

## Healthy Holiday Tips

**H**ave a variety of healthy foods available for celebrations. Plates of fresh vegetables with dip or crackers and apple slices with cheese are both attractive and tasty options. When making special dishes of traditional and favorite foods, try substituting low fat ingredients for their high fat counterpart.

**O**pen up your mind to new tastes. When you try new foods you will be teaching the children to try new foods too! Holidays are a wonderful time to experience your family's traditional dishes and dishes prepared by people from other countries and cultures.

**L**eftovers can be a lifesaver. During the busy holiday season, you may not have time to cook healthy meals every night. However, when you are cooking, simply double the recipe and freeze half of the dish. Warming up leftovers will be a healthier choice than stopping at a fast food restaurant.

**I**t only takes a few minutes to microwave vegetables. Don't let your busy schedule limit the number of servings of fruits and vegetables you eat each day. Keep as many fresh fruits and vegetables on hand as you can eat while they are still fresh. Fresh and frozen vegetables can be cooked quickly and easily in the microwave with a little water. And remember, canned fruits and vegetables are better than no fruits and vegetables.

**D**elicious foods may be plentiful over the holidays. Keep normal portion sizes in mind and don't let sweets and treats take the place of healthy foods. Remind children to brush their teeth after eating sweets. Child care providers should have parents leave an extra toothbrush with them for this purpose.

**A** few moments of quiet time are important before meals to let children settle down so they are ready to eat. The hectic holiday schedule with more projects, outings and possibly less sleep may take a toll on even the youngest children. Tell a short story, have sharing time or play soft music to bring everyone together before meals.

**Y**ou will enjoy the holidays more if you take some time for yourself. Taking care of children can be a stressful job and it may be more stressful if no one is taking care of you. Take some time to relax in a warm tub or watch a favorite movie. Children will respond to your happy, healthy attitude, making everyone's holiday more enjoyable.

— Catherine Stafford  
Contra Costa Child Care Council  
Child Health and Nutrition Specialist

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## Choosing Safe Toys

**T**oys generally offer children an opportunity to develop their imaginations, learn principles of sharing and working together and often help children improve their motor skills. When buying toys this holiday season keep in mind the ages and abilities of the children you are shopping for. Look for toys that are durable, appealing, interesting and suitable for the social and mental development of the children.

- Toys made of fabric should be labeled fire resistant or flame retardant and stuffed toys should be washable.
- Toys should be free of glass or metal parts that could become sharp when chipped or broken.
- Hanging toys or toys with cords attached can cause entanglement and strangulation. Hang mobiles out of reach and avoid toys with strings and cords longer than 7 inches.
- Toys with small parts that are removable or can be pulled off can be a choking hazard. Toys should be large enough, at least 1¼ inches in diameter and 2¼ inches in length, so that they cannot be swallowed or lodged in the windpipe. Avoid marbles, coins and games with small balls.
- Art materials should be labeled non-toxic. Crayons and paints should say ASTM D-4236 on the package which means that they've been evaluated by the American Society for Testing and Materials.
- Projectiles and other flying toys can cause serious eye injuries.
- Battery operated toys should have battery cases that secure with screws so that kids cannot pry them open. Batteries and battery fluid pose a serious risk, including choking, internal bleeding and chemical burns.



- Most riding toys can be used once a child is able to sit well unsupported. Check with manufacturer's recommendation for ages.
- Toys with loud sounds, especially if the toy can be held directly up to the ear, can cause hearing damage.
- Painted toys should be lead free.
- Avoid older toys including hand-me-downs from friends and family and garage sale toys. Older toys may not meet current safety standards and may be worn down enough to break and become hazardous. Keep toys clean to decrease the spread of germs. Many plastic toys for young children can be run through the dishwasher or spot cleaned with soapy water and rinsed off.

— Adapted from Child Care Health Connections and [kidshealth.org](http://kidshealth.org)

## KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

# Stop the Spread of Enteroviruses

**A**s we prepare for cold and flu season, enteroviruses are in the news. Each year enteroviruses cause 10–15 million infections. There are more than 100 types of enteroviruses and children are most at risk of infection because they do not have immunities from previous exposures. The enterovirus that is sweeping the country and sickening hundreds of Americans now is Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68). This enterovirus was first identified in 1968, and its symptoms resemble a cold or the flu ie: coughing, sneezing, runny noses, body aches and sometimes fever.

EV-D68 is a respiratory illness and it is more serious for certain people, especially children with asthma. If your child has asthma, be extra vigilant about his asthma care routine. Seek immediate medical attention for children who are having breathing difficulties (wheezing, difficulty speaking or eating, belly pulling in with breaths, blueness around the lips).

### Measures We Can All Take to Stay Healthy

- Get the flu shot. Health officials say the best way to stay healthy is to get the flu shot. It is not too late to get the shot and it is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. There is no connection between influenza and the enterovirus, but getting vaccinated can help protect your child's overall health and especially respiratory health.

