

LEARNING AND SHARING NEWSLETTER

FOR PARENTS

Is the Internet safe?

The Internet is filled with opportunities for learning, communicating, and sharing information. It is a valuable resource for children and adults alike. Like any large community, however, the online world presents some risks, especially for children.

Parents need to be aware of some of the potential problems their children could encounter:

- Pornographic and sexually explicit material;
- Hate messages and radical activities;
- Violent and destructive materials;
- Information on cults and other organizations that families may not find acceptable;
- Anonymous senders who may target your child with hate mail or threatening messages; and
- Fraudulent activities, scams, and hidden sales.

Additional areas of concern include online shopping and questionnaires. Marketing on the Internet has become very elaborate. Even the most harmless-looking contest or game may actually be a sophisticated marketing effort to get more information about your family.

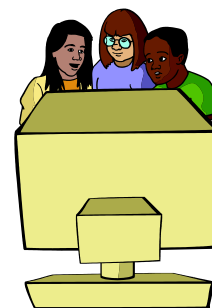
How do I help ensure my child's safety?

The best way to ensure your children are surfing safely is for you to surf with them every time they are online. Of course, this may be impractical. Read further for tips about how to make the Internet a safe, enjoyable, and friendly place.

Create online guidelines

Just as you teach your children to brush their teeth,

eat healthy foods, and be wary of strangers, teach your child online guidelines. Post these guidelines next to the computer so that the guidelines are visible when your children are surfing.



Keep the computer visible

Place the computer in a living room or family room where it is highly visible. If the computer is in a child's room it is easier to hide the screen and go to inappropriate Web sites.

Don't share private information

Even adults must be careful about divulging personal information online. Children should never be allowed to give out identifying information - home address, school name, telephone number, or e-mail address - without parental permission. These rules should be applied when playing an online game, entering a chat room, filling out an online questionnaire, registering for a free gift, or entering a contest. In addition, children should never be allowed to give out a credit card number or password.

Limit their time online

Just as you would limit the number of hours children spend watching television per week, discuss and make rules about the length of time they can be on the Internet. Specify also the time of day they can be online.

Be aware

People online may not be who they seem. It is easy for someone to misrepresent himself or herself. Someone claiming to be a "12-year old girl" could in reality be a 40-year-old man. Information also may not be true. The old adage, "do not believe everything you read" applies here. An offer that's too good to be true probably is.

Be visible

Be in the same room when your young child uses the computer. This will discourage wandering. Get to know the places they like to visit. This will promote interaction and exchange between your child and others in the home while on the computer.

To read the articles go to:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu> > Home and Family>Children> Health and Safety Resources>Child Safety on Internet.

CULTURAL CORNER

The Legend of the Poinsettia

One legend says that a long time ago on Christmas Eve, Pepita, a poor Mexican girl, was going to the chapel with her cousin for the Christmas Eve services. She was sad because she had no presents for baby Jesus.

The cousin said “give him any present with love and that will be special for him.” Pepita took some weeds



from the roadside and fixed a small bouquet and entered the chapel. When she was near the altar, she felt so happy and a miracle happened - the weeds became brilliant red flowers. They called them *Flores de Noche Buena*.

Why is it called Poinsettia

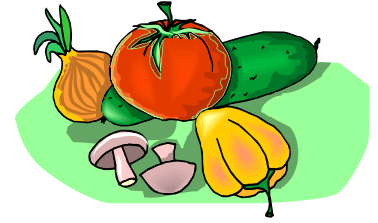
Joel Roberts Poinsett (1799-1851), a United States ambassador to Mexico, became captivated by the color of this flower. He took it to South Carolina and sent it to friends, who started the business of this flower.

This plant is native of Central America, in the area of southern Mexico. Its botanical name is *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, but people prefer to call it **poinsettia**, in honor of Joel Roberts Poinsett.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH TIP

Cancer

A review by the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research concluded



in 1997 that “diets containing substantial and varied amounts of fruits and vegetables could prevent 20 percent or more of all cases of cancer.”

The strongest evidence relates to stomach and lung cancer. Other areas that show convincing results are the mouth, pharynx, esophagus, colon, and rectum.

Studies involving patients who were taking dietary supplements in place of fruits and vegetables were ended early due to a higher mortality rate among the supplement users.

Researchers concluded that dietary supplements do not have the same positive effects as eating real fruits and vegetables.

To read the articles go to:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu> >More articles>Preparation>Food for the 21st Century>The Health Value of Fruits and Vegetables.

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