

THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

APRIL 2017
VOLUME 19 ISSUE 4

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Masters of Deception

Watch those Food Labels!

Pregnant?

What NOT to Eat

Play Like a Kid

Add Some Magic to Your Life

Eating Diversity

Expand Your Family's Food Repertoire

Pregnancy - Baby - Toddler - Preschool - School Age - Family

A Free Magazine for Parents and Caregivers



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On The Cover



Élodie came all the way from Ottawa for her photo shoot. She loves dancing and music (Shakira is her favourite!) – and was so good about wearing those gigantic boots! A big thanks to Little Labels Boutique for our cover kid's cute outfit.

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If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact us at 519.652.9226 or at editor@themomandcaregiver.com.

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Sabina Manji - Chief Editor

THE DAYS ARE LONG, BUT THE YEARS ARE SHORT



"Springtime flowers bloom like colorful arrows piercing their way to the sun."

Terri Guillemets

"Hold on to the tiny moments and cherish the little snuggles. They grow up so fast!"

Our assistant editor recently took her 13-year-old daughter shopping for a grade eight graduation dress. She was shocked by how quickly the years had flown by! She recounted tales of the snowy October day her daughter was born, of the trip to the optometrist at age three when they found out she needed glasses, of the time she dropped to her knees in a mud puddle at Niagara Falls. And now, here she is, getting ready to head into high school.

We all have moments when we realize our children are growing quickly. They're a reminder for us to slow down, make memories and enjoy all the little things

in life. April is a time of rebirth, of starting again, of stopping to smell the crocuses, daffodils and tulips. So, take this

"...slow down, make memories and enjoy all the little things..."

month to notice changes in your little one too - have they learned a new skill, said a first word, shown their true personality?

As we watch our babies and toddlers work on new skills, a parent's job is to encourage and protect them. We'll learn from the MHLU about preventing childhood falls on page 8. We can also develop and grow as a family by expanding our family's food repertoire. Cookbook author Carolyn Hemming explains why it's dangerous for adults and children to constantly choose the same foods.

We'll also hear from a teacher and father, Frank Emanuele, about equal rights for dads. With a growing number of dads taking an active role in their child's upbringing (whether those are stay-at-home, single, traditional, sharing custody, gay dads, etc.), he's shocked by the lack of private and sanitary places for a man to change a baby's diaper. Looks like we need to make some changes, world!

Change is good! As much as we might miss that little baby we held warmly in our arms, it's so exciting to see a toddler drinking from a cup, a preschooler no longer in diapers, a school-kid who can ride a two-wheeler, or a teenager who is choosing to wear Converse All-Stars with her grad dress!

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APRIL EVENTS

04/2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Saturday Morning Walk Thames Park (TVTA)
2 Imagination Station Museum London	3 April 2-9 Jack Richardson London Music Week Various venues	4 Kiwanis Celebrates Canada 150 Riverside United Church	5 London Lightning Budweiser Gardens	6 April 5-6 London Poultry Show Western Fair	7 April 6-8 45th Brush & Palette Club Art Show and Sale St. Paul's Cathedral	8 Go Wild Grow Wild Expo Western Fair
9 #WePlayOn - Enchanting Broadway Metropolitan United Church	10 Storytime LPL, Central	11 Beginning with Baby LPL, Cherryhill	12 London Lightning Budweiser Gardens	13 Doggie Night 2.0 Anderson Craft Ales	14 London Spring Arts and Craft Show and Sale Western Fair	15 Harlem Globetrotters Budweiser Gardens
16 Imagination Station Museum London	17 April is Poetry Month LPL, Central	18 Dixie Chicks Budweiser Gardens	19 Playgroup LPL, Byron	20 April 20-29 Anne and Gilbert Original Kids Theatre	21 April 21-22 Textile Showcase Wesley-Knox United Church	22 Fringe Spring Social Fringe Custom Framing and Gallery
23 April 21-23 Home & Outdoor Show Western Fair	24 Storytime LPL, Central	25 April 25-May 13 Ting Comic & Graphic Arts Festival The ARTS Project	26 Jazz for the People - Group of Seven Wolf Performance Hall	27 Dean Brody & Paul Brandt: Road Trip Tour Budweiser Gardens	28 Storytime LPL, Masonville	29 Poetry for Kids LPL, Byron
30 London Lesbian Film Festival Various locations	For More Details and Events Visit  Your Online Parenting Resource					

April 8
Go Wild Grow Wild Expo
Western Fair

April 20-29
Anne and Gilbert
Original Kids Theatre

April 27
Dean Brody & Paul Brandt: Road Trip Tour
Budweiser Gardens



FOODS TO AVOID IN PREGNANCY

If you're pregnant, you should avoid eating some foods during your pregnancy.

