

# Urban Living

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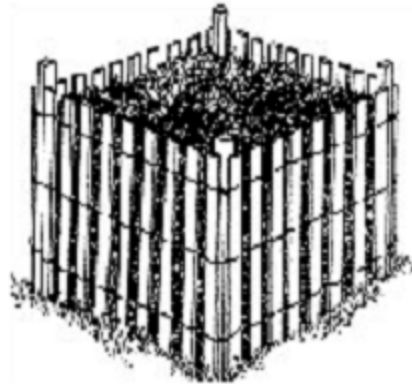
News You Can Use For Your Family, Home And Garden

September/October 2004

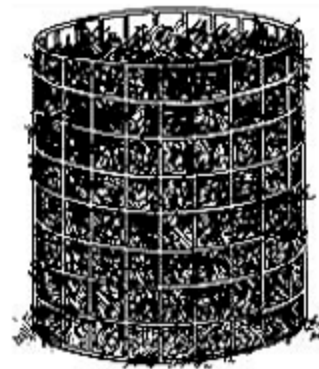
## Goin' For The Gold Fall Composting

by John Foerster

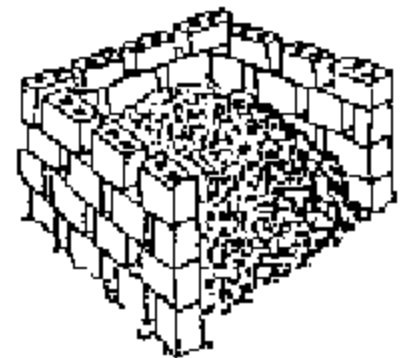
**W**ant better vegetables, nicer flowers, easier soil to work? Then participate in the garden Olympics by going for gardeners' gold—compost. You can produce it yourself from the garden plants at the end of your growing season this fall. All you need is some green plants, some leaves, some air and a little water. If you want really great compost, then add some composted chicken manure and two shovels of dirt from the garden. Yes! You are going to have to pitchfork the pile if you want compost by next spring. For sure, you're going



**Snow Fence**



**Poultry Wire**



**Cinder Block**

Some easily constructed compost bins.

*All you need is some green plants, some leaves, some air and a little water.*

to have to keep turning the pile after all the rain we keep getting. Here is what you need to do.

At the end of your gardening season, clean out the garden. Pile the waste in a bin along with some leaves. Add a little water (just so the plant material is damp), and mix occasionally. The more you mix, the faster the soil critters will break that garden waste down to good, dark soil. On your empty garden plot sow some alfalfa, or annual rye grass as a cover crop. This will get you ready for next season. It also prevents erosion. The seeds are cheap and found at garden stores and farm suppliers. Just ask for cover crop.

### Why Do You Need To Use Compost?

Well, the chief reasons are that compost improves your soil by loosening it, holding water and improving drainage. Also, making and using compost lets you recycle garden wastes and reduce trash disposal.

These are the steps you need to follow to decompose the plants you pulled up:

1. Gather garden waste.
2. Make your pile.

### What's Inside?

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3. Water the pile.
4. Turn the pile.

You can add some garden soil, and some composted chicken manure to the pile. This contains the little critters and worms that will make the compost. The following is a list of what is good for composting and what is not (see the box below).

### What Not To Use

Certain waste should not be used:

- Pet droppings (they transmit disease).
- Meat, bones, grease, whole eggs and dairy products (they attract rats).
- Try not to add plants with diseases, and weeds with seeds. You really can't be sure the compost pile gets hot enough in the middle to kill the disease and the seeds.

Mix one-half brown tree leaves with one-half green garden waste. Use materials of different sizes to let the pile drain and get air. Too many leaves and the pile will stay cool and won't break down (in that case, add more garden waste or some fertilizer, blood meal; or composted manure). A pile with too much green stuff will smell like ammonia gas (in that case, add more leaves). If you want to save space, speed composting and keep the garden looking neat, build a compost bin.

A good pile should be three feet by three feet by three feet (1 cubic yard). This size holds heat, and allows air into the center. To build a compost pile, start with a layer of chopped brush or other coarse material set on top of the soil. This lets air under the base of the pile. Next, add green garden waste and/or grass clippings. On top of this, add a layer of damp leaves. Now, add some garden soil, finished compost, and some composted manure. Mix,

and then repeat the layering until the composting bin is full.

### The Time Frame

Decomposition takes from six months to two years. This depends on how often you turn the pile and keep it damp. You can speed composting by chopping or shredding wastes, turning the pile and keeping it damp. Locate the pile close to where you will use it. Piles do best when protected from drying wind, and built in partial sunlight. Your finished compost is dark brown, crumbly and smells earthy. Your gold is ready to use in the garden. Mix the compost into the soil. If there are pieces of plants in the compost, it is not broken down. Adding this kind of compost to your garden will keep the plants in your garden from growing.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**My compost pile has rats.** Rats are attracted to animal products. This means there are probably some meat scraps or raw eggs in your pile. Do not do this.

**My compost pile isn't getting warm inside.** This means your pile is too small or too dry. Add more material to the pile. Water the pile and turn it with your pitchfork.

**My compost pile smells.** A smelly compost pile is too wet or too compacted. Turn the pile with a pitchfork. This loosens the pile and exposes it to air.

**My compost pile looks, feels, and smells okay, but it is not heating up.** Add some fresh grass clippings or a little fertilizer to the pile.

Congratulations! You have created gardener's gold.

### What Is And Isn't Good For The Compost Pile

#### Put in the Pile

Alfalfa hay  
Shredded Leaves  
Corn stalks  
Wheat straw  
Oat straw  
Vegetable wastes  
Shredded Paper  
Grass clippings  
Sawdust  
Shredded Bark  
Coffee grounds  
Fruit wastes  
Poultry manure (fresh)  
or composted  
Composted horse manure  
Composted cow manure

#### Do Not Put in the Pile

Plants with severe disease  
or insect infestation  
Harmful or succulent weeds  
Grasses that spread by rhizomes  
Dog and cat manure  
Meat or fish leftovers  
Bones  
Butter  
Cheese  
Lard  
Mayonnaise  
Milk  
Peanut Butter  
Oils  
Salad dressing  
Sour cream  
Whole eggs  
Grease

# Building Baby's Brain: What Parents Can Do

Every parent wants a smart child. But until recently we believed that there wasn't much we could do to help the brain develop. Most people believed that a child's genes determined a basic level of intelligence, and little could be done to change it after birth. Now we know that the brain does a lot of developing after birth. The basic brain cells are present at birth, but most of the connections between cells develop during the first 10 years or so of life.

