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Support healthy holiday eating

CC PARENT | Carey Smith

The holidays can bring a lot of fun and happiness to our lives, but also a few extra pounds. Modeling healthy eating for our children is ideal to help them also eat a healthier diet, but with Aunt Gertrude's famous pumpkin pie and Uncle Dorsey's divinity at every family party, how do we do this?

It seems like all healthy eating guides begin with an admonition of moderation. A strict diet can be difficult to maintain, and sometimes a bit of a wobble will result in a diet going off the rails. So instead of dieting, consider healthy holiday eating your goal. If you find yourself getting away from your ideal eating habits, jump back into it with your next meal.

When making your own holiday meals for your family, consider modifying your usual holiday fare to include more fruits and vegetables, more whole grains and less sugar. Opt for homemade foods instead of processed foods to have more control over the ingredients. Use Greek yogurt rather than sour cream. There are many recipes online which substitute mashed ripe bananas or applesauce for oils in baked goods. And remember to eat regular portions.

Having children help select and prepare healthy meals means they are much more likely to eat them. Strive to eat a rainbow every day. And though it can be hard to keep children on a regular sleep schedule during the holidays, it is ideal for maintaining overall good health and happy, rested kids.

Exercise is important, too. Just because the weather is cooler doesn't mean we can't get outdoors and go for an after-dinner walk, especially through the neighborhood to see holiday decorations. In inclement weather, an obstacle course in the living room or a family game of Twister gets everyone active.

Consider bringing a healthy dish to a holiday party. One key to not binging at potlucks or parties is eating regular meals throughout the day (which also helps to keep blood sugar in check), rather than skipping meals to save up for a feast. If a dinner is later than your usual time, go ahead and have a small snack and eat a little less when dinner is served. It's especially important for children to have regular meals or snacks to avoid hangry holiday meltdowns. Fruit can help stave off sugar cravings.

If you host a holiday get-together and would like to include your vegan and vegetarian friends and family, consider

substituting dishes with animal products (meat, dairy, eggs, honey) with plantbased ingredients. Thankfully, these are widely available these days. This can make a traditional holiday meal friendly to those with plant-based diets. Consider listing ingredients along with dishes or a marker that indicates a dish is vegetarian or vegan.

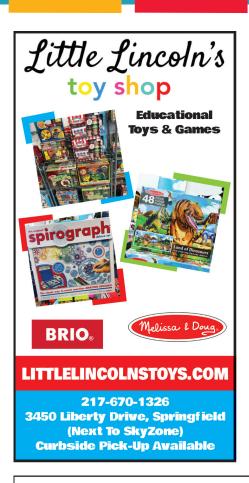
Christina Huntzinger, a Springfieldarea mom with a vegan family, says, "Sometimes thinking outside the box can be interesting, tasty and even healthier. So instead of just slapping a big old Tofurkey on the table and calling it a day, you can make new recipes - not based on soy meats - the tradition. For example, a lentil loaf, stuffed acorn squash or a mushroom wellington for the main dish."

Having children with severe allergies can make holiday parties extremely tricky. A simple bowl of peanut M&Ms set out for snacks can result in a child having a severe allergic reaction, necessitating emergency care. One general guideline for safe holiday parties is to just avoid nuts altogether, as these allergies are the most dangerous when it comes to reactions.

If you'd like to include families with severe allergies in your holiday celebrations, considering including them in the planning stages and ask them to bring a dish to share. Above all, be respectful and don't argue about someone's allergy. Many parents have been on the receiving end of the assertion that "your child cannot possibly be allergic to x." Trust that a parent knows best what their child is and is not allergic to. An allergy is not a lifestyle preference, but rather a medical need. Parents, of course, should keep an epi pen available at all times if they do take children with severe allergies to holiday get-togethers.

As many of us transition from the indulgent holidays we celebrated as children to ones we celebrate now as health-conscious adults, we take pride in reinventing our family traditions and celebrations.

Carey Smith's holiday plans include focusing on comfort rather than festivities.