Listeria is a bacteria that's present in many foods. For the most part, this bacteria causes a diarrheal illness in adults. In pregnant women, listeria infection can cause stillbirths, miscarriages and preterm labour.

Pregnant women are 10 times more likely to get listeria than other adults.

This infection can be passed on to the unborn child and may result in fetal death.

Listeria is in unpasteurized and soft cheeses, such as feta and queso fresco. Unpasteurized milk may also contain listeria. There is a growing trend among gourmands to seek out unpasteurized milk and cheese as the flavours are not affected by the process of pasteurization. Processed meats such as hot dogs and cold cuts may also contain listeria.

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The immune system is affected by pregnancy and thus pregnant women are much more likely to get an infection from exposure to these bacteria.

Other bacteria are present in foods that might cause greater illness in pregnant women. E.coli and salmonella are present in prepared salads and sprouts. Unpasteurized fresh pressed cider may also contain salmonella.

Certain fish may contain high levels of mercury and yet the right type of fish consumption might help in providing omega-3 fatty acids necessary for baby's brain development. Shellfish may contain vibrio, the bacteria that leads to cholera.

The list of do's and don'ts in pregnancy can be frightening. The CDC has an excellent website with a chart of foods to avoid and tips on food handling. This list simplifies what to avoid. Focus

then on what to include to grow a happy healthy baby!

Learn more at foodsafety.gov/risk/pregnant/chklist_pregnancy.html.

Dr. Bhooma Bhayana is a family physician in London and the mother of two young men. She continues to find wonder and enjoyment in family practice despite more than 25 years on the job!

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PROTECT YOUR CHILD BY PREVENTING FALLS

MLHU Early Years Partnership

Babies change so much, so quickly. They're constantly learning to do new things like rolling over, crawling, pulling themselves up and walking. Sometimes these new developments seem to happen overnight and take parents by surprise.

During the first two years, children continue to develop their skills and want to practise their new and exciting abilities. Toddlers will try to climb on anything, but they don't understand what is a danger nor do they have the co-ordination to protect themselves from falling. As a parent of a young child, it's a good idea to prepare for these changes!

Keeping your child safe

In the bedroom

- Once your child is able to sit up, move the crib mattress support to the lowest level.
- Always keep one hand on your child during diaper changes.

On the stairs

- Install hardware-mounted safety gates at the top and bottom.
- Remove or secure loose carpeting or items on the stairs.
- Install protective walls and railings on stairs, porches and balconies.
- Make sure your stairs are well lit.

In the kitchen

- Always use the harness when your child is in their high chair.

In the bathroom

- Have a slip-free surface in bathtub.
- Dry any wet areas on the floor to prevent slips.

Around windows

- Move furniture away from windows.
- Secure windows with guards and stops to prevent your child from opening them (screens don't protect children from falling).

In general living areas

- Fasten bookshelves and tall furniture to the wall.
- Make sure rugs or runners are tacked down or slip-free.

In the great outdoors

- Inspect home play structures regularly and fix promptly.
- Use only play structures intended for your child's age.
- Always use harness straps in the stroller and car seat.

Installing and using safety products can help reduce unintentional injuries but supervision is the most important thing you can do to protect your child. For more information on how to keep your child safe, visit preventchildinjury.ca.

By Meagan Melling RN BScN, Public Health Nurse
Middlesex-London Health Unit

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PLAY KEEPS THE MAGIC IN LIFE

Part 2

For adults who may not have had a playful childhood or have merely forgotten what it was like, I encourage you to explore and try to imitate childhood enthusiasm. Find or explore new hobbies and activities. If you can't think of one, experiment... that's what kids do all the time.

Move away from the TV, computer and video games and get involved. Electronic screens are two-dimensional and aren't interactive. You're not using most of your senses. You're not creating. You need to use all of you to experience all of you! If you truly looked at your day you'd be surprised at how much of your day is wasted doing non-crucial things.





