

Mom's Moments

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Volume 2, Issue 2

A Note from Anna

Fall is such a busy time of year. Busy times can often bring fatigue, stress, illness and unbalance into our lives. It's important to keep our hearts and minds focused on positive things. We hope this issue of Mom's Moments will help with that! *Dinnertime Discussions* encourages positive conversation as your family gathers around the table. *A Quiet Moment* reflects on how positive actions and words result from a positive attitude. *High School Days* gives insights for achieving success and balance in students' lives. And our *Health Nut* and *One-Day Menu* pages can help decrease your stress levels with great ideas for eating well and exercising! Find the positive moments in your busy days - they DO exist if you look for them!

Dinnertime Discussions

Ideas for Encouraging Positive Conversation

Dinnertime is an excellent opportunity to spend quality time with children and connect with them about their lives. Family time around the table is more valuable than we can imagine. Studies show that young people who eat dinner with family are less likely to smoke, drink or use drugs. They are more likely to develop healthy relationships, do better in school, and communicate more effectively with others.

How can you encourage your children to talk once they've joined you for dinner? Start by creating a welcoming atmosphere at the table. Clear off the clutter, play some music, light a candle even! Then go ahead and open the communication lines (wait until AFTER they shovel the food into their mouths!) **Joyce Verkerk from Sudbury, Ontario** suggests asking two questions: What's the worst thing that happened today? What's the best thing that happened today? These have been wonderful conversation-starters for her house!

Find discussion ideas for younger children at www.fotf.ca/articles_parenting/discussions.html and find discussion ideas for older children at www.dinnerdialogue.com. The Dinner Dialogue website also highlights some great DO's and DON'Ts for family dinnertime discussions, as well as emails new topics as they arise if you sign up for their email list.

So now that everyone's talking, how do you keep family conversations positive? Try to steer away from gossip, encourage ALL family members to talk, LISTEN to everyone's comments, and wait for children to talk through their problems and solve issues themselves before jumping in to help. Go with the flow - whether the conversation is serious or light-hearted, ENJOY each other's company!

Share With Us For Our Next Issue...

- Gift Ideas to Save the Budget for the Holidays
- Christmas Traditions In Your Family
- Got Any Great Christmas Photos to Share?

Find more [contribution ideas](#) on our website. Send December submissions by **November 15th**. Email contributions@momsmoments.ca to share.

Fall Fun Photo Contest Winner:

Submitted by **Emilie Godin, Gatineau, Quebec**



Share your pictures for our newsletters OR our [Online Photo Gallery](#). Email contributions@momsmoments.ca

Around the House

Weatherproofing Your Home for the Winter

- Conduct your own draft search by lighting a candle on a windy day and inspecting for leaks
- Wrap hot water tanks in a thermal blanket
- Insulate hot water pipes
- Seal outlets/light switches with foam gaskets
- Seal gaps around windows/doors with caulking
- Seal windows with shrink film
- Seal wall gaps with expanding foam insulation
- Weather-stripping & sweeps for exterior doors
- Replace air filter on furnace
- Place area rugs on cold floors
- Plant pine or fir trees on the north side of your home to serve as windbreaks
- **Ontario Residents** - [Home Energy Retrofit Program](#) - Many grants & rebates available for upgrading your windows, insulation, exterior doors and heating/cooling systems - especially beneficial for older homes!

www.energy.gov.on.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=conservation.homeretrofit

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Reuse Your Hanging Baskets!

From **Lynne Collier, Kendal, Ontario**

Remove all spent flowers from your hanging baskets and leave soil in them. Sprinkle bird seed on the soil and enjoy visits from winter guests!

A Quiet Moment— *Inspiration from the Bible*

"The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart...For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." Luke 6:45 (NIV)

My two-year-old son learns so much through copying the actions and words of those around him. My older son gets so tired of his baby brother following him around and repeating him word for word. For me, my young imitator is a reminder to be aware of how I act and speak, and how intentional I am about expressing the good in my heart.

When I am upset or tired, my oldest son knows that what I need most is a kiss, a hug and an "I love you Mommy." And my youngest son will sometimes say to me "You're so beautiful Mommy!" (He is learning well from his daddy!)