Stay well this winter



CC PARENT | Pamela Savage

With winter weather steadily approaching, many of us are moving our gatherings and events indoors. This means the onset of cold and flu season. While the months ahead do pose a risk in terms of annoying illness, there are several preventative tips that families can take in order to protect their loved ones from cold and flu.

To learn more, I spoke with internist and pediatrician Dr. Nicole Florence, a physician with over 22 years of experience practicing medicine and the co-medical director of the Memorial Wellness Center.

What preventative steps can families take in order to face the upcoming cold and flu season?

There are certain principles that we discuss with our patients that are rather simple, and since COVID-19 happened, a lot of these things are already a part of most people's daily routines.

- Have clean hands Be consistent with your handwashing avoid touching your face.
- Cover your cough This can be harder for kids, but we have to teach them to use the bend of the elbow to catch their cough, rather than their hands.
- Stay home If you aren't feeling well and can do so, one of the best things you can do is stay home. You'll be less likely to expose others, and you'll get the rest you need.
- Stay in good health Our immune system is not able to be at its best if we are tired, or if we are not eating healthy. This cold and flu season is a good time to just concentrate on being healthy overall. If you are healthy, you'll be less likely to get sick. If you do get sick, you'll be more

likely to recover fully and quickly.

• Get a vaccine - Vaccines are so important to keep healthy during flu season. People who have had vaccines are less likely to end up in the hospital with complications such as pneumonia. When considering your vaccines, think about how much you'll be helping your community to reduce the spread of illnesses overall.

It seems like parents are hearing a lot about RSV lately. How does RSV affect children?

Infants and children up to age 3 and people with underlying health conditions have smaller airways. It is for this reason that these individuals tend to react to the RSV virus with more inflammation. Adults are also exposed to RSV, but adults have larger and more mature airways, so we don't have as hard a time with inflammation.

What about COVID-19?

Vaccine and boosters continue to be important, and the other principles listed above also apply. Additionally, concerned families should pay attention to our virus levels in the community and can choose to wear a mask indoors if/when our community has a high level of virus circulating.

What should parents keep on hand at home as a part of their care toolkits?

This varies by age, and families should talk to their providers about appropriate medications and dosages for their children. To keep it simple, families should have Tylenol or Motrin on hand, as is age-appropriate, to treat for fever. Again, speak to your provider about this.

Additionally, keep a hydration solution such as Pedialyte or even popsicles in the house. Staying hydrated is really important for overcoming illness, and kids don't always have the same initiative as adults when it comes to keeping hydrated.

Another thing to ask your provider about are saline nasal sprays. There are many over-the-counter sprays that may be appropriate for aiding your child's congestion or cough, and your pediatrician can help you to determine what is recommended for your family,

Do you have any other advice or recommendations that you can share?

I would recommend sending your schoolage children with their own little bottles of hand sanitizer or antibacterial hand wipes. These are nice for kids to have on hand while they are at school or riding the bus.

Pamela Savage is a freelance writer living in Springfield. She has a school-age child and a preschooler and hopes to avoid icky germs this winter.

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Read about Thanksgiving history

CC PARENT | Deana Metzke

During the holidays, most families tend to have their own traditions. Some are large, like all the extended family gathering at one house for Thanksgiving, or small, like taking a drive around the neighborhood to look at Christmas lights.

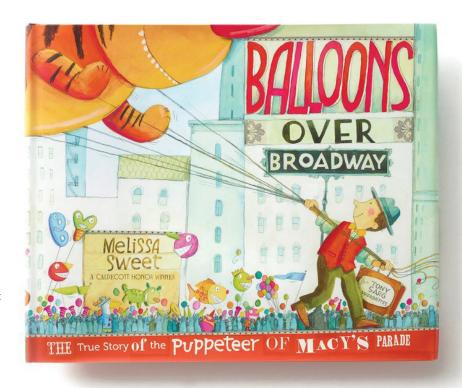
One tradition that I didn't have as a child, but have started as a parent, was watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Now that my kids are a little older, their focus is more on the performances during the parade, but when my kids were younger, they were enticed by the different characters that were super-sized and floating through the air.

