



# Healthy Ways to Family Fitness

issue 17

A NEWSLETTER PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH FROM THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## Create an Edible Garden

Gardening is a great activity for your whole family. Growing vegetables or herbs teaches children that plants, like people, need food and water to grow and stay healthy. Caring for plants helps children develop responsibility. It also builds self-esteem when children see what they can grow! A garden can teach children about new foods, and children actually enjoy tasting what they grow. A garden can teach children about nature, will encourage them to eat more fruits and vegetables, and get them moving with fun physical activity. This newsletter provides tips to help your family get started planning a garden.

### Why Grow an Edible Garden?

The benefits of creating and maintaining a garden at home include:

- Having your own source of fruits and vegetables. This can save money on your grocery bill.
- Learning where food comes from.
- Choosing which crops to grow and eat.
- Providing an opportunity for active play, such as planting, weeding, raking and harvesting.
- Eating fruits and vegetables from the garden will help your family meet MyPlate daily recommendations (see [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)).
- Stimulating all five senses for learning, such as smelling and tasting fresh foods.

### Getting Children Involved From Seed to Plate

Here is a list of activities to do with your family:

1. **Planning the garden layout.** Together select what to grow and where to plant seeds or seedlings.
2. **Planting.** Let your children plant the seeds or seedlings. They can also create garden markers out of various items, such as painted rocks or popsicle sticks.
3. **Weeding.** Your children can learn to identify weeds and remove them from the garden.
4. **Watering.** Follow a watering schedule and provide an easy-to-carry bucket or watering can so your children can easily water the garden.
5. **Harvesting.** Your children will love harvesting the produce that they grew themselves.
6. **Preparing the food.** Children can help out in the kitchen by washing and preparing food. Use child-friendly kitchen tools. Most of them are plastic or composite materials with dull edges so children won't cut themselves.



## Learn To Live

Anne Arundel County Department of Health  
[www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org](http://www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org)

For free information on healthy living and cancer prevention, contact  
Learn To Live at 410-222-7979 or at [www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org](http://www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org).



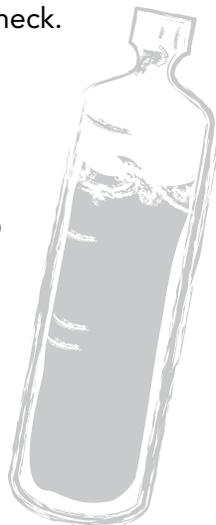
## Sun Safety

While outside in the garden, it is important to be protected from the sun. Too much exposure from the sun's ultraviolet rays early in life can increase the risk of skin cancer. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, but also one of the most preventable.

- Wear wide-brimmed hats that shade the ears and neck.
- Apply sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher that protects against UVA and UVB rays.

## Keep Hydrated

Children can get dehydrated quickly, which may lead to serious health problems. You can help prevent this by encouraging your child to drink water before, during and after spending time in the garden.



## Food Safety

- Always wash hands before and after handling raw fruits and vegetables.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under cool, running and clean tap water, even if you don't eat the skin or rind.
- Never use soap, detergent or bleach solution to wash fruits and vegetables. They are not meant for washing produce and are not safe to ingest.
- Avoid cross-contamination when preparing fruits and vegetables. Clean work surfaces, utensils and hands before and after handling fruits and vegetables.
- If you have leftover produce, store it in a clean, air-tight container refrigerated at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below. To be safe, do not use fresh, cut-up produce if it has been held longer than 2 hours at room temperature, unless you intend to cook it.

Check out the online resources below for more information. In Anne Arundel County, you can contact the Anne Arundel County Master Gardeners at 410-222-6757 to help answer your garden questions.

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

[www.hgic.umd.edu/content/onlinepublications.cfm](http://www.hgic.umd.edu/content/onlinepublications.cfm)

[www.cdc.gov/family/gardening](http://www.cdc.gov/family/gardening)

[www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)

[www.earllysprouts.org](http://www.earllysprouts.org)

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## Bookworm Apple Bark

### Ingredients:

- 1 apple
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1 small bunch of fresh chives or parsley
- 2 ½ tablespoons golden or black raisins
- 1 ½ tablespoons dried cranberries

### Supplies:

- Knife or apple slicer
- Kitchen shears

Wash the apple. Cut into four quarters, starting at the stem. Remove the core by cutting away to leave a flat surface on the apple quarter. Be careful not to cut too much of the edible portion of the apple away. Wash and cut chives or parsley into one-inch pieces. Place all ingredients on a plate.

Serves: 1.

Estimated time: 10 minutes

### How to Get Children Involved:

- Wash and cut the apple with an apple slicer.
- Spread the peanut butter on the apple slices.
- Sprinkle the cranberries and raisins on their apple.
- Garnish with fresh chives or parsley.



Source: [www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)