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Kindred *Spirits*

Probiotics and prebiotics

Eating good bacteria

Berry-licious parfait

Enjoy making this simple but healthy treat with your grandchild. You'll be aiding digestive health and helping build strong bones.

3 cups vanilla yogurt
2 cups fresh, sliced strawberries
1 cup fresh blueberries
2 cups ready-to-eat granola

Spoon one-quarter cup of yogurt into a small drinking glass. Layer a mixture of the berries, then 2 tablespoons of granola, repeating the three layers.

Serve immediately or refrigerate up to six hours. Makes six parfaits.

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You may have heard of probiotics, friendly bacteria found in fermented foods that have potential health benefits, such as improved digestive function, reduced inflammation caused by bowel disease, reduced bouts of constipation, improved cholesterol and triglyceride levels and reduced risk of colon cancer. The field of probiotics has developed rapidly and a variety of products have popped up on the market, says Susan Mills-Gray, University of Missouri Extension nutrition specialist. Products such as Activia and DanActive by the Dannon Company are two examples.

The good news is that all fermented products contain this friendly bacteria. Examples are aged cheese, microbrew beers, cottage cheese, kimchi, miso, pickled ginger, pickles (brine-cured without vinegar), sauerkraut, tempeh, tofu, wine and all yogurts. So you don't necessarily need to spend money on the specially enhanced products you see heavily advertised.

The new trend is to add prebiotics to food products; for example, Yo-Plus from Yoplait, Post's LiveActive cereal and Minute Maid's Digestive Wellbeing juice.

Prebiotics are fibers and certain sugars that we don't digest or absorb, but that the good bacteria in our intestines feed on, thereby stimulating their growth and activity.

Prebiotics occur naturally in small amounts in many carbohydrate-rich foods: whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables. Prebiotic-rich foods include asparagus, bananas, barley, dried beans, microbrew beers, berries, cherries, dark chocolate, eggplant, garlic, fresh herbs, Jerusalem artichokes, leeks, oats, onions, peanuts, peas, red wine, soybeans, tea, whole rye and whole wheat.

Probiotics and prebiotics look promising, but will consuming them in enhanced foods or capsules make a notable difference to your health? There isn't conclusive research at this time. Also, large amounts of probiotic and prebiotic rich foods can cause abdominal pain, gas, bloating and diarrhea, which is what they are supposed to combat in the first place.

Remember moderation is the key. Normal foods can provide adequate friendly bacteria and the food those bacteria desire.

Raising your grandchildren

Learn to cope with this complex emotional issue

When you are put in a position to care for your grandchild, it's not unusual to experience a wide range of emotions, says Kris Jenkins, MU Extension human development specialist. You love your grandchild, but taking the child permanently into your home can create social, emotional and financial issues.

This whirlwind of emotions can range from anger to excitement or indignation to resignation. You may feel many of these emotions all at once: disappointment in your own

child, happiness that your grandchild is safe, yet upset that your life has changed. Many grandparents just don't know how to feel.

These emotions can be destructive unless you learn how to cope with them. It's important to allow yourself to feel these emotions. Not only do you have that right, it's part of the process. Share your feelings with a trusted friend or a counselor when overwhelmed.

Take a one-step-at-a-time approach. Your grandchildren's dance recital can be exciting, but if the parent is not there, it can also be tinged with sorrow. If your adult child is neglectful, you may also

feel a sense of guilt and doubt about your own parenting skills. Don't let those feelings ruin the event. You are most likely not responsible for the behaviors or actions that led to your grandchild living with you.

Give yourself permission to have joy in raising your grandchildren. Let them know they make you happy. You are providing your grandchildren with a home as well as a much needed sense of family. Stability is important to children's lifelong success.

If you are having a hard time managing all your emotions, imagine what it must be like for your grandchild.

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Sleep improves health

A good night's sleep may be just the ticket to improve your grandchild's behavior and health, says Glenda Kinder, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist. Researchers found that children with inadequate sleep do not appear tired, but instead behave badly. "There is a lot of commonality between the symptom of a tired child and the symptoms of a child with (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder)," says Dr. Neil Stanley, author of *The Sleep Report*.

Children with less than 7.7 hours of sleep had a higher hyperactivity and impulsive behavior score. Because sleep needs differ between individuals, the only way to determine if lack of sleep is negatively affecting your grandchild's behavior is by observation.

Sleep is a time for the body to revitalize, both physically and mentally. Our muscles and cells need to rejuvenate at rest. Even an extra 30 minutes of sleep per night can improve a child's cognition, reaction times, impulsivity and attention span. The entire family will benefit from a healthy sleep schedule.