



# Family Matters

September/October 2003

A Family Newsletter prepared by Iowa State University Extension Family Specialists

## Six Steps to Reduce Marketing Contacts

Receiving excessive junk mail and telemarketing calls is a real hassle, and on top of that, it can put you at risk for identity theft and other forms of fraud. Take these six steps to reduce your exposure to unwanted marketing calls and mailings.

**1. National "Do Not Call" registry** - You may now place your phone number(s) on this "do not call" list operated by the Federal Trade Commission. It's free, and there are two ways to register:

- \* **By phone at 888-382-1222** - you must call from the telephone number which you wish to place on the "do not call" list.
- \* **On-line at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)** - a confirmation message will be sent to your email account; your phone number will be added to the list only after you click on the link within the confirmation email. Most telemarketers are required to "scrub" their lists at least quarterly, beginning September 2003.

**2. "Put me on your Do Not Call List."** If you state this request to any telemarketer, they must comply, even if their organization is not required to follow the national "Do Not Call" registry.

**3. Call 1-888-5-opt-out** (a service operated by the three major credit bureaus) to reduce prescreened credit card offers received in the mail. Note: it is necessary (and safe) to give your Social Security number for this request.

**4,5& 6 - Register as a consumer member of the Direct Marketing Association (DMA)** to request that their business members not contact you. You may

register on-line ([www.dmaconsumers.org](http://www.dmaconsumers.org)) or by mail (addresses below). Separate requests are needed to reduce contacts by mail, email, and telephone. Note: you will receive even fewer telephone solicitations than if you only register on the national Do Not Call registry.

**4. DMA Mail Preference Service**  
P.O. Box 643, Carmel NY 10512

**5. DMA Telephone Preference Service**  
P.O. Box 1559, Carmel NY 10512

**6. DMA E-Mail Preference Service**  
[www.dmaconsumers.org](http://www.dmaconsumers.org)

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## September is National Food Safety Month

National Food Safety Month is a good time to give extra attention to safe food handling practices (see articles on page 2) and an appropriate time to put your knowledge of proper refrigeration to the test!

### 'Fridge Quiz

1. Should hot food be placed directly in the refrigerator? *YES or NO*
2. Refrigeration prevents bacterial growth. *TRUE or FALSE*
3. At what temperature should you set your refrigerator? \_\_\_\_\_ *degrees F*

(Answers to the quiz are on page 3.)

## National Food Safety Month

September marks the ninth annual National Food Safety Education Month. To practice food safety at your house, keep the following in mind.

### Refrigerate promptly

Bacteria grow most rapidly in the Danger Zone - the unsafe temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees F, so it's key to keep foods out of this temperature range. Since cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying... be sure to refrigerate foods quickly!

### The Top 4 Cool Rules

**The Chill Factor** - Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within 2 hours or less. Marinate foods in the refrigerator.

**The Thaw Law** - Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave if you'll be cooking it immediately.

**Divide and Conquer** - Separate large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator

**Avoid the Pack Attack** - Don't over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to keep food safe.

## Tips for Parenting in Stepfamilies

Although you may want your new family to be just like everyone else's, stepfamilies are different from first-time families. It helps to understand what is normal in a stepfamily so you can accept things as they are or make changes when needed.

Most stepfamilies must deal with these problems:

**-Divided loyalties.** Children may feel torn between their biological parent and their stepparent. By accepting a stepparent, the child may feel disloyal to the first parent.

**-Belonging to two households.** Even if a child only visits the other parent, there are still two sets of rules, activities and values.

**-Building relationships.** Parents often want the stepparent to quickly feel love, trust and respect, but these feelings take years to develop.

## Tips for the College Student

As your son, daughter or grandchild returns to campus remind them of food safety tips.