As we learn more about how young brains develop, parents wonder what they can do to enhance their child's brain development.

## The Two Basic "Rules"

The developing brain needs two basics: safety and positive experiences. Parents who want to build their babies' brain power should remember these two rules of thumb:

### 1. Create a safe environment.

When a baby feels stress, the brain responds by producing a chemical called cortisol. High levels of cortisol can slow brain development. You can reduce your baby's stress by making his world safe, responsive, and predictable. Remove any physical threats. Respond when he cries. And create predictable daily routines so that he learns what to expect from his world.

**2. Provide enriching experiences.** The brain learns best when it is challenged with new information and then compares the new with existing information. Exposing your baby to new things helps the brain

strengthen old connections and make new ones. Even simple activities like a trip to the library or grocery store can help build your baby's brain. But don't overstimulate the baby. Too many new things, or experiences that are too challenging, will only frustrate your child and may create stress.

### Everyday Activities Are Important

The good news is that building brain power isn't difficult. Many of the things you already do as a parent contribute to

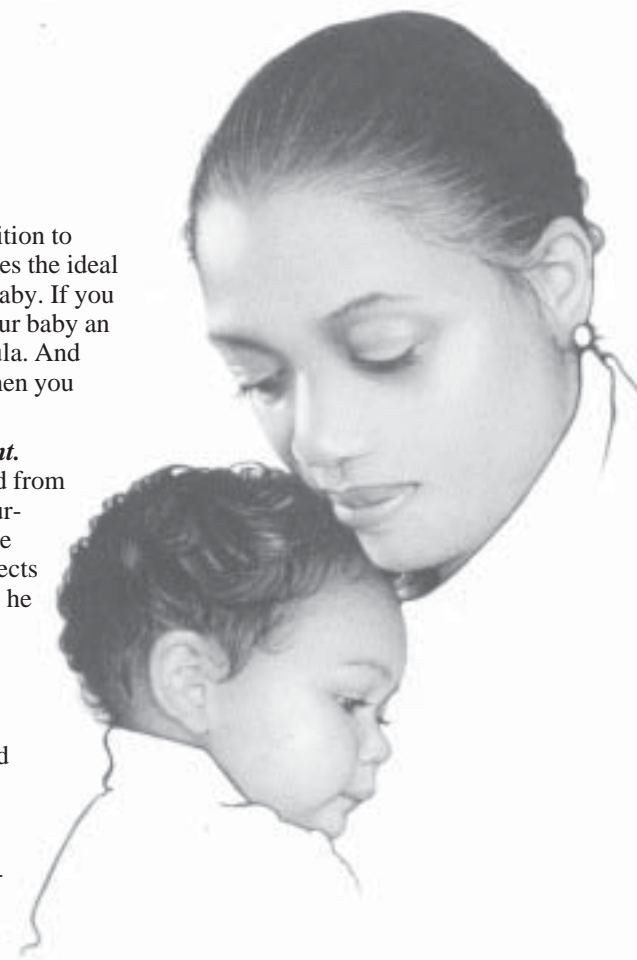
*"Simple activities like a trip to the library or grocery store can help build your baby's brain."*

your child's brain development. Even simple activities like cuddling or reading are important. When you rock your baby, his brain builds the emotional connections that lead to healthier relationships. When you read aloud, the brain pathways for language and reading become stronger. These little things make a world of difference in brain development. Here are some more ideas to build your baby's brain power:

- **Get good prenatal care.** Even before birth, the baby's brain is developing. Pregnant women should eat a nutritious diet, avoid alcohol and other drugs, and have regular prenatal checkups.
- **Pay attention to nutrition.** A grow-

ing brain needs good nutrition to thrive. Breast milk provides the ideal nutritional balance for a baby. If you don't breast-feed, feed your baby an iron-fortified infant formula. And always hold your baby when you feed her!

- **Create a safe environment.** Look at your baby's world from his perspective. Are his surroundings clean? Are there dangers such as sharp objects or choking hazards? Does he always ride in a car safety seat?
- **Talk to your baby.** Make eye contact. Smile at her. Play rhyming games. Read aloud. Sing songs. As she gets older, ask questions and explain things to her. All of this helps build language skills.
- **Find high-quality child care.** Look for caregivers who provide a safe environment and enriching new experiences for your child.
- **Expose your child to music.** Play rich, complex music. Sing songs. Give your child chances to experiment with a wide variety of musical instruments.
- **Limit television, and don't use it as a babysitter.** Children need interaction with real, live people to enhance their brain development.



- **Help your child live a balanced life.** Pay attention to the "whole child," not just intellectual skills like talking and reading. Allow plenty of time for running, climbing and other physical play. Encourage creativity. Give your child chances to play with other children. Expose your child to enriching new experiences in all areas of life.
- **Take care of yourself.** Parents who are stressed tend to pass some of that stress on to their babies. And stress can slow brain development. So take some time for yourself. Find people who can support you as a parent. Talk to other parents about their experiences. The better you take care of yourself, the better equipped you will be to care for your baby.
- **Get the information you need.** Many resources are available to answer your questions about child development. Your pediatrician can answer many questions. Your childcare provider or local librarian may be able to suggest good books on child development. And the Family and Consumer Sciences agent in your county Extension Service office can give you more information on parenting. Don't hesitate to ask questions!
- **Remember, it's never too late!** The brain never stops developing. Children and adults of all ages can learn from new experiences.

### Source

Part of the "Better Brains for Babies" Collaboration. Diane Bales, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Human Development Specialist, Department of Child and Family Development. Supported by the University of Georgia College of Family and Consumer Sciences. "Strengthening Georgia Families and Communities" Initiative.

# What Child Care Can Do

Most of our children are being raised jointly by parents and child-care providers. More than half of all mothers of one-year-olds work outside the home (along with an even higher percentage of their fathers), and the percentages rise as children grow older. Even if parents provide all the security, nurturing and enrichment that promotes healthy brain development, child-care providers must support and complement parents' care giving for the best outcomes. This fact sheet discusses the components of quality childcare that build healthy brains (and every other part!) in children.

