

WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

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DECEMBER 2021

HEALTH OBSERVANCE

SAFE TOYS AND GIFTS MONTH

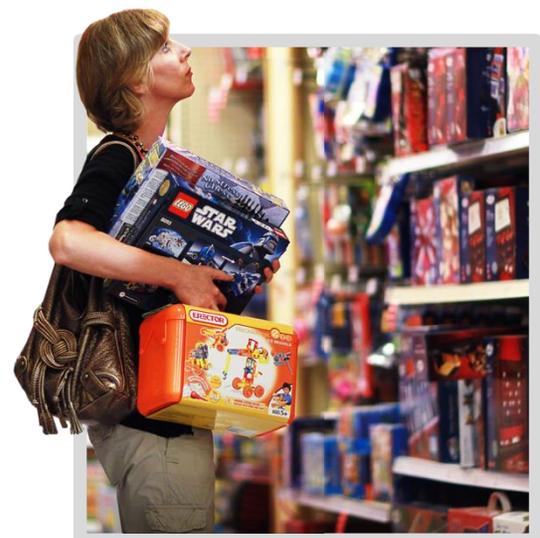
Kellie Burke, Wellness Coordinator – Wellworks For You

December is a month filled with holiday gift shopping. Your children are preparing their wish list of toys, and you are checking it twice to make sure what they are asking for is safe.

Safe Toys and Gifts Month is a December monthly observance created by Prevent Blindness America. It is a reminder for parents and other adults to be mindful of the potential dangers of each toy or gift for their kids. Understanding what to look out for makes a big difference in preventing possible injuries from well-intended gifts.

Before making purchases, it is essential to examine the safety and age range of the toys you select. Consider the age-appropriateness and if the toys suit the individual skills and abilities of the child who will receive them, especially for infants and children under age three. Shoppers may forget about safety factors when it comes to purchasing their children's desired toys and gifts. However, there are several guidelines you can follow on your shopping days.

- Check for age and skill level. Make sure of the developmental appropriateness.
- Inspect toys before purchasing. Avoid those with flying or shooting parts.
- Toys should not have sharp edges or points and should be sturdy enough to withstand any significant impact without breaking.
- Children with special needs should receive toys that appeal to different senses such as texture, sound, and movement.
- Make sure the toys have passed a safety inspection. "ATSM" means the toy has met the American Society for Testing and Materials standards.
- Make sure the toys do not have small parts, including magnets or small button batteries.
- Make sure the toys do not contain lead.



Sources:

<https://www.iabhp.com/national-wellness-observance-calendar/safe-toys-and-gifts-month/>

<https://emergencycare.hsi.com/blog/december-toy-safety-month>



HEALTH CORNER

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

What is it and what are the benefits?

The Mediterranean diet is a diet inspired by the eating habits of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. When initially formulated in the 1960s, it drew on the eating habits of Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. This diet consists of high consumption of vegetables and olive oil and moderate consumption of protein. Researchers found that people who eat a Mediterranean diet have lower odds of having a heart attack.

The foundation of the diet consists of plant-based foods, such as whole grains, vegetables, legumes, fruits, nuts, seeds, herbs, and spices. Olive oil is the main source of added fat. Fish, seafood, dairy, and poultry are included in moderation. Red meat and sweets are included occasionally.

If you are interested in trying the Mediterranean diet, the Mayo Clinic recommends the following steps to get started.

- Build meals around vegetables, beans and whole grains.
- Eat fish at least twice a week.
- Use olive oil instead of butter in preparing food.
- Serve fresh fruit for dessert.

Living the Mediterranean way also means being physically active and sharing meals with loved ones.

According to the American Heart Association, the Mediterranean diet is one of the top-ranked diets in the U.S. News and World Report. A panel of experts judge various eating plans and popular diets based on how healthy they are, how well they work, and how easy they are to follow.

The Mediterranean diet is also touted as one of the healthiest by many health organizations and dietitians. So, does it live up to its good reputation? A Mediterranean-style diet can help you achieve the American Heart Association's recommendations for a healthy dietary pattern that:

- emphasizes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, and legumes
- includes low-fat or fat-free dairy products, fish, poultry, non-tropical vegetable oils and nuts
- limits added sugars, sugary beverages, sodium, highly processed foods, refined carbohydrates, saturated fats, and fatty or processed meats

This eating style can play a big role in preventing heart disease and stroke and reducing risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure. There is some evidence that a Mediterranean diet rich in virgin olive oil may help the body remove excess cholesterol from arteries and keep blood vessels open.

Sources:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801>

<https://cpr.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/mediterranean-diet>



BUZZED DRIVING IS DRUNK DRIVING

U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) coined the national Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving drunk-driving-awareness campaign to help keep impaired drivers off the road. The holiday season is known for being merry, but is also the deadliest due to impaired driving. "Buzzed Driving" is Drunk Driving. Even a little bit of alcohol can alter someone's ability to react and drive safely.



Celebrate with a Plan

Always remember to plan ahead if you will be celebrating. If you plan to drink, arrange for a sober driver to take you home. Is it your turn to be the designated driver? Take that role seriously and do not consume alcohol, not even one drink.

The Sobering Stats

33% Approximately one-third of all traffic crash fatalities in the United States involved drunk drivers (with blood alcohol concentrations [BACs] at or above .08).

50 Even though it's illegal to drive when impaired by alcohol, in 2021, one person was killed every 52 minutes by a drunk driver on our nation's roads.

52% Of the traffic fatalities in 2021, over half involved alcohol-impaired individuals between the ages of 21 and 34 (52%).

80% Men are more likely than women to be driving drunk when involved in fatal crashes. In 2021, men were involved in 4 times the amount of drunk driving incidents as women and 80% of drunk driving fatalities.



Sources:

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/buzzed-driving>
<https://www.bankrate.com/insurance/car/drunk-driving/#2021>

Featured Recipe

Slow Cooker Chicken Parmesan Meatballs

10 Servings

INGREDIENTS

Sauce

- (28 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- small onion grated
- 2 cloves or 1 Tbs minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning

Meatballs

- 1-pound ground chicken
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- ½ cup Italian breadcrumbs
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 30 pearl-size fresh mozzarella balls (or cut up string cheese)

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare sauce by combining ingredients into a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker.
2. Prepare meatballs by combining ground chicken (or turkey), egg, Parmesan, Italian breadcrumbs, garlic powder and salt in a medium bowl.
3. Pat 1 tablespoon of the seasoned meat into a disk and place a mozzarella ball in the center.
4. Wrap the meat around the cheese and roll into a ball.
5. Repeat with the remaining meat and cheese.
6. Add the meatballs to the slow cooker.
7. Cover and cook on High for 3 hours or on low for 6 hours.

NUTRITION

Per serving: 3 meatballs & ¼ cup sauce 163 calories, 13.7g protein, 7.4g carbohydrates, 1.8g dietary fiber, 3.1g sugars, 7.4g fat, 3.1g saturated fat, 69.2mg cholesterol

Source: <https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/257285/slow-cooker-chicken-parmesan-meatballs/>