The average person in North America watches five hours of TV each day. Look at the time you may waste by moving a little slower on a task or between tasks. Do you ever notice how fast you get something done if you have to be somewhere at a certain time? Tighten up your day to shave off a few minutes to create something new. I guarantee you can find 30 minutes each day to do something unique and fun. If you can't find it, you aren't looking hard enough.

I think instead of asking people, "Hi, what do you do?" it should

be, "What do you love to do?" And, everyone should have an answer to this: "I'm really passionate about..."

What do you enjoy so much that you could get up an hour earlier than you already do because you're excited about doing it? When was the last time you woke up early because you wanted to and not because you had to? Just because you were excited about doing something unique?

Don't worry about succeeding. When you see children playing, they very seldom know how well they are creating. They're too busy

playing and exploring. They aren't measuring their success. Playing is an exploration 'in doing' and being in the moment. Learn to play well alone but don't forget to play with others. Play with your kids, play with your spouse, or play with your friends. Find your passion and create more.

Learn to play. It will add a spark of magic that will light up your life.

Dr. Lalit Chawla, MD, CCFP, FCFP, is a highly sought after international speaker, family physician in Chatham, ON, and an adjunct professor at the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry in London, ON.



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Frankly Fatherhood

A Man's Point of View

DADS DO DIAPERS TOO!

Our family enjoys regular visits to restaurants. I mean, who doesn't love it when someone else takes care of the cooking, dishes and mess on the floor? A few weeks ago, we were enjoying a lovely dinner in a downtown restaurant with another family with young kids. The food and service were great, the company was lovely, and the kids were actually behaving well. The evening had an air of perfection and bliss to it... but all of that came to a screeching halt when I got up to change a diaper.

The men's restroom did not have a change table. This isn't the first time I've run into this problem. In fact, I once changed a diaper on the men's room floor. I won't ever do that again so I politely asked a staff member if they could screen the ladies room for me to enter and change a diaper. The manager asked if I could "do the deed" in one of the restaurant's empty stalls instead. I reluctantly obliged and suggested that a change table be considered for the men's room if they wanted families to continue their patronage. Unfortunately, I felt my words fell on deaf ears... yet again.

The number of dads who are active in their child's care and upbringing is undoubtedly on the rise. We're seeing more stay-at-home dads, dads as primary caregivers, single dads,



part-time dads, and, in our case, gay dads who don't really have a choice but to do diapers. I don't think we're asking for much when we expect a private and sanitary place to change our babies.

I understand families aren't welcome in all eating establishments and I certainly don't expect to find a change table at the poshest place in town. However, if you offer a children's menu or a high chair, then I believe you're responsible for offering appropriate change amenities for all parents. Your standard Koala Kare change table is about \$300 – a price that's well worth the investment.

After all, it's 2017 and diaper duty shouldn't just be mom's job! If we truly want a community of equality for all parents, then this is a logical step forward. If you agree, let's hear from you. Help us at Dad Club of London to urge family restaurant owners to install change tables in men's rooms by signing our petition at dadclublondon.com/we-do-diapers.

Frank Emanuele is a proud father of two sons and special education teacher for the local public school board. When not parenting or educating, Frank enjoys cooking, photography, movies and video games.


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How Long do Dental Fillings Last?

Brushing Up

Tips for your Pearly Whites

So, you've had a cavity repaired with a filling. That means your tooth is set for life, right? Not necessarily. There are several factors that go into determining how long you can expect that filling to last.

Big fillings won't last as long

By far the most influential factor is the amount of tooth structure that has been replaced by the filling. A smaller filling will last longer than a larger one. With larger fillings, there is less tooth enamel left, making the overall structure more vulnerable. In many cases, larger fillings will require a crown at some point in the future.

What's it made of?

The material used in the filling also contributes to how long the filling will last.

Taking care

Finally, the patient's dental hygiene plays an important role in determining how long a filling will last too, as does whether the patient grinds his/her teeth. Proper dental hygiene and the use of mouth guards will help extend the life of your fillings.

If you suspect you have a problem with a filling, it's best not to wait. Call your dentist and arrange a check-up to avoid more costly procedures.



