

December 2014

# Kindred *Spirits*

Give the gift of active living

Promote good health

## Stay Active during Holidays

December is a busy month with holiday preparations and celebrations, but physical activity is even more important during this season than ever for everyone.

Stay active to:

- ◆ Reduce stress caused by the season's high expectations and jam-packed calendars.
- ◆ Help over-stimulated children let off a little steam during this exciting season.
- ◆ Prevent unwanted post-holiday weight gain.
- ◆ Boost your energy so you can enjoy all the holiday fun.

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Looking for just the right gift for someone special on your list?

According to Linda Rellergert, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, "Give a gift that promotes good health through an active lifestyle."

- ◆ Choose a gift certificate for walking or sport-specific shoes from an athletic-goods store and wrap in a shoebox. A gift certificate means the shoes will fit perfectly.
- ◆ An athletic-goods store is also the place to go for comfortable, attractive clothing for a sport or activity like jogging, cycling or yoga. They will have a wide selection and knowledgeable sales people to help.
- ◆ An inexpensive idea is a logbook or notebook for tracking distance walked, weights lifted or time spent in activity.
- ◆ A pedometer makes it easy to count steps or track distance walked and can be motivating, especially for those who love numbers. Reliable, accurate pedometers are available for about \$15 to \$25. One that counts steps and activity time is most often recommended.
- ◆ Hand and ankle weights are available at discount stores as well as sporting goods stores. For women, a good starter set would be two- and three-pound dumbbells (2 of each) and five-pound ankle weights with adjustable weights of one-half to one pound increments. For men, five pound dumbbells make a good starter set.
- ◆ Balls of every size and price range are essential for playing many games and sports from golf and tennis to football and basketball. A hand pump and adapter to re-inflate flat balls makes a good companion gift.
- ◆ A gift certificate for a round of golf, a line of bowling, time at the ice rink or other activity is a terrific stocking stuffer. Or give a certificate for an aerobics, tai chi, or yoga class.
- ◆ Jump ropes are inexpensive and great for increasing cardiovascular fitness.
- ◆ Make coupons for any activity your recipient would enjoy doing with you—walking, cycling, dancing, sledding. Both of you will benefit.

# Establishing a stable environment

## Adjusting takes time

Often grandparents taking on the caregiving role for their grandchildren do so unexpectedly and fulfill this role longer than they expected. Grandparents raising grandchildren can bring many joys, satisfaction, rewards, and challenges.

According to Nina Chen, MU Extension human development specialist, "Taking grandchildren into your home and raising them means a lot of adjustments for both grandparents and grandchildren. It takes time for everyone in the family to make the transition.

With a caring, loving, supportive, and stable living environment, grandparents can make a major difference in the lives of grandchildren."

The following are some suggestions for making the transition easier to build a healthy and stable home environment:

- **Establish routines.** Children need stability and security. Routines help them feel safe and know what to expect.
- **Have clear family rules.** Age appropriate family rules help children learn and feel secure

and protected when the expectation is clear and understood. Involving grandchildren in setting up family rules makes them feel they are part of the family.

- **Make it feel like their home.** Grandchildren feel more comfortable and feel a sense of control when they are involved in moving their things and have some privacy to keep their personal belongings. Help make them feel like your home is their home too.

Adjusting to change takes time. Every child is different and adjusts at his or her own pace.

### University of Missouri Extension

#### Urban Region

Clay County	816.407.3490
Jackson County	816.252.5051
	816.482.5850
Jefferson County	636.797.5391
Platte County	816.270.2141
St. Charles County	636.970.3000
St. Louis City	314.367.2585
St. Louis County	314.615.2911
	314.516.6392

#### West Central Region

Bates County	660.679.4167
Benton County	660.438.5012
Camden County	573.346.2644
Cass County	816.380.8460
Cedar County	417.276.3313
Cooper County	660.882.5661
Dallas County	417.345.7551
Henry County	660.885.5556
Hickory County	417.745.6767
Johnson County	660.747.3193
Laclede County	417.532.7126
Moniteau County	573.378.5358
Morgan County	573.378.5358
Pettis County	660.827.0591
Polk County	417.326.4916
St. Clair County	417.646.2419
Vernon County	417.448.2560

## Pears: A good winter fruit

December is Pear Month and the winter varieties are in season right now. The Anjou variety is one winter pear.

According to Melissa Bess, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, "Pears are a good source of fiber, which helps keep us regular and prevents cancer; vitamin C, which acts as an antioxidant and helps prevent diseases; and vitamin K, which helps with blood clotting."

Follow these tips for purchasing and eating pears:

- ◆ It is good to buy pears when they are unripe and still hard.
- ◆ Allow to sit on the countertop for a few days to ripen before using.
- ◆ Wash pears before eating and leave the skin on to get most of the nutrients.
- ◆ Toss them in your oatmeal, a salad, or enjoy as dessert!