## Child Care — Where?

About one-quarter of infants and toddlers with working mothers are cared for by their parents in the home. The rest are in some type of child care by others:

- one-quarter in child-care centers or schools;
- one-fifth in family child care;
- one-fifth in a relative's home;
- one-tenth in the child's home by a relative;
- the rest in the child's home by a non-relative.

Where a child receives care is less important than the *quality* of care she receives. Lots of research has examined the necessary conditions in children's care arrangements, whether by parents or child-care providers, that help children grow up healthy and happy.

## What Is Quality Child Care?

Most parents describe quality child care as "good parenting." Is there any way to ensure that child care includes "good parenting?" Although there are no guarantees, research has shown that the following conditions are necessary:

- **Small groups of children** — No more than 6 to 8 babies, 6 to 10 toddlers, or 16 to 20 preschoolers, always with at least 2 adults in each group.
- **A primary caregiver** — Infants and toddlers especially need nurturing from a consistent caregiver.
- **Scheduling that keeps children with the same caregiver** — Rather than changing primary caregivers on an arbitrary schedule.
- **Low staff turnover** — Again, to prevent children's anxiety about changes

in the very important adults in their lives.

- **Active parent participation** — To help ensure trust, communication, and consistency between home and child care.
- **Training** — Staff training in child development is often linked to higher quality care, along with clean, safe and stimulating environments.

## Low-Quality Child Care — The Results

Some parents choose childcare based on two factors that have little to do with quality: how much it costs, and how convenient it is to reach on regular travel routes. Recent studies have concluded that the quality of care in most childcare settings today is only fair or poor. Only about one in six children in child care is in a high-quality setting. In terms of brain development, what could happen to children receiving poor quality care? Here are some possible impacts:

- **Language skills** — Children exposed to lots of language, in reading, singing, and talking, develop more neuron connections in the part of the brain that handles language. Children not involved in lots of verbal interaction, as can happen when one adult

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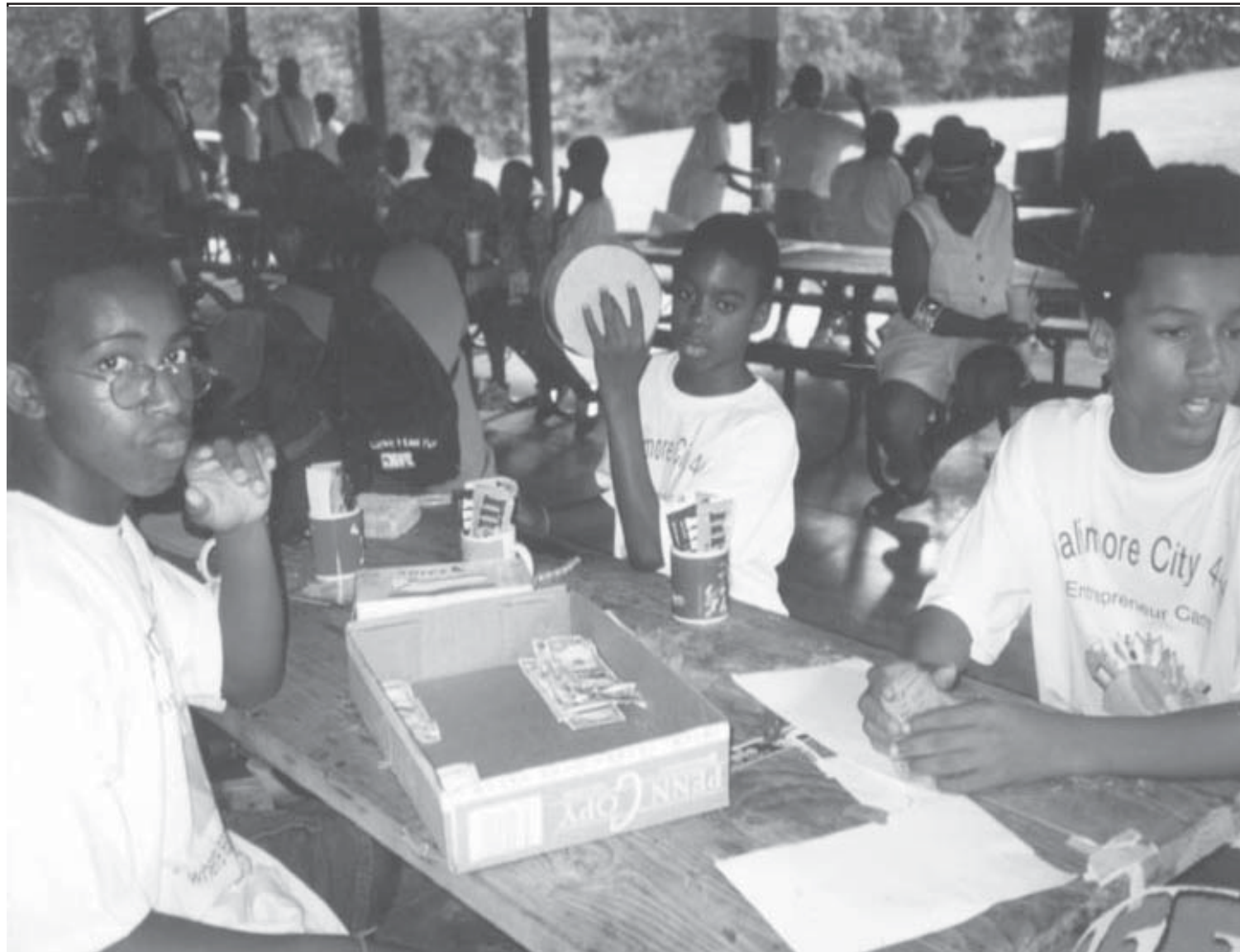
# Entrepreneurship—Not Just For Grownups

by Manami Brown

**M**ost of the young people that I work with in 4-H spend much of their time talking about clothes, music, the internet, going to the mall and who is liking whom. All of these important issues cost time and money. My job as a 4-H Educator in Baltimore City is to channel those interests into something that teaches leadership, reflects an entrepreneurial spirit, and fosters a means to give back to the community after achieving personal success and experience. The Baltimore City 4-H Youth Development Program achieves this in many ways, one being starting entrepreneurship clubs and projects throughout the city. Turning talents and ideas into business ventures can help enhance skills and create alternative options to making money.

