

TODAY'S FUTURE

Family Benefits From Strong Marriage

You have likely heard the statement, "The best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother."

Actually, one of the best things parents can do for each other – as well as their children – is to build and nurture a strong marriage.

What are some of the benefits?

Married couples...

- live up to eight years longer than others
- have fewer mental health problems
- have greater financial stability
- save more money

Children are less likely to...

- live in poverty
- experience mental health or emotional problems
- abuse drugs and alcohol
- drop out of school

Too Busy for Family Time?

Did you know that over the past 20 years, children's free time for play and unstructured activities has declined by 12 hours per week?

During that same period, time in structured sports has doubled, and passive, spectator leisure has increased 5 times, to over three hours per week. The impact this has had on families is profound: a 100% decrease in household conversations, a 33% decrease in family dinners, and a 28% decrease in families taking vacations.

What difference does this make for the children? A national poll of teens found that 21% rated "Not having enough time together with parents" as their top concern. Another study found that teens that ate meals regularly with their families had greater academic success, participated in fewer undesirable behaviors and were better adjusted psychologically. Children were also found to eat more healthy foods if they ate regular meals with their families.

How about your family?

- How many hours a week are your children involved in structured sports, dance, music and other activities?
- Do they have much time left to just play?
- How many hours per week is your family involved as spectators?
- How many hours are spent in practice times?
- In travel to and from activities?
- What are your costs for equipment, clothes, meals eaten out, and fuel?
- By contrast, how much time does your family have for just "hanging out" together?
- Do you eat family meals together on a regular basis?
- When was your last family vacation? Are you planning one this year?

If your family mirrors the typical family, it may be time to actually chart out where your free time and money are going. Keep track of the practice time, game, spectator and travel time for each person. Add up the money spent for each activity. Talk about why you are participating in each activity. What things has your family given up by being involved in these activities? Is this really how you want to spend your family time? It may be that you choose not to make any changes. But you may find, once you actually see the time and money invested, that you will decide that cutting back would be best for your family. It could clear the way for more family meals, more conversation, and maybe even a family vacation!

Written by Jeanette Friesen, Extension Educator

KICK THOSE GERMS TO THE CURB!

by Cindy Brison MS RD LMNT

Germs. They are everywhere. We carry millions of them on our hands. Some are harmful, many are not. Starting in the fall, many illnesses increase, like colds, the flu, diarrhea, and some that are food related. Many of these outbreaks are caused by poor hygiene, usually unwashed or poorly washed hands. Proper hand washing is the single most effective way to decrease these illnesses.

Did you know:

- 50% of Americans do not wash their hands after using the restroom? Another 25% only use cold water and soap, which does not remove germs well. Only 25% of the population washes their hands appropriately to remove these illness causing germs.
- 50% of many illnesses could be eliminated by proper hand washing.
- 30% of people who cough or sneeze into their hands wash them afterwards
- Kids who wash their hands at least four times per day experience up to 51% less sick days.
- Over-use of anti-bacterial gels can lead to antibiotic resistance.
- There are more germs in your kitchen sink, on your steering wheel, and your cell phone than in your toilet.

When should you wash your hands?

- Before preparing or eating meal
- After going to the restroom
- After playing with a pet
- After changing a diaper
- After shopping
- When you are around an ill person
- After you blow your nose or take out the garbage
- Anytime you touch your hair, face, mouth or other body parts
- Any time your hands may come into contact with something unclean



Stay healthy this winter-get your flu shot and WASH YOUR HANDS, WASH YOUR HANDS, WASH YOUR HANDS!



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