

Eat Healthy, Be Active

Welcome to this issue of *Eat Healthy, Be Active*-- the Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition's quarterly newsletter. Through this newsletter we hope to provide you and your family with quick, practical ideas for eating healthy and staying active. We hope you enjoy it, and please...share it with a friend

Healthy Smiles Begin with Healthy Habits

When you have an attractive smile you look and feel better about yourself! Healthy teeth are the key to that nicer smile. Healthy teeth also mean you're able to enjoy your meals (think about eating crunchy foods like an apple with teeth missing or a tooth ache) and make talking easier. Missing teeth make it difficult to speak clearly making it hard to communicate with friends and family as well as at school or work.

Take the dental health quiz below to see how your dental habits stack up!

- If you brush twice each day (when you get up and before bed) give yourself **2 points**.
- If you floss daily give yourself **2 points**
- If you've visited your dentist in the last year give yourself **2 points**
- If your toothbrush is less than 4 months old give yourself **2 points**



Planting Your First Vegetable Garden

Thinking about planting a garden this summer? From planning to preparing the soil then planting & weeding to the first bite of that home grown veggie...every step of gardening is a rewarding experience. Follow the road map in this news-

letter to help you get started!



Step 1: Choose a location: Think about **size** (start small but allow room to expand), **sun** (think full or at least 1/2 day) and **access to water**

- If you haven't had a can of pop, sweetened sports drink, candy or other sweet snacks today give yourself **2 points**

Add up your points. If your score was...

8-10 points You're a winner! Keep building that healthy smile.

4-6 points

Keep working on those healthy habits & consider what changes you could make

0-2 points

Your smile is at risk! Start building healthier habits now!!



See page 3 for Healthy Smile Pointers!

Remember...

Brush, floss, eat healthy foods, limit between meal snacking, wear a mouth guard, get sealants, avoid chewing on pencils & avoid tobacco



Coulee Region
Childhood Obesity
Coalition

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Special points of interest:

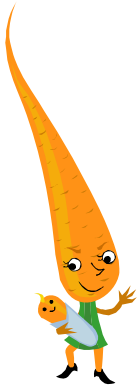
- ☉ Maintain your smile
- ☉ Vegetable gardening
- ☉ Biking safely
- ☉ Area biking opportunities
- ☉ Container gardening



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Planting Your First Vegetable Garden



Step 3: Raised beds or traditional rows? Raised beds are easier to work as they are higher but take work to build & money for materials. Traditional rows take less time to put in, allow for expansion but require more bending to

care for!

Step 4: Use seeds or plants? Seeds are cheaper, you'll get more plants & you can go in with a friend to share a packet. Plants reduce the time to harvest but are more expensive. They are good for veggies that take a long time until harvest or if you want to try a veggie you've never tried before & only want a few this year!

Step 5: Pest Management Lots of rabbits in your neighborhood? You probably will need fencing or wire

netting to keep them out. Are you interested in raising your veggies without chemical sprays? Read up on the how tos of organic pest management to get rid of those bugs that can ruin your veggies! Check out this web site for the nitty-gritty on organic gardening: www.organicgardening.net.

Step 6: Maintenance: Regular watering & weeding are essential for a healthy garden. Too little or too much water can effect how much your garden produces as can weeds as they (the weeds) take nutrients away from your veggies. Check out <http://www.gardenweb.com/sesbania/watering.html> for watering tips.

Step 7: Harvest Read up on the veggies you've planted to see when and how to harvest them. Lettuce can be cut & it regrows so you get several

"cuttings". Harvest zucchini when its about an inch in diameter. For specifics tips go to <http://gardening.about.com/od/vegetablepatch/a/HarvestTimes.htm>

Want some web sites for reference? Check out:

- www.weekendgardener.net
- www.gardening.about.com
- <http://4hgarden.nisu.edu/tour/overview.html> (great ideas for children's theme gardens!!)
- www.gardening-with-kids.com
- www.kidsgardening.com



Family Bicycling Safety



Summer bike rides are something we all look forward to as the weather warms. Follow these pointers to keep your

family safe this summer when they climb on their bikes.

- Be sure each person's bike is the right size for them. Oversized bikes are dangerous & hard to control! Kids are generally not ready for a 2-wheeler until they are 5 or 6 years old.
- Be sure the bike is maintained...air pressure in the tires is at the recommended range, the chain is oiled (a dry chain can lock up & break suddenly) and the

brakes are in good working order.

- Wear a helmet! All family members should wear one. Be sure it fits well and is worn level on your head (not tilted back as this doesn't protect your head...the purpose for the helmet!!)
- Obey the rules of the road. If riding in the road, ride single file, with traffic. Signal your moves. Follow the same rules as cars...stop at stop signs & stop lights. Avoid headphones as they impair your ability to hear traffic.
- Be visible. Wear bright clothing so motorists see you. Make eye contact with motorists so you're sure they see you & know you're there.

- If riding at night be sure to use lights...preferably blinking lights on the front & back of your bike. Be sure your pedals, wheels & spokes have reflectors on them & wear clothing that reflects.
- Check out your city or town's rules about riding on the sidewalks. In the City of La Crosse, you can't ride on downtown sidewalks but you can in the neighborhoods.