## Teens In Hampden

I recently attended a newly formed 4-H Club meeting in the Hampden section of the city. One of group's goals is to start a business that would benefit its members and be an asset to the community. The 4-H



4-H teens attend Entrepreneur Camp to learn the skills needed to run their own businesses.

*Turning talents and ideas into business ventures can help enhance skills and create alternative options to making money.*

volunteer leader asked the group to describe what entrepreneurship is and what experiences they could share with the group. One member talked of his experience selling sodas and snacks to community members. He teamed up with his mother to sell items over the summer that offered him spending money and helped provide a service to the community. His excitement about his business and making money was so contagious, that one by one each group member reflected on their own entrepreneurial experiences.

I was impressed as I sat there listening to their stories of success and failure, how informed and creative they are, and what's in store for the community of Hampden! The group will do a photographic survey of the community to determine needs, interests and business opportunities. They will interview local business owners, youth in the neighborhood and at their after-school program to determine what will be the best business options for their 4-H Club to implement.

## "Be The E"

One of our 4-H teens, Bridgette Howard, partnered with me and several other educators from across the country to develop a national entrepreneurship curriculum. As the only youth representative on the curriculum writing team, her input to the development of the materials was invaluable. Her reflection on participating on the national entrepreneurship curriculum team was two fold: "Being involved in writing a curriculum that deals with the

major (business) that I will pursue next year entering as a freshman at Duke University is invaluable." "Being a teenager on the team and still being accepted and respected by the members was truly a wonderful experience."

This new curriculum entitled "Be the E," is designed to empower youth with the knowledge, skills and mindset to meet the challenges of work and community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The target audiences are middle and high school age youth in 4-H Clubs, youth group settings, home schools,

after-school/summer enrichment programs, group mentor programs and classroom settings. The life skills outcomes are communicating, acquiring and evaluating information, decision making, problem solving, planning and organizing, thinking creatively, using resources wisely, social skills, and community service/volunteering.

The curriculum will include a helper's guide full of hands-on activities for group meetings of youth pursuing entrepreneurship. It includes extensive background on life skills, use of the Experiential Learning

Model, background on entrepreneurship and answers to questions in the youth manual. The guide includes three Pre-then-Post evaluations to demonstrate what youth are learning in each level. Activities are correlated to the national educational standards and benchmarks for middle and high school students.

If you would like more information about the Baltimore City 4-H Youth Development Entrepreneurship Program, please call (410) 396-4906.

## Child Care *con't from page 2*

cares for many youngsters, have brains that are measurably less developed.

- **Thinking skills** — Exposure to lots of language, as described above, is directly linked with advanced thinking skills. These children understand and can solve more difficult problems at a younger age than toddlers in poor quality settings.
- **Physical skills** — Toddler brains thrive when youngsters have the opportunity to climb, play, splash and run. Exercise actually causes the parts of the brain that control movement to develop more neuron connections. Leaving a child in a playpen all day, for example, slows his motor development.

- **Emotional control** — Many people don't realize that brain development also helps determine a person's emotional tendencies. Infants raised with inconsistent routines, changing caregivers, and stressful environments are more anxious and more impulsive. They also may be less caring toward others and have fewer problem-solving skills. Abused or neglected children often suffer from similar brain development problems. This lack of healthy emotional experiences early in life may contribute to a lack of emotional control as a child grows older.

## What Can You Do?

Remember: Where a child receives care is less important than the quality of care she receives. Most parents provide excellent care for their children. Many child-

care settings also provide excellent care. Early brain development can flourish in either setting. Deficits that occur in the early years may be overcome with later enrichment, though the process will likely be more difficult. Try to ensure that the child care you provide, or that you find for your child, is the best quality available. If you use a child-care provider, make sure that you talk frequently and build a close partnership. When it comes to brain development, the first years last forever!

## Source

Part of the "Better Brains for Babies" Collaboration. Don Bower, Ph.D., Extension Human Development Specialist, Department of Child and Family Development. Supported by the University of Georgia College of Family and Consumer Sciences. "Strengthening Georgia Families and Communities" Initiative.

# Does Food Increase Or Decrease The Risk Of Cancer?



There are so many food “rules,” highly publicized diets and alarming media reports about food and food ingredients, any consumer might be overwhelmed and confused about what to eat. Health experts agree that certain dietary behaviors can reduce the risk of cancer. Some say vegetables, fruits, soy and flaxseed will help. Others say limiting fat and alcohol is essential. Recently, researchers have emphasized healthy weight and exercise.

## Solving The Breast Cancer Puzzle

Research indicates that overweight and obesity, particular weight gained in adulthood, increase the risk of breast cancer later in life. Recent evidence also reveals excess weight gained during pregnancy raises breast cancer risk after menopause. Most estrogen production in post-menopausal women occurs in fat cells. Therefore, women with high body fat may be at

greater risk. Further research data suggest that exercise moderates the levels of estrogen and insulin in the blood. Consequently, lower levels mean less cell division and less risk of cancer.

The one key factor for most Americans to learn is portion control and serving sizes so to increase the number of calories ex-

*Health experts agree that certain dietary behaviors can reduce the risk of cancer.*

pendent to prevent weight gain and reduce the amount of calories taken in. It is strongly advised for an individual’s plate to be covered at least two-thirds with vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans. Animal protein, which is high in fat and calories, should cover no more than one-

third of the plate. The vast majority of research suggests a link between vegetables and fruits and reduced breast cancer risk. For overall health eat five to ten servings of vegetables and fruits everyday.

## What’s Clear And Not So Clear

The effect of dietary fat on breast cancer remains unclear. Conflicting evidence leads one to conclude that fat and saturated fat possibly increase the risk of breast cancer, while olive oil possibly decreases the risk. Results should be available soon from an intervention nutrition study whether a lowfat diet can prevent breast cancer occurrence.

On the other hand, there is strong evidence that drinking alcohol increases

*The one key factor for most Americans to learn is portion control and serving sizes so to increase the number of calories expended to prevent weight gain and reduce the amount of calories taken in.*

breast cancer risk. Therefore, experts direct women to limit alcohol to one during or less a day. Those individuals at high risk of cancer should avoid alcohol altogether.

It is believed by scientists that isoflavones, compounds in soy, bind to estrogen receptors in breast cells and block human estrogen from entering the cells and spurring tumor formations. However, results on the effects of isoflavone supplements on breast cell growth and cancer risk have been conflicting and since it is not known whether large doses of soy are protective or harmful for women at high risk for estrogen-dependent breast cancer, it is recommended to eat moderate amounts of soy foods and avoid isoflavone supplements.