Dr. Sanjay Agrawal and his team strive to provide compassionate, comprehensive and comfortable dental care to all of their patients, especially the kids.



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Biz Showcase

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Tuckey Home Hardware is a third-generation business that's been operating for over 70 years in Wortley Village. Its founder, Elmore Tuckey, started his career at a hardware wholesaler. He received so many offers from hardware store owners to manage their stores that he gained confidence and felt he could successfully run a store of his own.

In 1946, he purchased a store at the corner of Wortley Road and Craig Street and a year later his son Don joined the business. In 1977, the third generation, Dave, began working part-time. For nearly 10 years, the three generations worked side by side. Elmore retired at the age of 81 in 1985 and Dave joined the business full-time.

In 1964, in the face of increased competition, Don Tuckey became one of the founding members of Home Hardware Stores Ltd. These stores formed a buying group so they could access a larger selection of products at competitive prices. Being a member of Home Hardware, which has been named one of Canada's Best Managed Companies several times, has played an important role in the store's success and for many others across Canada.

Investing in the Old South community has always been a priority. To stay competitive, it has been necessary to grow. The most recent expansion was completed in 2016. The store is now 10 times the size of the original, with a staff that's grown from three to 25, and is better equipped to respond to customer demand.

"In the spring, our busiest departments include paint and our garden centre featuring plants, soils and mulches. Beautiful Tone, our quality line of paint, is manufactured in Canada at Home Hardware's own facility. We offer thousands of colours including contemporary, traditional and current trends. We can colour match all brands and our "Buy 6 get 1 free" reward program is very popular," said Dave Tuckey.

"Old South is a close knit, progressive community that's been very supportive of us and other local family businesses. Many people visit us from all over the city. Of all the reasons our customers support us, I believe the biggest is our friendly staff. Several of them have been with us for over 10 years with others approaching 20. We consider ourselves a family with a strong commitment to our customers and to each other."

Thank you to our customers.
Past, present and future. We
know we wouldn't be here
without you.



TUCKEY HOME HARDWARE

It's spring – that means it's time to get in touch with your inner ninja. That's right. The Legoland® Discovery Centre in Vaughan (inside the Vaughan Mills Outlet Mall) has added a Ninjago Training Camp in honour of the movie. Crawl through a laser maze or perfect high kicks against the training wall.

Once a year, this Legoland Discovery Centre – the only one in Canada – changes up an exhibit. In March, Lego Batman himself celebrated Batman the Movie with a special appearance.

Here's what stays year round:

- A simplified version of Lego manufacturing where you can find out your height and weight in Legos
- Four 12-minute 4D (3D plus temperature changes) films
- Amusement park-style flying on Merlin's Ride and laser shooting on the Kingdom Quest train

