YOU KNOW YOU ARE LIVING IN 2007 WHEN...

- You accidentally enter your password on the microwave.
- You haven’t played solitaire with real cards in years.
- You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of 3.
- Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they don’t have e-mail addresses.
- You pull up your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home to help you carry in the groceries.

- Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn’t have the first 20 to 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now a cause for panic and you turn around to go and get it.
- You get up in the morning and go on line before getting your coffee.
- You’re reading this nodding and laughing.

Best wishes for 2007!!
How can consumers identify high quality bed sheets? Conventional wisdom says that the higher the thread count, the better the quality. High quality, of course, means high price, but many consumers slap down the dollars following a second bit of conventional wisdom, “you get what you pay for.” Now, Good Housekeeping and Consumer Reports are challenging both assumptions.

Thread count is the number of vertical (warp) yarns and the number of horizontal (filling or weft) yarns in one square inch of fabric. It can be written as (warp X filling) or (warp + filling). The former designation is most useful because it provides information about the fabric weave. Thus, a fabric of balanced weave with 90 warp yarns per inch and 90 filling yarns per inch can be written as (90 X 90) or as (180). An unbalanced weave with 60 warp yarns and 120 filling yarns would be expressed as (120 X 60) or also (180). Common thread counts for sheets and pillowcases are 130, 160, 180, 200, and 310.

High thread counts usually mean that fine yarns have been used and that the yarns are tightly woven resulting in fabric that is sturdy, soft, resistant to shrinkage, and resistant to air permeability. Low thread counts might be preferred by some for their resilience, light weight, and low cost.

But what about those 1,500 thread counts that you have seen advertised? “Misleading,” says Good Housekeeping. Manufacturers are indeed counting yarns but they are counting every strand of a yarn instead of the whole yarn. Thus, if every yarn is made of three strands twisted together, the manufacturer can triple the thread count through “creative counting.” Good Housekeeping magazine has been tracking this practice for years and, in 2002, reported that 7 out of 8 sheets tested in their institute failed the thread count tests. Grand Patrician, Wamsutta, Charisma, and Waverly by Divatex were among the few that delivered the correct count.

After unfavorable publicity from Good Housekeeping, Consumer Reports, and the TV program Good Morning America, the textile industry rewrote its voluntary standard, making it clear that thread count for sheeting should be based on yarns, not individual strands or plies within a yarn. The Federal Trade Commission wrote a letter supporting that definition, saying, "Consumers could be deceived or misled by the practice of stating an inflated thread count."

Nonetheless, the standard is voluntary so consumers should be aware that careful scrutiny and common sense are still critical shopping skills. Consumer Reports notes that cotton and cotton-blend sheets with a thread count of 180 to 200 are comfortable and long lasting. If you prefer a crisp sheet, choose a percale fabric, which is typically made from fine, combed yarns. A satin or sateen weave provides a soft, silky, lustrous sheet, but with less durability. Knitted sheeting offers stretch ability for a smooth fit, but a broken yarn can be unsightly. Thread count is not relevant in knitted sheets because of the structural difference between woven and knitted fabric. Finally, beware of sheets with super high thread counts and super low prices, a situation that brings to mind another bit of conventional wisdom, “It is too good to be true.”

Source: Textiles and Apparel Newsletter, Cornell University, April 2006
UPCOMING EVENTS
Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties presents:
“Effective Youth Engagement Strategies” & “Adultism: Cultural Assumptions and Stereotypes about Young People”
Presented by Fran Miller, Lead Trainer, NYS Advancing Youth Development Partnership, Cornell University & Jutta Dotterweich, Project Director, NYS Advancing Youth Development Partnership, Cornell University

WHEN: .............................................................. Tuesday, February 6, 2007
WHERE: ........................................................... Herkimer County Community College
TIME: ................................................................. 9:30 – 2:30 PM (Lunch: 11:30 - 12:30, cost $10)
TO REGISTER: .................................................. call CCE at 315.866.7920

Sponsored by: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida Counties. “Connecting with Kids” is supported by a grant from the Slocum-Dickson Foundation. All “Connecting With Kids” Workshops are free and open to the public.

