

BEING AWARE AT FAMILY DINNER



Food

Reduce waste this month by using a typically discarded item -- carrot tops -- in homemade pesto!



Fun

Increase family members' awareness of the foods you buy and serve with this fun-for-all scavenger hunt!

Grocery Store Scavenger Hunt

Your Name: _____

1 Find a fruit or vegetable for each color of the rainbow:

- Red _____
- Orange _____
- Yellow _____
- Green _____
- Blue _____
- Indigo _____
- Violet _____

2 Find one item in the produce section that came from the state where you live:

3 Find a cheese that came from a foreign country:



Conversation

Enjoy this Recipe for Conversation, created especially for Earth Day!



Family dinner, by nature, encourages us to be aware: Aware of making the time in our busy schedules to be together; aware of the foods we cook and eat; aware of the ways in which we communicate with one another and connect at the end of a long day. Beyond being a simple habit or just another part of our routines, you could argue that dinnertime is one of the best opportunities we have to slow down and be mindful of the choices we make and their impact on our happiness and well-being.

Building on that mindfulness by finding other ways to focus on awareness at your family dinner table is a great way to add meaning to your meals. Can you use

your dinnertime to talk about issues that are important to you as a family? Choose a cause that's close to your hearts and make a plan to work on solutions together? Even simply thinking carefully about the benefits you'd most like your family to gain from your dinners together, and planning menus, conversations and games that can help you reach those goals, can make you more aware of the importance of continuing to enjoy that nightly time together.

This month, try choosing one of the following awareness campaigns to focus on at one or more of your family dinners, and see how it impacts your experience.

WORLD HEALTH DAY: FIGHT DIABETES WITH FAMILY DINNER

April 7 is World Health Day, which this year is devoted to diabetes awareness and prevention. While there's certainly no guarantee that eating regular family dinners will protect you from developing the disease, the research is clear: Family dinners are strongly correlated with better eating habits, from a reduction in the consumption of sodas and trans fats to an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption. Meals eaten at home also tend to be lower in calories and salt, and the good eating habits established at the dinner table in childhood carry through to healthier diets in adulthood. Dietary factors are a major contributor to the development and management of Type 2 diabetes in particular, so now is as good a time as any to take a closer look at what's on your plates!

Increase your family's awareness about eating healthy meals together by getting everyone involved in planning, preparing and talking about the foods you eat. Try some of the strategies in our online newsletter:

thefamilydinnerproject.org/newsletter/being-aware-at-family-dinner/

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH: IMPROVE LITERACY WHILE YOU EAT

One of the most surprising benefits of family dinnertime is its positive effect on literacy and academic skills. We find that families are often unaware that just by gathering for a pleasant meal together, and engaging in rich conversations, they can boost vocabulary, reading comprehension and even grades!

In honor of National Poetry Month, try focusing on the literacy benefits of family dinner with some of these ideas:

Want Your Kids to be Better Readers? Have Dinner Together. Find out more in our online newsletter:

thefamilydinnerproject.org/newsletter/being-aware-at-family-dinner/

EARTH DAY: MINIMIZE WASTE AT THE DINNER TABLE

Friday, April 22 is Earth Day. There are a number of ways to use family dinner as an opportunity to talk about the health of the planet, but food waste is one of the most often overlooked -- and easiest to control -- factors that impacts our environment.

Did you know that 40% of food produced in the United States each year is thrown out rather than eaten? Or that the typical family of 4 spends over \$2000 a year on wasted food? We can do better! Learn more about the problem of food waste and its impact on the earth, and try some of Dr. Anne Fishel's tips for improving your family's awareness about eating what you buy, and buying what you'll eat.

Talking Trash at the Table

thefamilydinnerproject.org/food-for-thought/talking-trash-at-the-table/





PASTA WITH CARROT TOP PESTO



Most of us are used to throwing away the leafy green tops of carrots, but they're completely edible and make a wonderful pasta sauce! This waste-reducing recipe can be made with any kind of nuts you prefer, or with pumpkin or sunflower

seeds if you're a nut-free family. Blanching (lightly cooking) the carrot greens first makes them less tough and easier to blend into a sauce. Make a large batch and freeze the extra pesto in ice cube trays for quick meals later on.



