WARM-UP YOUR WINTER WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY!

Set a family goal to be physically active every day. Adults need 30 minutes of physical activity each day and kids need 60 minutes. Make a list of fun ways to get moving this winter! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Walk the mall** -- The local mall is a great place to walk and window shop. The best time to walk the mall is in the morning where there are less people shopping. Wear sneakers and comfortable clothes and walk for at least 30 minutes.

- **Take the stairs** -- Instead of the elevator, take the stairs. Take a few minutes out of your work day and get your heart pumping by taking the stairs to and from your workplace, to the restroom, and even on your way out for a walk at lunch time!

- **Take a commercial break** -- Get some physical activity during TV time. When a commercial break starts, jog in place, do push-ups or sit-ups, or try some jumping jacks. Keep moving until your show starts again. Even short bursts of physical activity add up to a healthier you!

- **Turn on some music** -- Invite the whole family to dance with you. Choose lively music with a good beat and dance, dance, dance!

- **Be a cleaning machine** -- Vacuuming, carrying a laundry basket full of clothes up and down the stairs, and take grocery bags in from the bus or car are all great ways to get moving.

- **Let it snow** -- Bundle up the whole family and head outside to make a snow man or snow angel, build a snow fort, or shovel the driveway.

*Source: [http://eatsmartmd.blogspot.com/2013/12/warm-up-your-winter-with-physical.html](http://eatsmartmd.blogspot.com/2013/12/warm-up-your-winter-with-physical.html)*

**LET'S TALK FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS**

Strong families are based on good communication. Each month we will provide some good conversation starters for you to use with your children or the children in your care. These starters can help to begin a discussion and are much more effective than asking “how was your day?” The idea is to increase communication while getting to know each other better and sharing family values at the same time.

The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to any person and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, and gender identity or expression.
Some ideas for January/February:

- Happy New Year, have you made your resolution? Are you following your resolution?
- Four out of ten Americans say that they are doing what they can to achieve a healthy diet. What is your family doing?
- What is your favorite color and why?
- What do you like most about winter?
- Do you think it is important to keep your room clean even when you are not expecting guests?
- If you were stranded on a desert island, who would you like to be stranded with?

**TONS OF FUN THAT COST NO MONEY**

Hula Hoop
- Jump in—jump out
- Follow-the-Leader (leader in center-followers holding to hoop)
- Follow-the-Leader (leader uses hoop to get others to follow behind, the first person holding the side opposite the leader. Everyone is outside the hoop

Odd Socks
- Roll them into a ball

Milk Jug
- Scoop game with sock ball (cut and put tape on edges)

Water Bottles and Ball
- Bowling

Bandana
- Follow the leader

Towel and Sock Ball
- Fish in the ocean

Butterfly Nets
- Catch anything that doesn’t sting

Jump Ropes
- Walk a straight line
- Jump back and forth on the line
- Jump the rope

News Paper and Duct Tape
- Make a ball, big or small

Colorful Paper Plates
- Hope from one to the next in a straight line, circle or other fun shape

*Source: The Ohio State University Extension*
Bucket or Cup and Paint Brush
• Paint the deck outside, it will turn dark so the kids see the results but will dry off for the next painting

Music
• Turn music on and have kids dance, stop music and they freeze
• Musical chairs
• March to music
• Dance PARTY–dance to your favorite songs

Serving Spoon
• Potato race, hold the spoon with potato and run across the line

Have an indoor picnic.

Build a fort out of blankets (use chairs, couches, yarn- anything to hold up the blankets!).

Finger paint with pudding.

Playdough- use rolling pins and cookie cutters.

Have a tea party.

Make your own indoor hopscotch with masking tape on carpet/wood.

Play school–have the child be the teacher.

Make a letter book. Let the kids take a picture of something that starts with each letter of the alphabet.

HEALTHY WINTER LUNCHBOX IDEAS

Is your typical lunch just not cutting it lately? Is your body craving something different, maybe something with warmth or substance? During the cold months of winter you may want to switch up your lunch to a hot meal. Maybe you want a meal that keeps you healthy, or a meal that uses fresh, in-season fruits and vegetables.

