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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
Extension
Live. And Learn.

Kindred *Spirits*

Treats: Watch the sugar and calories

Keep treats as “sometime” foods

Moderation is key for sweets

Try these tips to cut back on your child’s (and your own) sweet treats:

Keep sweet treats as an *occasional* treat.

Treats do not have to be food. Try other things as treats such as fun erasers or school supplies for classmates.

Or, enjoy a family walk after school instead of a cookie. Or perhaps service a healthier item as a treat—such as vegetables and dip or fruit.

If you do have a sweet treat, make it a small portion size. Moderation is key for eating and serving sweet treats.

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Back to school, after school treats, birthday parties, sporting events, weekend outings, Halloween candy, holidays. There are a lot of things to celebrate, and a lot of celebration treats.

These treats can add up quickly, going from an ‘every once in a while’ treat to an almost daily (or more often) occurrence. These treats often contain a lot of added sugar—something the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) tells us to cut back on.

According to Megan Webb, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, “Consuming foods with a lot of added sugars (and excess calories) can make it difficult for kids and adults to get the nutrients they need from food.”

Excess added sugars (and calories) can also quickly contribute to weight gain. Just 100 extra calories per day (less than are in a typical small cookie) will equal a ten pound weight gain in just one year.

An extra calorie is a calorie that you eat but your body does not need it for energy or growth.

How do we know how much added sugar is in a food?

Read the label. The nutrition facts label will tell you how many grams of sugar are in one serving of the product.

How do we know if it’s an ADDED sugar?

Current nutrition facts labels don’t tell us. To find out if the sugar is added (rather than naturally occurring, like in fruit), we must dig a little deeper and read the ingredient list.

The ingredients are listed in descending order by quantity. So, the first few items listed are the items present in the largest amounts. If sugar, or another word for sugar such as; cane sugar, invert sugar, multi dextrose, dextrose, cane juice, or honey are listed in the first five ingredients, then that food likely is high in added sugar.

The bottom line is that treats can add up quickly. Let’s keep treats as just that, a treat (not a daily occurrence).

Reducing clutter in your house

We use 20% of what we own

Is your house cluttered or disorganized? When asked, most people will say yes.

In fact, the average home has 25% more furniture and 75% more toys than needed. Often lack of space is not the cause of clutter. More often it is the fact the space is disorganized.

According to Marsha Alexander, MU Extension housing and environmental design specialist, “Studies have indicated that Americans use 20% of what we own. The other 80% is made up of items we don’t use, feel we should use, or believe we might use someday.”

Household clutter is not just an issue

of disorganization but can result in serious health and safety issues. A clean, clutter-free home can help in the management of allergies, asthma, and indoor air quality concerns. An organized, clutter-free space can also help to prevent accidental falls.

If you wish to improve your home’s organization, where do you begin?

Where does your family spend much of their time?

Where is organization the biggest problem?

Where would a clutter free space make the most difference?

Start simple with a junk drawer, or a medicine cabinet or a toy area. Then you are ready to focus on larger closets and rooms.

Get the grandchildren involved and

play music to make it fun. Or, set a timer and challenge yourself to beat the timer.

The first rule to follow is “keep it simple.” Get tough when you consider what to toss. Use labeled boxes that say “give away, recycle, sell, throw away and keep” and group items into categories.

Finish one area or room before beginning another decluttering project.

And, once you have decluttered an area or room, remember that the habit of putting away things daily will help keep the space organized. Discard the old when you buy the new.

A well organized home will result in a safer and healthier environment and, it can also reduce family stress.

University of Missouri Extension

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Eat together as a family

October is Eat Better, Eat Together month.

According to Melissa Bess, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, “Some of our best memories as adults involve meals eaten together as a family.”

Family meals eaten together tend to be healthier and lead to improved communication for all family members.

The keys to enjoyable meals is planning, purchasing and preparing. Get your grandchildren involved. They can help plan the meal, check the kitchen for ingredients already on hand, and help purchase the necessary ingredients. Grandchildren can also help with meal preparation. Depending on ages, they can help with different kitchen tasks.

Involving your grandchildren with planning, purchasing food, preparing food and cleaning up helps them feel a part of the family and also teaches them life skills they will use forever.

If it’s been awhile since you had a meal together as a family, now is a great time to start the tradition!