“HOLIDAY BOOK TREE” THANKS
We would like to extend a heartfelt “thank you” to all who donated books to our Holiday Book Tree benefiting the Even Start Family Literacy Program. Over 475 books were collected and will be put to good use.

Bubble Magic
Bubbles are a lot of fun in the summer. Did you know they can be a lot of fun in the winter as well?

What you need:
10 cups water
1 cup of dishwashing detergent, preferably Joy or Dawn
1/4 cup glycerin (available at natural food and craft stores)
plastic bucket
plastic bubble wand

What you do:
Mix the water, detergent and glycerin in a bucket.

Take the bucket and bubble wand outside on a really cold day, when the thermometer is reading 0 degrees or below.

Dip your wand in the bucket and blow gently through the wand to create a bubble. What happened to your bubble? Did it freeze? What happens when you blow your bubbles out into the cold winter wind?

Try to keep your bubble on the wand. Allow the bubble to freeze. What happens to the bubble’s color when it freezes? Experiment with your bubbles on different days. How does the temperature affect the bubbles?

Source: adapted from Winter Day Play by Amanda Formaro, http://familycorner.com as printed in Caring for Kids 1/05
When a full schedule keeps you away from the kitchen, put your slow cooker to work making your meal. Even though it simmers foods ever so slowly, a slow cooker becomes an indispensable time saver. With a little preparation and assembly of ingredients, everything is in the pot. Simply put on the lid -- switch on the pot - and go! When you arrive home after a busy day - a "from scratch" meal awaits the family.

- Slow cookers are popular because they save money, time, and energy.
- You can cook all day for only a few pennies - far less than the cost of cooking the same meal on your kitchen stove.
- Leave the lid on. There is no need to keep looking at food as it simmers in a slow cooking pot. Steam and nutrients are trapped on the lid, condensed, and returned to the pot. After you put the lid back on, it takes 15-20 minutes to regain the lost steam and temperature. Taking the lid off means longer cooking times.
- You can stretch your penny-pincher budget by buying cheaper, less tender cuts of meat. The slow cooker makes them super tender - and you end up with more flavor and less shrinkage than with other cooking methods.
- Some vegetables take as long or longer to cook than meat. If you plan a meat dish with large chunks of carrots or celery, place the vegetables on the bottom or around the sides of the pot.

### Crockpot Chicken

3-4 pound roasting chicken (cut up)*
3 small onions, chopped
2 medium potatoes, cubed
2 medium carrots, sliced
1 cup water
herbs or seasonings of your choice (optional)

Place vegetables in bottom of slow cooker. Wash chicken pieces and place on top of vegetables. Add water and sprinkle with herbs or seasonings. Cover and cook 8-10 hours on low or 3-1/2 to 5 hours on high. Refrigerate leftovers.

*Reduce the fat by removing the skin before cooking.

**Yield:** 12 servings; serving size 3/4 cup (140 calories, 3 grams fat, 75 mg cholesterol, 95 mg sodium)

### Beef Stew

2 pounds beef chuck or stew meat cut into 1 inch cubes
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1-1/2 cup low sodium beef broth
1 clove garlic
1 teaspoon paprika
4 medium carrots, sliced
3 medium potatoes, (cut into 2 inch cubes)
2 small onions, chopped
1 stalk celery, sliced

Place meat in slow cooker. Add remaining ingredients, stir to mix well. Cover and cook on low 10 to 12 hours or on high 4 to 6 hours. To thicken, mix 5 tbsp corn starch with 1/4 cup of water. Stir into the beef stew and thicken as desired.

**Yield:** 12 servings; serving size 3/4 cup (220 calories, 9 grams fat, 75 mg cholesterol, 80 mg sodium)
With our busy lifestyles, we can often miss opportunities to learn and grow with our children. Jean Warren’s poem tells us to build on our children’s wonder and excitement by “capturing the moments.”

Find an unexpected moment by cooking creamy alphabet soup together. Young children can find letters they recognize or search for their whole name floating in the soup.

