



Fun and Games

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Spring Clean Up!

As we prepare to enjoy warmer weather and activities outdoors, we might be inspired to do some kitchen organizing and household cleanup. Teaching kids how to keep kitchens clean and organized is an excellent skill to have as adults.

EAT

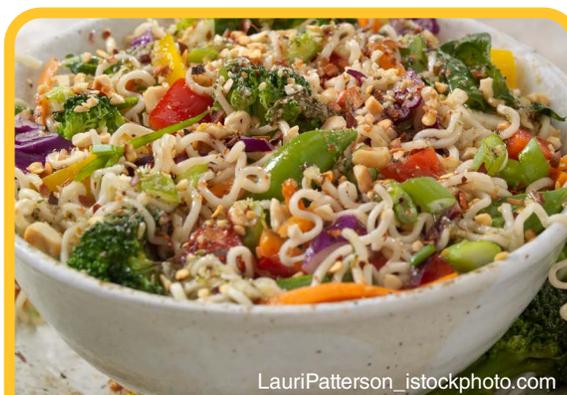
Most food packages have dates, even though they are not required by law. Do you know the definitions for food product dates? Fill in the blanks with the letter of your answer.

- a. Best if used by date; b. Expiration date; c. Sell-by date
1. A box of macaroni and cheese might have this quality date. The food is safe to eat after this date. _____
 2. Baby food and formula will have this date. The food should not be consumed after this date for safety reasons. _____
 3. The food usually is good in the refrigerator for a week or more beyond this date. Stores call the date the "pull date." _____

See "Spring Clean Your Way to a Safer Kitchen" from the Partnership for Food Safety Education for more information. (www.fightbac.org/?s=kitchen+spring+cleaning&id=12049)

Answers: 1. a.; 2. b.; 3. c.

Ramen noodles are fairly inexpensive. You can boost the nutrition with added vegetables.



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Ramen Noodle Side Dish

- 2 cups vegetables (carrots, peas, corn, onion, celery, broccoli, green beans, spinach)
- 1 tablespoon olive or canola oil
- 1 package ramen noodles, any flavor
- 1/2 cup water

Sauté vegetables in oil until tender-crisp (about five to 10 minutes). You can substitute frozen or canned vegetables for fresh. Crush ramen noodles and add to vegetables along with the seasoning packet and water. Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the water is absorbed and noodles are tender. Add extra water if desired.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 120 calories, 4 grams (g) fat, 3 g protein, 18 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 370 mg sodium.

Connect

Bonding over cleaning and organizing does not sound like an activity that most children and youth would rank high on a list of fun. Introduce the idea of spring cleaning in a different way to see if you get a more positive reaction.



Make an appointment with each child, write it on the calendar and keep your date. Devote time to that one person while they try on clothes from last summer to determine needs going into the next season. Keep the conversation positive! Start with the child who has clothing to pass down to smaller siblings. Make a list of items to buy, help them reorganize their clothes and end with a special “treat” of the child’s choosing. A video game challenge, a favorite snack, a walk-and-talk time or a shared book or movie are some options. Even when they don’t admit it, individual time with a parent is its own reward.

Have your child(ren) help you organize your cupboards in a first-in, first-out (FIFO) fashion. Find the date on the package and move the foods with the oldest dates to the front of the cupboard. As you sort food, brainstorm with your child the ways to use the foods you have on hand.

Tired of winterwear falling off the closet shelf all summer? Have each child assemble their winter gear head to toe as if they were in them. Assess for wear and growth. Wash, dry and pack in vacuum sealed bags. Everyone loves to help with that! Remember, gloves and mittens that don’t match are still just as wearable as matching sets. See how many coordinating sets your family can make from the missing pairs.

Remember the old game “Clean Sweep?” Three tarps were designated with signs stating keep, toss, donate. Use the basics of the game to go through toys, games and books. Ask for everyone’s help to clean a whole room or garage. Designate three spaces; donate, toss and keep. Set a time limit and GO!

Use a pair of large dice to determine how many items your young children will put away in a play space in your home. Everyone takes turns until the space is tidy. The work is more fun when it turns into a game and dice help with counting skills too.

Savor (the Savings)

Stretching Your Food Dollar

Remember that foods do not have to be thrown away on the date listed on the package. Eggs can be consumed three to five weeks beyond the date you purchased them. Milk often is fresh a week beyond the date on the carton. Keep milk in the main part of the refrigerator, where it is colder, instead of in the door.

Check the temperature of your refrigerator. Some refrigerators have built-in thermometers, but you also can purchase regular ones. Is the refrigerator at 40 F?



For more information, these publications are available under “Food Safety” at www.ag.ndsu.edu/food

BAC Down! Give Bacteria the Cold Shoulder

Fight BAC! Safe Handling of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Fight BAC! Fight Foodborne Bacteria

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