Homefront

Issue No 2 - A publication for the Racially Conscious Home & Family

RAISING A SUPERIOR CHILD

NUTRITION

10 TIPS
FOR DIVORCED PARENTS

CELEBRATING OSTARA

WHEN WE SEE LIGHT CONQUERING OVER DARKNESS

HEALTHY BODIES

Getting Started

RAISING A SUPERIOR CHILD
Part II - Nutrition
HOW TO MAKE YOUR CAR LAST
A few things you can do
GREEN CLEANING
Easy & Cheap

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Editorial



HomeFront will Make a Difference

Welcome to the 2nd Issue of HomeFront Magazine!

WOW! Who knew that our premiere issue was going to make such an impression? The amount of emails and support in general has been phenomenal, and we have all been working tremendously hard to make this second issue as great as our first.

Sadly, we won't be featuring "Homeschooling Curriculum, Part 2" in this issue. The author, Glory had some urgent matters that needed to be taken care of, so her column will be continued in the summer issue of HF!

With so many wonderful writers in HomeFront family, we have no doubt that we will be able to write about ANY subject that affects our families. We have recently added two new writers to our staff, and by combining their experiences with our own, we will have even more information to share with our readers.

Our HF writers are mothers, educators, nurses, childcare providers, legal professionals and much more; with this great combination of knowledge we will become a force to be reckoned with!

We hope that we can all come together and educate and learn together, to grow side by side as Women, and that we have given the Aryan Family a place to call Home.

Enjoy the second issue of HomeFront!

HOW TO MAKE A GROCERY LIST

BY VICKY

1. List what you only really need; I know I always buy stuff that is on sale even if I don't really need it, and now I have a cupboard full of unused items!



2. List what you'd like to buy (within reason).

3. Check the sales, but make sure you are going to use the items.

4. Check your coupons; use them only if they will truly save on groceries.

5. Add sales items and coupon specials if you will use the product; I save a lot this way on items like dish soap and paper towels.

6. Arrange your list in the order of the grocery store displays, as it saves you time. You should also mark off each item you put in your cart.

7. Estimate the actual cost of the groceries you want; this way you won't be in for any surprises at the register.

8. Cut back on something if your total estimate is too high.

Tips:

1. Choose a quiet time to work on your list.

2. Keep a list on your fridge and add items to the list when you notice that you are running out!

3. Don't write it while you're hungry. When I write my list hungry, I have nothing but junk food on it.

4. Leave yourself a few dollars for unadvertised sales or extras.

NATURAL HOME

Old Family Medicines That Really

Work!

This came up in a conversation with a friend, so I thought that I would share it with those of you who have young kids. I have used all of these recipes and they all work. -Jan

Colic and Restless Children

Can't get the little one to sleep? Have a colicky baby? Here's an easy recipe to calm even the worst case of colic and get even the most hyper toddler to sleep; it also works better than expensive Mylicon.

Boil an onion. Strain off the liquid and put it in the fridge. It will keep for about 2 weeks. Depending on the age and weight of your child, start with one teaspoon of the "onion tea" in a bottle or cup of juice. If the child is older, you may need more, but you cannot overdose on this tea. This is a tried and true cure for the colicky baby and the restless child. Onion tea is a natural sedative and calming agent. It is an old French family recipe and has been used successfully for over 100 years.

I have used it on all 7 kids, even up to the age of 5....you know, that time when they won't take a nap!

Teething

Rub some paprika on her gums instead of using the more expensive Orajel. It works very quickly for teething pain.

Cradle Cap and Dry Skin

Normally, baby skin doesn't need lotion, but if it does occasionally, use pure olive oil instead also use it for your babies scalp / cradle cap. It's not especially frugal cost wise, but used sparingly and only when it's needed, one small bottle should last longer than your baby is a baby, which is more than you can say for baby lotion.



How to use a humidifier safely

Putting a humidifier in your baby's room is practically a rite of passage for parents. When your baby has a cold, one of the best things you can do to keep her comfortable is to make sure the air she breathes is moist by using a humidifier. Moist air keeps mucus more liquid, which prevents stuffiness, making it easier for baby to breathe. The question is, which is better: cool mist or warm steam?

Both are equally effective at putting moisture into the air. But these days most pediatricians recommend the cool-mist option for the simple reason that there is no danger of burns from accidentally spilled hot water or from the steam. There is one drawback to the cool-mist machines, though; since the water isn't boiled, the machines are an ideal breeding ground for bacteria and mold. Since breathing either could irritate your baby's lungs -- particularly worrisome for children with asthma and other chronic respiratory problems -- you must be diligent about following the manufacturer's cleaning instructions. That means scrubbing the machine daily with soap and water, vinegar, hydrogen peroxide or bleach (whatever the manufacturer of your machine suggests).

If possible, fill the machine with water that has a low mineral content, either distilled or filtered water (e.g., tap water that you've run through a filter, such as a Brita or Pur), since the minerals can build up on the machine which then disperses them into the air, potentially irritating the lungs of sensitive children. Place the humidifier about three feet from your baby's crib, but not so close that she could reach out and touch it or knock it over.

If you live in a part of the country where the air is very dry during winter, you might consider running a humidifier at night when your baby isn't sick to keep nasal passages from becoming dry. Just be sure that her room doesn't get so humid that water condenses on the windows, pictures, or walls. When a room is too humid, bacteria and mold thrive on furniture, walls, carpet, drapes and bedding.

The content on these pages is provided as general information only and should not be substituted for the advice of your physician.

Source: Your Newborn Today



Trimming Babies Nails

By Stacey1488

The easiest way for Mom or Dad to trim their baby's nails may be to just peel the ends off with your fingers. The nails are so soft that the surplus will easily come away when you use your fingers. Or you can buy a pair of baby scissors or nail clippers with specially rounded ends.

Cutting your baby's nails may be easier if both Mom and Dad are involved; one of you can hold the baby and keep him from wriggling too much while the other does the job. You may also want to try it while you're feeding or he is sleeping so that he'll be calmer. My sister tends to do it while her son is sleeping. Press the finger pad away from the nail to avoid nicking the skin, and keep a firm hold on your child's hand as you cut or clip.

Some parents also nibble the ends of their babies' nails to keep them from getting long and scratchy (this is how my mother did ours). As your tongue is more sensitive than scissors could ever be, you can nibble off the short surplus nail without hurting your baby. Also, babies rarely object to putting their hands in your mouth!



10 HomeFront Baby Care Tips

Use a heater to warm the bathroom before you bathe your baby.

Don't heat bottles in the microwave because the milk could get too hot and burn your baby.

Enroll your babysitter in the Red Cross Babysitter Training Course, which includes first-aid and CPR.

If your baby starts choking, turn her face down and give four blows between her shoulder blades.

Avoid baby toys with small pieces that could break off and pose a choking hazard.

If your newborn wets six diapers per day, you can be sure you are breastfeeding them enough.

Use washcloths to grip a slippery baby when you hand baby over to another person during bath time.

Movement may ease colic, so place baby in a swing.

Do not give your infant any small, hard foods, such as nuts, popcorn or raisins.

If your baby keeps you up at night and you're feeling moody, try a nap. Even a half an hour nap will relieve stress.

LAUNDRY CARE + TIPS



Bleeding of Colours: Your red shirt got mixed in with other clothes and ruined them? First Rule! Don't Dry Them. Wash them all again with regular detergent and color-safe bleach. To prevent bleeding in the first place, wash in cold water and add a cup of salt.

Blood on Clothes: Pour hydrogen peroxide on blood and rinse with cold water. If any blood remains, repeat the process.

Burn / Scorch Marks: If the fabric is washable, brush it gently with a soft brush or dry sponge to remove loose carbon particles. Then, wash the fabric with regular detergent and colour-safe bleach. This will permanently weaken the fabric even more than the scorch has, but the scorch may no longer be noticeable.

Burnt Stuff on Iron: Rub iron with aluminum foil to remove burnt on starch, etc.

Fabric Softener: I have been using an old dishtowel as a fabric softener sheet. I pour a couple of capfuls of Downey on it and throw it in the dryer. It has taken over a year to go thru a bottle of (small) Downey fabric softener. I add more Downey about every 15 loads or just when I notice a little static. It helps to use a towel that is distinct from the other laundry. I use a pink towel, which is a one of a kind in our house.

Grease Stains: Sprinkle a generous amount of cornstarch or baby powder over the grease stain, allow it to sit for a couple of minutes, and then brush the powder off. The powder absorbs the grease and it brushes off with the powder.

Lint: Keep lint off dark clothes by not washing them with towels, washcloths, dishrags, etc. This is where a majority of the lint comes from and it's just easier to eliminate them

Perspiration Stains/Odor: Soak the stained shirt in

equal parts ammonia and water and add a few Tablespoons of liquid dish soap overnight. Then, wash the shirts as usual.

Spaghetti Stains: Wet the fabric and then sprinkle with powdered dish detergent. Scrub gently with a toothbrush. Rinse the item and launder normally.

Soiled Shirt Collars: Take a small paintbrush and brush hair shampoo into soiled shirt collars before laundering. Shampoo is made to dissolve body oils.

Zippers: To make a zipper slide up and down more smoothly, rub a bar of soap over the teeth.

Babies and Heat Rashes

BY MARIA

Heat rashes occur in babies when the pores of their sweat glands become blocked. This generally happens when the weather is hot or humid. As the infant sweats, little red bumps and, possibly, tiny blisters form because the blocked glands cannot clear the sweat.

Alternative Names: Heat rashes and babies; Prickly heat rash; Red miliaria Information:

To avoid heat rash, keep your baby cool and dry during warm weather.

Some helpful suggestions:

During the hot season dress your baby in lightweight soft cotton clothing. Cotton is very absorbent and keeps moisture away from the baby's skin.

If air conditioning is not available a fan may help by evaporating moisture and cooling the infant. Place the fan far enough away that there is only a gentle breeze drifting over the infant.

Avoid the use of powders, creams, and ointments. Baby powders don't improve or prevent heat rash. Creams and ointments tend to keep the skin warmer and block the pores.

FOOD ALLERGIES

BY SAMANTHA / MOMMYGOOSESTEP

Food allergies and food sensitivities are unsuspecting culprits that can cause many types of illness. My son is allergic to many different foods. While food allergies and food sensitivities are very similar, I am going to talk about food allergies in children.

Symptoms of food allergies can be very mild to very severe. Symptoms include: headaches; nausea; ear infections; hives; yeast infections; eczema (mostly on legs and face); weight loss; and the worst being anaphylaxis, or shortness of breath, drop in blood pressure, loss of consciousness and sometimes death.

Parents to children with food allergies must be extremely careful in what their child eats. A child may show signs of an allergy anywhere from 30 minutes to a few days after ingesting the allergy causing food. No one knows what causes any type of food allergy. What has been proven is that if there is genetic history of allergies (of any type) in the family, your child will most likely have some sort of allergy, whether food related or repertory. Children are more likely to develop allergies over adults, but many food allergies can stay throughout adulthood while some may turn into simple sensitivities or intolerances. Although these can be troublesome, they tend to be less severe and life threatening than actual food allergies.

Common food allergens include but are not limited to:

Wheat; dairy; peanuts and other tree nuts; legumes (beans); soy; eggs; corn; bananas and kiwi (related to the latex plant); citrus; tomatoes; stone fruits such as peaches, plums, or anything with a large pit in the middle. There are always exceptions to food allergies; I once read about a lady who was allergic to the proteins in chicken!

Please take note that many people who are allergic to cows' milk can safely drink goats' milk; be aware though, because goats' milk contains many of the same proteins that people are allergic to in cows' milk. Some people are severely allergic to goats' milk, so use caution when trying something new as a sub-

stitute, and always contact a health-care provider.

Some children can drink soymilk in place of both the above, but some children are allergic to soy also and may have to seek out a good supplier or rice or oat milk.

My family has discovered that we can use products made of spelt to substitute for our son's wheat allergy. Although spelt is an ancient relative to wheat, he shows no allergic reaction and can now enjoy pasta, waffles and tortillas.

Having a family member with food allergies can be frustrating and worrisome but there are a ton of great books and websites that can help ease the confusion. With a little re-

search you can find many alternatives with great turnout.

If you suspect your child has a food allergy, stop introducing new foods and the food you may suspect and make an appointment with your pediatrician or an allergy specialist. If your child shows signs of anaphylaxis, call 911 immediately!

You can find many items for special food lifestyles at organic/health food stores.