One last group of beneficial plant estrogen is flax, which comes from the flaxseed, and alpha-linolenic acid – an omega-3 fatty acid. Animal and human studies determined that these two elements reduced breast tumor growth. One tablespoon a day of ground flaxseed as part of a healthy diet is suggested, but women with hormone-dependent breast cancer and taking medication should limit or avoid eating large amounts.

## Diet And Prostate Cancer

The body of evidence suggests that the best way to reduce the risk of prostate cancer is to eat a mostly plant-based diet, limit ones’ intake of meat and fat and discuss vitamin E supplementation with your physician. Presently, the national Cancer Institute recently began a 12-year prostate cancer trial to try to confirm the benefits or

selenium (a trace mineral found in plant foods) and vitamin E because both show the best evidence for prostate cancer prevention.

Other antioxidants have shown encouraging results by defending cell changes that can lead to cancer. Cruciferous vegetables, such as cabbage, cauliflower and especially broccoli have been associated with reduced risk. Tomatoes, particularly, cooked and concentrated tomato-based products appear to help prevent and slow the growth of prostate cancer. Other foods linked to reducing prostate cancer include red grapes, peanuts and soy. In fact, large amounts of soy are consumed in Asia, where prostate cancer incidence is low.

Also recommended is regular consumption of fatty fish like salmon, sardines and tuna, which are high in omega-3, which is linked to the reduction of prostate cancer. And finally, vitamin D, which our bodies produce when exposed to sunlight, is also associated with a lower risk. A few inconclusive studies suggest that calcium stifles the production of vitamin D and even elevates prostate cancer risk. However, calcium-rich foods and lowfat dairy products are recommended for their many other health benefits.

## Get Tested

This article only examined two forms of cancer, but be mindful that clinical, laboratory and human studies take several years for definitive conclusions. In the meantime, both women and men should eat healthy diets, maintain a healthy lifestyle and routinely get tested. All women should do a monthly breast-exam and those 20-39 should have a clinical breast exam every three years. Those over 40 should have

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annual clinical breast exams and mammograms. All men should get an annual prostate-specific antigen test and a digital rectal exam beginning at age 50. Those men at higher risk, including African-Americans and those with a family history of prostate cancer, should consider beginning their screenings at age 45.

## Sources

American Institute for Cancer Research, *AICR Newsletter on Diet, Nutrition and Cancer Prevention*. Fall 2002, Issue 77.  
International Food Information Council Foundation, *Food Insight*. March/April 2004.

# Autumn Harvest Adds To Delightful Meals

## Tomato And White Bean Soup

½ cup chopped onion  
 1 teaspoon olive oil  
 ½ cup thinly sliced celery  
 ½ cup thinly sliced carrot  
 1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic  
 1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes in juice  
 2½ cups water  
 1 teaspoon dried oregano  
 1 teaspoon dried basil  
 ½ teaspoon dried cumin  
 salt and black pepper to taste  
 1 can (15 ounces) cannelloni or Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained  
 1 jarred roasted red bell pepper, rinsed, patted dry, coarsely chopped (about ½ cup)  
 ½ cup cut green beans (optional)

In large saucepan, cook onion and olive oil over low heat until onion begins to color, about 5 minutes. Add celery, carrot and garlic; cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, water, oregano, basil and cumin. Cover and cook over medium heat until vegetables are tender, 5 to 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add cannelloni beans, red bell pepper, and green beans, in using. Cover and cook 10 minutes or until green beans are tender and flavors are blended. Ladle into bowls and serve. If you want a thicker soup, puree the beans and stir them in. Makes 8 servings.

*Nutrition Facts Per Serving:* 74 calories, <1g total fat (0g saturated fat), 14g carbohydrates, 3g protein, 3g dietary fiber, 423mg sodium.

## Pumpkin Soup

2 teaspoon olive oil  
 ½ cup chopped onion  
 2 celery stalks, chopped  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 teaspoon peeled, minced fresh ginger  
 2 teaspoons sugar  
 ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
 pinch of cinnamon  
 salt and black pepper, to taste  
 1 can (14.5 oz.) pumpkin or equal amount of fresh pumpkin  
 1 potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes  
 4 cups vegetable or fat-free, reduced sodium chicken broth  
 ¼ cup nonfat sour cream  
 2 green onions, chopped

In large stock pot, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion, celery, garlic, ginger and sugar; cook 4 minutes, until tender. Add nutmeg and cinnamon. Season with salt and pepper, to taste; stir to coat. Add pumpkin, potato and broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, partially cover and simmer 20 minutes, until pumpkin and potato are tender. Ladle soup into bowls and top each serving with sour cream and green onions. Makes 6 servings.

*Nutrition Facts Per Serving:* 89 calories, 2g total fat (<1g saturated fat), 16g carbohydrates, 4g protein, 2g dietary fiber, 409mg sodium.

## Pumpkin Cider Bread

2 cups apple cider



These small, delightful pumpkins called "Pumpkin Baby Bear," are wonderful in our Autumn recipes. Try Pumpkin Soup or Pumpkins Cider Bread.

2 cinnamon sticks  
 3 tablespoons freshly grated orange zest from 5-6 navel oranges  
 canola spray  
 1 cup canned pumpkin puree  
 2 large eggs  
 ¼ cup canola oil  
 ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 ½ teaspoon orange extract  
 2 cups all-purpose flour  
 2 teaspoons double acting baking powder  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 ¼ teaspoon baking soda  
 ¼ teaspoon nutmeg  
 ¼ teaspoon mace  
 1/8 teaspoon allspice

In saucepan, boil cider with cinnamon sticks until reduced to ¼ cup. Let cool. Remove cinnamon. Over wax paper, grate oranges so only thin top orange layer (zest) is removed. Lightly coat loaf pan with canola oil. Place oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 350°F.

In large bowl, whisk together pumpkin puree, eggs, oil, brown sugar, zest, extracts and reduced cider. In separate bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, salt, baking soda and spices. Add dry ingredients, 1/3 at a time, to pumpkin mixture, stirring until lightly combined (do not over mix). Bake bread 1 hour or until tester comes out clean. Let cool and serve. Makes 12 servings.

