

Alphabet Soup

May, 2009

Nourishing ways to fill children's days.

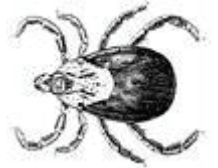


Protect Your Children from Dangerous Insect Bites

See inside for:

- * May Recipe
- * Indoor Activities for Rainy Days
- * Fun Road Trip Tips
- * SPIRALS
- * And More!

Warm Spring weather has arrived and our children are busy at outdoor play after a long cold winter. Along with the change of season, comes the concern of disease or infection causing insect bites.



In a recent story on VillageSoup.com, it was said that Lyme disease is on the rise in Maine. Lyme Disease is an inflammatory disease spread through a tick bite, most often a deer tick. Deer tick habitats are located, but not limited to, tall over-grown grassy areas and at the edge area of lawn and wooded areas. Most Lyme Disease cases are reported between the months of May and July.

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As a parent or guardian it is very important to educate yourself on the types of ticks that are out there in our Maine woods, signs and symptoms of Lyme Disease and most importantly, prevention. Deer ticks, which are ticks known to carry Lyme disease are very tiny, sometimes impossible to see. Therefore, when Lyme Disease has developed, you may not even know you had a tick. Symptoms include, flu-like symptoms such as chills, fever, headache, muscle pain and lethargy as well as a rash. If you or your child develops any of these symptoms seek advice from your family doctor or pediatrician immediately. Early diagnosis and treatment is important. Antibiotics are used to treat Lyme disease. The specific antibiotic used depends on the stage of the disease and the symptoms.

Insect bite prevention is difficult if your child enjoys playing outside, however if you have your children play away from wooded, grassy areas, wear protective clothing when possible and wear insect repellent, they will be less likely to receive a tick or other insect bite. Always remember to thoroughly check your child for ticks everyday, head to toe. For more information on types of ticks, photographs and prevention contact the

Maine Center for Disease Control at 1-800-821-5821 or visit http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/lyme_disease.htm.

Healthy Spring Recipes



ITALIAN VEGETABLE CASSEROLE



This is a quick and easy way to add a vegetable serving into your daily meal plan. This recipe is also perfect for kids with lactose intolerance. Kids with lactose intolerance often need to limit or avoid dairy products.

Prep time: 25 minutes

Directions:

Ingredients:

- * 1 zucchini, sliced
- * 1 yellow squash, sliced
- * 1/2 red bell pepper, chopped
- * 2 tomatoes, chopped
- * 1/4 c. fat free Italian dressing
- * 2 c. brown rice, cooked
- * 1/4 cup soy parmesan cheese
- * non-stick cooking spray

1. Spray casserole dish with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Mix vegetables and dressing together in the casserole dish.
3. Cook vegetables in microwave for 10 minutes, stirring every 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Sprinkle parmesan cheese over the top of the vegetables.
5. Serve vegetables over rice.

Serves 4

Source—www.kidshealth.org



Prep time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

- * 1 apple
- * 1 banana
- * 1/3 c. red seedless grapes
- * 1/3 c. green seedless grapes
- * 2/3 cup pineapple chunks
- * 1 cup nonfat yogurt
- * 1/4 c. dried coconut, shredded

FUN FRUIT KABOBS



Directions:

1. Prepare the fruit by washing the grapes, washing the apples and cutting them into small squares, peeling the bananas and cutting them into chunks, and cutting the pineapple into chunks, if it's fresh. Put the fruit onto a large plate.
2. Spread coconut onto another large plate.
3. Slide pieces of fruit onto the skewer and design your own kabob by putting as much or as little of whatever fruit you want! Do this until the stick is almost covered from end to end.
4. Hold your kabob at the ends and roll it in the yogurt, so the fruit gets covered.
5. Roll it in the coconut.
6. Repeat these steps with another skewer.

Serves: 4

Source— www.kidshealth.org



Leap into Learning!



Supporting Preschoolers in Reading and Language Success (SPIRALS) is a special initiative that is enhancing learning for preschoolers and their teachers in early childhood classrooms across Waldo and Knox County!