In the busy times how is my "overflow"? When I'm tired or stressed, what words do I speak to my family? Do I act with kindness towards them?

I've often heard that you can tell the true nature of a person by their reactions to negative events. Ouch! I know I've failed that test a few times!

It's up to me to store up good in my heart. I need to be aware of what I watch on TV, what I read, what music I listen to and what words come out of my mouth! I definitely need help - I find myself praying MANY times throughout the day-quick prayers like "Help me God!" or "Sorry about that!" And when I manage to read a few verses from my Bible during the day and read a devotional (find great ideas in our [Online Resources!](#)) I am much better equipped to focus on the good, and let go of the bad.

The words and actions of my sons warm my heart every time. I love my young copycats and I'll do my best to set a good example of a positive overflow of the heart. And when I fail, I'll apologize and start again tomorrow! **-Anna**

Be challenged and inspired!

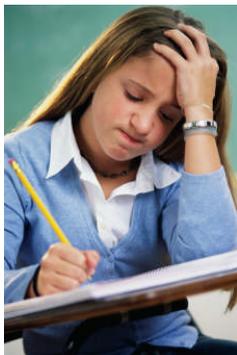
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- **Dare to Share** a story, resource or idea to encourage others in our newsletters or [blogs!](#)

Must Read - For Baby's First Year

On Becoming Babywise by Garry Ezzo. When the simple concepts in this book are put into practice in the early months (0-6 months), you have a happy baby with a good routine who sleeps through the night early on. It really works wonders! The books go on to [Babywise II](#) for pre-toddlers (5-15 mos.), [Toddlerwise](#), [Childwise](#), etc.

Better Baby Foods: Your Essential Guide to Nutrition, Feeding and Cooking for All Babies and Toddlers by Daina Kalnins and Joanne Saab registered dietitians at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. This book is highly recommended and has everything you need to know about feeding your baby 0 to 24 months! Also look for [Better Food For Kids](#) for children ages 2 to 6. Both books include easy recipes the entire family will enjoy!

High School Days—What Kind of Student is Your Child



Students at both extremes of the "motivational scale" can be at risk.

All students fall somewhere on what I call a "motivational scale." An important idea to grasp is that students at both extremes of this scale can be considered at risk.

First there is the obvious concerns for students with low motivation. We fear that they may struggle to graduate and move onto other positive pursuits. These students may not be involved in extra-curricular activities, or they may have one or a few that consume them, at the expense of their schooling.

When lack of motivation is apparent in a student, one tool that has worked very well is the use of the agenda for home-school communication. I have used it a few times at the request of parents (*reluctantly at first!*). Students are responsible for having their agenda initialled by the teacher once they've recorded their homework at the end of class (*note: THEY are responsible—it is not the teacher who chases after them!*), and parents initial it on their end. Parents and teachers can communicate

with each other when needed (*I have ended up writing more positive notes home to mark the improvements.*)

My experience has been that the use of the agenda in this way has essentially improved the communication and relationships between the student and the teacher, as well as the student and their parents. On top of the accountability, I have seen motivational and self-confidence levels rise greatly as students find themselves improving from working more consistently! In grades 9-10, students are learning to take responsibility for their education; it would not be appropriate to use this method with senior students.

This leads me to the second extreme on the motivational scale... **Why can motivated students be at risk?** Some students can have what I call the "superman/superwoman complex" where they take on every possible extra-curricular activity—sports, arts and academic, volunteer work, etc... and they feel the pressure to succeed in ALL that they take on. They can experience high

stress, unrealistic expectations and a fear of failure.

Obviously, we want our children to be motivated! Just watch that they aren't stretching themselves too thin, that they are able to balance everything that they take on, and that they don't demand perfection in all that they do. Taking constructive criticism well, and growing from our failures are important skills in life! Students shouldn't be too high stressed, particularly in the first couple of years in high school. As they reach grades 11-12, the pressure understandably does mount a bit as they look to their futures, but still needs to stay in check.

Wherever your child sits on the motivational scale, make sure to keep the doors of communication open with your teen! Demonstrate interest in their schooling, but help *them* to take responsibility for it! An overbearing parent can inhibit that process! Help them to believe in themselves and to find balance.