*Nutrition Facts Per Serving:* 10 calories, 6g total fat (<1g saturated fat), 32g carbohydrate, 3g protein, 1g dietary fiber, 221mg sodium.

## Oven Roasted Fish, Mediterranean-Style

4 portions (about 4 ounces each)

salmon, halibut, cod or other fish fillets, preferably skinless  
 2 medium (about 4 ounces each) zucchini, trimmed, sliced thin  
 ½ red onion, cut into very thin slivers  
 1 strip (about ½-inch wide) orange zest (removed with a vegetable peeler), cut into 4 narrow strips  
 2 garlic cloves, minced  
 1 teaspoon lemon juice  
 ¼ cup chopped fresh basil  
 salt and freshly ground black pepper  
 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil  
 2 cups cooked instant brown rice

Preheat oven to 450°F. Cut four pieces of foil each about 12 inches long.

Position a portion of fish in center of each piece of foil. Rub minced garlic onto fish. Sprinkle lemon juice over fish. Divide zucchini, red onion, orange zest and basil evenly on top of fish. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and drizzle with olive oil. Wrap packets double, folding long sides; crimp ends and seal. Place on baking sheet. Bake fish for 15 minutes. Slide off baking sheet and cut trough packets. Slide fish onto bed of rice and top with vegetables and juices. Makes 4 servings.

*Nutrition Facts Per Serving:* 319 calories, 14g total fat (3g saturated fat), 24g carbohydrates, 23g protein, 2g dietary fiber, 64mg sodium.

## Spaghetti Squash In Marinara Sauce

Spaghetti squash is the easiest, quickest winter squash to cook—simply microwave on high for 5 minutes per pound

1 spaghetti squash (about 3 pounds)  
 2 teaspoons olive or vegetable oil  
 2 shallots, minced

Photo credit: All American Selections

1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes  
 1 teaspoon dried thyme  
 1 teaspoon dried rosemary  
 freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil  
 ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
 ¼ pound lean ground beef (optional)

With tip of knife, pierce squash in several places. Microwave on high 15 minutes. Let cool ten minutes. Meanwhile, in medium saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add shallots and garlic, and sauté 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, thyme, rosemary and pepper. Bring to boil, stirring frequently. Reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Meanwhile, if using ground beef, spray medium skillet; brown meat until done. Drain off fat; add meat to sauce. Remove from heat and stir basil. Carefully halve squash and scoop out seeds. Scrap inside of squash with fork to remove spaghetti-like strands. Divide "spaghetti" among four plates and top each with marinara sauce and Parmesan cheese. Makes 4 servings.

*Nutrition Facts Per serving:* 212 calories, 6g total fat (2g saturated fat), 39g carbohydrates, 7g protein, 7g dietary fiber, 405mg sodium.

## Pork Loin Chops With Cabbage, Apples And New Potatoes

2 teaspoons olive oil  
 4 thick cut (about 4 ounces each) lean boneless pork loin chops, fat trimmed  
 1 pound (1/2 head) red or green cabbage, cut into thin slices  
 1 medium onion, quartered and cut into thin slices  
 1 carrot, cut into thin slices  
 1 rib celery, cut into thin slices  
 1 teaspoon chopped garlic  
 2 Granny Smith apples, cored, quartered, peeled and cut into thin slices (about 2 cups)  
 1 pound new potatoes, halved  
 1 teaspoon dried thyme  
 salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

In large Dutch oven, or other large wide saucepan, heat olive oil. Add pork chops and cook over medium heat 5 minutes on each side. Transfer to side dish. In same pan, place cabbage, onion, carrot, celery and garlic. Cook, stirring, until heated through, about 3 minutes. Add apples, potatoes, thyme, salt and pepper, to taste. Stir to blend. Cover and cook, over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally until vegetables are tender, into vegetables and add any pork juices. Sprinkle with cider vinegar. Cover and cook until pork chops are reheated and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Serve each person a dish of vegetables with a piece of pork on top. Makes 4 servings.

*Nutrition Facts Per Serving:* 338 calories, 9g total fat (3g saturated fat), 36g carbohydrates, 28g protein, 7g dietary fiber, 84mg sodium.

# To Stay Alone Or Not To Stay Alone? — That Is The Question!

Children grow up fast and the time comes when parents must decide if their child is well prepared and mature enough to stay alone at times. For working parents this is an even bigger decision because it can be for a period of time, every day, before or after school.

You'll need to decide whether self-care will encourage responsibility or place your child at risk. There are things to consider before making your decision. Determine if your child seems ready and willing to take on this responsibility. Here are some questions to ask yourself about your child's readiness to care for himself or herself at home:

1. Is my child able to complete tasks, follow directions, observe rules and communicate problems and feelings to me?
2. Has my child expressed an interest in self-care?
3. Does my child use good judgement?
4. Is my child usually able to find useful and interesting things to do?

If you were able to respond favorably to these questions, your child may be ready to be responsible for himself or herself. Some additional signs of maturity in a child are finishing homework with little help and getting ready for school on time. Other signs are being able to tell time and knowing how to lock and unlock the doors.

Now, talk with your child to determine his/her desire and level of confidence regarding your home situation.

## Setting Rules

Rules provide structure for children and can help them feel secure. Follow these guidelines for creating rules.

- Try to have the child participate in creating the rules
- State rules clearly, specifically and in a positive manner. For instance: "The breakfast dishes should be done and the table set for dinner by 5:00 p.m."
- If the rules involves a task, make it a necessary and appropriate one for the child. It may be unreasonable for a nine-year-old to prepare dinner but appropriate for him/her to set the table.
- Remember to check and enforce rules consistently.
- Remember that mistakes can happen. Firmness, patience and flexibility will help you and your child.
- Some areas where rules might help are personal safety, homework and chores, play privileges, care for siblings, snack preparation and television watching. What are others for your family?

## Being Safe At Home

Learning personal safety skills not only will help to protect children, but may help to reduce their fears if they are home alone.

It's important for your child to follow basic safety procedures with strangers. Go over the guidelines to follow when they are home alone and the doorbell rings. Discuss rules for answering telephone calls when you are not there. You may want to use an answering machine to screen calls. Set policies for who may or may not be allowed in the house when your child is alone. Set a check-in time for your child to call you at work.

Role play various situations, such as what to do if your child becomes injured or if the smoke alarm goes off.