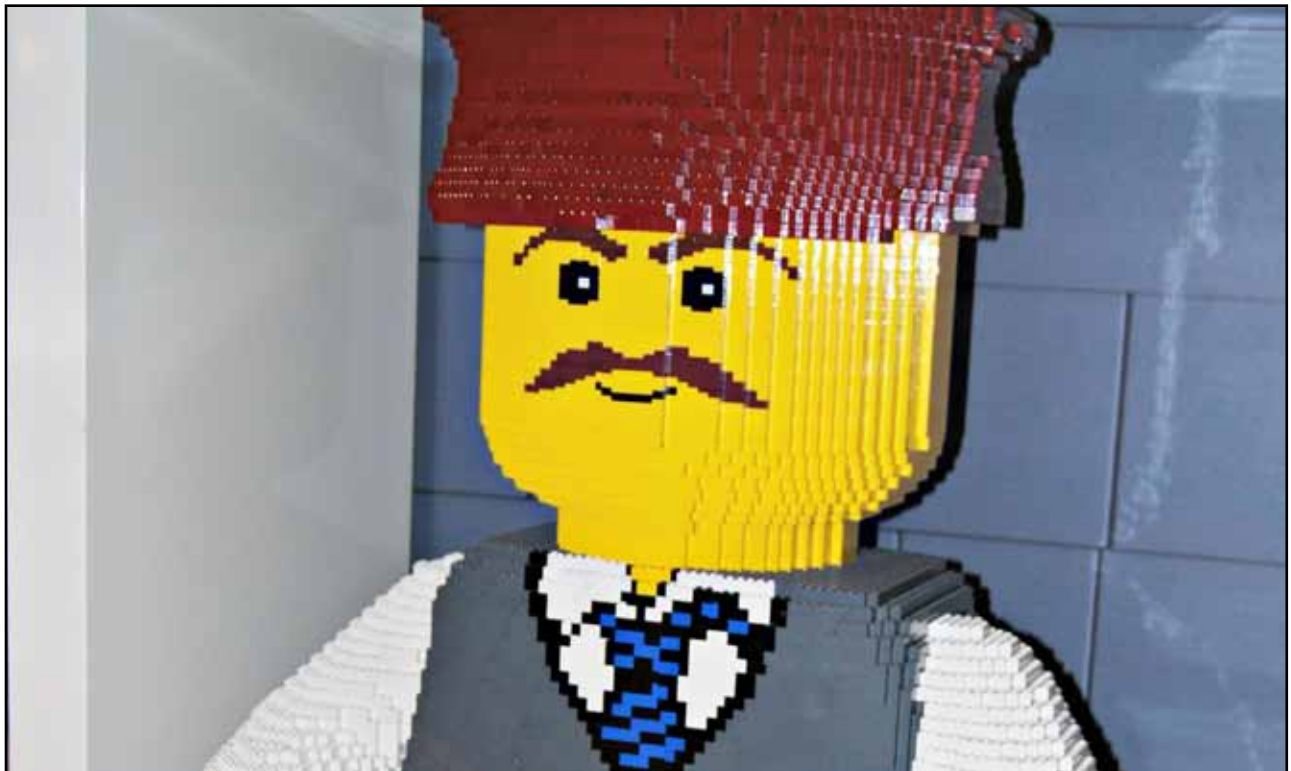
They're all included in the price of admission (\$22 at the door or \$15 online).

Of course, building is what Lego is really about. Settle down at activity stations and snap together a tower

to test against earthquakes or build a racecar to test on ramps dominating the floor. Little ones get busy at the Duplo bins clutching big pieces designed for little hands.

This place buys one parent about three hours of shopping time while the other helps build colourful plastic dreams with the kids. (www.toronto.legolanddiscoverycentre.ca)

Sherri Telenko is a freelance writer and blogger living in Southern Ontario. Sign up for travel and trail riding ideas at www.horsetrotting.net or follow her on twitter @SherriTelenko.



LEGOLAND DISCOVERY CENTRE

Fostering Dreams

Adopting Hope with the Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex

I Thought I Knew What I Wanted,
But Then I Got Just What I Needed

The fact that I thank God for my dysfunctional uterus may be a surprise to some but, after 10 years of failed fertility treatments, I decided to take a different path. When I turned to adoption, I wanted a newborn baby. After a short wait I got a call about a four-year-old boy. I was in a work meeting and, in the scramble to find privacy for my call, I grabbed a pen and a pack of sticky notes and left the office. As the worker filled me in on the history of this little boy, my mind was scrambling, my inside voice repeating ... say no, say no, it's not a baby.

As the worker read his case history, I flipped page after page of my bright green stickies. It was not a pretty story.

She explained, "He may be challenging for a while."

Say no, say no, but the word wouldn't come out of my mouth. I hung up and sat there wondering what had just happened. I didn't say no but had I said yes? She said I didn't need to say yes right away. What could she be thinking? Shouldn't she place this kid with someone who was jumping for joy to get the call? Two days of pendulum swinging followed that call, weighing the pros and cons. What if I meet him and fall for him? What of my baby dreams? What if we don't connect? Is this God's plan for me? For him?

Finally, I called back and a meeting was arranged, followed by a few more visits, then a sleepover, then a weekend. Before I knew it, I was tucking a four-year-old into a giant bed in the guest room. Even after all these years of waiting, I still didn't have a room ready. I felt like I was babysitting and I took a long time to realize that no one was coming to pick him up. The worker was right – it was challenging for a while, but daytime meltdowns over Hot Wheels gave way to evening concerts singing Justin Bieber – over and over! Fears about attachment gave way to a conviction that he was meant to be mine. I wouldn't trade him for any baby from anywhere – not even one from the womb that had let me down. I'm so thankful he came to me the way he did – otherwise he wouldn't be him. I'm thankful every day that the word no didn't pass my lips that day and that this experience left me open to saying yes a few more times!