The world is starting to awaken after a long winter. Everyone is ready to shed their winter coats and get out in the sunshine. This is a perfect time of year to be outside with your child and an Observation Notebook. Make an Observation Notebook together and head out into the world to explore.

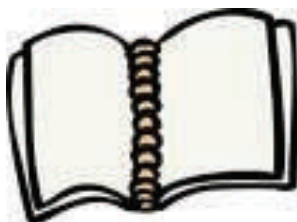
Observation Notebook

This can be as simple as putting a cover of colored paper around sheets of blank paper or it can be whatever your imagination can come up with. Decorate the cover with a collage of pictures from a seed catalog, have your child write their name on the cover, and on the inside pages list some of the things you might see. Birds, big and small, trees, short and tall, plants with buds, are some of the things you might observe. Help your child write about what they see. Once inside expand on the list. The big bird in the tree becomes the big gray bird in the tree.



Big or Small, Short or Tall

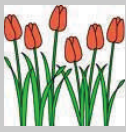
Helping your child to understand big, tall short, or small can be fun. Even if your child does not know the difference between an inch and a foot, you can help them learn this by making your "ruler". Trace your child's hand and explain to them that you are going to make a homemade ruler. Cut out the hand and take with you outside to measure some of the treasures you find on your walk. Have your child find three things that are shorter than her hand, three things that are longer than her hand, and three things that are bigger than her hand. Along the way explain the difference between shorter and smaller, or bigger and taller. Using the cut-out hand, have your child find things inside that she identifies by size with her new words.



Books to share:

Eddie's Garden by Sarah Garland

Webster's Walk by Jill Dow



Fun Springtime Activities



We all love Spring! It is a time for warm sunshine, outdoor play and when everything is blooming and turning green. In addition to this sunshine, we also need rain. When springtime showers keep your children inside, try these four rainy day activities:

- Puppet show time

Your child can create their very own puppets with items you already have around the house. First, you'll need some old socks or lunch-size brown paper bags. Then decorate them with markers, crayons, glitter, sequins, string, ribbons, yarn, buttons, or dry macaroni. Give the puppets names and funny voices. Make up a special story for them. Maybe one puppet is lost and can't find his way home. Maybe another puppet has superhuman powers. To make your show even better, use a cardboard box as a stage.

- Build a fort

Dig out some old sheets, blankets, or comforters. Spread them over chairs or other furniture to create a top-secret hideout. Bring a flashlight, a good book to read, and maybe even a healthy snack.

- Dress-up time!

Both boys and girls can have fun trying on old clothes. Let your child be creative and try on old scarves, hats, jewelry, shoes, and clothes. Do you want to be a doctor? You can pretend an old white shirt is a lab coat, use old gowns for your princess or sunglasses for your movie star. Use stuffed animals and create a veterinary office for your animal lover. The ideas are endless!

- Say thanks.

Special occasions are chances for us to thank people who love us and take good care of us. But it can be a special treat to get a gift or a card on an ordinary day. Have your child think of the people who make them happy and then come up with a way to show them you care. It might be an aunt, uncle, grandmother, neighbor, or babysitter. It could even be for you, mom and dad! Use your arts and craft supplies to help your child create a special card. You will be delivering sunshine on a rainy day!



Source— www.kidshealth.org

Road Trip Fun

Are you ready for a summer road trip with your child? Remember, to a child an extended period of time in the car can become overwhelming, with not much to look at. Here are some tips to make the most of your family time in the car.

- Bring a small map or road atlas. Use stickers to track your family's progress.
- Create a trip box that includes stickers, pipe cleaners, pens, paper, and crayons.
- Listen to music or a book on tape or CD.
- Sing silly songs like "Old MacDonald," "B-I-N-G-O," and "She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain". For added fun, make up your own silly songs with your child's help.
- Snooze.
- Play "I Spy."
- Search for shapes, colors and letters on street signs and license plates.
- Have Fun!!

