

FAMILY *Ties*



Turn Off TV

EVERY DAY IS A GOOD DAY

Some people turned off their televisions during National Turn off the TV Week in April. Others turned them off during the recent writers' strike. "But you don't need to wait for a specially designated week or a writers' strike to decide to cut back on your family's TV viewing.

You can have your own 'turn off the TV' week, or day or even hour — whatever amount of time you choose. But make a point of turning off your television. Be intentional when you watch TV. Being more intentional in TV viewing requires becoming media literate.

According to the Center for Media Literacy, becoming media literate means managing television and the choices involved. The center suggests that viewers develop critical viewing skills to better understand what is being depicted in the media and to see the political, economic and social motivations behind those media depictions.

Many of us enjoy some TV, and we can learn from some of the programs aired. Keep in mind, though, that small children often imitate what they see, good or bad. It's your job, as the adult, to decide how much TV and what kinds of shows your child watches. In addition, watch TV with your child when you can.

The U.S. Department of Education recommends that parents think about their children's ages and choose the programs they want their children to view. The department suggests looking for specific programs to watch rather than just leaving the TV on all day. Choose programs that are interesting to the child, encourage questioning or teach an age-appropriate concept. Also consider the level of violence and whether a child will understand the topic.



It's OK to limit the amount of time you permit your child to watch TV. Too much television cuts into important activities in a child's life such as reading, active play and talking with friends and family.

For more information about making choices about TV, see the ISU Extension publication *Getting Along: Taming the TV* (PM 1650). A free copy is available for download from ISU Extension's Online Store, <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/>.

NORTHWEST AREA
Family Newsletter

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Grow

A SALSA GARDEN

Love salsa? Grow a salsa garden this year. In your salsa garden plan to grow three vegetables and three herbs.

Parsley is a biennial herb that has flat leaf or curly leaf varieties. Plant 2 or 3 plants in your garden.

Basil - There are several kinds of basil varieties, but sweet basil is recommended for your salsa garden. Basil is an annual herb and you can plant 2 to 3 plants.

Cilantro is a very strong herb. It is an annual and easy to start from seed. Plant 2 or 3 plants in your garden.

Onions can be planted from seeds or sets. Select red, white or yellow for your garden. You can plant up to 30 onion sets in your salsa garden.

Peppers - Plant 2 or 3 pepper plants in your garden. Plant any green, sweet, bell type of pepper. If you like hot, spicy salsa,



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plan to also grow a hot pepper variety.

Tomatoes - Plant at least 2 tomato plants. Try one paste tomato variety, such as Roma. Roma has medium sized, oblong tomatoes with a thick meaty flesh. Also plant a large type tomato such as Celebrity or Delicious.

Check out ISU publication PM0608 for help in choosing tomatoes for your garden. *This publication addresses the variety of tomato shapes, sizes and colors with suggestions for Iowa gardens based on color, size, shape, growth habit (determinate or indeterminate), and name. Also includes detailed information about planting, spacing, fertilizing, training, yields, harvesting, and storage, including tips on how to ripen end-of-season green tomatoes.*

Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Lancaster County Web site: lancaster.unl.edu

Month of May

KICK OF BARBEQUE SEASON

Cooking outdoors was once only a summer activity shared with family and friends. Now more than half of Americans say they are cooking outdoors year round. So whether the snow is blowing or the sun is shining brightly, it's important to follow food safety guidelines to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying and causing food borne illness. Use these simple guidelines for cooking food safely.

Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature. Here is a chart to keep handy during grilling season, and for that matter, any time of the year.

SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

- Whole poultry: 165 °F
- Poultry breasts: 165 °F
- Poultry legs, thighs and wings: 165 °F
- Duck & Goose: 165 °F
- Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird) 165 °F
- Ground poultry: 165 °F
- Ground beef, pork, veal, and lamb: 160 °F
- Beef, veal, and lamb (steaks, roasts and chops):



Medium rare 145 °F
Medium 160 °F
Well Done 170 °F

- Fresh pork:
Medium 160 °F
Well Done 170 °F
- Ham: Fresh (raw) 160 °F; Pre-cooked (to reheat) 140 °F
- Eggs & Egg Dishes: Eggs, cook until yolk & white are firm; Egg dishes 160 °F
- Leftovers & Casseroles 165 °F

NEVER partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.