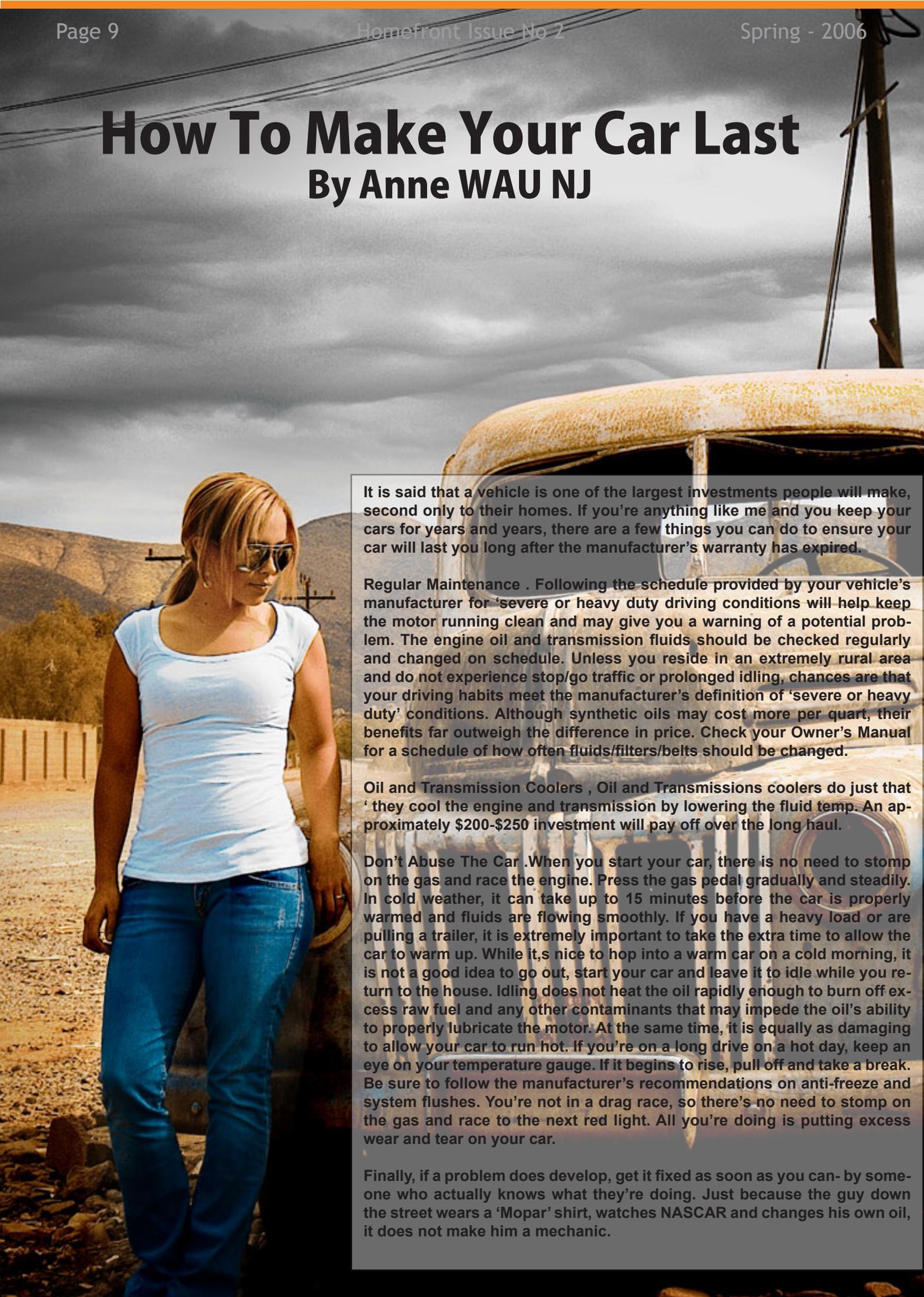
Books I have read

Food Allergy Field Guide: A Lifestyle Manual for Families By Theresa Willingham.



How To Make Your Car Last

By Anne WAU NJ

A woman with blonde hair, wearing sunglasses, a white t-shirt, and blue jeans, stands in a desert landscape. She is looking down and to her right. In the background, there are mountains and a utility pole. To her right, the rusted, yellowish-brown body of an old car is visible. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

It is said that a vehicle is one of the largest investments people will make, second only to their homes. If you're anything like me and you keep your cars for years and years, there are a few things you can do to ensure your car will last you long after the manufacturer's warranty has expired.

Regular Maintenance . Following the schedule provided by your vehicle's manufacturer for 'severe or heavy duty driving conditions will help keep the motor running clean and may give you a warning of a potential problem. The engine oil and transmission fluids should be checked regularly and changed on schedule. Unless you reside in an extremely rural area and do not experience stop/go traffic or prolonged idling, chances are that your driving habits meet the manufacturer's definition of 'severe or heavy duty' conditions. Although synthetic oils may cost more per quart, their benefits far outweigh the difference in price. Check your Owner's Manual for a schedule of how often fluids/filters/belts should be changed.

Oil and Transmission Coolers , Oil and Transmissions coolers do just that ' they cool the engine and transmission by lowering the fluid temp. An approximately \$200-\$250 investment will pay off over the long haul.

Don't Abuse The Car .When you start your car, there is no need to stomp on the gas and race the engine. Press the gas pedal gradually and steadily. In cold weather, it can take up to 15 minutes before the car is properly warmed and fluids are flowing smoothly. If you have a heavy load or are pulling a trailer, it is extremely important to take the extra time to allow the car to warm up. While it,s nice to hop into a warm car on a cold morning, it is not a good idea to go out, start your car and leave it to idle while you return to the house. Idling does not heat the oil rapidly enough to burn off excess raw fuel and any other contaminants that may impede the oil's ability to properly lubricate the motor. At the same time, it is equally as damaging to allow your car to run hot. If you're on a long drive on a hot day, keep an eye on your temperature gauge. If it begins to rise, pull off and take a break. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's recommendations on anti-freeze and system flushes. You're not in a drag race, so there's no need to stomp on the gas and race to the next red light. All you're doing is putting excess wear and tear on your car.

Finally, if a problem does develop, get it fixed as soon as you can- by someone who actually knows what they're doing. Just because the guy down the street wears a 'Mopar' shirt, watches NASCAR and changes his own oil, it does not make him a mechanic.

Fire Safety

The statistics regarding the deaths of children in home fires are very very grim. More than 1,000 children age 9 and under die each year that's an average of 2-3 children every day. Most home fires can be prevented and, with proper planning, a fire needn't end in tragedy. To protect your family, practice the following recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association.

Prevention is the Best Protection

Each year, children who play with matches or lighters start about 100,000 fires. To prevent disaster, lock matches and lighters in an out-of-reach cabinet and never leave youngsters unsupervised around open flames.

In the kitchen

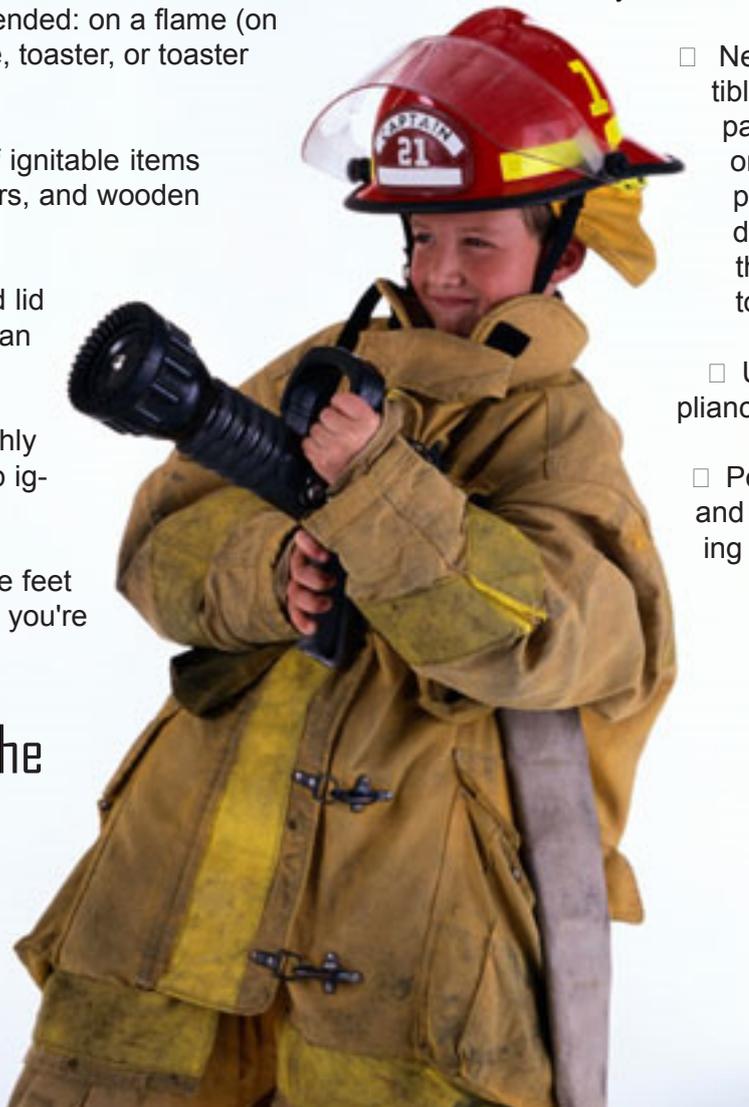
- Don't leave anything unattended: on a flame (on the stovetop), in a microwave, toaster, or toaster oven.
- Keep the stovetop clear of ignitable items such as dishtowels, potholders, and wooden spoons.
- Keep a large oven mitt and lid within reach to cover small pan fires.
- Clean appliances thoroughly after cooking. Grease buildup ignites easily.
- Teach children to stay three feet away from the stove when you're cooking.

Keep Throughout the house:

- If you smoke, don't leave cigarette butts in the ash-tray. Throw them down the toilet.
- Don't smoke in bed. When you're sleepy you may accidentally leave a smoldering cigarette to ignite bedding.

- Use only one heat-producing appliance per electrical outlet.
- Make sure electrical cords aren't frayed or worn. Even if cords are in perfect condition, don't run them under rugs or behind drapes.
- Keep portable or space heaters at least three feet away from furniture, curtains, and bedding; turn them off before you go to sleep and whenever you leave the house.

- Never place combustibles such as newspapers, magazines, or kindling near fireplaces, heaters, or radiators; and never use these heating devices to dry clothes.
- Unplug electrical appliances when not in use.
- Pot handles turned in and out of reach of groping hands.



Continue >

The Well-Equipped Home.

Smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and escape ladders are essential to a fire safety plan. A working smoke detector on every level of your home cuts your risk of dying in a fire nearly in half. For a fire alert home:

- Replace the batteries in each smoke detector once a year.
- Test the batteries in every smoke detector once a month. Batteries are low when a detector "chirps," and they should be replaced immediately.
- Replace smoke detectors every ten years.
- Place a fire extinguisher on each level of your home. The best models for home use are rated "2-A: 10-B: C" because they are safe to use on any fire.
- Read the extinguisher's directions, before a fire breaks out, to understand how to use it. Use it only on your way out the door when you are six to eight feet away from the flames and within clear reach of an exit.
- Most portable extinguishers only "blast" for about eight to ten seconds, and are ineffective on large or spreading fires.
- Ask your local fire department how to properly use fire extinguishers. Or, rally a group of neighbors and tell the manager at your local hardware store that your group will buy multiple extinguishers if he arranges to have the manufacturer send a representative to give a tutorial.
- Supply all upper level bedrooms with an escape ladder. Show children where the ladders are kept, how to attach them to the windows, and how to use them. Demonstrate how to back out of the window and go down the ladder feet first. The National Fire Protection Association doesn't recommend actually climbing down the ladder during fire drills because of the risk of falling.

Have an Escape Plan

If your family doesn't have a fire escape plan, make one today. Teach your children that if there's a fire, they need to get out of the home, and stay out until firefighters say it's okay to go back inside. Children as young as three years old can follow a well-rehearsed plan but adults should be responsible for escorting younger children out of the home. And be sure to have a back-up strategy in case one parent travels frequently. Here are some guidelines:

- Teach children what a smoke detector sounds like and emphasize that whenever they hear the alarm they should go outside immediately.
- Make sure that the home's exits are unobstructed by toys and debris.

- Draw a basic diagram of your home, marking all windows and doors, and plan two routes out of each room. The first should be the door. The second will probably be a window if bedrooms are on the second or third floors.
- Practice crawling low during drills in case your home is filled with smoke during a real fire.
- Check all windows to make sure they open easily. Metal security bars on windows or doors should have quick-release mechanisms that everyone knows how to operate. Replace double-key deadbolts with locks that can be opened from the inside without a key.
- If you live in a high-rise building, always use the stairway marked "Fire Exit" to practice your escape (and to leave during a real fire).
- Show children how to cover their nose and mouth with a T-shirt or pajama top to reduce smoke inhalation.
- Explain that before opening a door, it should be felt for heat. If the door is warm, everyone should exit via the alternate route.
- Coach children to stand by the window and signal for help if they are unable to escape on their own. Remind them never to hide in a closet or under a bed.
- Teach the stop, drop, and roll technique. After escaping from a burning building, anyone whose clothes are on fire should stop, drop to the ground, and roll over and over until the flames are out.
- Designate an outdoor meeting place, such as a neighbor's mailbox or tree that is well away from your home. Tell your children that when they leave the burning building, they should go directly to that spot. Also, stress that they should never go back into the home to retrieve a forgotten toy or pet.
- Practice the escape plan every six months. At least one drill should occur in the middle of the night because the majority of home-fire deaths occur between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m.
- Inform caregivers about the escape route, and encourage grandparents to create and practice an escape plan that your family can rely on during a visit.