Older children can measure ingredients or help clean and prepare the vegetables. Allow them to add other ingredients they may enjoy to the soup. Make your own family’s “stone soup.” Conversations during the preparation of the meal can add the SPICE needed to create the perfect dinner. Any of the following books can be the DESSERT!

Just capture the moment.

**Stone Soup** by Marcia Brown
Activity: Talk about the ingredients that would be added to the soup by different nationalities.

**Pop Corn** by Frank Asch
Activity: Make a batch of popcorn to enjoy with the video of a favorite story you have read together as a family. **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** is a great choice.

**Pancakes, Pancakes!** by Eric Carle
Activity: Create animal shapes as you grill the pancake batter. Or easier yet, let your children use their imagination to tell a story behind the irregular shape pancake you’ve placed before them. You’ll be amazed at the ideas that come from your children’s interpretation of the shapes.

**Strega Nona** by Tomie de Paola
Activity: Make a collage or necklace using different shapes of macaroni.

**The Winter Picnic** by Robert Welber
Activity: Go on a winter picnic. Enjoy the chance to have a really different meal with your children. The experience will provide memories for years to come!

**Creamy Alphabet Soup**

- 1 cup alphabet shaped pasta
- 3 cups chicken broth
- ½ cup chopped celery
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 1 cup whole green beans
- ½ cup sliced carrots
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup milk

Prepare alphabet pasta according to package directions. Pour chicken broth into a saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat. Add celery, onion, green beans, carrots, and bay leaf. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until carrots are tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove bay leaf and let the soup cool for 5 to 10 minutes. Add cooked pasta and stir in milk. Serve immediately. Makes ten 1/2-cup servings.

**Source:** Menu for Mealtimes
BEST NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION:
MAKE VEGETABLES AND FRUITS A PRIORITY

This year just do it – make a commitment to eat more vegetables and fruits. The evidence continues to mount on the numerous health benefits of produce. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition recently reported findings that higher fruit and vegetable intake reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and enhanced bone health. Regular fruit and veggie eaters were also less likely to be obese, according to another study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Among 7,356 adults – those who ate produce daily (4.5 cups) were less likely to be obese (BMI less than 30), even if their diets were higher in fat. That’s good news – you can keep you heart healthy, bones strong and waist line smaller by eating enough fruits and veggies.

Remember, vegetables are more than just French fries, corn and peas – as the Centers for Disease Control found that to be 40 percent of the vegetables on the average American’s plate.

How much do you need?
Most people need about 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 cups of vegetables each day. That is a total of 4.5 cups or about 1.5 cups per meal. The federal dietary guidelines individualize produce recommendations based on age and daily activity level. Figure out your own produce needs by going to www.mypyramid.gov and start the New Year off the right way!

Variety
Did you know that there are 5 categories of vegetables? They include:
1. Leafy Greens
2. Orange/Yellow
3. Dry beans and peas
4. Starchy vegetables
5. Other vegetables

Try to work on getting a variety of these vegetables each week. Start your shopping in the produce section and plan your meals around seasonal produce and bargains. For example, if you see a great deal on broccoli, buy a big bunch and use it to stuff baked potatoes or to put in a stir fry dish or salad.

Here are some New Year’s Reminders to Getting More Vegetables and Fruits:

- Tape pictures of colorful fruits and vegetables to your bathroom mirror;
- Add a new fruit and vegetable into your meal plan every day this week;
- Place a fruit bowl on your counter in arms reach;
- Arrange vegetables and fruits front and center in the refrigerator; consider making the deli drawer into the fruit drawer;
- Keep a food log for only fruits and vegetables. At the end of each day tally up your totals and marvel at your daily progress;
- Order a green, orange or yellow vegetable in place of starch when dining out;
- Liven up salads with red peppers, orange slices, yellow zucchini or red kidney beans;
- Add cut-up fruits to a morning smoothie;
- Stir-fry green, yellow and red vegetables for a nutritious lunch or dinner;
- Keep a ‘produce’ notebook or shopping list with you to record new fruits and vegetables that you want to try.