The origins of the parade and its balloons were not something I'd ever thought about, but in 2011, Melissa Sweet wrote a great book that explained just that. Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade, which Sweet wrote and illustrated, explains the history of the Macy's parade in New York City.

Readers learn that puppeteer Tony
Sarg started off by decorating the
windows in Macy's for the holidays, but
eventually took his skills to the nowfamous parade route. We also learn about
the origins of the parade to support those
Macy's employees that were immigrants
and wanted to celebrate in ways that they
had in their home countries.

All in all, *Balloons Over Broadway*, with its descriptive illustrations, gave our tradition of parade viewing on Thanksgiving morning a whole new perspective. This narrative nonfiction picture book would be good for kids around 8 years old and up.

Learning about the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade was an entertaining experience, albeit unintentional. However, I was very intentional when I decided to read



Kate Messner's *History Smashers: The Mayflower*. Even as an adult, this chapter book opened my eyes to a lot of new information about the first Thanksgiving, and I had to do some unlearning.

For younger readers, however, this could be an opportunity for them to learn history differently to begin with. Even small things, like how long the trip on the Mayflower actually took, and how unpleasant that ride was for many, was new information for me. Messner also does a great job of including parts of the story from the perspective of Native Americans during that time as well.

And while your first thought may have been that this would be a boring book, that could not be further from the truth. History Smashers: The Mayflower has to be engaging in order for a younger reader to keep reading, so the author has included photographs and graphic illustrations with captions. She writes in a way that clearly has a younger audience in mind. These additions and other extra details will keep young readers turning page after page

For me as an adult reader, Messner was able to "smash history," exactly as the title says, and I think that it can do the same for your young reader. This book would be great for ages 4th grade and above. *History Smashers: The Mayflower* was published in 2020 and can be found wherever you purchase books or at the local library.



Nonprofit launches to provide donation-based music education

CC PARENT | Holly A. Whisler

Music has been a life-long calling for Chatham native Corey Cochran, director of Sangamon Conservatory and Academy of the Recording Arts, located at 960 Clocktower Drive, Ste. E. Corey and his wife, Kali, who teaches the preschoolage kids, are both fulfilling this calling by bringing the gift of free music education to the Springfield area. The Cochrans are in the midst of SCARA's inaugural semester that began in September, and they look forward to adding more students to SCARA's roster.

The vision behind the nonprofit, Christian organization is to bring affordable, donation-based music education to all who want to learn to be classically trained musicians. Cochran said that he and his wife "had this concept in the works for some time," and that the pandemic helped to accelerate making SCARA a reality. Cochran said they want "music education to be available and accessible," and SCARA fulfills that mission. Ultimately, SCARA is their way of "giving and serving."

Initially, the Cochrans thought SCARA would be well-suited to families who homeschool their kids; SCARA could fulfill the music aspect of the overall homeschool curriculum. As well, they hoped school districts that do not have a robust music program could augment the curriculum with classes offered at SCARA.

Corey Cochran has 12 years' experience teaching at the college level and is currently a music education doctoral candidate at Liberty University. He is a classical guitarist and offers college-

Lindsay Cochran, 7, receives guitar instruction from his father, Corey Cochran, director of the newly opened nonprofit

preparatory courses for high school students who plan to study classical guitar at the college level. progress donation

"We're growing," stated Cochran, who said there's still plenty of room to accept more students. If learning to play guitar and sing is something your child has always wanted to do, this is the time to seize the opportunity. Courses are designed to start students at the beginner level and when a student show proficiency at their current level, they will

progress to more focused instruction.

PHOTO COURTESY COREY COCHRAN

Sangamon Conservatory and Academy of the Recording Arts.

Group classes are completely donation-based. The suggested donation is \$10 per person per class, but families are simply asked to give what they can. Cochran said group lessons get students used to performing in front of others, "since this is a performing arts program."