Legal Guardians

By Anne

Preparing a will and naming a legal guardian for your children isn't something that most people look forward to doing. According to the attorney who prepared the papers for my family, only one third of Americans have a will. As unpleasant a task as it may be, it is something that should be done. We owe it to our precious children to look after them even after we're gone.

Deciding who should take responsibility for your children, in case of a tragedy is sometimes an extremely hard decision to make and can often lead to arguments. Arguments can erupt between not only yourself and your spouse, but other family members as well. One sister may take great exception to your choice of another sister for example.

Before naming names, compiling a list of what traits a guardian must have may help get you off to a good start. Do they have children of their own? Do they have a good relationship with your children? Are they in good health? Are they financially capable of handling more children? Is their relationship strong and steady? Are their children happy? Do they have the same values you have? Would they want to take on the responsibility of raising your children? If your children are old enough to understand the concept of a legal guardian 'ask them who they would chose if given the choice. I wouldn't advise seeking input from younger children as the subject of losing mom and dad may upset them greatly.

While you are compiling your list of candidates, keep in mind that it need not be a family member. Yes, choosing an 'outsider' may upset your mother or sister, but this is about what is in the best interest of your children and nothing else.

If you are naming a couple as guardians, you also have to take into consideration that they may indeed split up in the future. So it's best to take it one step further and decide which one person to name as guardian to avoid a future custody battle. This is something that many people overlook and don't take into consideration.

After you have made your choice, the next step is to ask them about it. Don't be surprised or hold a grudge if they say no. It's a huge deal to commit to taking on raising someone else's children, something a lot of people never even consider. It's best to sit down with the couple when the children aren't present. Give them time to think it over, this isn't a decision that should be made hastily.

Then there should be a conversation regarding the finances. Do you feel that appointing a trustee would be best? Or would you like to name them both guardian and trustee? And which would they prefer? You have the choice of leaving your kids' inheritance in the care of the guardian, or you could name a bank or investment firm as trustee. In the latter scenario, the trustee would send a predetermined amount to the children's guardians each month for their care. Funds would be invested as you have set forth in your will and your children would inherit the balance of the trust at a certain age, also named in your will.

Choosing a guardian for your children may turn out to be much easier then you think, or it could turn out being much more difficult. Either way it is an essential part of being a responsible parent.



CIRCUMCISION

BY ANNE

There is a controversy raging in the United States right now over circumcision. 'To cut or not to cut?' Is the question on the minds of many expecting parents. Each side of the controversy will cite plenty of "evidence" to back up their beliefs. The simple fact is that 82% of the world's male population is uncircumcised. Yet in the USA, 63% of males are circumcised. The USA represents 1/20th of the world's population, yet we perform well over 50% of the world's circumcisions. According to the Mothers Against Circumcision web site (www.mothersagainstcirc.org), there are roughly 79 million American infant circumcisions compared to 40 million throughout the rest of the world, out of a world population of over 2.5 billion males. The United States is the only medically advanced nation to routinely subject its infant males to genital mutilation. It is an unheard of practice in Europe, non-Muslim Asia, and South America. Yet we have celebrities raging on against female genital mutilation in some Muslim countries; where is the outcry for the male babies right here at home?

Western (civilized) nations have no history of circumcision. It was not until the Greek and Roman empires expanded into Muslim countries that genital mutilation was discovered. Both ancient Rome and Greece passed laws prohibiting circumcision to be practiced. Circumcision was not a common practice in the USA until the Victorian era, when doctors would circumcise infants to curb male masturbation. Older boys were circumcised as a punishment for being caught masturbating. Circumcision was still listed in American medical books until the 1970's as a way to prevent boys from masturbating. During the cold war era, as women began to stray away from home birth to hospital birth, hospitals began to routinely circumcise infants without parental consent. They continued this until a number of lawsuits in the 1970's required them to receive parental consent. Suddenly and miraculously, circumcision then became the answer to many medical problems such as penile cancer. Over the years, as these medical theories have been disproved, aesthetic excuses such as 'I want him to look like his father,' 'it's easier to clean,' and 'he'll be made fun of in the locker room,' have come into disgusting play.

The simple fact is that there are no valid, medical reasons to have your infant son mutilated. If you are considering circumcising your son, I suggest you go to your local library or find a video of the procedure being done online and watch it. The theory that an infant doesn't feel pain is total bull. If it doesn't crush you to watch a helpless, trusting, hours-old infant strapped down onto a restraint board and have the tip of his penis hacked off, then perhaps you should rethink having a child at all. There are still those doctors that still, in this day and age, will tell a questioning mother that her infant will not feel any pain. They will boast that some infants even sleep during the procedure, though passing out from the pain is more likely. Only 14% of doctors use any anesthetic during the procedure. A common anesthetic used is a topical cream, EMLA. It has been proven that the cream does not penetrate deeply enough and only lasts through roughly 1/3 of the procedure. Injectable anesthetics are not used as they cause the penis to swell, making the surgery more difficult.

It is also relatively unknown what happens to the foreskin after the procedure is done. Very few people know that there is a great demand for human foreskins in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries. It is a multi-million dollar a year venture. Companies such as Advanced Tissue Sciences and Bio-Surface Technology purchase human foreskins to advance their research for both cosmetics and things such as the breathable bandage. Ask your doctor if your hospital is in the business of selling spare body parts.

When I was interviewing doctors to see who would be given the pleasure of delivering my children, I asked them two questions over the phone, before ever scheduling an appointment: Do you do abortions, and do you perform circumcisions? If the answer to either of those questions was yes that was the end of the conversation.

COMMON SENSE CARE FOR YOUR BABY

By Stacey1488

I was the eldest of three kids, and I had my fair share of caring for my little sisters. Changing their diapers / nappies, putting them to sleep and keeping them entertained were chores for everyone in my family / extended family and neighbours. My mother was a single parent, so there wasn't always money for disposable diapers/ nappies and the like.

Diapers / nappies were washed in the tub and hung in the sun and wind to dry. When my sister made a mess, there was a clean supply of cloth rags at hand. They were washed and hung to dry in the sun and wind also. We never had baby wipes and very rarely had disposable diapers / nappies.

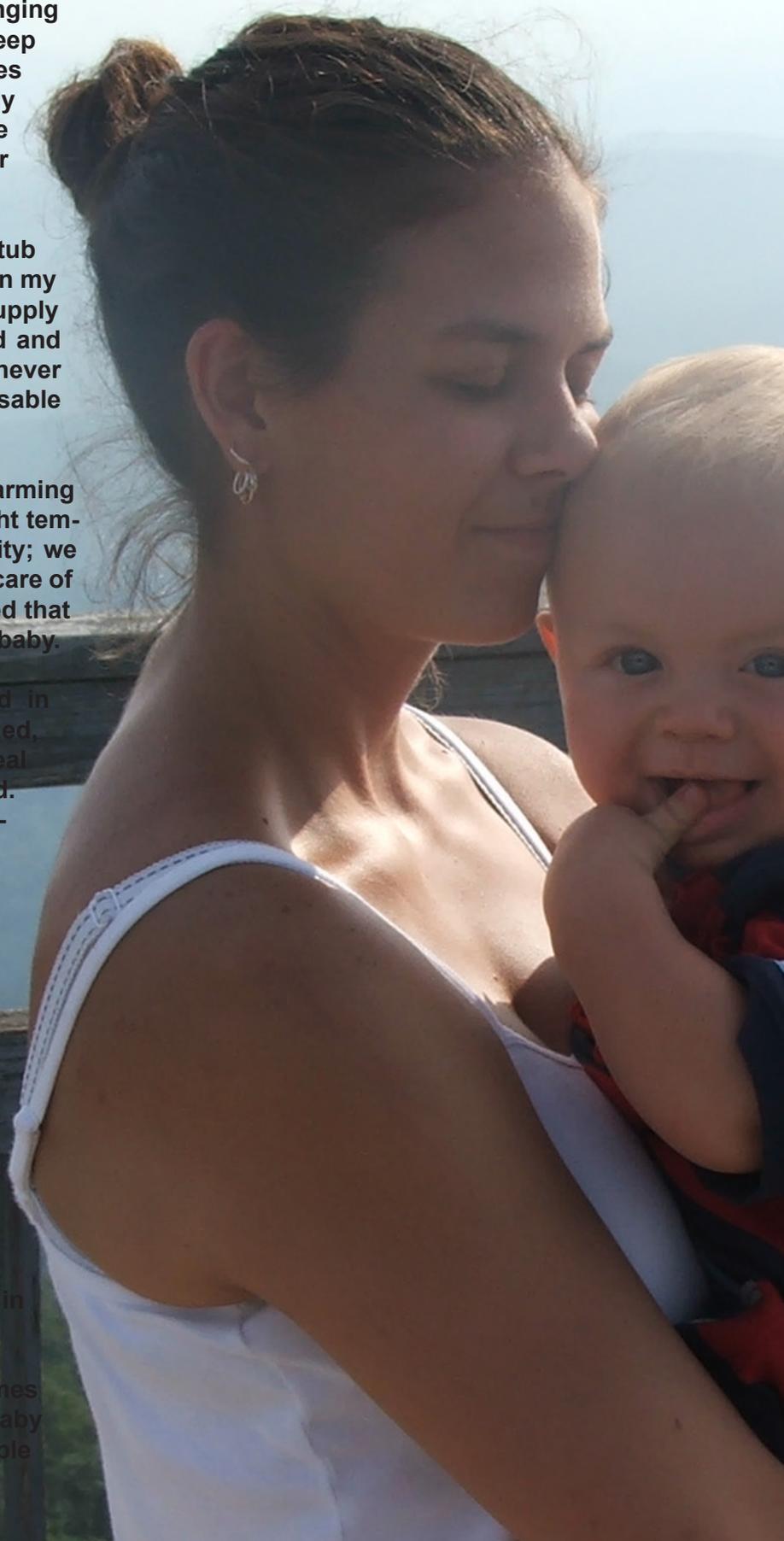
There were no middle of the night bottle warming episodes; mother's milk is always the right temperature. We believed in nature and reality; we believed that the human body could take care of itself for the most part, and so we believed that a mother's milk was made for a mother's baby.

When the little ones became interested in trying solid food, they were given boiled, mashed potatoes. Fork mashed beans. Real egg yolk. Porridge, puried then cooked. Commercial jars of baby food were expensive alternatives only for "wealthy families", who, in our minds, likely didn't even eat beans and potatoes. I still love beans and potatoes to this day lol.

How times have changed. Let's expose a few myths.

□ Clean white cloths, or rags cut from just about any old thing, makes more sense than buying or even making baby wipes... those special throwaway bits that can irritate baby's skin with soaps and perfumes. Wash the cloths with detergent, rinse with a quarter cup of vinegar in the rinse water, and hang them in the sun to dry.

□ Juice especially for baby (at three times the cost)? Where does it come from? Baby apples? Gentle peaches? If regular apple



juice is too strong for baby, dilute it. If it needs pasteurizing, boil it.

□ By the same token, where does that baby food come from? I'd venture to say it starts out as the same food you eat! Just don't use salt or any form of fat - butter, vegetable oil, shortening are all no-nos at this point. When feeding your baby real food, be sure it's mashed completely. Remove even very small lumps or strings of food, which can choke a baby. Their digestive system isn't ready to handle it yet, either.

□ It's not necessary to sew your own diapers, but it is necessary to use cloth diapers unless you have more money than you know what to do with. Do the math, as they say. A dozen cloth diapers/nappies cost around twelve to fifteen dollars and they last until the baby is potty trained. So what if it takes four dozen or more? How many times could you reuse a disposable diaper/nappie?

Wash diapers like you do the rags, in bleach and detergent, and then use vinegar in the rinse to neutralize the bleach. Hang diapers in the sun to dry. Ultraviolet rays from the sun kill bacteria efficiently. Don't believe the myth that the heat from your dryer will do the same. If anything, bacteria will thrive in that warm dark environment.

□ Mother's milk is not only cheaper, it's preventative medicine. Babies raised on it are more easily weaned and sooner. They don't have digestive problems that plague bottle-fed babies (constipation, etc) and they're generally healthier, according to most studies.

□ Did you know that baby oil is nothing more than mineral oil with fragrance added? Fragrance that could irritate your babies' skin at twice the price?

□ Or that cornstarch is preferable to baby powder, money wise and purity wise? Baby powder is talcum powder, again with added fragrance, which can irritate baby's skin. Cornstarch is pure enough for food.

Baby lotion is more water than anything else. The 'anything else' is what sometimes hurts your baby's skin more than it helps. Normally, baby skin doesn't need lotion, but if it does occasionally, use pure olive oil instead. It's not especially frugal cost wise, but used sparingly and only when it's needed, one small bottle should last longer than your baby's life, which is more than you can say for baby lotion.

