

OCTOBER 2010

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
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Kindred *Spirits*

Try these old fashioned games Bobbing for Apples

Halloween Trivia

- ◆ Orange and black are Halloween colors because orange is associated with fall harvest and black with darkness.
- ◆ Are all pumpkins orange? No, they also come in white, blue and green.
- ◆ Halloween (All Hallows Eve) was a European tradition to celebrate the harvest around a bon fire, share ghost stories, sing, dance and tell fortunes.
- ◆ Halloween candy sales in the U.S. average about \$2 billion each year.
- ◆ The most popular Halloween candy isn't candy corn—it is chocolate candy bars!
- ◆ The North American brown bat has an average life span of 32 years and is a natural enemy of night-flying insects.

Do you remember the party games and activities of your childhood? "You may not realize it," says Diana Milne, MU Extension human development specialist, "but the younger folks in your family likely have never heard of some of the games or traditions that you experienced growing up."

Halloween is just around the corner and this event is second only to Christmas in terms of the number of Americans who celebrate it. If you're not planning to participate in a Halloween party, you might want to consider hosting a "Fall Fling".

Here are some good, old-fashioned games and activities that will bring back memories and also be fun for today's children:

- ◆ **Bobbing for Apples.** Fill a tub with room temperature water, then add the apples. The size of the tub and the apples will make a difference in the difficulty of "bobbing". For younger children, make the apples smaller and the water in the tub more shallow. Choose a soft variety of apples, because they are easier to bite. Have paper towels on hand to dry off afterwards. Remember, no hands allowed; you may also need to tie back long hair. Prizes can be given to those who can bob an apple out the quickest; the apple marked with a secret symbol; the person who bobs the most apples.

- ◆ **Scavenger Hunt.** Stick with the party theme when developing your list of scavenger items. Divide up your party-goers into at least two teams (3 to 5 people per team is a good number). Limit the area for your hunt. You may want to restrict it to your house and yard.

Consider the age of the party-goers, the time of day and safety issues. Each team gets a list of items to look for and bring back to the party within a designated period of time. Items for a Halloween party might include: broom-straw from a witch's broom, a piece of candy corn, a dead spider, a picture of a black cat, etc.

- ◆ **Musical Chairs.** If you prefer, don't even use chairs. You can use duct tape or masking tape and make X's on the floor in a large circle. When the music stops, the person who does not have an X to stand on is the one who drops out of the game. Remember, the last person standing gets a prize!

- ◆ **Making caramel apples.** Do it the "hard" way or the "easy" way. When I was a kid, we had to unwrap each piece of caramel candy, put in the double-boiler and slowly melt, before dipping the apples. Nowadays, we have the caramel "sheets" that simply wrap around the apples after inserting with the wooden sticks. A minute in the microwave and we've got our caramel apple—yummy!

Published in partnership with the Family Friends Program, Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics.

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Dry Apples for Later Use

Healthy uses for apples can add to your diet

Dried apples, seasoned or plain, are a great snack by themselves as apple rings or apple chips, added to home-made trail mix, cookies, cobblers or pies or made into fruit leathers. It's an easy way to use your excess apples as well as have them for use in the winter. They make excellent gifts, too.

Saralee Jamieson, MU Extension human development specialist adds, "Drying apples is easy to do and it's a great activity to do with your kids or grandkids."

Firm-textured, tart apples like

Jonathans or Rome Beauties are preferred. To make dried apples, follow these instructions:

1. Peel, core, cut into uniform 1/8 inch slices or rings.
2. Soak in solution of 2 teaspoons of sodium bisulfite to 1 quart of water for no more than 10 minutes. (*Caution; Sodium Bisulfite can affect anyone with asthma, allergies or other respiratory problems*). Or soak in 1 tablespoon of pure crystalline ascorbic acid in 1 quart of water for a few minutes. Drain slices well before dehydrating.
3. Apple slices may be sprinkled with cinnamon.

4. A food dehydrator is the best method for drying if you dry a lot of food. Place slices in a single layer on trays to allow for air circulation. Follow manufacturer's directions, usually about 6-12 hours depending initial moisture content.
5. Apples are dry when they are soft and pliable with no moisture in the center when cut.
6. Store apples in a moisture proof container. Label and store in a cool dry place. Dried apples can be stored up to 12 months.

Soak apples in water or juice to rehydrate for use in pies and cobblers. Enjoy!

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Eat an Apple Today

Apples are loaded with pectin, a cholesterol-lowering soluble fiber. One medium apple, with peeling, provides five grams of fiber! According to Susan Mills-Gray, MU Extension nutrition and health specialist, "Apples also contain antioxidant properties, which helps to fight

- ◆ **Best varieties for fresh eating:** Any variety you like.
- ◆ **Best varieties for sauce, pies and baking:** Arkansas Black, Cortland, Empire, Golden Delicious, York, Granny Smith, Jonathan, Liberty, Lodi, Mutsu, Northern Spy, Ozark Gold, Rome Beauty, Spartan, and Winesap.
- ◆ **Best varieties for salad use:** Cortland, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Mutsu (these all resist browning when cut).
- ◆ **Best varieties for freezing:** Empire, Golden Delicious, Jonathan, Liberty, Mutsu, Spartan.

MU Extension has a great publication *Apple Varieties and Their Uses* (pub #6022). Contact your local MU Extension Center for a copy.