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young families



More for Your Food \$\$\$

Have you heard someone say they aren't eating any bread because they're on a diet? Breads and cereals are an important source of nutrients, particularly carbohydrates, protein, iron, and the B vitamins—riboflavin, thiamine, and niacin. They also contribute fiber to our diet. Breads and cereals should not be left out of anyone's diet—children or adults.

Cereal is made from grains such as wheat, oats, corn, rye, and rice. Bread is made from the ground flour of these grains.

We need at least four servings of whole grain, or enriched breads and cereals each day. What do whole grain and enriched mean? Whole grain breads and cereals contain the germ and outer layers of the grain where the B vitamins and minerals are found. Enriched breads and cereals have specific amounts of B vitamins and iron added to them, which are set by federal standards. Foods which usually are enriched include: wheat flour, white bread and rolls, farina, cornmeal, rice, macaroni, spaghetti, and noodles. Read the label to be sure. Baked products which are not whole grain or enriched do not contain worthwhile amounts of nutrients except carbohydrate, a source of energy/calories. Keep in mind that the dark color of some breads is caused by addition of coloring and is not an indication of containing whole grain.

Shopping Tips

- Whole grain or enriched breads and cereals, and enriched spaghetti, macaroni, and noodles provide extra food value for your money.
- Regular enriched rice costs less than the precooked rice or packaged rice mix. Do not wash rice.
- Hot cereals cost less per serving than ready-to-eat cereals.
- Be aware that you do not need cereals with 100 percent of the U.S. RDA for all the nutrients listed on the label to have a well-balanced diet. These cereals are usually more expensive.
- Large packages of cereals are more economical if you can store and use them. They usually cost less per ounce.
- Cereals that have some form of sweetener listed first or several sweeteners listed as ingredients usually cost more per ounce than other cereals.
- Basic pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, etc.) shapes cost less than the specialty shapes.

Storage Tips

- Store cereals and pasta at room temperature in tightly closed containers to keep out dust, dampness, and insects.

- Do not store cereals and pasta near soap or other products with strong odors.
- Store packages of dry cereal at room temperature. Close the packages tightly after each use.
- Store bread in a breadbox or bread drawer in the wrapper it came in.
- The following guide gives maximum storage time for best quality of cereals and pasta:

Breakfast cereals	2 to 3 months
Pasta	1 year
Egg noodles	6 months
Rice, white or precooked	1 year
Rice, brown or wild	6 months

When these products are held longer than the time indicated, off flavors may develop.

Recipe

Here's an easy main dish.

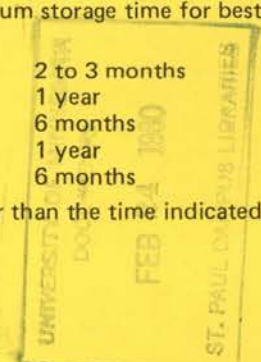
Chicken-Rice Bake

Cut frying chicken into small pieces and lightly salt and pepper.

Put into greased baking dish:

- 1 cup regular, enriched uncooked rice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups boiling water or broth

Place chicken pieces on the rice. Bake until chicken is done and rice is fluffy—about one hour. Serves six. Serve with a green vegetable, carrot sticks, and baked apples for a colorful, nutritious family meal.



Selecting Children's Books

*"There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry."*

—Emily Dickinson

This time of year is good to stress the pleasures of reading to your children. Once established, the reading habit gives a lifetime of pleasure, and it can help children understand their relationships with family and friends.

Books show children both the happy and problem situations of life. They allow children to identify with different types of situations. Family changes described in books help them to adjust to changes at home.

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To meet children's needs, however, books should be selected carefully. Whether you are buying books for your youngsters or selecting them from library shelves, look for these qualities:

Sincerity—Children's books should take the young reader seriously, neither talking down nor over the child's head.

Authenticity—Children enjoy books where the sense of time and place is well established. Historical stories and biographies should be authentic, and any unsavory details should be tempered to the age of the expected reader.

Credibility—Plot and characterization must be convincing and the motivation believable, even if details are fanciful such as in fantasies and science fiction tales.

Emotional Impact—Emotions expressed should be close to a child's own. Consider the child's maturity when gauging what the impact will be.

Age Suitability—When an age range is given on a book, use this merely as a reference. Children vary widely in their capacity and interests at any age.

In addition to choosing books wisely, try to enjoy books with your children in a relaxed atmosphere where discussion can follow the reading. Not only will family relationships be strengthened, but other values will be derived. Books are one of the basic resources to be used in the development of happy, well-adjusted children.

Fairy Tales

Witches, ogres, bloodthirsty curses—the elements of many fairy tales may be too frightening for some young children, but for others the stories have good points.

This is the opinion of extension family life specialist Ron Pitzer of the University of Minnesota. He says fairy tales show strong feelings that all people have at times, and it helps children to understand these emotions.

Fairy tales often show good against bad, and all children must learn about this as they grow. The message of good and bad is clear and this helps children think of their own ideas of right and wrong.

As fairy tale characters grapple with conflicting feelings, children gain some self-understanding. They see that such feelings as loving and hating one's brothers or sisters at the same time can happen to others, too.

Fairy tales are probably most helpful because they act like a bridge from a child's inner world of imagination to his or her real life. Heroes and heroines try their own ideas, and this can give children the courage to try new things.

Check Your Strike Zone

Did you know you have a "strike zone" in your house? It's from the floor to about chest high on an adult—a zone which should never contain matches or cigarette lighters. The "strike zone" is where children spend most of their time looking for things to do, and where they are apt to find things with which to start a fire. Keep matches and lighters out of the strike zone in your house!

TV Pluses, Minuses

The one-eyed box in your living room is probably neither a sinister force nor a particularly good one on your children. Ron Pitzer, extension family life specialist at the University of Minnesota, says television is often criticized for its effects on children and families, but family members still make the decision on how their time is used.

Instead of corrupting family life, Pitzer thinks television probably reinforces existing family patterns. For closely-knit families, TV may enhance family sharing through conversation about programs and follow-up activities. In other families it may only provide something else to bicker about or a way to avoid conversation and relating to one another.

Studies show that elementary school age children spend 26-27 hours a week watching television. Naturally, children learn from this exposure. Perhaps TV's most useful mission for young children is as a window on the world. Even if they seldom watch educational programs, they are being "educated" by what they do watch.

Instead of curbing reading and school performance, as early TV critics once feared, it now appears that viewing has little effect on either. It may, however, cut into active play time, and this is a concern. Growth through play requires active involvement. Just observing the activities of others on television is not enough.

Violence and its effect on children are currently in the spotlight, and most evidence shows that viewing violence can result in aggressive behavior by children. Perhaps TV's most dangerous side effect may be the way it dulls sensitivity to suffering. Many programs tell children that raw power gets results and that brute strength will solve all problems.

Pitzer suggests that parents and children examine their viewing habits and think about the effects TV has on family relationships and children's behavior. The most vulnerable are children who watch a lot of television without a strong dose of good example and moral guidance at home.

There is no simple answer to the question of television's influence on children. Its influence is unique with each child. Viewing choices are affected by relationships with a child's peers and family, by intelligence and by the education and tastes of parents. It's one source of material that children have for organizing and interpreting their world, but it's only one of many.

This newsletter is published by the Agricultural Extension Service of your University of Minnesota for young families in the Twin Cities area. I would appreciate your suggestions for its content. Call me at 823-5241.



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