Bottom line? Raise your baby the natural, frugal, healthy; way and you'll save money many times over in ways that's hard to anticipate.

Some facts were taken from Frugal Way Of Life

Green Cleaning

By WAU NC

For a long time, I have sworn up and down that I would look into cleaning my house without the expensive and potentially dangerous chemicals that fill my cupboard. It's a pretty intimidating task when you really think about everything you have to replace: bathroom cleaner, toilet cleaner, window cleaner, floor cleaner, kitchen cleaner, laundry detergent, dish detergent, dishwasher detergent, carpet cleaner, air freshener- yeah, you get it. Some of those things are more toxic than others; some are merely not so hot for the environment when they go down the drain. The biggest task is figuring out which cleaners are the major offenders, which can be easily (and cheaply!) replaced, and how in the world to begin.

My purpose with this particular column is to share what I find out while making the Big Switch. I actually just finished my first attempt, armed only with baking soda, vinegar, ammonia, water, and some lemon juice. I can still smell the vinegar from my kitchen floor, which I like because it reminds me of coloring Easter eggs. But since you may not dig vinegar, I'll include a list of resources that I've referenced for you to check out on your own, and maybe you can find an alternative that better suits your family.

So last week I picked up the following items: 3 lbs of baking soda for \$1.50; 1 gallon of white vinegar for \$1.99; and ' gallon of ammonia for \$0.99. So the grand total was just over four bucks, which is comparable to a single bottle of any given cleaner. Some people choose not to clean with ammonia because it is an irritant or they merely don't care for the smell; I decided to go ahead and use it as part of my general cleaner because I wiped the surfaces down with lemon water afterwards, rinsing it away and taking care of the odor. The vinegar serves as a mild disinfectant; some people use Borax, and I will probably try that next.

Today's major tasks were the two bathrooms and the linoleum floors throughout the house. My usual cleaners of choice have been Clorox with Teflon for the bathrooms, Lysol Cling for the toilet bowl, some natural glass cleaner stuff from Home Depot for the mirrors and chrome, and good old Mr. Clean for the floors. I'll spare the chemical details, but basically there are all sorts of nasty chemicals in all that stuff, but you know that and that's why you're reading this in the first place.

I mixed up a generic all-purpose cleaner to spray down the sinks, shower/tub and toilet. I used: ' c ammonia, 2 Tbsp vinegar, 1 Tbsp baking soda, and 32 oz warm water. I mixed it all in one of those empty spray bottles from the hardware store, but to make a gallon you use 1 c ammonia, ' c vinegar, and ' c baking soda. This needs to be wiped off with water after you clean with it, so I also had a bucket of hot water with some lemon juice. For the toilet bowl, I sprinkled in some baking soda and poured in some vinegar, then scrubbed with a brush. If you have a young child, they'll probably get a good giggle from seeing the toilet bubble, I know my son did. The vinegar is acidic and removes some of the mineral staining in the bowl if you have any. As far as the end results, I just went and checked the bathroom. There is no discernable odor, the sinks are shiny and there is no residue, and the toilet bowl is actually a little whiter. I didn't clean the mirror or chrome because those are part of next week's trial of cleaning all the glass in the house.

For my floors, I mixed ' c of vinegar in 1 gallon of hot water. I' one of those on-the-knees scrubbers, and I just wash my floor with a bucket and a rag. Everything came right up off the floor, including a lovely pen doodle by my preschooler. The house does smell like vinegar, but it is airing out and has a pleasant smell. There is no residue on the floor, it's smooth and clean, so I'll definitely stick with the vinegar for the linoleum.

In the next issue, I will have quite a bit more to share, as I am planning on trying something new weekly. You can look forward to my misadventures while trying to get my windows, kitchen, dishes and laundry clean without harsh cleansers. If you have any personal tips or recipes to share, please send them in and I will include them in the next issue!



What are your children reading?

The Biscuit book series. These books are too cute, I just got a lot of 5 of them off Ebay (I was silly though, I paid \$15 w/shipping and you can get almost the same set for \$10 lol).

Anyway, they came today, they are so cute, and my son read two pages by himself!

Amanda

Right Now my children 7 and 9 are reading Moby Dick, we love the Classics in our house and we try to do a new one each month!

Sadie

We like the Angus books they are originally from the 1930's... but in my house it is "Benny" because that is our scottie's name. We also like the McDuff books

Highlandclass14

My daughter who is 10 yrs old is currently reading The Little House Books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, they are absolutely AMAZING, and she loves them! I love to read them also, nice, they are also available on Audio tape and CD, and i would highly recommend them for road trips!

Melanie

Raising a Superior child

NUTRITION

By WAU NC



You are what you eat; it's a simple but true fact, and it is particularly applicable to children. As a young body grows, it can only work with what it is given, and the responsibility lies with the parents to make sound nutritional choices on behalf of their children. Not only are we feeding their bodies; we are also instilling in them the patterns that they will follow as they make their own decisions later in life. Feed a kid grape soda and Dingdongs for breakfast at 3, and you will most likely find him eating the same crap 5, 10, and 20 years later, with a gut and rotted teeth to show for it.

OK, well that may be something of an extreme case and not all that common (though not completely unheard of), but the core idea holds true. As a parent, you have the power to shape your child's future; if you don't put forth a conscious effort, then he will pick up on your actions anyway, only you won't have control over whether your influence is positive or not. It's the simple decisions that are made now, such as avoiding McDonald's altogether, not introducing soda, etc. that are going to make a difference in the long run. Our kids are going to form their tastes and habits now, and chances are if they aren't introduced to the junk early, they won't develop a taste for it any time soon. And if they do so as an adult, so be it; at least their little bodies will have a chance to grow without all that crap in there taking the place of truly nutritious food.

My son is three, and for as long as he has been eating solid foods, I've had a pretty simple plan. Each of his three meals includes something whole-grain, protein, dairy, fruit, and a vegetable at lunch and dinner. He has an afternoon snack that varies, usually another whole-grain choice. Of course life is no fun without the occasional treat, like birthday cake, Halloween candy, or a cookie once in a blue moon, but they are saved for special occasions and are separated by a few weeks at the least. People joke that it's mean to keep the sweets out, but dessert is meant to be a treat here and there, not a regularly scheduled meal. So that's how we look at it in our household, and I think it just makes those treats all the more special.

I've just realized that my house is a little crazy and this may not sound normal to people, to be fixing a special meal for their toddler. We have three people in our family, my husband is a meat and potatoes type of guy, I fix something vegetarian and low fat for myself, and our son has his own meals. I'm not sure if it sounds like too much work for other people, but you can apply the same idea when fixing a meal for your entire family. Just try and make sure meals are well-rounded and include as many different varieties of fruits and vegetables as you can (the color rule is helpful; go for as many different colors as possible). Once you figure out what to include in each 'category' you can stock up for variety. To give you some ideas, I'll share some typical options I give my son (he's old enough to pick his own foods from the choices presented to him and enjoys helping fix his own meals), and maybe you can get some ideas for your own family as well.

Breakfast:

Whole-grain: old fashioned oatmeal (not the instant kind), buckwheat waffle (1 square), whole-wheat toast or a whole-grain cereal.

Protein: 1 egg, scrambled, fried or hardboiled, without salt or butter or anything.

Dairy: 'c milk, also contributes protein
Fruit: fresh fruit of choice, sometimes we have fruit cocktail with the juice rinsed off, applesauce, etc.

Lunch:

Whole-grain: a sandwich, usually natural peanut butter with all-fruit jam on whole-wheat.

Fruit: same as above, from a different group (Only one citrus per day, etc.)

Protein/Dairy: yogurt (Stonyfield farm brand, organic without all the additives)

Vegetable: fresh vegetable, usually carrots.

Snack: This is where it really varies, sometimes I bake whole wheat pretzels, or we have whole grain crackers with raisins, organic granola bars, etc.

Dinner:

Protein: Usually a small portion of Dad's dinner; sometimes cottage cheese, meat in pasta, tofu or beans.

Whole grain: if not part of above, wheat pasta or wheat toast.

Vegetable: usually broccoli, frozen and steamed.

Fruit: same as above.

Dairy: 'c milk

That pretty much sums up what my son eats, and we've been following that plan for so long now that it's second nature and takes minimal effort. As a result, he is a very lean and muscular boy, very rarely gets sick, has plenty of energy and is an all-around very healthy child. If you wait to make nutritious foods a part of your child's daily life, it may result in him avoiding them altogether when he begins to equate healthy with 'yucky.' Make things like broccoli a favorite now, and even if he decides that he doesn't want to eat it later in life, at least his little body can reap the nutritional benefits at this early stage in his life.

Avoiding a C-Section

By Anne

Caesarean Birth deliveries are on the rise; some women even ASK for one just to avoid a normal, vaginal birth! Some doctors could be considered 'C-Section Crazy' and do unnecessary C-sections for practically no reason. This should be discussed during your very first appointment with your OB. You should make it known, right from the start, that you DO NOT want a C-section unless it is a life threatening situation. Personally, I wouldn't go to any doctor who would even consider doing an 'Optional C-Section,' just because the mother is afraid of giving birth! So, the first step in avoiding a C-section is choosing a doctor that is on the same page as you are. Ask about their 'C-section to vaginal birth ratio' if it seems high to you, don't hesitate to ask more in-depth questions about the different scenarios where he/she would call for a C-section. For example: if your child is in a breech position, would the doctor rush to a C-section, or try to turn the baby? I have personally had two successful external versions where my breech babies were turned to the correct position for birth.

Choosing a midwife and/or doula will also lessen your chance of having a C-section. Statistics show that midwives call for a C-section less often than a doctor.

After you have chosen the right doctor for you, have this conversation often and make it well known throughout your pregnancy that you want to do everything within reason to avoid a C-section. It's YOUR body and YOUR baby □ YOUR wishes should be followed!

Ask your doctor about his use of the fetal monitor. Once they strap the monitor on, walking is no longer an option. Walking and/or changing positions frequently during labor have been shown to reduce the odds of needing a C-section. Ask your doctor about intermittent monitoring. If you and your baby have both had a healthy, normal pregnancy, there should be no reason to avoid intermittent monitoring.

Some women who have had past C-sections are wrongly told that they cannot have a future vaginal

delivery. Ask your doctor about a VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Caesarean). In the past, doctors were afraid of the uterus rupturing along the incision line of the previous C-section, but today's advanced surgical techniques have lessened the chance of this happening. So a vaginal birth may very well be possible for you.

Read and educate yourself so you know when you are being steered toward something that may not be right for you or your baby. Ask questions. As the old saying goes: The only stupid question is the one that doesn't get asked.



TOP TEN SIGNS OF PREGNANCY

Missed Period
Tender Breasts
Nausea
Fatigue
Frequent Urination
Spotting
Light Headedness
Constipation
HeartBurn

The Great Toothpaste Swindle

By WAU NC

So you've finally squeezed the last bit out of your crusty toothpaste tube, and it's time to brave the toothpaste aisle: row upon row of Extreme Sparkling Minty-Fresh Whitening Action. If you're like me, you grab what's on sale or whatever has the shiniest box. I never put much thought into toothpaste because I figured it was a bunch of different packages for virtually the same product, which is pretty much how it works. But there are some ingredients that you should be aware of, some claims that are true and not-so-true, and just some interesting things to know about boring old toothpaste that I feel like sharing.

The basic components of toothpaste are: water; humectants, which give the paste its shape and keep it moist; surfactants, which is basically the soap that loosens the particles from your teeth; binders to keep the liquid and solid ingredients from separating; whitening agents that remove staining; the flavorings, colorings, preservatives and such; and finally, the active ingredients that the brands claims are based upon.

Active ingredients are fluoride, tartar controlling agents, antibacterial components, and things of that nature. Fluoride is pretty essential for adults, as it is the best proven method of preventing tooth decay currently known. Though some areas have fluoridated water, it only affects teeth that are still developing, which would be the teeth of kids 16 and under. Adults need the fluoride found in toothpaste, and children can benefit greatly from the reduced amount of fluoride in specially formulated toothpaste for kids. There are some brands out there that do not contain fluoride if you prefer to avoid it based upon your own research, so that is a choice left up to you.

Tartar control is just that- control and not removal. Tartar is plaque that has hardened on teeth, and that's what stains and discolors teeth for the most part. For tartar control toothpaste to be effective, it must be used regularly (read: twice a day, or at least before bed!) and you should see a 40-50% reduction. Prevention really is the key, because once it has hardened, it's nasty stuff to get rid of. Think of that hook-like scraper thing your dentist has, and why you may like to avoid it. There's your motivation to keep brushing.

Miracle whitening toothpastes aren't going to come anywhere near as close as the kits or a visit to your dentist. They will help remove the staining, but teeth aren't naturally sparkly white anyway, so they won't make you look like a movie star. For any significant whitening action, you're really going to have to go another route.