Mélanie Heffern is a high school teacher in Ontario.

Shopping for Depends?

By Caroline Deschamps, NP-PHC, PTS, PFS

If you are shopping for Depends, I suggest you read on. Don't blush, just read!

Urinary incontinence is the loss of bladder control. It can range from leaking urine when you cough to suddenly having to go and not making it to the toilet on time. This is NOT NORMAL despite aging, having had a baby or being in your menopause.

In this short article, I will only be able to skim the topic. What I want you to be able to get out of it is whether or not you should seek medical attention. Don't be shy, there's nothing to be embarrassed about. It's more common than you think! Why live with it if you don't have to? So here's what you need to know.

Types of urinary incontinence. There are different types of urinary incontinence. For the purpose of this article, I will focus on the most common.

Stress incontinence occurs when pressure is exerted on your bladder simply by coughing, laughing, sneezing, exercising or lifting something

heavy. A weak sphincter muscle at the bladder is to blame. This type is most common in women such as pregnant, postpartum or menopausal.

Urge incontinence (or over-active bladder) is that sudden, intense urge to urinate, followed by an involuntary loss of urine. The bladder contracts even though it is not full causing you to need to urinate frequently. This can be a sign of a bladder infection or an irritated bladder. It can also be due to bowel problems such as constipation or due to a damaged nervous system (multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, stroke or injury).

Overflow Incontinence comes from the inability to fully empty the bladder, leading to overflow. Those affected often or constantly dribble urine. There is the sensation that their bladder can never fully be emptied. Some notice a weaker urine stream.

So why is this happening? Keep in mind that urinary incontinence is not a disease

in itself. It usually indicates an underlying condition that can most likely be treated. There are several reasons why urinary incontinence occurs. The following can cause **temporary urinary incontinence**: alcohol, over-hydration, dehydration (concentrated urine can irritate the bladder and cause contractions which in turn give you the urge to urinate), bladder irritation (from drinking certain beverages such as caffeine or carbonated drinks, even citrus fruits and juices), medications (sleeping pills, diuretics, muscle relaxants and antidepressants), and other illnesses or injuries which can prevent you from getting to the toilet on time.

Weak pelvic floor or bladder muscles, neurological diseases, or an obstructed urinary tract are often to blame for **persistent urinary incontinence**. Many factors can lead to this including pregnancy and childbirth and changes with aging. It is important to seek medical attention to rule out other very serious conditions that may be to blame. (*read side*)

What factors increase your risk of urinary incontinence?

- You're a woman!
- Pelvic/bladder muscles weaken with age.
- Obesity. Big bellies increase the pressure on the bladder.
- Smoking.
- Vascular disease.
- Participating in high-impact sports (running, basketball) due to sudden pressure applied on your bladder.
- Other diseases (kidney disease or diabetes)

Ways to decrease your risk of urinary incontinence

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Don't smoke!
- Do Kegel exercises ([see MM exercise of the month- August, 2007](#))
- Avoid bladder irritants
- Eat more fiber
- Be active!

See your doctor/NP if the urinary incontinence is frequent or affecting your quality of life.

Nutrition Fact—The Scoop on Caffeine

How much caffeine is too much? Can caffeine prevent colon cancer? Can it protect you from diabetes? Can it help you lose weight? To confuse things even more, recent research has shown that caffeine does not have a diuretic effect (makes you urinate more) after all...unless you drink more than 4 cups of coffee per day that is.

With all the confusion, what's the best thing to do? Well, let's focus on our best options for general health and wellbeing. First of all, **how much is too much?** For most people, 200-300 mg of caffeine per day (about 2-3 cups of coffee) is not harmful. More than that (4-7 cups) can cause restlessness, anxiety, irritability, muscle tremors, sleeplessness, headaches, abnormal heart rhythms, nausea, diarrhea or other gastrointestinal problems. Note that there are many sources of caffeine. It can be found in coffee, tea, soft drinks, sports/energy drinks, some foods and other products.

You need to cut down (or cut out) your caffeine intake if:

- You drink more than 3 cups of coffee per day (or more than 500-600 mg caffeine per day)
- You have caffeine sensitivity (feeling the effects with as little as one cup of coffee)
- You're not sleeping well
- You're taking certain medications and supplements (some antibiotics, theophylline, ephedra - talk to your health care provider).