## A Note About Using Appliances

Safety of children in the kitchen is important to all parents. Problems with using appliances can be avoided if parents and children together identify those appliances that may be used and those that may not be used. Some appliances that parents may not want their children to use include stoves, irons, food processors and power tools. Have your child practice making a simple snack or meal.

## Develop An Emergency Plan

Make sure your child understands what an emergency is and who to call for help. Leave a list of emergency telephone numbers, including the number where you can be reached, posted by the telephone. Write a list of people for your child to call or places to go in an emergency. Discuss the list with your child and mark whom to call when. For example:

- If you're scared or don't know what to do, call . . . Mom at work, Grandma or the next door neighbor.
- In a real emergency, call . . . 911.

Find a neighbor or friend who is willing to help in case of an emergency and include that information on the list. As a parent, you need to be sure help is always available when your child needs it, and that your child knows she/he may call adults for help whenever frightened or just not sure what to do.

## Fire Safety

In the event of a fire, your child's only responsibility should be to get out of the house safely and report the fire from a nearby house. Stress that even if your child has caused the fire, he/she must never try to put it out. Be sure your child understands that he or she is more important and valuable than the building, possessions or pets.

The process of attempting to make your child "fire safe" will take considerable



time, effort and patience on your part. You and your child will need to plan and practice fire safety skills together on a continual basis. Fire safety is not something that is learned once and remembered forever. There are many things you and your child can do and learn to greatly reduce the chance of a home fire. Practice and attention to fire safety could prevent serious injuries or even the death of your child.

It's very important that your child be familiar with and practice two escape routes from every room in your home. To teach him/her these skills, draw a simple floor plan of your home and mark escape routes from every major room. The most important rooms are those where your child is likely to be asleep.

Practice these routes until your child can do them with assistance, then have surprise fire drills every few months. There is a big difference between knowing what to do and being able to do it. Actually participating in fire drills reduces your child's chance of panic and injury—which increases chance of survival.

## Preventing Accidents At Home

Here is a checklist to use concerning safety habits.

- All poisonous products are out of reach of young children.
- The list of emergency numbers is posted near the phone.
- Poisonous plants are out of reach of children and pets.
- All medicines are locked up or out of reach of young children.
- There are no electrical cords that could be tripped up.
- Fire escape plans are mapped and fire drills are practiced.

- Smoke alarms have been checked and everyone knows how they sound.
- Everyone knows where the safest place is if there is a tornado warning. In your house it is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Matches are out of the reach of young children.
- A first-aid kit is located in a safe and accessible place.

In case of a minor accident or injury, it's important for children to know basic first aid and have a first-aid kit that is kept in a place they can reach, but is out of the reach of young children.

## Planning Time

School-age children usually have free time after school. Often, they get bored when they have too much free time. Help your child(ren) plan an after-school schedule. Discuss rules that you have for completing homework, watching television, completing household chores, staying with brothers and sisters and playing with friends.

## Keep Tabs On Kids

When a child is responsible for her/himself, how can a parent effectively monitor the child's behavior and whereabouts? Be sure to:

- Raise issues that concern your child(ren).
- Be prepared to enforce family rules.
- Practice open communication.
- Show an active interest in your child's life everyday.

## Set Up A Trial Period

Try leaving your child alone for short periods of time to see how he or she copes. This can be while you go to a neighbor's for a few minutes or make a quick trip to the store. If this works well, try for a longer period of time next.

Once you've decided that your child is responsible enough to care for him/herself after school, discuss a trial period and agree on a definite ending period. For instance, you might agree to let your child stay home alone after school for one week. At the end of the week, discuss your child's and your own experiences. Talk about feelings such as being frightened, confident, safe, lonely, bored, etc. If the experience was not 100 percent satisfactory, some minor changes might be needed to make both of you feel better about the situation. The trial period gives both you and your child the right to adjust or cancel the original agreement. It's a good idea to reassess the situation every few months. You can use these discussions to add new responsibilities and privileges as your child becomes more experienced and confident.

## Source

Penn State University Cooperative Extension Better Kid Care Program Web Site. [www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu).

# Why You Should Be Concerned About Your Home's Indoor Air Quality

by Gwendolyn B. Jackson

**M**ost people spend over 90% of their time indoors and about half of their lives inside their homes. And consider, for their size, children breathe up to twice as much air as adults. Children are at greater risk of health problems that come from indoor air pollution. Some of the most serious health problems for children can start at home.

In fact, the air inside the home can be more harmful to any individual family member's health than the air outdoors. At this time of the year when temperatures become chillier and we began the migration indoors, you should be concerned about the air in your home. Is it safe to breathe?

## You Cannot Taste, Smell Or See Some Air Pollution

It is not easy to tell if your home has poor air quality. Yes, you may notice bad odors, or see smoke, but there are so many other dangers you cannot see or smell, such as carbon monoxide or radon. Car-

Techniques and products used in home projects can pollute the air with dust or harmful chemicals.

## Look Closely At Everyday Household Products

New furniture, carpets and building products can give off chemicals that can be harmful to both children and adults. The chemicals have been labeled safe to use by the manufacturers, but the sometime-occurring vapors locked in by the home's walls often irritate the eyes and nose. Bleach, wood polish, toilet and drain cleaners, shoe polish, bug spray, batteries and oven cleaners are only a handful of household products that are dangerous, primarily to children be-

cause if not

- Do you choose furniture, carpet and building supplies made with non-toxic chemicals and materials?
- Do your kitchen and bathroom have exhaust fans? Do you use them?

*New furniture, carpets and building products can give off chemicals that can be harmful to both children and adults.*

- Do you open windows and/or turn on fans when working on hobby projects that make a dust or have odors?

Once you finish answer-



or thrown away safely, the eating or drinking and just touching or breathing of some products – even in small amounts – can be harmful.