If you have sensitive teeth, you may want to try out special toothpaste formulated to ease the pain. Desensitizing toothpastes have minerals in them that block the channels in teeth that connect to the nerves, but it takes 4 to 6 weeks of regular use to see dramatic improvement. For a particular sore spot, you can dab a bit of the paste onto the area for a minute or two and it will have a slight numbing effect.

Antibacterial ingredients kill germs and prevent nasty things like gingivitis. In mainstream brands, you find stuff Triclosan, and natural toothpastes use baking soda, tea tree oil, and some other things like that. I'll spare the chemistry, but basically germs=bad, must kill.

Speaking of baking soda, what does it do for your teeth? Whiten them? Nope. Freshen your breath? Yep, and that's about it. Baking soda actual has mild antibacterial properties, but it has to be present as at least 26% of the solution for it to be effective, and there is only one main brand that has it. When wet, it's even less effective, so basically the baking soda in all but one brand is worthless. That single brand is Arm & Hammer Peroxicare, which has 51% baking soda. But unless you just really dig that baking soda freshness, I'd recommend a different brand. Read on.

Most toothpaste is in fact created equal. The biggest ingredient to look for is fluoride, and you need to decide if you prefer a natural brand or not. If that's the case, Tom's of Maine has the only natural toothpaste recognized by the ADA (and that's only their fluoridated versions) and I would personally recommend it. They say give it 5 days to become acclimated to the taste, and it's true; they don't include the barrage of sweeteners found in other pastes, but once you get used to the flavor, you may prefer it. For mainstream brands, if you are going to be particular, your best bet is Colgate Total. It has the most effective antibacterial, tartar controlling and anti-decay ingredients and it is comparable in price to everything else out there. But if you're just going to reach and grab and aren't particular about anything other than taste, the generic brand is just as good as the extreme stuff. You just may not be as cool.

Family Recipes

Hot Cross Buns

By Vicky

Hot Cross buns are lightly sweet and will go well with any other Ostara dishes you are going to make, Hot Cross Buns have always been a big favourite of mine, i hope you enjoy them!

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups flour
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 oz of dry yeast
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp allspice

PREPARATION:

Mix all the ingredients except for the yeast and egg. In another bowl, dissolve the yeast in 1/4-cup hot water. Add yeast and beaten egg to the flour mixture. Cover with a cloth and let the dough rise until double in size (about an hour).

Preheat your oven to 400F. Shape the dough into balls around 3-inches across and place in the oven on a lightly greased sheet. After 5 minutes, bring them out and cut a light cross in the tops of each bun. Put back in the oven and bake buns for another 15-20 minutes.



Visit our Website for more Family Recipes and much more

<http://www.homefrontpublications.org>

Online Homeschooling Resources



My children are 6 and 13, so most of the links provided are for those two age groups! I just thought I would write about that very first link I posted <http://www.starfall.com/>

What a great little place. You can download the whole thing and print it, or ask them to send you the whole set FREE in workbooks.

I just got mine in the mail; it only took about 5 days. My son loves it, and their website has lots of activities which correspond to the workbooks.

The only draw back is that at the end of the first level of reading they seem to make all the characters multi-cultural. But it is only four stories out of fifteen. I guess no too bad.

What a fun, colorful, free, and organized way to teach your kid to read, five Stars.

Glory

10 Tips for Divorced Parents

By WNMom

Everyone knows that divorce can be very hard on everyone involved especially the children. Here are some tips to help make it easier on the children. This comes from my personal experience so they may not all work in your particular situation but are worth trying none the less. All examples are things that I have experienced first hand.

1. Once you know you are getting a divorce talk with your partner about custody and visitation BEFORE you go to court. If you have an agreement made ahead of time you will be able to make the transition smoother. You may also be able to compromise to where the non primary parent can get additional visitation over what the court would give. Children need their parents (exceptions made for abusive parents). No matter what you think of your partner now, at one point you loved them enough to have a child with them. Keep that in mind and set aside hurt feelings to do what is best for the children involved. Don't let the ex make plans on your time. Ex., if you are supposed to have the child for the week of spring break and the ex makes plans to take the child skiing for your whole week and your weekend. Then they come back and you ask to see the child since you agreed to let them go after the plans had been made and the ex says, "No it isn't your weekend." If you stick strickly to the divorce agreement you have already made it known that you will not agree to losing your time with the child. Then if a situation like this comes up you can take it to court with proof that you have never changed the routine. This of course is only in cases where the ex is a selfish materialistic jerk who only cares about themself and not what is best for the child.

2. Keep records of EVERYTHING! What time you picked the child up or dropped the child off. The condition the child was when they were handed over and when they left. Keep all reciepts of purchases made for the child's care. Keep a record of activities that you shared with your child from outings to reading books. This can be very useful if you have a partner that keeps trying to screw you. This way you can prove the quality of care your child gets in your custody. This is also useful if your ex defies a court order. Ex., if they are ordered to have you as first choice "baby sitter" and they never call you when they go to work and leave the child with someone else. Your records can prove contempt of court. You should also notify your lawyer each and every time they do not contact you to babysit.

3. File a report with your police department if there is a "no harass, no contact" clause in your divorce every time your ex contacts you for reasons other than issues with the children. You are divorced. Ex., Your ex should not be calling you to find out about what to do with their pet gecko who won't quit breeding. They forfeited that right when you were divorced. Sometimes an ex will call just to "check up" on you while your children are in your care. This can constitute harassment and the children pick up on negativity.



4. Never talk badly about your ex in front of or within ear shot of your children. No matter what caused your divorce pitting one parent against the other and essentially causing a child to have to "pick" between parents is very damaging to them. It will come back to bite you in ass later as well. Ex., NEVER tell a child that their parent has "abandoned" them or they don't love them. The children ALWAYS tell the ex what was said and that only stirs up the anger again. It also is a really crappy thing to tell a kid and can have adverse mental issues for that child.

5. If you must communicate with your ex concerning the children do it privately and away from the children. Ex., Sometimes conversations can get heated when an ex is being a jerk and even over the phone the children know it is about them. This can leave them feeling like it is their fault.

6. Even if you and your ex can not get along set that aside one day a year and have your child's birthday together. This will mean so much to the child and teaches them that mommy and daddy love them enough to give them a birthday free of hurt feelings. If you are unable to be around your ex invite your family to a birthday party for the child. Even though some people think 2 parties are too much your child's birthday is important to them and you should make the effort to let them know you think it is important as well. Don't blow it off because they have already had a party with your ex.

7. Don't try to "out do" your ex. Kids that are brought to love become materialistic brats and will usually remain so for life. Ex., Provide your children with everything you would have but if you go and buy the children a bunk bed, then your ex goes out and buys canopy bunk beds the children will start to play the "(so and so)" got me THIS can you get me THIS? Kids pick up on the competition and instead of knowing they have a loving parent they will see only that material things get them attention.

8. Don't relax on rules and consequences when the children are under your care. The ex might have a more "fun" house but in the end what the children learn will stick with them longer than anything. Many of us when we were children said, "I won't do {____} to my kids when I grow up." Yet 9 out of 10 times you do because you realize when you grow up that you didn't know everything. Especially in these times parents need to know their children and provide reliable stability for them.

9. Be involved with all issues concerning your child. Even if you are not the primary parent you still have equal say when it comes to the treatment of your child and to the schooling they get. If you don't approve of something make your opinion known. If the ex refuses to listen and compromise inform your lawyer of their refusal and of them denying you your given parental rights. If need be take them back to court if it can not be resolved between you and your ex.

10. Always keep in mind that your feelings are less important than what is best for your child. Make their life easier by supporting them and not putting your wants ahead of common sense. Striving to bring your ex as much trouble as you possibly can because you have hurt feelings is childish and damaging. Keep your personal opinions of your ex out of areas that involve your children. More likely than not they feel exactly like you do when it comes to the children. Ex., Don't be a jerk and use your children as leverage or as a weapon. They aren't either of those. They are people who will grow up acting what they saw from their parents. This world doesn't need any more vindictive, self centered, materialistic jerks...it has enough!



Healthy bodies

Getting Started

By WAU NC



OK in the last column, I yelled at all the fat girls out there to get motivated; though it may have been a mean tactic, sometimes it takes someone else's brutal honesty to really be honest with ourselves. This time around, I am writing for anyone interested in exercising to become a healthier person, and because starting to excise can be somewhat overwhelming, I'll be a little nicer this time and just share a few pointers to get you started.

The first thing you need to do is set a goal or two. Unless you're a nut, you don't set out on a cross-country road trip without a map; likewise, you can't start an effective exercise program if you don't know where you'd like to wind up. We all have different goals, and they change with time. I started out as the chubby chick that used asthma as an excuse to get out of gym class; my first goal was just to get moving and to lose the excess weight. That was quite a while ago and my goals have changed quite a bit; I'm still aiming to slim down, but my overall goal is to build lean muscle mass and to burn off fat to create more definition. My goal has become more specific as I have worked out more, and I have modified my regimen to reflect that. My goals aren't exactly important here, but I am trying to give you an idea of what I mean. Have something set in your mind that you want to

achieve; that way you will be able to remind yourself of how far you've come, and where you are going to end up after all of your hard work.

I know all of this goal talk sounds cheesy, but it really is an invaluable motivational tool. As you begin to see changes taking place, you will be excited and inspired to work even harder to meet your goal. And once you do, be sure to reward yourself. Even if it is with a big ol' chocolaty sundae, one treat is not going to undo all of your work, so indulge. Then set your next goal and get back to work.

So now you know what you're aiming to do, and you need a means to do it. For any woman who cannot or does not want to go to a gym, I have two words for you- exercise videos. Don't think of Richard Simmons in hot pants leading fat old ladies, because that's not what I mean. You can get a good, solid workout in your own home without a lot of expensive equipment. I redden in the face when I admit, even in writing, that I started with workout videos that I ordered from an infomercial. I was reeled in by the ad, and I'll admit it. I'll admit it, because it was really one of the best buys I ever made, I still use what I bought now, and I recommend it to other people all the time. I am not going to name brand/instructor names in this article, but if anyone wants to contact me personally for video recommendations, I will be more than happy to help.

Anyway, I suggest you visit www.videofitness.com and www.collagevideo.com and read through the reviews and previews of videos to find something that appeals to you. You'll probably need to pick up a few pairs of dumbbells, which you can get for pretty cheap at a sporting goods store or even big retail box store. If you

are interested in step aerobics, you'll need a step (check a used sporting goods place first!). Certain videos require specific pieces of equipment, so you'll need to check that out first before you get started. You can also rent videos and preview them, sometimes through your local library, or if you rent DVDs online, they have fitness selections as well. It's hard to recommend anything without actually recommending anything, so like I said, please email me with questions or pick through the aforementioned sites.