SCARA also provides private lessons to students who qualify through an audition process, and scholarships are available.

Musical subjects currently offered at SCARA are:

- Music fundamentals for early childhood, elementary, youth, and adult
- Electric, acoustic and classical guitar
 - · Bass guitar
- Music production, which consists of studio practicum, beat-writing, songwriting, sampling and midi-programming, orchestration and arrangement in popular styles, vocal technique, vocal production and arrangement,



keyboard and synthesizer technique and arrangement, audio science and technology and music industry studies

• Composition and theory, ear training Everyone is welcome at SCARA. Cochran said, "Students will be challenged and allowed to grow at their own pace. Furthermore, to those parents who are struggling to find a musical outlet for their kids - here it is."

General information about SCARA. class schedules and how to become a student can be found at scara.academy. Contemporary • Ballet • Pointe • Jazz • Tap • Hip Hop • Adult Classes • Lyrical **FALL/SPRING ENROLLMENT IS OPEN CALL AND SCHEDULE FOR A FREE TRIAL CLASS** 217-414-4808 324 Sattley St. Rochester

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Winter family fun

CC PARENT | Stacie Lewis

Ansar Shrine Circus

Nov. 11 - Nov. 13. Come one, come all to the greatest show in three rings. Adults \$15, ages 12 and under \$8. BOS Center, 1 Convention Center Plaza, 800-745-3000.

Baby Shark Live! The Christmas Show

Nov. 11, 6pm. Journey into the sea for the holidays to sing and dance through some of your favorite songs with Baby Shark and Pinkfong. Join in exciting adventures to explore shapes, colors, numbers and much more. \$28.50-\$68.50. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

Hobnob Holiday Market

Nov. 11, 4-8pm. Over 100 vintage, handmade and boutique vendors, plus food trucks, live piano music on Friday night and Santa on Saturday. Illinois State Fairgrounds Exposition Building, 801 Sangamon Ave., 217-782-6661.

Veterans Day Parade

Nov. 11, 10am. In honor of veterans and active military members. Begins at Capitol Avenue and Eleventh Street, then proceeds west to the Illinois State Capitol. Downtown Springfield.

911 First Responders Toy and Food Drive

Nov. 12, 4-6pm. Benefits Toys for Tots and Feeding Families for Thanksgiving. Crowne Plaza Springfield, 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy., 217-529-7777.

Artisan Holiday Boutique & Sweet Shoppe

Nov. 12, 9am-4pm. Shop a wide variety of unique, locally handmade crafts from jewelry and ceramics, to baskets and wreaths. Also shop the special-product vendor fair and the Sweet Shoppe which will have lots of homemade goodies. Springfield Ceramics and Crafts Club, 2626 S. Pasfield St.

Craft Bazaar

Nov. 12, 9am-4pm. Over 40 booths full of handmade items. Concessions available. Free admission with a canned good donation. Church of the Little Flower, 800



Stevenson Dr., 217-529-1606.

Christmas at the Brinkherhoff Home

Nov. 19, 10am-2pm. Music performances, shopping for children and adults, make-and-take your own fresh wreath, personalized Christmas door décor, and take-home cookie decorating kits. \$5. Brinkerhoff Home, 1500 N. Fifth St., 217-361-5555.

Light up the Park

Beginning Nov. 25, every Thu.-Sun., 6-9pm through Dec. 25. A local holiday tradition. Get ready to be wowed by the nearly onemile drive through hundreds of thousands of lights and beautiful displays. A \$5 per-vehicle donation is requested. Sponsored by the Chatham Friends of the Parks. Enter on Park Ave. Chatham Community Park, Chatham.

Zoo Lights

Beginning Nov. 25, every Fri.-Sun through Dec. 11 and also Dec.16-23 and Dec. 26-30, 5-9pm. Take a stroll through the zoo to see thousands of lights and displays. Enjoy hot cocoa or roast a marshmallow over the fire pit. See zoo animals that are active this time of year, such as red wolves, arctic fox, eagles, cougars, birds of prey and many others. Adults \$7.50, kids 3-12 \$5.50, kids 2 and under free. Henson Robinson Zoo, 1100 E. Lake Shore Dr., 217-585-1821.