Source: Communicating Food for Health, November 2006
ORANGES ~ WINTER’S FAVORITE FRESH FRUIT

When the sun doesn’t spend much time in the sky, it’s nice to have some oranges in the kitchen to brighten your day. Fresh navel oranges taste like summer, but are at their peak in the winter.

Varieties of oranges ~ There are many varieties of oranges, but the two most popular ones are navel oranges and Valencia oranges. Valencias, which have a smooth, thin skin, ripen in the spring and are best known as juice oranges, though they are also good for eating. In the winter, look for seedless navel oranges, which are easy to identify by the “belly button” on their blossom end. Easy to peel, sweet and delicious, navel oranges are widely available from November through April, and are at the height of their season in January.

Choosing and storing ~ Oranges are picked ripe and ready to eat. Choose firm oranges that are heavy for their size, as heavier oranges have more juice inside. In general, smaller oranges are juicier than larger ones. Color is not a good indication of quality. Although the fruit changes from green to orange as it ripens, under certain growing conditions the ripe fruit will begin to turn green again – and may actually be sweeter than some fully orange fruit. Store oranges on the counter for 10 days to 2 weeks, or up to 3 weeks in the refrigerator. The peel protects the fruit and very little nutritional value is lost until the skin is cut.

Nutrition ~ Just one navel orange will meet your entire day’s requirement for vitamin C! If you eat an orange, you’ll also be getting more than three grams of dietary fiber, including soluble fiber, as well as folate, potassium, calcium and magnesium. You won’t use much of your calorie budget to get this either, because an orange has only a little more than 60 calories. Oranges also contain health-promoting flavonoids and terpenes, which appear to help fight off cancer.

Weight control with oranges ~ In a recent study, people ate the same number of calories from a variety of different types of food and reported how full they felt afterward. Those who ate fruit, especially oranges, reported feeling fullest over the next couple of hours. And their behavior proved this to be true. When allowed to eat freely from a buffet two hours later, the orange eaters ate noticeably less than those whose snacks had not made them feel as full.

Preparation ~ How easy can you get – just peel and eat! To juice an orange, cut it crosswise. Room temperature oranges will provide more juice than cold ones. The juice of navel oranges can turn bitter on standing or heating, so squeeze them right before drinking. If you cook with navel oranges, add them at the last minute, just to heat them. Orange zest, the colorful peel, adds sparkle to baked goods and sauces. Scrub the orange well and then use a very fine grater or a special zesting tool to remove only the outer, colored part of the peel. The white part, which is fine to eat with the rest of the orange, can become very bitter if cooked.

Tips for using oranges ~ The whole fruit has more fiber to fill you up and is chock full of nutrients. Juice is low in fiber, but it is high in folate, which may help prevent certain birth defects and lower homocysteine levels which helps lower the risk of heart attack.

~ Calcium-fortified orange juice is an excellent source of well-absorbed calcium.
~ Oranges are wonderful in a salad. They pair beautifully with fresh spinach leaves.
~ Blend orange sections into your next fruit smoothie or serve them with baked fish.
~ When you squeeze an orange, save the shells. They make fun containers for fruit salad or sorbet.
~ Dry citrus peel to use later in recipes. Spread grated peel out as a single layer on a cookie sheet. Bake at 200 °F for one hour. Store in a tightly covered container.

Influenza (commonly called the “flu”) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. The information below describes common flu symptoms, how to protect yourself and those close to you from getting the flu, and what to do if you get sick with flu-like symptoms.

People May Have Different Reactions to the Flu

The flu can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death. Although most healthy people recover from the flu without complications, some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious complications from the flu.

Be Aware of Common Flu Symptoms

Influenza usually starts suddenly and may include the following symptoms:

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Diarrhea and vomiting (more common among children than adults)

Having these symptoms does not always mean that you have the flu. Many different illnesses, including the common cold, can have similar symptoms.

Know the Risks from the Flu

In some people, the flu can cause serious complications, including bacterial pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Children and adults may develop sinus problems and ear infections.