"...he was meant to be mine."

Caroline is a foster and adoptive care provider with the Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex and the mom of two boys. She has a specific interest in the effects of attachment and developmental trauma as it relates to children-in-care.



**Foster Dreams,
Adopt Hope**

To learn more about fostering and adoption,
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LONDON & MIDDLESEX

One in five parents have a mental illness. Depression, anxiety and stress are the most common problems, and many parents are reluctant to get help.

Mental health is family health. Our children are intuitively connected to us. They emotionally pick up on our worries, depression and anxiety.

Engage in treatment. If you seek out help to control your moods, your children will copy your healthy habits. Even if you don't want to get better for yourself, do it for your kids.

Connect. Surround yourself with supportive individuals. You'll have people to count on when life is hard.

Plan it out. Learn to understand your illness, its triggers and cycles. Make sure your kids have other adults who can take over or offer balance when you struggle.

Find fun for you and the kids. Find activities that go beyond the roles of parent and patient, like exercise and creative pursuits. Your kids will adore seeing you enjoy yourself.

Celebrate your strengths. When you're struggling, strengths are the last thing on your mind. Celebrate them as a family by listing three things each family member likes about themselves ... then post it on the fridge.

"...taking good care of yourself is the best gift you can give your kiddies."

Single parenting: Being the only nurturer and disciplinarian can exacerbate mental illness. Ask for help, team up for play dates and exchange babysitting duties.

Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of and taking good care of yourself is the best gift you can give your kiddies.

Resources:

Extended benefits that cover "services of a social worker" to access my support

Canadian Mental Health Association 519-434-9191

Family Services Thames Valley counselling 519-433-0183

Emily Beeckmans is educated as a social worker and is a trauma specialist. As a private practitioner, she strives to educate clients and the public about the importance of emotional health and well-being. Emily offers you a safe place to dig into your thoughts, feelings and life choices.



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Pet Friendly

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Last summer, a beach-goer took a video of a distressed dog trapped in a hot car in Grand Bend. The video went viral across social media and, understandably, dog lovers everywhere were enraged by the poor pup's situation. It's easy to assume that the person responsible was a "bad owner," but that's very rarely the case. Almost every time there's a heat-related fatality or injury to an animal, it's because a well-meaning owner underestimated the weather and lost track of time.

The internal temperature of a car can quickly reach fatal levels even on a 15°C day, and cracked windows don't provide enough air flow to make a difference. Even a mild April afternoon can be dangerous. Dogs don't produce sweat the same way that humans do and mostly

rely on breathing cool air to regulate their temperatures. When only warm or hot air is available in a car, it damages their cardiovascular systems, ultimately leaving them dehydrated, comatose or worse.

This means that it's impossible to tell if the weather is ever "safe" to leave your pet in a car. Spring is a great time to enjoy hikes and dog parks with your pup, but a simple stop at the grocery store on the way home could mean disaster for your furry family member. By always making it a priority to leave your dog at home and encouraging others to do the same, you could save a life.

If you find an animal in distress, act quickly. Call 911 or the local Humane Society, who are authorized to break the

window to perform a rescue. Also record a description of the car and approach surrounding businesses to see if an owner can be found, then provide the pet with water immediately.

Our loyal companions rely on us to protect them and weather-related harm is completely preventable. Unfortunately, many good pet owners just don't understand the risks. If pet owners everywhere pledge to never leave their dogs unattended in parked vehicles, we just may be able to avoid this type of "viral video" for 2017.

Dr. I. Wonder is here to answer your questions regarding your furry family members. If you have a question, email it to us at brent@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com. Our team at Neighbourhood Pet Clinic will tap into their collective experience to answer your questions.



A food label's Nutrition Facts Table includes calories and 13 nutrients. We've been taught to read food labels yet few of us understand the key factors that most impact our health.

Real food stuff

Start with the ingredients. Many nutrient facts can be manipulated with chemicals, heavily processed ingredients and unrealistic serving size claims.

What about nutritional claims?

Nutrition claims provide a snapshot of one nutrient in a food, such as fibre

or fat. The food industry is a master of deception; just as a magician distracts while performing magic, the food industry distracts us with clever wording and marketing, like fat-free, low-fat, sugar-free, source of fibre, cholesterol-free, reduced in calories or light in hopes that we'll eat more.