Christmas at Sugar Creek

Nov. 26, 10am-3pm. Over 50 vendors. Food truck onsite 10am-2:30pm. Bake sale and used book sale. Bring a non-perishable food item for the local food pantry. Start your holiday shopping here. Free admission. Sugar



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Creek United Methodist Church, Chatham, 1022 New City Road, 217-725-4359.

Holiday Fun With Abe and Mary Lincoln Nov. 26 through Dec. 21, Saturdays 10am-7pm and Wednesdays, 4-7pm. Listen to Abe and Mary Todd Lincoln's stories, play games or score a picture with them. Part of the Old Capitol Holiday Walks. Free. Springfield Visitors Center, 1 S. Old State Capitol Plaza, 217-789-2360.

Illinois Local Holiday Market

Nov. 26, 9am-3pm. Find all of your local favorites for your holiday shopping. \$1 admission. Kids are free. Illinois State Fairgrounds, 801 Sangamon Ave., 217-391-4302.

Memorial Holiday Fest Kick Off & Tree Lighting

Nov. 26. Kick off the season with the tree lighting at Fifth and Adams streets at 4pm. At this year's holiday fest you'll see the downtown area adorned with decorations for the Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanza holidays, enjoy entertainment on the Old State Capitol plaza, and wonder at the new 10-foot-tall outdoor whimsical light display at the Old State Capitol. Also check out "Winter Holidays around the World" with children's activities at the Illinois State Museum and the sock skating rink at Kidzeum. 217-788-4700.

Polar Express Pajama Party

Nov. 26 at 1pm and 6pm, Nov. 27 at 3pm. The Polar Express steams off on a journey to the North Pole. Be greeted by conductors before joining the cocoa party, where you can enjoy crafting and more cocoa before embarking on a special screening of the film. Visit with a special guest after the show. Saturday matinee is sensory-friendly. atthelegacy.com. \$15 or \$20 day of performance. The Legacy Theatre, 101 E. Lawrence, 800-838-3006.

Jubilee Farm Holiday Craft

Nov. 28 through Dec. 10, Mon.-Fri. 10am-12pm and Sat. 10am-3pm. Enjoy an array of unique and beautiful handcrafted pottery and Christmas décor, plus beaded, woven, knitted, crocheted and quilted gifts, all at reasonable prices. Baked goods sold on Saturday, Dec. 3 and Saturday, Dec. 10. Free admission. Jubilee Farm, 6760 Old lacksonville Road. 217-787-6927.

Miracle on 34th Street

Dec. 2-4 and Dec. 9-11, Friday-Sunday. Based

on the classic holiday film, this joyous and heartwarming musical is pure joy meant for the whole family. Directed by Andrew Rains. \$20. Springfield Theatre Centre, 420 S. Sixth St., 217-523-2787.

Christmas with Santa

Dec. 3, 9am-3pm. Visit with Santa, tour the historic buildings and enjoy hot chocolate and coffee. Clayville Historic Site, Pleasant Plains, Route 125, 217-481-4430.

Zooper Edventure Class

Dec. 3, 11am-12:30pm. Kids ages 6-9 can take a walk on the wild side and have a Zooper Edventure. This drop-off class is filled with fun. Registration and payment is due at least 24 hours before the class begins. Henson Robinson Zoo, 1100 E. Lake Shore Dr., 217-585-1821.

Holiday Open House

Dec. 3, 1-4pm. Enjoy cookies and cider, and visit with a Civil War-era Santa Claus. Take a self-guided tour through the home and see it decked out in 19th century-holiday style. Free. Edwards Place, Springfield Art Association, 700 N. Fourth St., 217-523-2631.