Have a Hot Meal
Some great hot meal options could be soup or chili, and if you're eating either from a can be sure to choose low-sodium options. Whether you eat at home or at your workplace you can simply reheat your soup or chili in a microwave safe dish or in a pot on the stove. Be sure to follow the reheating instructions on the can label. If you don't have access to a microwave or stove at your workplace, you can heat your meal in the morning before work and place it in a thermos to be eaten later. Don't have a microwave, stove, or thermos? A small, portable crock pot is also a great option.
**Boost Your Immune System**
If you're looking for a meal that gives you what you need to stay healthy, try to pack foods with Vitamin C and D. Vitamin C helps your body build a strong immune system to fight off the cold and flu. Some examples of foods with Vitamin C are:

- oranges
- grapefruit
- kiwi
- bell peppers
- dark leafy greens such as kale, spinach and broccoli

Vitamin D is a vitamin our body gets from the sun. In the winter months our bodies see much less sunlight than in the summer so we get less Vitamin D. Vitamin D helps our bodies build a strong immune system and absorb calcium to build and maintain strong bones. Vitamin D is found in dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and cheese. Choose the low-fat or fat free dairy products.

**Eat In-Season**
If you try to eat a diet made up of local and in-season foods there are some delicious winter options for you! Some wonderful vegetables that can be found at your grocery store or farmers' market are:

- potatoes
- kale
- Brussels sprouts
- squash

Fruits found in the produce department are:

- oranges
- clementines
- pomegranates
- kiwi

Need some ideas?

- Throw a clementine or two in your lunch box.
- Reheat last night's dinner of turkey, broccoli, and sweet potatoes in your thermos.
- Have a glass of milk instead of soda.

There are simple steps that you can do every day to have a healthy, immune system-boosting lunch this winter.

Source: http://eatsmartmd.blogspot.com/

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**6 HEALTHY WINTER HABITS**

During the winter we tend to overeat and spend too much time indoors. We also go to bed earlier than our normal time and then wake up later due to the long winter nights. For those cold days, we drink more coffee and tea and not enough water. Here are 6 healthy habits you can do to stay happy and healthy during the winter months.
1. **Don't hide from the outside** -- Get outside each day for some light. Getting out in the sun helps to keep your spirits up and your weight down. Some ways to get outside in the winter are: go for a walk, play in the snow, shovel the driveway and walk ways, decorate your house for the holidays, and play with the pets.

2. **Eat Healthy** -- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that are important for good health. Try to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your diet. Determine what is in season right now and dig in. You'll be rewarded with high quality produce, packed with nutrition, at a lower cost. Plan your food in advance so you are not tempted to buy extra treats at the grocery store. To find out what is in season in Maryland, visit the Maryland Harvest Calendar at www.pickyourown.org/MDharvestcalendar.htm

3. **Stay active** -- You can stay active while you keep your home looking good. Do active housework like sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, doing laundry, or washing the windows. If you shop, carry your own packages and then unload them in the car after every store. Dance to your favorite music and keep the spirit up.

4. **Drink water** -- It may be cold and wet outside, but don't forget to drink plenty of water to keep you hydrated and help you feel healthy.

5. **Handle and prepare food safely** -- As you prepare holiday or any of your meals, keep yourself and your family safe from food-related illness. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, bread, baked goods, cold cut meats and sandwiches, and all eating surfaces. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.

6. **Stay warm** -- Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry and dress warmly with several layers of loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing.

**Source:** [http://eatsmartmd.blogspot.com/](http://eatsmartmd.blogspot.com/)

### POPULAR NEW YEARS EVE RESOLUTIONS

1. **Lose Weight**- The fact that this is among the most popular resolutions suggests just how difficult it is to commit to. But you can succeed if you don’t expect overnight success. Plan for bumps in the road. Use a food journal to keep track of what you eat and have a support system in place.

2. **Stay in touch**- Feel like old friends (or family) have fallen by the wayside? It’s good for your health to reconnect with them. Research suggests people with strong social ties live longer than those who don’t. In fact, a lack of social bonds can damage your health as much as alcohol abuse and smoking, and even more than obesity and lack of exercise.

3. **Quit smoking**- Fear that you’ve failed too many times to try again? Talk to any ex-smoker, and you’ll see that multiple attempts are often the path to success. Try different methods to find out what works. And think of the cash you’ll save! (We know you know the ginormous health benefit.)
4. Save money- Save money by making healthy lifestyle changes. Walk or ride your bike to work, or explore carpooling. (That means more money in your pocket and less air pollution.) Cut back on gym membership costs by exercising at home. Take stock of what you have in the fridge and make a grocery list. Aimless supermarket shopping can lead to poor choices for your diet and wallet.

5. Cut your stress- A little pressure now and again won’t kill us; in fact, short bouts of stress give us an energy boost. But if stress is chronic, it can increase your risk of—or worsen—insomnia, depression, obesity, heart disease, and more. Stress is an inevitable part of life. Relaxation, sleep, socializing, and taking vacations are all things we tell ourselves we deserve but don’t allow ourselves to have.

