

# PERSPECTIVES

Utah State University  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

extension.usu.edu/boxelder



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## Healthy Web Surfing



There are more than 20,000 Web sites that provide health information to consumers. It's up to you, as a consumer, to decide which sites you can trust to provide reliable information. Consider the following tips as you surf for health information.

1. Identify who posts information to the Web site. Look for the "Contact Us" tab to learn more.

.gov government agencies

.edu educational institutions

.org professional organizations  
like research or scientific societies

.com commercial sites, commonly promote or sell a product.

2. Learn what the site's purpose is. Sites may inform, persuade, sell, or present a viewpoint. Read the "About this Site" link to help you evaluate the site's reliability. Be cautious of sites that seem to promote one product or position; that tout "miracle cures" or that push treatments that sound too good to be true.

3. Look for research-based information rather than strictly opinion. Check sources of information cited on the Web site to ensure they are reliable. Be cautious of sites that offer information from just one source. If a Web site has an editorial board that reviews information before it is posted, that's a good sign. Look for information about board member credentials. Look for the criteria used in selecting information for the site. Be skeptical of sites that rely on anonymous testimonials.

4. Look for the date when the site was last updated. Health information is continually changing and a responsible site will review and update it often.

5. Read the Web site's "Privacy Policy" to make sure your privacy will be protected and that your information will not be shared with other companies.

### Suggested Health Information Sites

#### American Dietetic Association

www.eatright.org

#### Food Guidance System

www.mypyramid.gov

#### National Library of Medicine

www.medlineplus.gov

Tufts University Nutrition Navigator

www.navigator.tufts.edu

#### U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

## Energy Saving Tip

Install low-flow showerheads. A 2.5 gpm showerhead can save as much as 50% on water bills and a lot on heating water. Remember: a 10-minute shower uses half as much water as a bath, and many people are just as happy with a 5-minute shower.

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## Quick Dinners



When time is short, try some of these ideas to help you put a meal together quickly.

**Breakfast for Dinner:** Omelets, crepes, pancakes, waffles, German pancakes, scrambled eggs and hash browns.

**Quick Burritos:** Spread flour tortillas with heated canned refried beans, add some chopped leftover chicken or other meat, lettuce, sour cream, drained diced canned tomatoes, grated cheese, and salsa, then roll up.

**Baked Potato Meal:** Microwave a potato. Slit and fluff potato then top with steamed vegetables, grated cheese, chopped green onion, chopped ham, and drizzle with ranch salad dressing.

**Black Bean Quesadilla:** Drain one can black beans; lightly mash. Add ½ cup salsa; spread on tortilla. Sprinkle with cheese; broil.

**Baked Tortellini:** Place ready to eat tortellini in a lightly greased casserole dish. Pour spaghetti sauce over the top, add a few sliced olives, pepperoni slices, and drained bottled mushrooms. Top with mozzarella cheese. Bake or microwave until hot and bubbly.

For more ideas visit the USU Extension Web site <http://extension.usu.edu> and look for the publication *Dinner to the Rescue* by Teresa Hunsaker.

[http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/pub\\_\\_7785207.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/pub__7785207.pdf)

## FAQ

### Why read to infants before they can talk?

It may seem that very young children don't understand what you're saying, but in important ways they do. Talking, singing, and reading to your child are not only important for brain development but a wonderful opportunity for bonding with your child. When babies hear you say words over and over, more speech and language connections develop. You can read picture books and stories to very young children, even to infants. By about six months, infants show their excitement by widening their eyes and moving their arms and legs when looking at a book with pictures of babies or other familiar objects.



Read stories in a way that encourages older babies and toddlers to participate—by answering your questions, pointing out what they see in a picture book, telling you what they think will happen next in the story, and repeating rhymes and refrains. Telling the same stories and singing the same songs over and over may feel boring to you, but are not boring to children.

For more objective, research-based, credible information and tools you can use every day to improve your life, visit

<http://www.extension.org/>

## Bright Ideas for the Bathroom

### Bathroom Shower Head:



Fill plastic bag with vinegar and place over shower head and allow it to soak for 15 minutes to remove hard water buildup.

**Bathroom Faucets:** Use alcohol to shine.

**Bathroom Showers:** To remove hard water spots and soap scum, use undiluted, heated, white vinegar. Put the vinegar in a spray bottle, apply to shower walls and let soak for 15 minutes. Using a nylon-covered sponge, apply dry borax and scrub. For stubborn problems use a dry, soap-filled steel wool pad on a dry shower (don't use water).

To prevent hard water spots use a squeegee to remove water from shower walls after showering.

For more information about cleaning and organizing your home, visit the USU Extension Web site and look for the publication *Making a House a Home: Clean and Organized*.

# Slashing Recreation Expenses



Tight financial times don't mean family recreation has to stop. There are lots of things to do that are inexpensive or even free.

**1. Choose activities that are free or cost a small amount.** Activities such as hiking, picnicking, visiting a local museum, or attending a concert can be not only enjoyable, but free.

**2. If you entertain at home, have a potluck affair.** This way, everyone shares the cost of the food.

**3. Make kites and fly them.**

**4. Spend time outside.** Play Frisbee or baseball. Build a snowman. Go on a picnic or a walk around the park.

**5. Go to a movie matinee.** Matinees are cheaper than evening shows.

**6. When eating out, try to go out for lunch instead of dinner.** It's less expensive.

**7. Play board or card games at home.** Pop popcorn or bake cookies for a tasty and not-so-expensive treat.

**8. Have a candle-light dinner at home, and go out for dessert only.**

**9. Read a book together as a family or sing or play musical instruments with each other.**

**10. Make puppets with your children, and then put on a puppet show.**

**11. Visit the public library.** Not only do they have free books, most libraries also have free movies.

**12. Start camping for vacations.** This can be a lot cheaper than theme parks, and more peaceful.

**13. Scrapbook with your family and create pages of activities you have done together.**

**14. Join 4-H and complete a project as a family.**

**15. Check out these Web sites.**

[http://www.utah.com/amusement/family\\_northern.htm](http://www.utah.com/amusement/family_northern.htm)

## Check Your Credit Report



[www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)

This central site allows you to request a free credit report once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

Your Credit Report can be requested from the Web site, by phone (800-322-8228) or by mail.

Consider ordering a Credit Report from one company now and the others later (for example,

one credit report every four months) so you can track changes or new information that may appear on your credit report throughout the year.