Instructions:

1. Fill a medium saucepan with water and bring to a rolling boil.
2. Add the carrot greens to the water and cook for 3 minutes. Drain thoroughly and rinse the blanched greens with cold water to stop the cooking process.
3. In a blender or food processor, combine the carrot greens, parsley, nuts, garlic, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Pulse until you have a smooth paste (you can add 2 tablespoons of water if you need a bit more liquid to help it along).
4. Transfer the pesto to a large bowl. Stir in the cheese and lemon juice.
5. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and toss

Ingredients

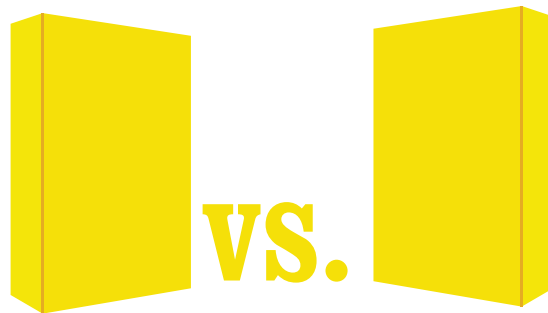
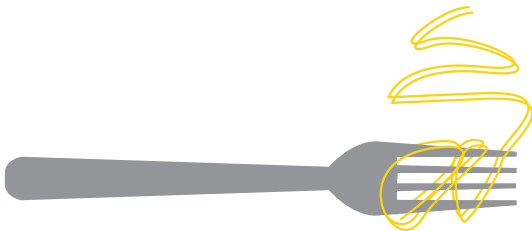
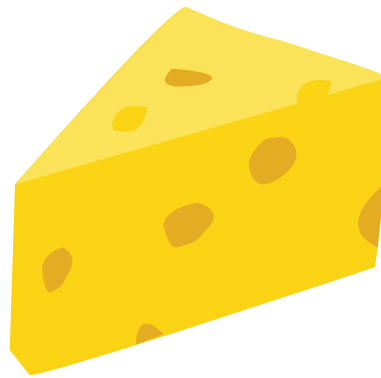
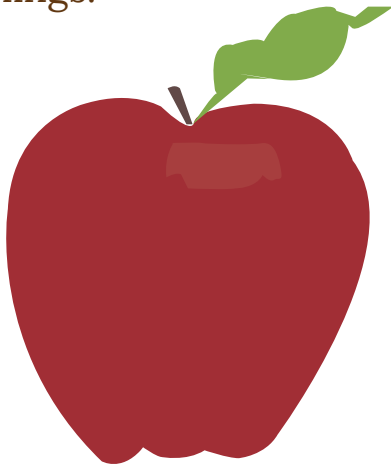
- 1 cup packed roughly chopped carrot greens
- 2 cups fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 cup chopped pecans, walnuts, or almonds
- 1 cup olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Juice of one lemon
- 1 lb. of your favorite pasta



GROCERY STORE SCAVENGER HUNT

Directions

Print a copy of the scavenger hunt for each child and give each a pen or pencil. Give everyone a set amount of time to search and decide on a place to meet once the search is done. Young kids can team up with an adult or pair with older siblings.





GROCERY STORE SCAVENGER HUNT

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2

Find one item in the produce section that came from the state where you live:



.....

3

Find a cheese that came from a foreign country:



.....

4

Find a food you've never tried before:



.....

5

Find something that's on sale this week:



.....

6

Find a package that has a recipe on it:



.....

7

What is the recommended serving size of pasta?



.....

8

Compare the prices between a name brand box of cereal (like Kelloggs, General Mills etc.) and the store brand. Which is cheaper?



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CONVERSATION

**the
FamilyDinner
Project.org**



**RECIPE FOR
CONVERSATION.**

Celebrate Earth Day April 22

- What's your favorite activity to do outside?
- Are there ways you think our family could do a better job caring for the environment?
- What are three things we might start doing regularly that are good for the earth?
- Imagine you could build a whole new planet for people to live on. What would it be like? What other species would live there? How could you make sure that planet was taken care of by the people and animals?



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