Know How the Flu Spreads

The flu usually spreads from person to person in respiratory droplets when people who are infected cough or sneeze. People occasionally may become infected by touching something with influenza virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.

Healthy adults may be able to infect others 1 day before getting symptoms and up to 5 days after getting sick. Therefore, it is possible to give someone the flu before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick.

Protection Against the Flu

The single best way to protect yourself and others against influenza is to get a flu vaccination each year. Two kinds of flu vaccine are available in the United States:

- The "flu shot" —an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.
- The nasal-spray flu vaccine —a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for “live attenuated influenza vaccine”). LAIV is approved for use in healthy people 5 years to 49 years of age who are not pregnant.
October or November is the best time to get vaccinated, but you can still get vaccinated in December and later. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as springtime.

The following additional measures can help protect against the flu.

**Habits for Good Health**

These steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as the flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze - throw the tissue away after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If you get the flu, stay home from work, school, and social gatherings. In this way you will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs often spread this way.

**What to Do If You Get Sick**

**Diagnosing the Flu**

It is very difficult to distinguish the flu from other infections on the basis of symptoms alone. A doctor's exam may be needed to tell whether you have developed the flu or a complication of the flu. There are tests that can determine if you have the flu as long you are tested within the first 2 or 3 days of illness.

If you develop flu-like symptoms and are concerned about your illness, especially if are at high risk for complications of the flu, you should consult your health-care provider. Those at high risk for complications include **people 65 years or older, people with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, and young children**.

Your doctor may recommend use of an antiviral medication to help treat the flu. These are prescription medications, and a doctor should be consulted before the drugs are used. Antiviral treatment lasts for 5 days and must be started within 2 days of illness. Therefore, if you get flu-like symptoms, seek medical care early.

**Other Ways to Respond to the Flu**

If you get the flu, get plenty of rest, drink a lot of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco. Also, you can take medications such as acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®) to relieve the fever and muscle aches associated with the flu. Never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu), or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English & Spanish) or 888-232-6358 (TTY)

*Source: Department of Health & Human Services, CDC, Fact Sheet, January 14, 2006*
ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS - USE THEM SAFELY!

Families using electric space heaters to supplement their heat should consider several safety measures.

A portable electric space heater allows you to warm rooms most used while lowering the setting on the home's central heating unit, but be cautious.

Electric heaters don't have an open flame, but heating elements can be hot enough to ignite nearby combustibles like draperies, paper, clothing or furniture.

According to national statistics, portable and fixed-space heaters caused a disproportionate share of the home-heating fire deaths. Space heaters were involved in 25 percent of the home heating fires and 74 percent of the deaths.

The leading cause of most space heater fires was the ignition of combustibles left too close to the heater.

Be sure to check surrounding objects and refer to the manufacturer's instructions to see how far the heater should be placed from combustible materials, she said.

- Never run the heater's cord under rugs or carpeting.
- Place the heater on a level surface for stability.
- Don't leave the heater unattended or operating while you sleep.
- Don't place the heater where children might play near it or where people might trip over or bump into it.
- Portable electric heaters are designed to be used only as temporary supplemental heating and only while attended.
- Keep portable electric heaters away from water and never use them in the bathroom or near a sink. Look for a heater listed with a nationally-recognized test laboratory (such as Underwriters Laboratory - UL). These heaters have been tested to meet specific safety standards.
- Buy a heater with a guard around the heating element to keep out fingers or fabrics.
- If you must use an extension cord make sure it is a heavy duty cord with a #14 gauge or larger wire. An incorrectly-sized cord may create a fire hazard.
- Do not use an electric heater as a dryer by placing clothing over it.
- Never use a heater to thaw pipes.

Regardless of the type of heater you use, be sure to have a smoke detector on each floor of your house.

Source: Parts of this article were adapted from: "Electronic Space Heaters," Publication #98, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/hard.html, as printed in Connecting Lewis County, January 2006.
SHOPPING FOR AN ENERGY SUPPLIER

The introduction of energy competition in NYS allows customers to choose an energy supplier. You no longer have to buy your electricity and natural gas from your local utility. Instead, Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) can now compete for your business. Your utility company will still be responsible for delivering the electricity or natural gas to your home or business through their existing wires and pipes. And, the safety and reliability you’ve come to depend on won’t change – you’ll still call your utility if there’s an emergency or service interruption.