Taking back control

Look for as few ingredients as possible. (Five or less is best!) Focus on real food, and stay away from ingredients you can't pronounce. Watch out for food colourings, gums, and artificial and

natural flavours. Be aware of the many forms of sugar. And always ask yourself, "Does this ingredient really need to be in this food?" Does peanut butter or pasta sauce really need added sugar?

By shopping for real foods and making choices based on the quality of the ingredients, we send a clear message to the food industry.

Rene Beaulieu is a Certified Health Coach and business professional who is passionate about working with people to improve their health, family and work life. Learn more at healthseekersinc.com.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Be Food Safe

Every year, about four million Canadians are affected by a foodborne illness. Here's how to prevent them.

Clean: Bacteria spread easily through the kitchen by getting on hands, countertops, knives, cutting boards and other surfaces. Clean regularly and wash your hands frequently when making food.

Separate: Cross-contamination spreads bacteria. Use one cutting board for vegetables or fruit and another one for meat, poultry or seafood. This ensures bacteria from the raw meat won't get onto the other foods.

Cook: Cooking food to the proper internal temperature ensures that bacteria are destroyed and you won't get sick. Refer to <http://befoodsafe.ca> for a chart of proper internal cooking temperatures.

Chill: Even after food is prepared properly, it can grow bacteria if you don't store it correctly. Chill leftovers or takeout foods within two hours of preparing them and make sure your fridge's temperature is at 4°C (40°F).

Children's immune systems aren't fully developed to fight off infections or bacteria so they're at a higher risk for foodborne illness. Teach everyone proper food safety methods at home and you'll keep everyone safe.

Heather Thomas, PhD is a Registered Dietitian from London who strives to find balance in her professional and family life while enjoying the occasional chocolate chip cookie along the way!



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WHOLE HEALTH

Eating Diversity: Serious Reasons to Expand Your Family's Food Repertoire

Food diversity is a serious topic, yet it's easy to ignore because we don't see how it affects us daily. The topic is often linked to distant, wide-scope issues like the imminent food crisis or biodiversity, so we may not think of it as impacting our families directly. But, choosing to eat the same foods on a consistent basis is dangerous.

Restricting the food we eat to a limited number of varieties is not only a serious risk to plant and animal extinction, but also our personal health. This is because eating the same foods ultimately drives demand and production. Efforts to maximize yields and profits usually result in lack of crop rotation, nutrient-depleted soil, the use of chemicals and genetic engineering. Significant evidence supports most chronic disease is caused by eating nutrient deficient or toxic foods that are over-processed, chemical-laden and genetically-modified. In addition to disease, low nutritional quality and chemicals are leading to increases in allergies and food intolerances. Many would say this has happened with wheat and rice. It's also important to note that limited sources of food supply make it an easy target in times of war.

Instead, it's healthier and smarter to eat a variety of quality nutrients from various sources. Not only good for ensuring our own personal health, it can help to ensure the continued existence of plants, their interdependent species and our food supply. The resurgence of ancient grains is helping to cultivate and return some important diversity to our meals. Making efforts to eat a wide range of fruits and vegetables at home can prevent illness, build strong kids and ensure healthy aging for the parents who need to be around to raise them.

Encourage your family to be creative and try new ingredients and recipes. Millet is an example of an inexpensive and unfamiliar food, but this creamy breakfast cereal will have you hooked. It's full of flavour with coconut milk, sweet figs and vanilla.

Creamy Vanilla Fig Millet Cereal Serves 2

1½ cups water
⅔ cup millet seeds
½ cup light coconut milk (or almond or soy milk)
5 dried figs (any type) chopped
1½ tsp pure vanilla extract
1 tsp honey or pure maple syrup

Bring the water and millet to a boil in a medium saucepan. Cover, reduce to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes. Remove the lid; stir in the milk and figs. Simmer, uncovered, until the milk has reduced and the cereal is creamy. Stir in the vanilla and honey. Divide between two bowls and serve.



Carolyn Hemming (and co-author, Patricia Green) are the authors of seven bestselling cookbooks in three languages with easy recipes and accessible ingredients. Carolyn is an active mother and businesswoman who lives with her family in London.



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