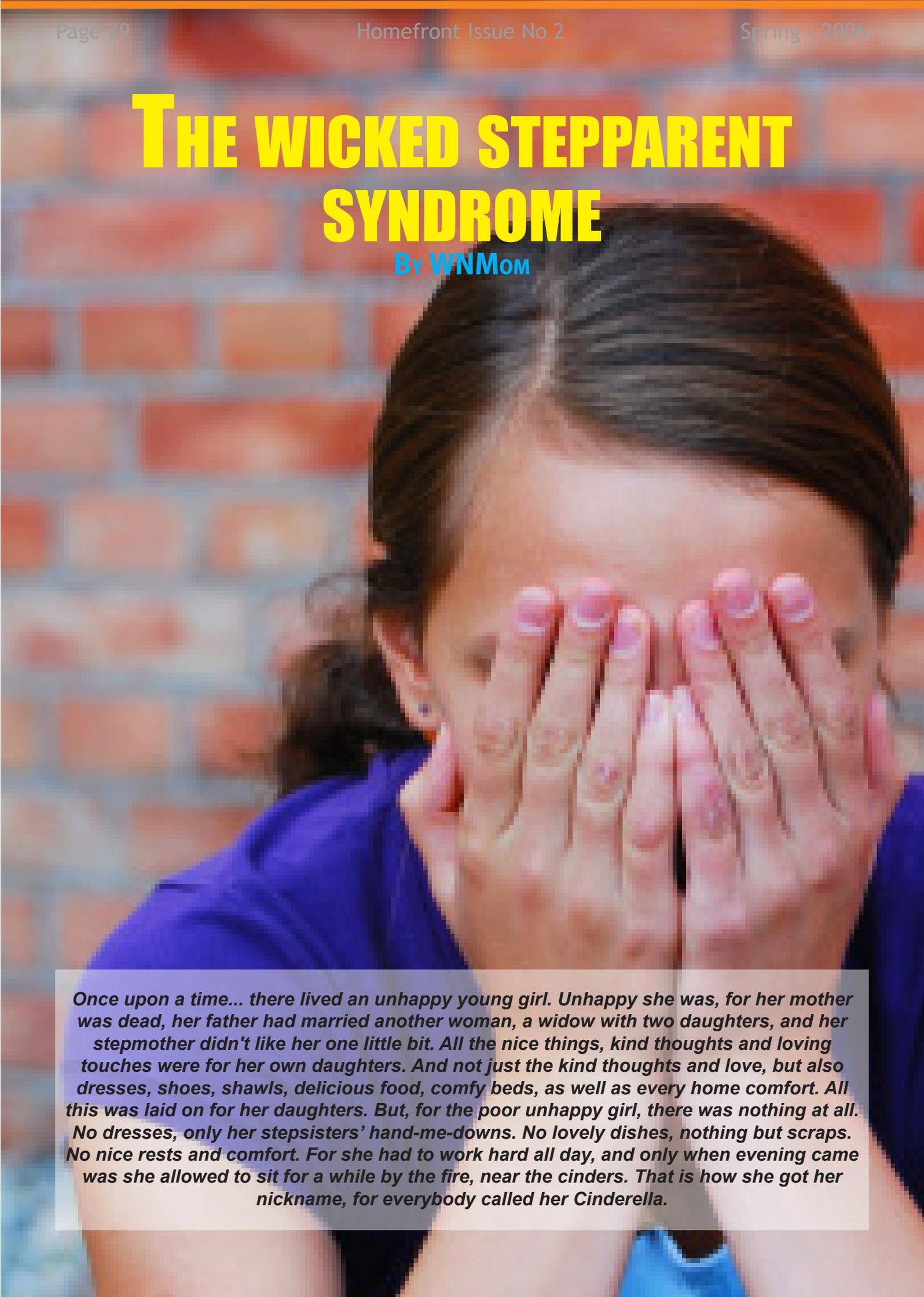
A good program is going to require including at least cardio and weight workouts. The cardio will help burn calories (read=lose weight) and will increase your cardiovascular health. Weight workouts will build lean muscle mass, creating a shapely and toned body. Plus adding muscle increases your metabolism, which means that your body will burn more calories during your regular daily activities. Don't worry about bulking up; building up the body-builder look doesn't happen without lots of extra effort, so just working out moderately with weights and no supplements isn't going to make you huge. Cardio and weights can be combined in workouts together, done back to back, alternating days, etc; it depends on your personal preference and which videos you choose. A good starter schedule could be something like: Monday, cardio; Tuesday, weights (either upper or lower body, or total body); Wednesday, rest (or add in a yoga or stretch tape); Thursday, cardio; Friday, weights. You don't want to take on too much too quickly, because you will burn out mentally and physically. You also need to have at least one day of rest for a muscle group before working it again with heavy weights. Shoot for what you can do to start; 20 minutes of cardio is a good beginner goal, and work your way up to 60 minute cardio sessions. I mentioned yoga and stretch; I incorporate these at least once a week into my routine to give my muscles a good stretch and to improve flexibility; you also need to add in core work if it is not included in your videos. With your goal in mind, decide how often you need cardio, which body parts you'd like to work with weights and how often weekly, and how much time per day you can dedicate to working out. Naptime was my workout time for a long time, and I started out 4 days a week, 30-45 minutes; now I usually shoot for 50-80 minutes 5 days a week plus 30-60 minutes on an optional 6th day. Decide what works for you and just go for it!

Like I said, don't take on too much at once, and keep in mind that when you begin, anything is more than what you were doing before. So if you can't finish that entire step tape, that's alright. Just stick it out for five more minutes next time, until you can get all the way through it. If you have to use lighter weights than an instructor on a video, no big deal; I have to do that all the time when the Amazon of an instructor I prefer goes for the 20 lb bicep curls. Design a program, give it a whirl, and modify as needed. You need to find types of exercises that you enjoy, that way you will stick with it and have a good time while improving your life. Of course there are other ways of exercising, such cardio and weight machines at home or the gym, jogging and biking outdoors, but exercise videos are my forte, so that's where I can give advice until I'm blue in the face. But anything that gets you physically active is going to do the trick, even if it's just walking the dog after dinner every night. Just remember that you get out of it what you put in, so the harder you work out, the greater the rewards will be.



THE WICKED STEPPARENT SYNDROME

By WNMom



Once upon a time... there lived an unhappy young girl. Unhappy she was, for her mother was dead, her father had married another woman, a widow with two daughters, and her stepmother didn't like her one little bit. All the nice things, kind thoughts and loving touches were for her own daughters. And not just the kind thoughts and love, but also dresses, shoes, shawls, delicious food, comfy beds, as well as every home comfort. All this was laid on for her daughters. But, for the poor unhappy girl, there was nothing at all. No dresses, only her stepsisters' hand-me-downs. No lovely dishes, nothing but scraps. No nice rests and comfort. For she had to work hard all day, and only when evening came was she allowed to sit for a while by the fire, near the cinders. That is how she got her nickname, for everybody called her Cinderella.

How many times have we told this story to our children? How many times have we heard it ourselves? When our friends get the short end of the stick, how many times have we said they are getting treated worse than a 'red-headed step-child'? Through out time stepparents have gotten a bad reputation. However undeserving it is, good stepparents constantly feel that only the negative and never the positive are measuring them.

Being a stepparent is somewhat different from regular parenting, not so much in the technique you may choose to use when raising your stepchildren or influencing them should they not live with you, but the way you must go about teaching them. Every situation is different and depending on the level of intelligence and civility both you and the natural parents have, being a stepparent can be a joy or pure hell. I hope to touch on each of these views in this article.

There are a great many people who feel that a stepparent could never love a stepchild as they could or do their own children. This is not true. For many stepparents there is a special bond with the stepchild just as a natural mother or father would have. In some cases it is even stronger than that of the natural parents.

When you agree to be in a relationship where there are already children you must make some serious decisions before committing yourself to a long-term relationship. First and foremost you must always put the children first and expect that the natural parent will as well. That means that you are second in the relationship. If you cannot live with that then being a stepparent is not something you should take on. Being a step-parent can be very trying at times and natural parents may not see you as an equal in matters that involve their children, not even the person you are in a relationship with. Some other things to consider would be how well you and the 'other' parent get along. If you do not get along with the natural parent with whom you share your duties then you either need to sit down with them and work out the issues or you may need to reconsider getting involved. While it is possible to be a stepparent and not get along with the shared duties parent, it makes life 100% harder for the children and for you.

You may also want to consider how well you get along with the child. You will NEVER replace the child. You will NEVER get the parent (if they are in fact a good and responsible parent) to choose you over the child and you should not expect to do that anyway. Another factor is how serious you plan to be with your new partner. Is this planned for the long term or is this a relationship you doubt will last? Getting involved in a relationship where you have the potential to be a stepparent is something that you should never weigh lightly. It does not just affect you. Everything that happens will affect the children.

I understand that people cannot always determine the length of a relationship, however, the majority of people do know whether or not they are in a lasting relationship. Stepparents must be extra careful when considering this because if the relationship should be dissolved the stepparent has no legal rights to the children. If you have been in their lives for a while it can have damaging effects on you and the children. When a marriage breaks up and natural parents separate the children will usually still be involved with both parents. When a stepparent and a natural parent separate, the stepparent no longer has the right to see or be involved with the children. You need to really consider the possibility of this issue and determine whether or not you will be able to live with that. If you can't or you think you may not be able to, do not get involved. While we all get married with the idea that our marriage will be the one that spans a lifetime, nothing in life is certain except death. It is a fact you must face and plan for prior to becoming emotionally attached to someone else's child.

When you have thought over every possibility and decided that you are indeed ready to enter the world of step parenting there are a few more things you should consider. Sometimes children are eager to welcome you into their lives. This could be the case if the natural parent you mirror is not or was not much of a parent. It could also be the case if the natural parent has died and sometimes it is just a very warm and loving child. However, allowing a child to call you 'Mom or Dad' before a legal commitment is made is something that should be reconsidered. It can be hard to resist sometimes but allowing the children to give you that title can cause some major problems. First if the natural par-

ent is still in the child's life they can become terribly jealous and fearful that the child will love you more than them. This can cause serious issues with visitation and custody arrangements. Also, should the relationship dissolve the child is left feeling that 'another' parent has left them. Lastly if you allow the children to label you with the title of 'Mom or Dad' and the relationship should be dissolved it will make it harder to leave because of guilt over leaving the children.

There was a case not too long ago where a young woman became involved with a man who had a couple of children. One of them lived with him and the other did not. Everything seemed fine at first until the natural mother saw the stepmother forming a very strong bond with the child that lived in the home. The child soon called the stepparent 'Mama' and the natural mother became enraged. The natural mother had very little to do with the child and in fact was pregnant by another man. Despite this fact she could not stand the thought that her child could possibly love another person in a child/parent way. The stepmother did everything she could to give the stepchild the love and attention that had been lacking in her life. She taught her things to get her level of learning where it should be for a child of her age, she cared for her when she was sick, she trained her to the potty and loved the child as if she were her own. All of this only further enraged the natural mother. In this case it would have suited the natural mother just fine if the stepmother had really been a wicked stepparent. Eventually she decided that her child should not be loved by anyone else and had the child removed from her father a year after she had walked out on him and their child. That was not enough for her though. She continued to try and get the visitations limited and actually talked badly about the stepmother to the child and to the man's other child. When her efforts fell short of driving the step-mother away and fell short of



destroying the bond the step-mother had with the child she tried to do everything in her limited power to separate the natural father and the step-mother. When she was finally confronted with her behavior she explained to the natural father that she had done all of this because she did not like her child calling the stepmother 'Mama'.

Eventually she got her way and the stepmother left. It wasn't enough to just move, she had to get as far away from the natural mothers as possible and moved across the country just to find some peace. She now has no involvement with the children.

Another case involves a stepmother who went into a relationship where there were two natural children but neither of who lived with the father. However, one day the eldest of his natural children came to live with him on a permanent basis. The stepmother did not like the child and the conflict caused great pain to all parties involved. Eventually it led to the marriage being torn apart. The stepmother had not considered the possibility of having a stepchild even though she knew prior to getting involved that there were other children. However, she did find out before she got married but was so consumed by the idea of being married that she failed to think of all the aspects of this new life as a stepparent. She believed that she would be able to squeeze the natural child out of the life of the father. Even though she has two children by him, he still chose to put his child first. The problem lies in the fact that this woman could not handle being second in line.

When teaching or influencing a stepchild you must always be mindful of the ways the parents have chosen to raise them. Personal beliefs and preferential politics can cause serious issues. You can still influence a child to your personal beliefs without spelling it out in crayon to them. Your actions and the way you treat them and the people around you will set an example. Children are not stupid and they do see through

smokescreens. So always be aware of the choices you make and the way you are acting. Always take the high road in situations that involve the stepchildren. Sometimes that can be trying but it is worth it. When you choose to be the better person in a situation the children will never see any negative reactions from you where they are concerned. This will help build up a sense of trust and security for them. When they are over, if they do not reside with you, play with them. Do activities together no matter how small you may think they are getting your stepchildren involved will mean a lot to them. Try to include them in family decisions. For example asking their opinion on where to go for dinner, or what to cook for dinner, what movie to pick up, what activity to do for the night. Small things like that will mean more in the long run than say trying to buy their love or affection. Leave that to the shared duties parent. By all means get them what they need and every now and again it doesn't hurt to buy them a surprise or something they wanted and you feel they deserve.

However, taking them to the toy store every time they come over sets a bad example and will lead to serious problems. Once you indulge in the manipulation of buying affection you teach the children that they are able to make you and the shared duties parent compete. Then it becomes less about being a family and more about who buys me what I want when I want it.

In conclusion all I can really say is to use common sense when contemplating becoming a stepparent. Treat your stepchildren with love and respect no matter how you are treated in return. When they get older and mature they will remember that you were the one who was always there for them and they will come to understand how much they really meant to you.

Skin and it's connection to food

Have you got Normal Skin - Oily Skin Or Dry!!
The right foods can help you!!

Oily Skin - If you have oily skin you are like me and you are inclined to have greasy complexion, you probably also get breakouts (UGH). Vitamin A and omega fatty acids are essential for the control of sebum production in the skin and YOU should be taken them, so make sure you get enough foods such as salmon, oranges, red fruits and plenty of yummy green leafy veg, as well as nuts and seeds in your diet. Without these foods breakouts and a greasy complexion will be by your side and we all know how annoying that can be!!

Dry Skin - If you suffer from dry skin like most people do, especially in the winter make sure you're drinking enough water, you need to drink around eight glasses a day, don't drink anymore than 8 as too much water can also flush all your minerals out. You may also be getting too few omega fatty acids or too little vitamin E, I take

Vitamin E and use Vitamin E creams on my face. Good sources of fatty acids include salmon (not a fav for me), and other types of fatty fish (for omega-3 fatty acids), also take flaxseed oil for omega-6 fatty acids. Vitamin E is also found in green leafy veggies, and seeds.

Normal Skin - If you have normal skin, I envy you lol! A regular, gentle skincare regiment and daily sun protection should be all you need to keep your skin in good condition, my sister has "normal" skin and I really envy her. Make sure you get plenty of antioxidants in your diet. Beta-carotene, found in oranges, red and dark-green fruit and veg are a powerful antioxidant and they are converted into vitamin A - another vitamin that's essential for skin health.