Can caffeine prevent colon cancer or diabetes? Some research shows that it may protect against them, but there is much more evidence of fruits, vegetables and whole grains having a greater protective effect than coffee.

So what about weight loss? Caffeine may act as an appetite suppressant, but the effects don't last long enough to make a difference. It may increase your body's ability to burn calories but not enough to get significant weight loss.

The bottom line is that even though caffeine may offer some health benefits, it is definitely not to be chosen over a healthy diet and exercise program, be it to reduce your risk of colon cancer, diabetes or weight gain. Caffeine is a stimulant that can increase your blood pressure and heart rate. Many caffeinated drinks are also high in calories...keep that in mind the next time you order a Grande non-fat Chai Latte!

Exercise of the Month The Wall Sit

Works your glutes and legs. Stand with your feet hip distance apart, with your back against the wall. Bring your feet out, in front of you, about 1 to 1.5 feet away from the wall. Slide your back down the wall so your knees are bent at a 90 degree angle (thighs parallel to the ground) and your knees are above your ankles (you should be able to see your toes). Hold that position for as long as you can keeping your hands on either side of your body. For a more advanced move, add an upper body exercise such as dumbbell biceps curls or a shoulder press as you stay down in your wall sit. Aim at doing this for 60 sec. or more. Feel the burn!

Caroline is a nurse practitioner and personal trainer specializing in pre/post-natal fitness in Ottawa, ON. **Email** healthnut@momsmoments.ca

Reaching out to connect, encourage and support women.

Good Eats

Spinach & Roasted Red Pepper Lasagna

Adapted from *Williams-Sonoma's Essentials of Healthful Cooking*

- 2 kg fresh baby spinach or 1kg frozen chopped spinach
- 500g your favourite Italian sausage
- 500g part-skim ricotta cheese OR low-fat cottage cheese
- 2 large egg whites
- ½ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 8 cups tomato sauce ([see MM Oct newsletter, Good Eats](#))
- 9 dried lasagna noodles (or fresh)
- 3 large red bell peppers, roasted and seeded
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced

If using fresh spinach, rinse it carefully, discarding any damaged leaves. Drain briefly in a colander and then, working in batches if necessary, transfer to a large saucepan with only the water that clings to the leaves. Place over medium-high heat, cover, and cook, turning the leaves a couple of times, until wilted and still slightly firm to the bite, 5-6 minutes. Drain well and chop finely. Squeeze the spinach with your hands to remove most of the moisture. If using frozen spinach, cook according to the package directions, let cool, and squeeze out.

Remove the casings from the Italian sausage. In a frying pan, cook sausage, breaking it up with a wooden spoon, until cooked through.

Mix the ricotta (or cottage cheese if using) and egg whites until well combined. Stir in the Parmigiano-Reggiano and ½ cup of the mozzarella cheese. Stir in 1 tsp salt and ¼ tsp pepper.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

To assemble the lasagna, cover the bottom of a 9-by-13-by-3-inch baking dish with 4 cups of the tomato sauce. Arrange 3 of the noodles on top of the sauce. Cover the noodles with half of the bell peppers, cutting them as needed to lay flat. There will be spaces. Cover the peppers with half of the spinach, using your fingers to pull any clumps apart. Sprinkle half of the garlic evenly over the spinach. Using a large spoon, dollop half of the Italian sausage followed by the cheese mixture on top of the spinach. With the back of the spoon, gently spread the cheese as much as possible without pulling up the spinach. There will be some spaces. Top with another layer of the pasta, and then the remaining peppers, spinach, garlic, sausage, and cheese mixture. Cover with the remaining 3 noodles. Spread the remaining 4 cups tomato sauce over the top. Cover the baking dish with aluminum foil.

Bake until the pasta is almost soft when tested with a knife, about 1¼ hours. Uncover the lasagna. Sprinkle the remaining ½ cup mozzarella evenly over the top. Replace the foil. Continue to bake until the pasta is soft and the cheese on top of the lasagna is melted, about 15 minutes longer. Uncover and let the lasagna rest for 20 minutes before cutting into 8-10 rectangles and serving.