- After grocery shopping, always take perishable food home quickly and refrigerate within two hours. Don't do other shopping or visit a friend until this is done.
- Left-over pizza, fried chicken, Chinese food and other carry-outs should be refrigerated as soon as possible. Remember that perishable food should never be unrefrigerated more than two hours.
- "Care packages" of food from home are always welcome. Parents should let students know they are sending a package. Students need to be watching for it so it does not sit unnoticed after being delivered. Remember to send nonperishable foods that are packaged well; that do not require refrigeration; and will not be affected by warm temperatures in the mail truck.
- Share the ISU Answerline web site with them: [www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline)

### Did you know...

Overdoing it with antacids like Roloids or Maalox can weaken bones by hindering the uptake of the mineral phosphorus. They contain aluminum hydroxide, which binds to phosphorus and prevents its proper absorption.  
*from Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter, Aug. 03*

**-Stepparent discipline.** Children often resent stepparent discipline. Consider letting the biological parent handle most discipline issues during the first months.

**-Rivalry among stepsiblings.** Getting along with "new" brothers and sisters is more difficult than getting along with siblings in first-time families. "One big, happy family" is more often a myth than a reality.

Building relationships in a stepfamily takes time. Talk to parents in other stepfamilies. Read articles and books on stepfamilies. And keep your sense of humor; there will be days when you won't know whether to laugh or cry!

For more information, get your free copy of "Parenting in Stepfamilies" PM 1547c by e-mailing [cclark@iastate.edu](mailto:cclark@iastate.edu)

# Temper Tantrums - What's a Parent to do?

Take one toddler (by nature, still immature and easily frustrated). Add a toddler's strong desire to have its own way. The result: the perfect formula for a temper tantrum!

Why do temper tantrums happen so often with toddlers? A toddler will throw a tantrum because a square block won't fit in a round hole, because their socks are lumpy, or because you won't let them climb on top of the kitchen table. Toddlers can't talk too much yet, or tell you how they feel, and they have few problem solving skills. Tantrums are most likely to happen when a toddler is hungry, tired or overexcited.

So what's a parent to do when a tantrum happens? Remember that this behavior is normal and that every parent of every toddler dealt with tantrums at one time or another. You might be embarrassed by the tantrum (they always seem to happen at the worst place or time!), so getting the child to stop is usually foremost on your mind.

Some ways of responding can actually make the tantrums worse. Giving in to what the child wants won't help in the long run. Also avoid catching the child's anger and throwing a mini-tantrum yourself. Other parents try to reason with the child when they are in the midst of the fit and, of course, that is futile. Threats like, "Stop or I'll give you something to cry about!" do not work any better.

**Try this method.** Pause before you act. Take 30 seconds to review your options, which include: Distract: get your child's attention focused on something else. Remove: take your child to a quiet place to calm down. Hold: physically hold the child and offer comfort. Remain calm and let the child

## Answers to 'Fridge Quiz'

1. Yes, but divide large quantities of food into shallow containers for quicker cooling.
2. False. Refrigeration *slows*, but does not prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.
3. 40 degrees F to discourage the growth of foodborne bacteria. Use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature of your refrigerator regularly. Did you know - 23% of consumers' refrigerators are not cold enough!

know that, while you don't approve of this behavior, you still love them. These strong emotions can be very scary to a toddler!

One of the best ways to handle tantrums is to prevent them, if possible. Study your child's tantrums: when and where do they usually occur? Who is usually involved? What happens right before the tantrum? Often, looking for patterns can give you clues about the conditions that bring out a tantrum.

**Other ways to avoid tantrums** might include choosing your battles carefully (say "no" to the really important things and avoid fighting over things that don't matter), giving your child a few minutes warning before an activity change ("In a few minutes, we are going to leave the park and go home."), and helping children before they get in over their heads (toddlers need challenges but not experiences that are overwhelmingly difficult).

An ISU Extension publication on temper tantrums can offer more ideas. To receive your free copy of this publication, contact your local county Extension office and ask for "Understanding Children: Temper Tantrums" PM 1529j.

## Key skills open doors to marital success

Opening the doors to a successful marriage does not mean avoiding conflict, but rather managing it effectively.

Most successful marriages are not conflict-free. They have the same amount of conflict as troubled marriages. The difference is that couples who have successful marriages use key skills to build long-term happiness and satisfaction.

One of those skills is to pick worthwhile arguments. Some issues aren't worth fighting for; let them go. Overlook small differences; take into account how the two of you are feeling. Some times are simply not good times to discuss issues of conflict. Often, when you are tired, stressed, or sick discussing issues only leads to more conflict. Wait to have the discussion until you are both rested, relaxed, and healthy. Then, if the issue is no longer important, let it go.