THE BASICS OF SUNBLOCK

By AryanAngel72

Are "sunblocks" and "sunscreens" the same thing? No. They both provide sun- protection for the skin, but they use different ingredients and mechanisms in achieving that protection. A "sunblock" most commonly uses zinc oxide or titanium oxide to "block" the sun's harmful rays from penetrating the skin by reflecting it. A "sunscreen" uses minerals and other ingredients to absorb the sun's harmful rays once it gets into the layers of the skin. This helps mitigate sun damage to the skin. Sunscreens are easier to wear than sunblocks as they readily absorb into the skin and do not leave a whitish residue. However, sunblocks are more advantageous in that they do not allow penetration of the sun into skin. Their ingredients are often more harsh and may leave a whitish residue on the surface of the skin, as they do not absorb easily. This can be a problem when you wish to wear every day, or under makeup. Sunblocks are good for long periods or extreme sun exposure, swimming and sports.

What is "SPF" anyway? SPF stands for "sun protection factor". The FDA requires all sunscreen products to put their SPF on their label. The SPF reveals the amount of sunburn protection that a sunscreen can provide an average user, when applied correctly. It is recommended that sunscreens have an SPF 15 or more. Note: An SPF of 30 is NOT twice as strong as an SPF of 15, but rather provides about 97% protection against UVB rays compared to 93% protection against UVB rays for SPF 15.

What are UVB and UVA rays? The sun's radiation accounts for 90% of skin aging and skin cancers. UV's are the damaging invisible ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation from the sun. Both cause suntan, sunburn and sun damage. UVB rays are rays that burn the skin during peak sun hours (between 10AM and 2PM) in the summer months and UVA rays- are rays that cause aging year round, regardless of weather.

Can I use my sunscreen for my face on my body too? Yes. However, sunscreens can be expensive and sunscreens developed especially for the face, even more so: they must use a more advanced science and expensive ingredients because the face tends to be more sensitive than other parts of the body. This is especially true after facial treatments or surgery of any kind. General advice: It is better to use a specially formulated sunscreen for your face on the rest of your body, if you have to, than to use a general all-over sunscreen on you face.



ASK HOMEFRONT

Questions & Answers

(Q) What can I do to ease my nausea?

(A) There are many tips to ease nausea, experiment and do what works best for you. Snack frequently - lot of pregnant women keep saltines on hand, 24/7. Drink lots of water. Avoid fatty foods and caffeine. Drink peppermint & ginger tea, lemonade, ginger ale. Suck on hard candies. Accupressure bracelets can be purchased at most drug stores. Ask your healthcare provider about taking Vitamin B6.

(Q) Is it true that pregnant women shouldn't clean the cat's litterbox?

(A) Yes. Cat feces can contain the bacteria *Toxoplasma gondii*, which can cause Toxoplasmosis. It can also be found in soil where cats may defecate, such as a garden.

(Q) Is it safe to clean my house while pregnant?

(A) Yes. Make sure you're in a well ventilated area to avoid excess fumes. Always wear gloves (even when you're not pregnant) to avoid any chemicals being absorbed into the bloodstream. Seek out natural based cleaning products to ensure safety.

(Q) How much weight should I gain when pregnant

(A) Weight gain varies. If your pre-pregnancy weight is normal, you should ideally gain 25 / 35 pounds. If you're under-weight, you should gain 25 / 40 pounds. If you are overweight, you should only gain 15 / 25 pounds.

(Q) Is it safe to travel?

(A) According to the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the safest time to travel while pregnant is during the second trimester. This is the time she is least likely to experience a miscarriage or premature labor. Traveling is considered safe up until 35 weeks, after that many doctors will not recommend it. If you are traveling by air, check with your airline to make sure they will allow you to fly. Some airlines will not allow women who are 35 weeks and beyond to fly. Metal detectors at the airport will not harm your baby.

(Q) I would like to decorate my baby's room, is it safe for me to paint?

(A) It is recommended that you let someone else do the painting while pregnant.

(Q) Why am I feeling so tired?

(A) Being pregnant puts a strain on your body. Changing hormonal levels are the main culprit that give you that run-down feeling. Tiredness usually eases with the passing of the first trimester. To help relieve that tired feeling, listen to your body. Go to bed earlier and try to get nine to ten hours of sleep. If you can, take a nap during the day. Eat right.

(Q) What over the counter (OTC) medicines are OK?

(A) ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS seek the advice of your healthcare provider before taking any OTC products.

(Q) Is it normal for me to have headaches?

(A) Yes. It is quite common to suffer frequent headaches while pregnant, especially during the first trimester. Although the exact cause is undetermined, it is believed that hormonal changes are the main cause. Ask your healthcare provider what you can take to relieve your headache.

CELEBRATING OSTARA

By Vicky

Ostara, is the Spring Equinox, it is the day when we see light conquering over darkness, when our glorious Spring has returned. In addition to the historical traditions and related holidays, there is an abundance of pagan ways to mark the return of life, which may add significance to your celebration of Ostara!

Flowers are an obvious choice, I love daffodils and when I see them I am instantly reminded of my Homeland Ireland and Ostara. If there are any wildflowers growing near your home, Ostara would be an ideal time to pick some (respectfully). However, remember that many wildflowers do not survive even a single day after being placed in water, so choose your flowers wisely. You may choose to do this in



connection with a nature walk. An Ostara nature walk is a great way to celebrate Mother Nature; it's not for any other purpose such as exercise. Keep the focus where it belongs Ladies and Gents.

Your florist will certainly have a wider selection of flowers for you to choose from, whether or not flowers are in bloom in your area, I'm not sure if they plant Spring type flowers in parks in the USA, in Ireland once St Patrick's days is over we are free to pick Daffodils from the sides of roads. Traditional choices for ostara include violets, daffodils, primrose, iris, peonies, narcissus, and cowslips. Yellow, white, and purple are most often connected with Ostara and Easter, and these would be among the colours to select for flowers and for candles. Yellow is the most traditional.

If you are interested in related traditions, check the Roman god of Attis, whose flower is the violet. His story is yet another one showing rebirth and regeneration. Ostara is an ideal time to fill a cauldron or other container with spring water, and place your flowers--or float them--where they will be seen as soon as you enter your house. My husband has bought me a huge cauldron to do exactly this and we have a wonderful stand with a chain to hang it from, Ostara is a special time for our family.

Hot cross buns are another traditional food at this time of year. Some people see the cross on top as a symbol of the Christian cross; others regard it as the traditional markings of North-South-East-West. But the hot cross bun always reminds me of Brigid and living in Ireland we were raised on Hot Cross buns for Ostara!

A lot of pagans, especially those with small children, enjoy the tradition of knocking on the ground (with their hand, stick, or wand) to "wake up" Mother Earth. This can be done ceremonially, marking a four-pointed circle/compass on the ground. The child who will do the "wake up" call starts at the southernmost point, walks to the northernmost point--representing the cold north--and knocks there. Your Children can take turns doing this, we done something similar for the Winter Solstice with a comrade and his son!

Spring-cleaning can be a family ritual also. It makes housecleaning a little more fun for children and adults alike, if they see the connection to the wheel of the year. Spring-cleaning is upon us and we have just started today March 12th!

However you choose to celebrate Ostara, remember that we are celebrating the abundance of Nature. The New Year, and promised return of life, is finally here. Enjoy!

TEETHING & TOOTH CARE FOR YOUR BABY

By Stacey1488

Unfortunately teething is something that all babies have to go through. Teething is actually a process that begins even before your baby's first teeth start to appear. Most babies usually start teething when they are 4 to 7 months old. Typically, the first teeth to come in are the two front bottom teeth, I love when baby have their first two teeth and give you that adorable smile, nothing compares to it. A month or two later, the front four upper teeth appear, followed by the two lower incisors about four weeks after that. Next, the first molars arrive, and then the eyeteeth. However, this is just a general idea of what to expect and many babies will have their teeth coming in earlier or later, it all depends on the baby.

How will I know if my baby is teething?

Sometimes when your baby is teething, they will feel some type of discomfort. Some symptoms of teething include:

- Crying
- Running a low-grade temperature
- Drooling more than usual (very common sign)
- Irritability
- Biting and trying to chew on anything within reach (another very common sign)
- Swelling along the gum line that is tender to your touch

How can I make my baby feel more comfortable?

Your baby may need some extra cuddles, although some babies are so distraught and uncomfortable that hug won't even help. You can also try some of these tips to relieve your baby's discomfort:

- Wash and dry your hands. Then, using one of your fingers, rub your baby's gums softly. This has worked like a gem for me.
- Many babies find teething rings made of a hard rubber soothing to chew on. I cool mine in the fridge for 15 minutes. Don't freeze them, as some tend to break!
- Soft, cold foods such as applesauce or yogurt can be very appetizing to your baby and can offer some teething relief if they are old enough for solid foods.

How should I care for my baby's teeth?

Now that your baby's teeth are coming in, you will want to keep them clean and healthy by:

- Using a gauze pad to wipe the teeth after meals and at bedtime.
- Gently brushing the teeth with a baby toothbrush that has soft bristles.
- Not allowing your baby to go to sleep with a bottle.

Source: The European Society of Pediatrics!



HOW TO MAKE YOUR HOME FEEL FRESH

By Vicky

We don't always have time for a full springtime clean, many of us start with the simple and easy tasks, like cleaning floors and corners, dusting rugs and the like. There is just something about the freshness of the spring season that makes us all want that spring freshness in our homes. We hope you enjoy the below tips, HomeFront have adapted these tips are from one the e-newsletters WAU subscribes too - How to Make Your Home Feel Fresh in Spring - Enjoy!

1. Open your windows. Let a fresh spring breeze flow through your home and get rid of lingering winter staleness. If it's still cold where you live, try opening the window in your bedroom just a little, and sleep with an extra comforter, we always sleep with the window opened at night, today we started to open the kitchen and living room windows to cleanse the air in both rooms!

2. Try moving a piece of furniture or two. Sometimes the new perspective we gain when we change something around is all we need for a sense of spacious freshness. We haven't moved furniture yet, but have plans to do so over the next few weeks!

3. Simplify your knick-knacks. Try the 'Take-Away Half' plan: take away half of your knick-knacks and put them in a box. Then when the seasons change again, switch them. It will feel like you have all new decorations! Today I removed all my autumn candles and decorations, and I will only use flowers from spring d'cor, in my bathroom I just add cute little fairies with flowers and candles.

4. Consider bring colour into your home. Try bringing in more light airy spring colours to your home. A new slipcover for that tired sofa is a start, we don't have a sofa that can be slip covered, I would love to change mine for each season, so I throw a pastel throw rug over the back of the chairs, or even a couple of pretty pillows will make a refreshing difference.

5. Use old things in new ways. Try putting rolled-up napkins in a clean vase, or placing candles on a mirror for the dining table, I put some of my candles that I don't light on my coffee table on top of tiles I have of Spring Goddesses. I also use pretty painted baskets to hold my magazines and remote controls; you can get them cheap at craft stores.

6. Follow your nose! If something smells 'off' in your home, find out what it is. Rotting compost, moldy drains, and a neglected pet bed--all these can contribute to a sense of winter stuck staleness. Be sure to empty compost daily; try pouring 1/2 cup of vinegar down your drain to freshen it; and give that pet bed a washing. And once you've eliminated the causes of bad odors, place shallow dishes with a tablespoon of vanilla extract in each one around your home to keep it smelling fresh. And if the fridge is the offending party I would suggest removing all food items from the fridge and cleaning the entire inside of the fridge, the last time I had a bad smell in my fridge it wasn't even any food we had inside, it was just food that had spilled and started to smell. Also keep a pack of Baking Powder in your fridge to eliminate odors!

7. Fresh flowers help. The sight of pretty spring flowers blooming on a table or shelf livens our spirits. My husband has just started to plant flowers and herbs. Bulbs are a great value since after they have bloomed you can plant them outdoors to bloom again next year. My favorite flower is Daffodils, we still haven't grown any but they are definitely a great spring flower!

8. Vacuum rugs/sweep or damp-mop floors. If you only have time for one chore, cleaning the floors is usually the one that will make the most immediate difference in how fresh a room feels. Today we slept under all the living room chairs, under the coffee table and under the mat at the entrance to our house, we actually threw out the rug from our living room as it a dust and dirt collector and no amount of cleaning would remedy it, so we just left our floors bare and it feels wonderful!

9. Do a quick pick up and put away. Anytime my husband and I clear out a little space, it gives us some breathing room, and that feels really great. It's like the early-spring raking we do in our yard; today we got rid of fallen leaves we had ignored for the past few weeks, so new life can grow.

When we get rid of clutter and believe me it gets bad with two clutter bugs living in one small space, we create some growing room in our home. You can start small, maybe with just one corner, but if you make a daily or weekly habit of it, room-by-room, eventually your whole house will be done! Today we did our yard and living room!

10. Wipe pet hair off upholstered furniture. I absolutely hate pet hair on my furniture, so everyday I dust it off this only takes a minute, it really makes a difference.