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October Poll Results:

How Would You Best Describe Your Employment Status?

Full-time Outside of Home: 27%

Part-time Outside of Home: 27%

Self-employed: 0%

Homemaker: 45%

Total Number of Votes : 11

We would love to get a better representation from our readership! Take our monthly polls online at www.momsmoments.ca.

November Poll: How much do you spend on average for Christmas presents?

Tasty Treats - Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

My 2-year-old loves to help me mix together the ingredients of these chewy treats! Then we watch through the oven window as the dough magically turns into cookies!

- Anna Sklar

- ½ cup softened butter or non-hydrogenated margarine
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- ½ tsp vanilla
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup quick-cooking oats
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 cup raisins



Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat together the butter/margarine, brown sugar, egg and vanilla in a large bowl until smooth. Add the rest of the ingredients. Mix until well blended. Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls onto cookie sheets. Bake for 9-11 minutes. Makes about 30 cookies.

Caroline's One Day Menu

From Caroline our Health Nut

Christmas is just around the corner and we all know what that means... so here's a way to keep on track before you panic! Keeping it simple and delicious, I've chosen recipes from Weight Watchers this month. These recipes can be prepared in less than 20 minutes. Hope you enjoy this menu as much as my family does!

Breakfast

Tangy Yogurt Pancakes with Blueberry compote*

Lunch

Chicken barley soup*
Sliced cantaloupe

Dinner

Turkey rolls cordon bleu*
Steamed green beans
Linguine with pesto

*see below for recipes

Tangy Yogurt Pancakes with Blueberry Compote:

Compote— Ingredients: 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries; 4 tbsp sugar; 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice; 1 tbsp water. Combine blueberries, sugar, lemon juice, and water in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat; reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, about 12 minutes. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

Pancakes— Ingredients: 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour; 2 tbsp sugar; 1 tsp baking powder; 1/4 tsp baking soda; 1/4 tsp salt; 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg; 3/4 cup plain nonfat yogurt; 1/2 cup fat-free milk; 1 large egg; 1 tbsp canola oil; 1/2 tsp vanilla extract. Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and nutmeg in a bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the yogurt, milk, egg, oil, and vanilla. Add the flour mixture to the yogurt mixture, stirring just until smooth. Heat a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Using a scant 1/4 cup for each pancake, pour the batter into the pan. Cook just until the tops are covered with bubbles and the edges are cooked, 2-3 minutes. Turn the pancakes and cook until browned, about 2 minutes more. Serve with the warm blueberry compote.

Chicken Barley Soup:

Ingredients: 1 lb skinless boneless chicken breasts, cubed; 1/2 tsp salt; 1/4 tsp black pepper; 1 tsp canola oil; 1 3/4 cups chicken broth; 5 cups water; 1/2 cup quick-cooking barley; 10 oz of your choice of vegetables (carrots, celery, zucchini, onions, potato, peppers, tomato, mushrooms, etc.).

Sprinkle the chicken with salt/pepper. Heat the oil in a large nonstick saucepan. Add the chicken and cook until browned, about 5 minutes. Add the broth and water; bring to a boil. Stir in the vegetables and the barley, cover, reduce the heat, and simmer until the barley and vegetables are tender.

Turkey Rolls Cordon Bleu:

Ingredients: 1 1/4 lb (625g) turkey (or chicken) cutlets raw; 4 (1 oz) slices reduced-fat ham; 2 (1 oz) slices reduced-fat Swiss cheese, halved; 3 tbsp plain dry breadcrumbs; 1 tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise; 1/4 cup dry white wine; 1/4 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth; 1 tsp butter.

Top each cutlet with a slice of ham and then a half slice of cheese. Roll up and secure with toothpicks. Spread the breadcrumbs on a plate. Brush the turkey rolls with mayo; dip in the crumbs, pressing down to coat.

Spray a large nonstick skillet with nonstick spray and set over medium-high heat. Add the turkey rolls and sauté until browned all over, about 5 minutes. Add the wine, broth, and butter; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer until the turkey is cooked through and the sauce thickens, about 5 minutes longer.