Junior and Senior Naturalists

Dec. 3. Explore the ever-changing landscape of the garden with hands-on activities, games and outdoor investigation. Ages 5-8 meet from 10am-12pm and ages 8-12 meet 1-3pm. \$12-\$15. Lincoln Memorial Garden, 2301 E. Lake Shore Dr., 217-529-1111.

Springfield Jaycees' Holiday Lights Parade

Dec. 3, 5:30pm. A dazzling and festive parade with all the wonderful spectacle to usher in the holiday season. Starts at Jefferson to Fifth to Monroe to Sixth to Washington streets. Free. Downtown Springfield.

Clayville Candlelight Christmas

Dec. 9, 5-9pm and Dec. 10, 3:30-10pm. Experience pioneer life and the warm welcome the Broadwell Inn and Tavern extended to travelers and guests of long ago. Enjoy entertainment and demonstrations. Coffee, hot chocolate, soda and bar service available. clayville.org. Clayville Historic Site, Pleasant Plains, Route 125, 217-481-4430.

Candlelight Tour

Dec. 10, 4:30-6pm. Tour the Lincoln home after hours and learn about their family while enjoying the $19^{\rm th}$ century holiday

decorations in the warm light of candles. Free. Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 413 S. Eighth St., 217-391-3221.

Christmas Candlelight Tour

Dec. 10, 4:30-7pm. Experience the historic house in all its candle-lit splendor for one night only. Donation suggested. Elijah Iles House, 628 S. Seventh St., 217-492-5929.

The Nutcracker

Dec. 10, 2pm and 7pm, Dec. 11, 2pm. Springfield Ballet Company brings Tchaikovsky's mesmerizing music to life. Bring the whole family to enjoy the timeless story of Clara and her Nutcracker prince, and experience the magic. \$22-\$42. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

Tree of Lights Ceremony

Dec. 10, 5:30pm. Buy a light to remember a special pet or loved one. Visit the website to order your light. Animal Protective League, 1001 Taintor Road, 217-544-7387.

Caroling at the Carillon

Dec. 11, 4-5pm. Celebrate the season around a roaring bonfire singing holiday carols with the bells of the carillon ringing the melodies. Free admission and refreshments. Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon, 1740 W. Fayette Ave., 217-546-3853.

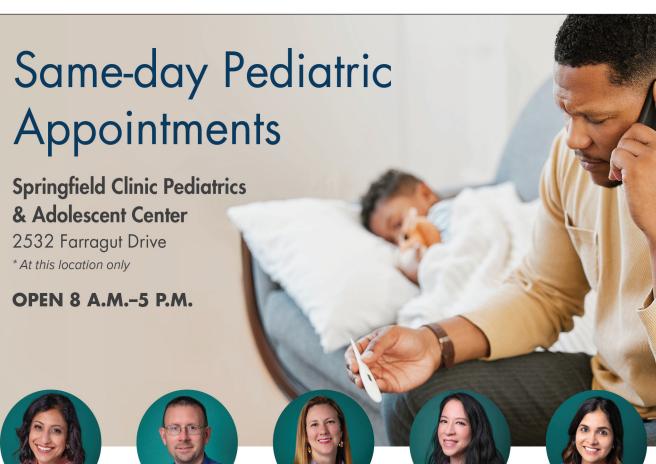
Holiday Extravaganza

Dec. 11, 9am-4pm. Over 100 craft vendors with items ranging from fine art to homemade products to homebased businesses. Check out the old-fashioned cake walk and concessions, visit Santa and enjoy entertainment by local children's performance groups all day. Proceeds benefit local schools' music, art and band programs. \$4 and \$2 for seniors from 9-11am. Orr Building, Illinois State Fairgrounds, 801 Sangamon Ave., 217-782-6661.

First Night Springfield

Dec. 31. On this night, Springfield's art, music and theater worlds meet in a spectacle of dazzling sights and sounds to celebrate the New Year. Bring the family to enjoy talented local and regional artists and performers, plus fireworks. Hosted downtown by the Springfield Area Arts Council. 217-753-3519.





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