EV-D68 like other viruses can be spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes or contaminates a surface with respiratory secretions or stool, so be vigilant:

- Avoid touching the face with unwashed hands (nose, mouth, eyes).
- Cover coughs and sneezes, with a tissue or into the elbow, not with hands.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces especially often-touched surfaces, such as toys and door handles. Disinfect with a mild bleach solution (¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon water).
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, including hugging, kissing and sharing a cup.
- Stay home when you are sick. Do not send your child to child care or school when they are sick.

- Most importantly, make hand washing part of children's daily routine. Washing your hands, and having children wash their hands several times a day is the easiest way to reduce the spread of illnesses in your home and child care setting.
- Get into the habit. Have a small sturdy stool at the sink. Invest in some brightly colored or fun shaped soaps or scented liquid soaps. Choose a little song to sing while washing, so children do not rinse off the soap too soon.
- Identify Times to Wash Hands:
  - When arriving at child care
  - Before and after eating
  - After using or assisting a child in the bathroom
  - After coughing or sneezing or wiping nose
  - After touching animals
  - After changing diapers—wash the child's hands too
  - Before and after touching a sick or injured person
  - Before and after treating wounds or cuts
  - After handling garbage

### Follow These Hand Washing Instructions

- Use soap and warm, running water.
- Rub hands vigorously for 15–20 seconds.
- Wash backs of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails.
- Rinse well and dry hands with a single use towel.
- Hand sanitizing gels are not a good choice for child care. Although they are a good alternative when no water is available, they are toxic if swallowed. Alcohol based hand cleaners do not kill enteroviruses.
- Towelettes and baby wipes should not be used in place of hand washing. They leave a residue, like sanitizing gels that should not be ingested.
- Antibacterial soaps are fine to use, but do not necessarily offer greater protection than ordinary soaps. Viruses that cause colds and flu, and other microbes, such as fungi and parasites are not always killed by antibacterial soaps.

— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## Holiday Dried Fruit and Almond Clusters

- Sliced almonds, lightly toasted ..... 2 cups
- Dried fruit, mixed ..... 8 oz (1¼ cup)  
(golden raisins, cranberries, cherries and blueberries)
- Egg whites ..... 2
- Sugar ..... ¼ cup

1. Place a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat oven to 300°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a medium sized bowl, mix the almonds with the dried fruit. Whisk the egg whites in a small bowl until frothy, add sugar and continue whisking until well combined. It should look like a loose paste.
3. Pour egg mixture over the fruit/nut mixture and stir well. Spoon heaping tablespoons onto the prepared baking sheets. The ingredients will not stick together well, so push them together with the spoon; they'll stick once baked.
4. Place baking sheets in oven one at a time and bake 20–25 minutes. Let cool completely before removing from the pan.

Yield: 20 clusters (serving size 2 clusters)

Meets requirement for protein/meat alternate at snack time only

— SFGate.com

## Snapper Vera Cruz

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Snapper or mild fish fillets ..... 4 | VERA CRUZ SAUCE:                               |
| Lime, juiced ..... 1                 | Olive oil ..... 1 Tbsp                         |
| Olive oil ..... 1 Tbsp               | Onion, sliced ..... 1                          |
| Pepper ..... ¼ tsp                   | Tomatoes, diced ..... 15 oz can                |
|                                      | Green olives, pitted, sliced ..... ¼ cup       |
|                                      | Jalapeno pepper, seeded,<br>minced ..... ½ tsp |
|                                      | Garlic cloves, minced ..... 2                  |
|                                      | Capers, drained ..... 2 tsp                    |
|                                      | Oregano ..... 1 Tbsp                           |
|                                      | Marjoram ..... 1 tsp                           |
|                                      | Bay leaf ..... 1                               |

1. Arrange the fish in a shallow oven proof dish. Combine lime juice, olive oil and pepper and brush fish with mixture. Marinate fish for 1–2 hours in refrigerator.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F. To make sauce, saute onion in olive oil and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, olives, jalapeno, garlic, capers and herbs. Cover and simmer about 5 minutes to blend flavors.
3. Pour tomato mixture over the snapper, lifting the fillets to allow the sauce to flow underneath. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until the fish becomes flaky. Remove bay leaf.

Yield: 4 servings

Meets requirement for protein/meat alternate and fruit/vegetable

— EatRight.org

**Food Funny** Q: What do you call fake spaghetti?  
A: Impasta!

## Activity Corner

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR BABIES

**About** – Before a baby’s first birthday, crawling and even walking will be the next big milestones to conquer. Help children learn how to crawl around or step over things by creating a mini-obstacle course.

**How To** – What you’ll need:

- Small blocks, cardboard boxes
- Small round or square plastic containers
- Stuffed toys, pillows
- Blanket

Place a large blanket on the ground and scatter the items on it. Make sure each item is far enough apart so you and baby can step or crawl around it. If baby is crawling, show her how to crawl around the objects. If baby is learning to walk, hold his hands and help him step over each item.

**Benefits** – This activity helps a child’s brain develop:

- Balance
- Gross Motor Skills
- Lower-Body Strength
- Eye-Foot Coordination

— First 5 California

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