You can (1) switch to an Energy Service Company, or (2) continue to get your energy from your utility company.

To shop for an energy supplier other than your utility, you should evaluate the ESCO offerings available to you, compare them with your utility’s offering, and decide which seems best for you.

FOR HELP IN CHOOSING AN ENERGY SUPPLIER FOLLOW THESE TIPS:

Call . . . your utility or the PSC at 1-888-Ask-PSCI (1-888-275-7721) to get a list of eligible Energy Service companies (ESCOs) serving your area, or go to www.AskPSC.com or your utility’s web site for a list, and then call the companies.

Compare. . . the prices, services, and terms that the ESCO are offering you. Does the agreement include special fees, deposits, clear information, and procedures for switching?

Consider. . . customer services such as toll-free numbers, Web sites, complaint handling procedures, and hours of operation.

Check out. . . billing and payment options, such as how you would be billed, when payment is due, and whether there are any late charges. Are other options or services available such as group buying, or value added service? You may also be able to support cleaner, sustainable energy solutions and reduce our dependence on foreign oil by shopping for suppliers that offer energy generated by renewable sources.

Confirm. . . the details of the agreement.

THEN. . .

Choose. . . the energy supplier that’s right for you, and continue to monitor your bills and service. If you choose an ESCO and are not satisfied, you can switch back to your utility or to another Energy Service Company.

Source: Public Service Commission, as printed in CCE Schoharie County Cooperative Extension’s Scoop
When you replace light bulbs or entire light fixtures in your home with ones that have earned the government’s ENERGY STAR, you help preserve energy resources and reduce the risks of global warming while saving money and time buying and changing lights in your home.

ENERGY STAR qualified lighting provides bright, warm light but uses at least 2/3 less energy than standard lighting, generates 70 percent less heat, and lasts up to 10 times longer.

To save the most energy and money, replace your highest used fixtures or the light bulbs in them with energy-efficient models. The five highest use fixtures in a home are typically the kitchen ceiling light, the living room table and floor lamps, bathroom vanity, and outdoor porch or post lamp. ENERGY STAR qualified lighting fixtures and replacement bulbs can be found at home improvement and hardware stores, lighting showrooms, and other retail stores, including on-line outlets.

The smallest things can add up to a real difference. We encourage you to change out the light fixtures or bulbs at home that you use most with ENERGY STAR qualified models. If every American home changed out just five high-use light fixtures or the bulbs in them with ones that have earned the ENERGY STAR, each family would save about $60 every year in energy costs, and together we’d save about $6.5 billion each year in energy costs and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions from more than 8 million cars.

Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFL’s)

ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs:

- Use at least 2/3 less energy than standard incandescent bulbs to provide the same amount of light, and last up to 10 times longer.
- Save $30 or more in energy costs over each bulb’s lifetime
- Generate 70 percent less heat, so they’re safer to operate and can cut energy costs associated with home cooling.
- In addition to other quality requirements, must turn on instantly, produce no sound, and fall within a warm color range or be otherwise labeled as providing cooler color tones.
- Are available in different sizes and shapes to fit in almost any fixture, for indoors and outdoors.
- To get a CFL with the right amount of light, choose one that offers the same lumen rating as the light you are replacing. The higher the lumen rating, the greater the light output. Use the table below to see how lumens can generally be compared.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>A-shaped Incandescent Bulb (Watts)</th>
<th>Typical Lumens (Measure of Light Output)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>&gt;450</td>
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<td>&gt;1,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>&gt;2,600</td>
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</table>

Source: www.energystar.gov
More and more people are dealing with Type 2 diabetes in this country. Here are some tips from “Communicating Food for Health” November/December 2006 issue for managing diabetes along with some resource ideas.

► Lose weight if you are overweight. Type 2 diabetes linked to obesity often disappears if the obesity is corrected. Even limited weight loss can lead to better blood glucose control.