## Take Important Steps

There are specific steps you should take to determine what is causing poor air quality in your home. First, ask the following questions:

- Does anyone in your family have asthma or allergies?
- Does a family member notice burning eyes, coughing or sneezing that happens most often while at home?
- Does any one in the home have chronic bronchitis or another disease?
- Have you ever tested your home for radon and/or installed carbon monoxide alarms?
- Do some areas smell damp, musty, smoky or like chemicals?
- Does your home seem stuffy or stale?
- Can you smell cooking odors the next day?
- Have you seen cockroaches in the home?
- Are your fuel-burning appliances running properly and safely?
- Do you allow smoking in the house?
- Are there furry pets in the home? In the bedroom?
- Have the children in the home been tested for lead? (Regardless of eco-

*The air in your home can have a major impact on your health, especially if you already have health concerns.*

ing these questions, use some common sense, such as running a fan vented to the outside when cooking and the bathroom exhaust fan to minimize steam and reduce dampness. Determine the source of problems in the home or the source for "strange" smells and correct the problem(s). Open up the windows and air out the house, as well as closet doors, whenever possible. Other tips to reduce potential air pollutants in the home:

- **When installing new carpet**, try to do so when windows can be open for several days afterwards. Vacuum the old carpet well before it is to be removed to keep down the dust.
- **Before buying new products** for the home, ask for products made with non-toxic chemicals and materials.
- **Let new furniture** and building materials air out for a few days before bringing them inside.
- **Check the filter** on your furnace or air conditioner at least twice a year and change when needed. Investigate less economical filters that might trap more dust. If you rent, talk to your landlord about these steps.

## Source

Healthy Homes Partnership, *Help Yourself to a Healthy Home*. University of Wisconsin, 2002.

*And consider, for their size, children breathe up to twice as much air as adults. Children are at greater risk of health problems that come from indoor air pollution.*

bon monoxide is a deadly gas that can come from malfunctioning appliances that burn gas, oil, coal or wood. Another gas, radon, comes into the home from the ground below and it is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States.

Dampness in the home can also cause mold to grow in places not easily visible. Eventually, you smell the musty odor. Keep in mind some forms are toxic and coming in contact with large amounts can cause health problems.

Sometimes indoor air pollution comes from what people do in the house. Second-hand smoke or environmental tobacco smoke can raise a child's risk of ear infection and breathing problems. These environmental hazards can trigger asthma attacks, as well. Pets found in many households, especially furry pets, can cause health problems for some folks. Allergies and asthma can really act up when pets are allowed in sleeping areas. Then you must also be careful with products used in hobbies and home projects that involve sanding, painting, welding or using solvent chemicals (i.e. varnish or paint strippers).

## Urban Living

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MCE is a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), state land grant universities and local governments. The Smith-Lever Act requires the Extension Service to "extend" information and research. Baltimore City's government has supported a city office since 1948.

Information areas include: urban and rural agriculture; natural resources; family and consumer sciences (financial planning, nutrition, human development, family and community life), and youth leadership and development.

Local residents are offered research-based expertise and technology from the University of Maryland via Extension workshops, classes, publications, consumer calls, fairs and exhibits, 4-H Clubs, radio and TV.

If you have a gardening, budgeting or nutrition question, or if you know someone who wishes to join a 4-H Club, call us: 4-H, 410-396-4906, urban agriculture, 410-396-1888; family and consumer science, 410-396-1883; nutrition, 410-396-1780.

We welcome letters from our readers. Please share your suggestions or success stories of your use of our information. Write to: Editor, *Urban Living*, 17 S. Gay Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. [www.agnr.umd.edu/BaltimoreCity](http://www.agnr.umd.edu/BaltimoreCity)

*Educating People To Help Themselves*

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## Director's Note

# The Changing Season

There's an old Ashanti proverb that says "Rain beats a leopard's skin, but it does not wash out the spots". As many of our readers and clientele know, the city's Extension Office is a facility that has many barriers that necessitate our relocation. However, just as the rain washes the leopard's skin, the challenges posed by our current location has not washed out the Extension's programming and the work ethic of a committed staff.

Consequently, it was hard to expect the retirement of Carrie Davis, an Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) Nutrition Assistant. For more than 20 years Carrie used her unique teaching style to reach out to more than 5,000 parents and instruct them on how to achieve a healthier diet for themselves and that of their families. She knew the right approach for each of her clients — maintaining a hard check that was respected by teen moms or being soft and gentle with others. Her folksy manner not only got everyone eager to learn, but anxious to see what she was going to share at the next lesson. Carrie will be missed by those in the office and certainly by a lot of community folks. The City Extension family wishes her only the best in her retirement years.

At about the same time Carrie was departing Extension, a new Urban Agriculture Faculty Assistant signed on. A retired chemist and a Master Gardener, John Forester, joined the city Extension family this past August. John's contagious humor and commitment to the greening of the city is more than welcomed by the Extension family, the community gardeners, the Master Gardener volunteers and all of Urban Agriculture's collaborators.

The title of John's first contribution to *Urban Living*, "Goin' for the Gold" denotes his style, but what he really addresses is composting, effectively using nature's resources wisely. His easy to follow instructions can motivate even the novice gardener to generate the *black gold*.

Manami Brown shares in her article, "Entrepreneurship-Not Just for Grownups", the new generation of the 4-H entrepreneurship programming. For nearly 20 years, 4-H has chan-

neled the energy and resources of the city's youth to enhance their skills and create alternative options to making money. The original nationally recognized 4-H Learn and Earn curriculum, which was given birth in the City of Baltimore, has grown into "Be the E". It's a youth entrepreneurship curriculum that was developed by Manami, Extension Educators from across the country and significantly special was the input by a Baltimore City 4-Her. Read how the 4-H's entrepreneurship programming is affecting the youth of our city.

Now that the fall chill encourages us to be inside and the windows closed, read "Why You Should be Concerned about Your Home's Indoor Air Quality". I'm sure you have noticed all the television ads for appliances that "purify" your indoor environment. Before handing over your dollars learn what to identify as indoor air pollution. You might be surprised at what few common sense steps you can take to correct problems.

There is a lot of nutrition-oriented information thrown at you on TV and during commercials on the radio. Magazines and the newspapers publish articles about what to eat, what diet works best and some stuff you don't even want to know. In response to questions from confused consumers, the relationship between cancer and nutrition in relative to breast and prostate cancers is addressed in this issue. A favorite section of the newspaper for many of our readers, the recipes, contains soon-to-be fall favorites that are packed with antioxidants and cruciferous vegetables, which are associated with reducing one's risk to cancer.

The final two child development articles are presented to enlighten new parents and parents with children a little older and need to take on responsibilities.

Enjoy your *Urban Living* and benefit from what is shared. Take pleasure in the colors of fall and experience the changing of the season.

Gwendolyn B. Jackson, CFCS  
City Extension Director



Select dried flowers and grasses to create a seasonal floral display for your home.

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## Urban Living



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