6. Volunteer- We tend to think our own bliss relies on bettering ourselves, but our happiness also increases when we help others. And guess what? Happiness is good for your health.

7. Go back to school- No matter how old you are, heading back to the classroom can help revamp your career, introduce you to new friends, and even boost your brainpower. Studies have found that adults who had gone back to school (including night school) had stronger memories and verbal skills and a decreased risk of Alzheimer’s disease.

8. Cut back on alcohol- While much has been written about the health benefits of a small amount of alcohol, too much tippling is still the bigger problem. Chronic heavy drinking boosts your risk of liver and heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and mental deterioration, and even cancers of the mouth, throat, liver, and breast.

9. Get more sleep- You probably already know that a good night’s rest can do wonders for your mood—and appearance. But sleep is more beneficial to your health than you might realize.

10. A lack of sleep has been linked to a greater risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes. And sleep is crucial for strengthening memories (a process called consolidation). So take a nap—and don’t feel guilty about it.

11. Travel- The joys and rewards of vacations can last long after the suitcase is put away. But traveling allows us to tap into life as an adventure, and we can make changes in our lives without having to do anything too bold or dramatic.

Adapted from Health.com http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20452233,00.html

FUN ACTIVITIES FOR WHEN WINTER TRAPS YOU INDOORS

It's freezing outside and your baby has already completed his usual circuit of activity mat, bouncy seat, and Exersaucer. With hours to go before his next nap, you need tactics to keep your wee one cooing when Old Man Winter traps you indoors. Try these fun indoor activities to pass a gray day. The time will fly!

1. Let her/him “help” you cook.
2. Make some music- Scatter about tambourines, shakers, or whatever's on hand (formula tins and wooden spoons will do!) and call band practice in your living room.
3. **Play ball**- Once your baby can sit up (at around 6 months), plop down across from him and introduce a ball between you. Let him reach and roll and transfer it between his hands; add a second ball and even a third.

4. **Read together**- Snuggle up on the sofa with your baby and a good read. Infants love to listen to your voice and to be held; babies age 6 to 12 months want to mouth board books; 1-year-olds start to understand the words you're saying as they help flip pages.

5. **Finger paint with food**- Place your baby in his high chair and spoon a dollop of yogurt on the tray. You might need to demonstrate at first, but soon your munchkin will be making blueberry-colored tracks and swirls.

6. **Go for a swim**- Fill the tub with bubble bath, or blow bubbles over the tub and let him pop 'em. Toss in a few toys in need of a clean (that set of plastic food?) and you've got one less thing to do later.

7. **Make it a laundry day**- Let your tot help you "sort" whites and darks. Later, enlist your lil guy to "fold" the clean clothes as you work beside him.

8. **Look into the mirror**- Place her on her tummy with an unbreakable toy mirror facing her to encourage her to push up.

9. **Let her "help" you clean**- Give your baby a dishrag and plastic bottle filled with water, and let him spritz and wipe the kitchen floor for some good, clean fun.

10. **Build a maze**- Transform your living room into a baby-proofed labyrinth. Arrange plenty of sofa pillows and chairs with blankets draped over them, fort-style, throw in a collapsible tube tunnel and let your explorer roam!

11. **Juggle scarves**- Toss them high; your baby will love to watch them dance in the air and catch the light as they fall. Blow on them to keep them airborne, and brush them along your child's skin -- silky!

Adapted from Parents.com http://www.parents.com/baby/development/social/when-winter-weather-traps-you-indoors/#page=11

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If you have a disability that requires special assistance for your participation in a program, please contact the Carroll County Extension Office at 410-386-2760; fax 410-876-0132, two (2) weeks prior to the program.

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FRUIT COMPOTE

Serving Size: 1/2 cup  Yield: 5 servings

Ingredients:
1 can (8 ounces) pineapple chunks  1 1/2 cups orange juice
1 Tablespoon cornstarch  1 medium peeled and sliced banana
1 pear - sliced in cubes  2 peaches - sliced in cubes

Instructions:
1. Drain the juice from the canned pineapple into a small saucepan.
2. Stir in orange juice and cornstarch. Blend until smooth.
3. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly.
4. Let the juice mix cool to room temperature.
5. While the juice mix is cooling, peel and slice the banana. Wash the pear and peaches and cut them into cubes.
6. Pour the cooled juice mix into a large bowl. Add the pieces of pineapple, banana, pear, and peaches. Stir together.

Note: You can serve this compote in serving dishes, or over frozen yogurt or waffles.

Cost:
Per Recipe: $ 1.93
Per Serving: $ 0.39

The recipe finder is a link from www.eatsmart.umd.edu.