► Participate in regular physical activity. Regular physical activity improves fitness and quality of life and decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease. It also helps with weight loss or control. In Type 2 diabetes, regular physical activity helps to improve blood glucose control and possibly decrease the need for insulin or oral medications.

► Watch the amount of saturated fat, trans-fat and cholesterol you consume, as they tend to raise blood cholesterol levels. Foods to watch out for include fatty meats, fried foods, high fat dairy products, bakery goods and margarines. Choose lean cuts of meat and limit yourself to 3-ounce portions twice a day, including more skinless poultry and fish.

► Increase your intake of fiber. Fiber comes from plants and may help to lower blood glucose and levels of fats in the blood. Foods high in fiber include bran cereals, cooked beans and peas, whole-grain bread, fruits and vegetables.

► Eat more whole grains, fruits and vegetables as opposed to refined foods. Not only do whole foods contain fiber, but they also contain numerous plant chemicals, or phytochemicals, which appear to be beneficial for health.

Whole plant foods are minimally processed foods from plants that are in their whole, near-natural state and are generally lower in calories, higher in fiber and higher in nutrients than their refined counterparts and have a lower glycemic response. A four-ounce potato contains 82 calories while the same amount of potato chips contains 608 calories. Examples of whole foods are fruits, vegetables, beans or legumes and whole grains. Whole foods are more satiating – that is you feel fuller on fewer calories. This is important because most people with Type 2 diabetes need to lose excess body fat to improve their blood sugar control and blood lipid profile.

► Refined foods are foods that have been processed from whole ingredients and often lose fiber and important nutrients. For example, white flour is a refined food made from whole-wheat kernels. Sugar is a refined food made from sugar cane. Besides losing fiber, vitamins and minerals, these foods are most often much higher in calories per serving than their original form.

► Eat regular, well-balanced meals with snacks as needed. This will help to improve your blood glucose levels and reduce overeating. A well-balanced meal consists of about 1/4 protein foods and 3/4 carbohydrate foods.

► Understand that “sugar-free” doesn’t mean carbohydrate-free or calorie-free. “Sugar-free” foods are often sweetened with fructose or sugar alcohols (xylitol, mannitol, sorbitol). These sweeteners may have a smaller effect on your blood glucose levels than table sugar, and they are okay to use in moderate amounts. But foods containing fructose or the sugar alcohols will still contain calories.

► Even foods sweetened with artificial sweeteners (such as sugar-free pudding) still have calories and are not “free” foods.

► Know the carbohydrate content of the foods you eat. Carbohydrates occur naturally in milk and fruit, and are also found in pasta, bread, rice, dried beans and peas, and starchy vegetables such as potatoes, corn or green peas.

► Use alcohol in moderation. If your blood glucose levels are in good control and alcohol is consumed with, foods containing carbohydrate, one drink a day is acceptable. However, it is important to monitor your blood glucose to know how you react to alcohol since alcohol can lead to hypoglycemia.

► Know where to go for reliable information. The following organizations offer credible information for consumers with diabetes:

American Dietetic Association: www.eatright.org
American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org
MONEY LESSONS FOR LIFE

Some of the reasons we have for not talking to children about money include our own lack of knowledge, the fear that we’re not practicing what we ought to be preaching, and the fact that our parents didn't talk to us about money. Don't let these barriers stand in your way.

As soon as children can count, introduce them to money. Keep in mind the following guidelines when educating children about money or other subjects:

$ Guide and advise rather than direct and dictate. Let children have responsibility for their decisions.
$ Encourage and praise rather than criticize and rebuke.
$ Allow children to make and learn from mistakes and successes.
$ Use opportunities to include all family members in money management decisions and activities as appropriate for their age.
$ Explain to children what they can and cannot do, and the consequences of going beyond their limits.
$ As children get older, include them in discussions of limits and consequences.

