



HCSF Newsletter

April
2011



Are you sick of all the snow and ice and longing for something green to appear? April is **National Gardening Month**, but it's still too soon for most of us to dig in the dirt outside. Why not help Mother Nature along by sprouting some bean seeds and planting them inside instead! **National TV Turn Off Week is April 18-24**. We challenge you to turn off the TV and see what happens. Don't worry; the kids won't die of boredom – we have lots of suggestions to keep the whole family active!

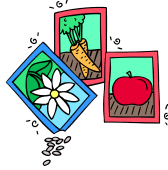


Sprout, Spring, Sprout!

Materials: green bean seeds
paper towels
sandwich bags
water
sunlight



Planting bean seeds is a simple first gardening project! Soak green bean seeds in water overnight and then put them on wet paper towels. Put the paper towels and bean seeds into clear sandwich bags, and hang them in a window until the seeds begin to sprout. This way everyone can see what happens when they sprout. Once the seeds have sprouted, you can plant them in paper cups or small pots.



Sugar Snap Peas with Honey Mustard Dip

Who wouldn't like to try a veggie that has sugar in its name? Carrots, celery, broccoli, radishes and pepper strips would also work well with this dip, so don't be afraid to mix it up! Set this out while you're making dinner for munchkins to munch on.

Ingredients

- 1 pound sugar snap peas
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plain yogurt
- 2 Tablespoons honey
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard



Rinse the peas under cold water in a colander. Drain thoroughly and pat them dry. To make the dip, combine the yogurt, honey, and Dijon mustard in a small bowl. Serve the dip surrounded by the sugar snaps peas (and any other crunchy veggies you've got on hand).

Kids in the Kitchen: Kids can rinse the peas, help measure ingredients and stir the dip.



What is TV Turnoff Week? This is a week for families to reconnect with each other by turning off, or dramatically reducing entertainment screen time (TV, video games, internet games etc.).



Why should I try this with my family? Consider some facts:

- The average American youth spends **more than 7½ hours a day** using electronic media (TV, computers, video games, cell phones etc.). **That's almost 53 hours a week** – more time than most adults spend at work!
- Kids with a TV in their bedroom watch **an additional 4.8 hours** of TV every week!
- Time in front of a screen is related to weight gain, poor sleep and other health issues, **and that's even true if the TV is "just on" but you're not actively watching!**



The goal of TV Turnoff Week is not to banish screens from your home *forever*, but to take a break and see how it feels to be together without any distractions. You can use this week to discover active leisure pastimes the whole family enjoys! You might also take this week to decide what your family's screen time rules will be once TV Turnoff week is over!

How can you manage your family's screen time?

Make the TV off-limits for certain days or hours. Some families find that it's easiest to just keep TV and video games off on school mornings, or between the hours of 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Mealtimes, in particular, should always be screen-free--*and that includes Mom and Dad's cell phone* 😊. Having rules the whole family follows will keep you from having to make day-by-day or case-by-case decisions on how much screen time is too much. Once kids get used to it, they'll accept this rule like any other.



Take charge of the TV. Make the TV work for you, not the other way around. Turn it on to watch specific shows at specific times, then turn it off--don't leave it on as background noise.

Give your child (some) control. Allow your child some choice about what and when she watches TV, as long as she stays within your family guidelines about screen time. Try to avoid switching off the set in the middle of a show or shutting down her video game mid-level. Give warnings before time is up, and allow kids (especially little ones) to press to "off" button themselves.



Need some TV- free activities? We've got 24 to get you started!

1. Spring clean your neighborhood! Provide gloves and bags for the family and pick up some of the "junk" that appears once those snow piles melt!
2. Fly a kite.
3. Put together a puzzle.
4. Go ice skating or roller skating.
5. Play with your pet.
6. Listen to the radio.
7. Visit the zoo.
8. Make up a story and write it down. Draw pictures to go along with the story.
9. Read a book aloud.
10. Take a nature hike. Make a collage with the materials you collected.
11. Plan a picnic. Kids can pick out and make the food for everyone to enjoy!
12. Go bird watching.
13. Visit the library. Ask if they have story time or other activities for kids.
14. Plant a flower, vegetable or herb garden. Or get your garden plot ready if it's too soon to plant!
15. Read magazines or newspapers.
16. Start a neighborhood kickball game.
17. Go swimming.
18. Play board games or get out the Move Cube.
19. Get out the family photo album. Share your family history.
20. Make crafts to give as gifts.
21. Attend a high school sporting event.
22. Ask an older family member to tell you a story about his or her childhood.
23. Learn some new riddles or jokes. Practice them on your brother or sister!
24. Go fishing.