Reheating

When reheating fully cooked meats like hot dogs, grill to 165 °F or until steaming hot.

Serving the Food

When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. Any harmful bacteria present in the raw meat juices could contaminate safely cooked food.

In hot weather (above 90 °F), food should never sit out for more than 1 hour.

Back To The Basics

Saving To Meet Your Goals

Think back to your childhood, to a time when you saved your money in a piggy bank until you had enough to buy that special something you wanted. That practice served us well when we were children. As adults, we still want things, granted the things we want cost more than the things we wanted as children. As a society of instant gratification, more often than not, we want what we want and we want it now. In order to satisfy the “want it now” feeling, we purchase the item on credit. As this occurs, some families are experiencing higher amounts of credit card debt, which is a growing concern in our country. Going back to the basics and saving for planned (not emergency) future purchase, will allow you to be financially healthier in the long run.



Some of us may want to take a tropical vacation in the next year or two. Some people may want to save for a down payment on a home. Others may have plans to purchase new furniture, appliances or a vehicle. Students going to college may need to save a certain amount of money in the summer to live on during the school year. As an alternative to using credit to purchase something, consider putting off that purchase that you want to make and save for it.

If setting aside money for a future purchase is difficult for you, consider these options to help you be more successful at saving for your goal. If you have some money saved, purchasing a certificate of deposit can make it more difficult to access your money. Certificates of deposit (CDs) are a money market instrument in which funds are deposited for a set period of time and interest rate at a financial institution. These instruments pay higher interest rates than savings accounts and the maturity date can be anywhere from a few months to a few years. If you wish to cash in the CD prior to the maturity date, you will be assessed a penalty. The fixed time of investment, higher interest rate along with a penalty for early redemption make it a useful tool for saving.

Some employers offer tools to help individuals save. Plans may allow employees have a certain amount of money deducted from their paycheck and automatically deposited into an account the employee owns at a financial institution. The net pay is less as the money is taken out for deposit prior to the paycheck being issued. Some people find that bringing home a slightly smaller paycheck allows them to easily adjust their budget to the money they are now bringing home. The money is also “out of sight, out of mind”.

If an employer program is not available, you might be able to establish a separate savings account at your financial institu-

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tion. You can automate the savings. Sign up once to have money automatically transferred from one account into the new savings account on a regular basis and you don’t have to do anything else and the savings occurs. If having the savings account at your home bank may still be too much of a temptation, you could make it a joint account and require two signatures to make a withdrawal. You’ll be less likely to take money out for something else if you need another person with you to access it. Opening a savings account at different financial institution is another option; however, you may have to physically take money there to deposit.

A new option for individuals to consider is a web site that promotes saving to reach your goals. The site is: www.smartypig.com. To use this program, you must have an existing checking or savings account. Here’s how it works: Open an account on SmartyPig, identify what you’re saving for, how much you want to save and when you want to have it saved by. The website will calculate how much you need to save per month to meet your financial goal and you can set up an automatic transfer of money from your current checking or savings account into the new savings account (FDIC insured) you’ve opened through SmartyPig. Here’s how it’s different: The current rate of interest is 4.3% (APY) on your savings. It offers a feature that allows friends and family members to make deposits into your account to help you reach your goal. Once you reach your goal, you can get incentives from retailers who sell what you’re saving for. The site allows you to choose between a SmartyPig Mastercard/Visa card that can be used anywhere Mastercard/Visa are accepted, or you can purchase a retailer gift card for a specific store. There is also a social networking aspect to the site to allow users to blog information. While the site targets people in their teens and 20’s, anyone can use it.

Saving money is easier for some people than others. If you struggle to save, then saving creatively may need to be how you approach it. The method that you choose to use to save for a goal should match your values and your lifestyle. It needs to be a method that you are comfortable using as each method has different pros and cons to consider. The cost of saving for a purchase (not making an immediate purchase and living without until money is saved) can be a lot cheaper than the cost of using credit (high interest costs and years to pay off).