Age-Appropriate Lessons

Money lessons and your expectations need to be age appropriate. Concepts to teach and activities to provide to your children include:

$ For young kids, spark interest in money by using the pictures of money. Work together to count money and make change.
$ Set up a three-jar system, such as, "now, short-term and long term," or "spending, savings and sharing." All money earned or received as a gift should not be available for spending, but divided among the jars. Sharing includes gifts or donations to others. When the jar is full, that money goes into a savings account or may be used for a purchase.
$ Go with your child to set-up a savings account or to purchase savings bonds. When saving at home, pay interest on the savings, or provide a match with the requirement that your contribution stays in savings. To encourage saving, let your child make the decision on account withdrawals. Regular savings is the quickest way to a good credit rating.
$ Eliminate the "I wants" at the store checkout by allowing them to spend only their own money when they go shopping with you.

Lessons in Life

$ Create a lesson out of bill paying. For example the utility bill is a need, while satellite radio is a want. Help them figure costs per day, then subtract for account balances.
$ Avoid criticizing when children make poor decisions. Focus on what happened and what was learned. Always try to recognize responsible behavior.
$ Allowances help empower the child and provide money management lessons. It's also appropriate to expect all family members to perform unpaid, routine household chores appropriate for their abilities. Give a base allowance, which may be tied to chores. If chores are not completed, the penalty should be lost privileges. Always provide chore opportunities for additional earnings. Shift more spending decisions to your child, which reduces the need for the child to ask for money, and encourages wise spending.
$ It is better that children learn money management under your guidance than alone in the real world. Parental loans should come with interest, terms and require some collateral. Let them learn that it is expensive to rent someone else’s money for a period of time.

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Goal Setting
Occasionally express your desire to have things you can't afford. They need to hear that you, too, have to tell yourself "no" to spending money. Delayed gratification should lengthen as the child ages, with goal setting for achievement or for items they want as their motivation. Delay spending by requiring comparison shopping, a list of pros and cons for the purchase and thrifty alternatives.

Teach the difference between wanting and needing. For an older child create a list with three columns- needs, wants and wishes. This comparison helps children see that the three do not go together. As they make responsible spending decisions, let them keep the money they saved. Teach them that spending is not a fix for a negative feeling.

Ways to Teach About Money
One important lesson is how to track earnings, spending, and savings in order to know how you're doing financially. Ask your child to write down transactions into specific categories each month.

Another method for learning about money is to use the grocery store as your classroom. Demonstrate how to plan a meal, use leftovers, shop by unit price, question coupon or sale values, figure costs of eating out (including tax and tip), and ways to create lower cost options.

Teach about ways to build a good credit rating, and if your older child does not have a regular full time income, do not give them a credit card as it sends the message to "SPEND." Co-signing means you're liable and does not help them establish a credit rating. Credit purchasing can have a far more negative impact on a financial future than any other money decision.

Establish a regular schedule for a family financial discussion. Report current balances and concerns and work together on coming up with solutions to reduce expenses, avoid credit debt and increase savings.

Sometimes the best motivation for wise spending is to plan how to do more with the money you save!

Source: Colorado State University, Cooperative Extension, October 2006

MY MITTEN BOOK
The next time the kids come in from playing outside, dry out their mittens and use them to create this great book:

What you need:
- construction paper
- mitten
- pencil
- scissors
- white paper
- hole punch
- yarn
- glitter
- markers

What you do:
Fold construction paper in half. Place your hand in a mitten and place it on top of the construction paper. Trace around the mitten. Cut out your mitten shape from the folded construction paper to create two mitten cutouts for the front and back covers of your book.

Use your mitten shape as a stencil to cut out several mittens from the white paper. Place one of the construction paper mitten shapes in front of your book. Stack the white mitten shapes on top so that the thumbs are lined up. Place the last construction paper mitten on top of the stack.

Punch two holes in your mitten book on the solid side of your mitten. Thread a piece of yarn through each hole and tie a bow.

Decorate the front cover of your mitten book using glitter and markers. Fill your book with winter drawings, poems, stories, or photos. Make up a funny story about where your lost mittens may have gone!

Source: adapted from: Winter Day Play by Amanda Formaro, http://familycorner.com as printed in Caring for Kids 1/05
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