HOMESCHOOLING

“FACT FAMILIES”

By Glory

A great tool I have recently started using with my second grader's math this year is Fact Families. I was having a problem getting him to memorize addition and subtraction facts and since Singapore doesn't address memorization at all, (yet expects them to know it midway through book 1A), I had no choice but figure it out.

I created the fact family houses you see in the pictures by using simple draw functions on MS Word. If I can do it, anyone can!

(When making the worksheets, put the sum of the two number as the maximum value, and ignore the rest. After you create this worksheet copy and paste into a word doc. And then you can edit the problems so they ONLY contain the fact families you just practiced. (i.e. $1 + 1 = 2$ or $2 - 1 = 1$ and so on)

What we do first is go over the first fact family in the roof and then put the four operations in the house. (See picture for clarity) So the fact family 1,1,2 is in the roof while the four operations are in the 'house' living as a family. $1 + 1 = 2$, $2 - 1 = 1$. This particular family, and all doubles or 'twins' as I call them, only have 2 operations as they repeat themselves.

Immediately after my son writes down the operations in the house, he fills in a worksheet of 15 problems using ONLY THIS fact family. The problems repeat themselves several times and this repetition is good for memorization of the fact family. This first one is pretty boring, but it immediately creates a sense of accomplishment as the child only learns two facts, one addition and one subtraction. The natural inverse properties of addition and subtraction let children 'discover' the patterns that math will exhibit all the way through college. My son seems to like finding these patterns, and they excite him when he figures it out. He actually told me he was getting smarter when we did this.

We go on to the next fact family as soon as he completes the top portion of his worksheet and repeat

the entire process. My schedule doesn't permit me to work with my son in math on a daily basis, so we alternate days with the exact same worksheet he just did, on the next day to reinforce memorization of the facts. And at the same time, he isn't learning anything new, so I don't have to participate in that activity. You may want to introduce a new set of fact families every single day.

We also practice using the fact family flashcards that are available on the Math Cats website. The print function wasn't working when I made them, so I just copied and past special-ed the picture of the page into a word doc and then printed them off that way. It worked just fine.

You can use this same concept when introducing the inverses of multiplication and division and Singapore starts that in Book 2.

Good luck until next time,

LEAVE IT OR HEAVE IT?

Are you wondering how long a specific dry food item will last on the shelf? Here's a small guide:

Baking Powder - 1 Year

Baking Soda - 2 Years

Bouillon Cubes - 1 Year

Breadcrumbs, dried - 6 Months

Cake Mixes - 9 Months

Cornmeal - 1 Year

Flour (White) - 6/8 Months

Peanut Butter - 2/3 Months

Sugar, brown - 4 Months

Sugar, granulated - 2+ Years

Vanilla - 1 Year

DOGGIE TREATS FROM SCRATCH

By Vicky

Easter Dog Biscuits

INGREDIENTS:

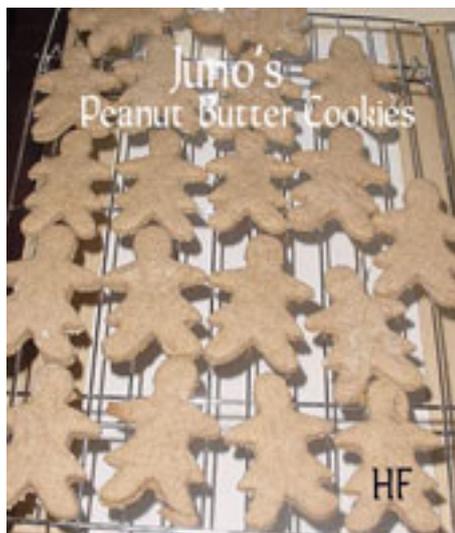
- * 2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- * 1/2 cup nonfat powdered milk
- * 1 tsp. sugar (or less)
- * 1 egg
- * 1 tsp. beef or chicken bouillon granules
- * 1/2 cup hot water

PREPARATION:

In a large bowl, dissolve bouillon in hot water. Cool to room temperature. Add remaining ingredients. Knead for three minutes or until dough forms a ball. This dough can be really tough to roll :(so i let my husband do that part.



Juno's Peanut Butter Cookies



INGREDIENTS:

- * 2 cups whole-wheat flour
- * 1 tbsp. baking powder
- * 1 cup peanut butter (chunky or smooth)
- * 1 cup milk

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 375°F. In a bowl, combine flour and baking powder. In another bowl, mix peanut butter and milk, then add to dry ingredients and mix well. Place dough on a lightly floured surface and knead. Roll dough to 1/4 inch thickness and use a cookie cutter to cut out shapes. Bake for 20 minutes on a greased baking sheet until lightly brown. Cool on a rack, then store in an airtight container. These cookies BURN easily!!

KIDS CRAFTING CORNER

“OSTARA EGGS”

By VICKY

It's Ostara/Easter time, and we all know what that means- its time to decorate some eggs, my favourite part of spending time in the USA for Ostara was decorating eggs, this wasn't something we done in Ireland! Here are some fun alternatives to store-bought kits that you can use to create unique Ostara/Easter eggs with items found around the house. Be sure to wash your eggs in warm soapy water before decorating to remove any residue!

Boiling Eggs

To prevent cracking, bring your eggs to room temperature before you boil them. Place your eggs in a single layer in a saucepan and add enough water to cover the eggs, plus an inch or so. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes, then rinse them with cold water.

After decorating, you may give your egg a nice shine with a little vegetable oil and a soft cloth. Be sure to keep in mind if you'd like to eat the eggs afterwards, they should not be out of the refrigerator for over two hours, should not be cracked, and make sure what you are using to colour your eggs is nontoxic.

Natural Egg Dyes

There are two methods of dying with natural ingredients. In some cases, you will boil your egg with the dying agent; for others, you will cook your egg first, then soak it in the dye. To achieve the best results, add 1 teaspoon of vinegar to your liquid when you add the eggs, and keep in mind the more of an ingredient you use, the richer your colour will be. Dying your eggs naturally gives Ostara/Easter a nicer feeling "at least for me"!!

Here are some ingredients you can use to dye your eggs:

Red: Red onion skins- you will need quite a few. Boil these with your eggs for 1/2 to 1 hour.

Pink: Soak in the liquid from canned beets or cranberry juice, or boil with fresh beet, cut up rhubarb, or red onionskins.

Orange: Yellow onion skins- Boil 2 cups worth for 1/2 hour, then add eggs and continue to boil until eggs are cooked.

Pale Yellow: Boil with orange or lemon peels, carrots, celery seed, or ground cumin.

Deep Yellow: Boil with ground turmeric.

Pale Green: Boil with spinach leaves.

Blue: Soak in juice from canned blueberries, or boil with red cabbage leaves.

Lavender: Soak in purple grape juice.

Brown: Soak in coffee.

Tie Dye Eggs

Shave different colours of crayons while your eggs boil. Mix a few different colors together in a bowl and when the eggs are cooked and still very hot, roll them in the bowl of crayon shavings. Make sure your egg is good and dry before you try rolling it! This is lot's of fun and works a treat!



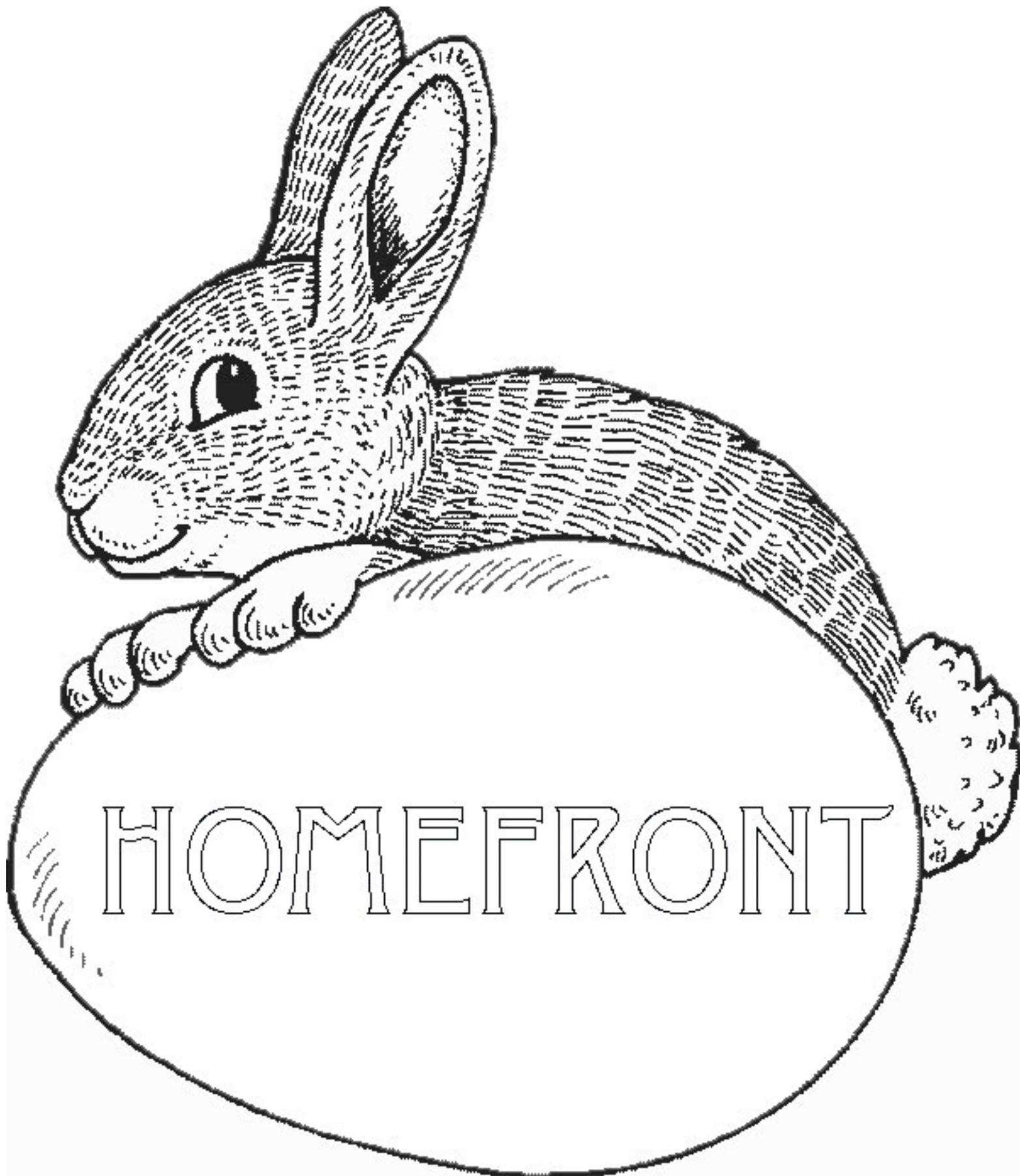
Extra HomeFront Tricks

- Write on your egg with a white crayon before dyeing, and watch as your invisible drawing magically appears! Coloured crayons also have a nice effect. I Loveee doing this, i always make really cute Ostara/Easter Eggs with Runes on them.
- Wrap rubber bands around your egg before dyeing it.
- For marbled eggs, add one tablespoon of oil to your dye, but don't put in any vinegar! Dip in multiple colours for a neat effect.
- Rather than dyeing eggs, wrap colored tissue paper around wet eggs and allow to dry; the paper will fall off, leaving the color behind. Or, you can simply use markers to decorate your eggs.
- Use small leaves from fresh or dried herbs like flat parsley, rue, thyme or fern. Press the leaves against the egg and wrap securely with a section of old nylon stocking. Do this before putting in the dyebath. After dyeing, rinse these eggs in clear water before unwrapping. The area under the leaves will have little or no dye if done properly.
- Create designs with markers, stickers, paints. NOTE: Drawing designs with crayons won't work here as the waxy crayons will melt off in the boiling process.

A CHART OF WHAT COLOUR EGGS GO WITH WHAT RUNES AND MAGICK

COLOUR	HERB	TYPE OF MAGICK	RUNE
Green	Colts-foot, bracken, for a pale green: spinach leaves	Growth, Prosperity	Fehu
Yellow green	Carrot tops, for a green-gold: yellow delicious apple peels	Fertility, New beginnings	Berkana
Yellow	Tumeric, for a light yellow: Orange or lemon peels, carrot tops, celery seeds or ground cumin	Sun, Energy, Vitality	Sowulo
Orange	Yellow onion skins	Sun, Energy, Vitality	Sowulo
Rust	Onion skin	Strength	Uruz
Red	Madder root for a pale red: fresh beets or cranberries, frozen raspberries	Sacred eggs	Sowulo
Pink	Madder root	Love, Affection	Gebo

PRINT OUT AND COLOUR



CONGRATULATIONS

Homefront would like to Congratulate the following families on their Pregnancies, Births and Marraiges!

Births

Congratulations to R&S on the birth of their Daughter Lily!

Patricia and Ronald on the birth of their daughter Aryan Justice

MARRIAGES

Congratulations to Tina and Mike on their Marriage

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