Healthy Smile Pointers

Looking for ways to keep your teeth healthy & your smile brighter?

- Watch those sweet drinks...pop...sports drinks...even juice can bathe your teeth with sugar. This is especially a problem between meals as the amount of saliva your mouth produces is less.
- Even diet pop can be problematic. It contains acid that can damage tooth enamel. Water is still your best bet between meals!
- Cut down on snacking...especially sweet or starchy foods such as crackers. When you eat these

foods the bacteria in plaque make acid & this acid "attack" lasts 20 minutes. Acid attacks can lead to dental decay in time. When snacking choose fresh fruits & veggies or cheese which have a protective effect on teeth.

- Get your fluoride! Brush daily with fluoride toothpaste and drink fluoridated water rather than bottled water (although some bottled water

does contain fluoride so check the label!). Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel making it less likely to decay.

- Floss daily! Flossing helps break up the bacteria and sugar between your teeth reducing the possibility of decay.



- Wear a mouthguard when playing sports
- Avoid tobacco products!

Biking in the Coulee Region



This Spring brings lots of opportunities to strap on your helmet and enjoy a bike ride. Check out the following area events...

May 2-8

Bike to Work Week

Bike to Work Week promotes biking as a healthy alternative to using your car to get to work. It's a great way to build activity into your day, a "green" mode of transportation and a relaxing way to start and end your day. A number of area business participate so watch for more information in area media & from your employer. The week ends with a celebration in Cameron Park on Friday night at which challenge prizes are awarded.

May 4-8

Bike & Walk to School Week

Area schools are competing with one another to see who can have the most students walking or biking to school during this week. So have your kids grab their helmets and head to school! They too can share in the fun of Bike to Work Week!

May 2

Bike to Work Week Bike Rodeo



Come to the rodeo in Riverside Park between 1-4 PM & enjoy fun, games & a chance to practice your biking skills.

May 9

Slide into Safety with the Loggers 5-8 PM Copeland Park

Come out & join the Safe Kids Coalition for one of La Crosse's largest safety events. This free event is filled with fun activities, booths & entertainment for the entire family!

June 20

Minds in Motion Bike Tour



The Minds in Motion Bicycle Tour offers riders a choice of four levels of difficulty: a 10 mile family ride, 16 miles of flat terrain, 34 miles with rolling hills and longer climbs, or 60 miles of rolling hills and major climbs. Riders will receive a free T-shirt, rest stop refreshments, sag wagon support and lunch. Interested riders can register at www.mimbiketour.org. Proceeds support children's health, wellness and nutrition throughout the Onalaska School District.



This newsletter is brought to you by the Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition. Our goal is to prevent childhood overweight & obesity. Members include:

Family Resources Gundersen Lutheran Head Start
La Crosse County Health Dept UW-La Crosse YMCA
School Districts of La Crosse, Onalaska & Holmen
Viterbo University UW-Extension-WNEP Program

No Yard? No problem with container gardening!



Gardening is a fun, relaxing activity for people of all ages. If you love to gar-

den but have limited space or you always wanted to have a "green thumb" but don't know where to start, container gardening may be for you! You can have enough to enjoy fresh vegetables all summer long. A container allows you to move your "garden" to a perfect growing location, especially during bad weather. Good locations include your windowsill, balcony, and porch or patio area. Here are some tips to get you started:

Use clean containers at least 6" across and 8" deep like clay pots, plastic pails, and milk jugs with the tops cut off. Choose a container large enough for the plants you want to grow. Punch holes in the bottom of the containers for proper drainage. You may want to place stones or crushed rock over the drain holes to keep them from getting plugged up. Use good potting soil for best results.

Some vegetables that grow well in containers include green bean, car-

rots, beets, cucumbers, leaf lettuce, green and bulb onions, peas, radishes, tomatoes, green peppers, and various herbs. Plant the seeds or set transplants according to instructions on the seed package or plant tag.

Watering a container garden is much different than a regular garden. Because the amount of soil is relatively small, containers can dry out very quickly, especially if they are always in full sunlight. The plants may need watering on a daily or twice daily basis. Read directions on the plant or seeds carefully. Apply water until it runs out of the drainage holes. Soak the soil thoroughly before planting. After planting, water the pots frequently. Place your pot where there will be at least six hours of sun each day. Carefully remove any weeds that appear.

If you have questions or need gardening tips, call the La Crosse County Extension office at 608-785-9593. This summer try container gardening. It's an enjoyable way to grow good nutrition...at your fingertips!

WNEP
La Crosse County UW-Extension

Italian Pasta Salad

Makes 8 servings

4 cups pasta, cooked
2 cups blanched broccoli pieces
1 cup cooked carrot slices
1/2 cup red pepper strips
1/4 cup sliced green onions
1/2 to 3/4 cup Italian salad dressing, light or reduced fat

Instructions:

1. Mix all ingredients together and refrigerate for about 30 minutes before serving.

Note: For a more hearty salad, add strips of cooked ham, a can of cooked red beans or sprinkle with grated cheese.

Source: USDA SNAP-Ed Connection. Recipe Finder

