

Mom's Moments

September 2007



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A Note from Anna

September always brings change to our lives. There is such a feeling of anticipation in the air—especially for our school-age children! Some of them are entering elementary or high school for the first time. This issue includes a few hints to help with those transitions!

I hope you had a chance to glance at our updated "About Us" and "Share With Us" webpages. We invite you to check out our new 'Deeper' quarterly newsletter for those who desire to seek God more and dig deeper in their faith. Find it at www.momsmoments.ca.

Our summer *The Ministry of Motherhood* Book Study blog is done for Melanie and I. If you weren't able to join us in reading this summer, grab the book to read and blog on it at your own pace—the blog will stay there for some time.

In October we'll start our next book study *A Woman's Journey to the Heart of God* by Cynthia Heald. I'd love to travel this journey with you ladies! Grab a copy and read the introduction this month! Look for more info in October.

In My Family—Lunchbox Love

"My 5 yr old is not a huge fan of bread, she takes the good stuff out and leaves the bread. I got a clever idea from somewhere and got a large heart shaped cookie cutter and used it on the bread. She gets heart shaped sandwiches for lunch and for some odd reason the bread tastes better that way!" - Karen, Uxbridge, ON

We often include notes in our 6-year-old's lunchbox to connect with him at school. The notes give needed encouragement to kids of any age. A few kind or funny words can speak in great ways to a young person's heart in the midst of learning group dynamics, academic pressures, or separation issues. When our son couldn't read, we simply drew a picture of an eye, followed by a heart shape, then spelled out his name—the only word he knew at the time! He loved that he could understand that on his own. Older children would most likely appreciate a joke or riddle in their lunch, or simple words of affirmation like "You look great today!" or "Have a great day!" or "I'm so glad you're my son/daughter. See you later!" You know what words will speak to your child's heart. - Anna

Find ideas for packing school lunches on page 4.

Check it Out! - Stay Alert, Stay Safe!

The Stay Alert, Stay Safe Program's website offers not only games for the kids, but also resources for parents, teachers and children on topics like bullying, internet safety, Halloween, summer holidays and more! Visit www.sass.ca.

Share With Us for Our Next Issue...

- Best Halloween costume for you or your child
- Thanksgiving/Fall traditions in your family
- Fall Fun Photo Contest—winners will be featured in the November issue

Find more contribution ideas on our website.

*Send October submissions by **September 20th**.*

Email contributions@momsmoments.ca to share.

Gran's Garden

By Lynne Collier, Kendal, Ontario



The gardening season is coming to an end. As the leaves turn and start to fall we need to prepare our gardens for a period of rest, especially if we live in a cold winter climate. So rake your leaves and wrap your small trees in burlap to protect them from the harsh winds and heavy snow. If this time of year makes you sad to see your garden "sleep" here are some ideas to help you focus on the "awakening" of spring time:

Choose a site, till it over and plant a few bulbs that will sleep through the winter and be the first to burst awake in spring.

Daffodils are usually the largest and need to be about 6" deep. Cover them with ½" of soil mix. Above these plant Tulips about 4" down and cover these with ½" of soil mix. Last to plant are Grape Hyacinth (*Muscara*), about 2" down, just under the surface.

Cover these with a layer of soil mix. Water the site thoroughly and finally cover with a layer of leaves to insulate your bulbs for the long sleep.

Now wait for spring! Impatient? No problem. I like to plant pansies at this time of year for winter interest in my garden. They thrive during light snowfalls and reappear as soon as the snow starts to melt. Until next season, enjoy the best thing in your winter garden – the children in your life! God bless and Go Play Outside!

Thank you so much, Lynne, for sharing your gardening expertise with us this season! Our lives and our gardens are all the richer for it! Look for a couple of tips from Gran this winter on enjoying the outdoors despite the weather!

Garden Photo Contest Winner!



Wendy Lempner, MomsInBloom.com in Ohio, USA

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A Quiet Moment— Inspiration from the Bible

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)

Change can be scary for most of us. We rely on our routines and schedules to accomplish times of fun, learning and work in the midst of caring for our children. We hope for a lot from our days. And then we also have to remember to eat healthy and to get enough sleep! When life brings change for us or our families, schedules and routines often take a back seat to simply surviving the transition time. Eventually life returns to normal, even if it is different somehow.

Seasons come and go. Kids experience new classes, new teachers, new interests and new friends. Adults change jobs, careers (or retire), return to school, move, or add more babies to the household! Change is simply a part of life!

I've always found comfort in knowing that my best friend, Jesus, never changes. He is a constant in my life, a Rock, a firm place to stand as the storms of life rage around me. Sometimes the storms bring excitement and fun, sometimes sadness and loss.

I know that Jesus' love for me never changes. He died for me and there is no greater love than that!

I hope my sons know that my love for them never changes, I hope I am consistent enough to show them my love in the way I talk to them, the affection I give them, and the time I spend with them. I hope I can be a firm place to stand in the good and bad storms in their lives, just as I know my Rock will stand firm through any change that life will bring for me.

- Anna Sklar

Be challenged and Inspired!

- **Sign Up** to receive our monthly newsletter by email at www.momsmoments.ca
- **Reach Out** to connect with others by passing on our newsletters by email or in print.
- **Dare to Share** a story, resource or idea to encourage others in our newsletters or blogs!

My Special Teachers

A few life lessons I've learned from my special teachers:

- Great memories hide in the routines of daily life.
- Hugs and kisses have magical healing powers.
- It's possible to see God in all the moments of a day.
- Adventures are waiting around every corner.
- Quality time means more than quantity time.

Who are my special teachers? My two sons, who share life with me, help me to experience it fully and challenge me to see through their eyes. I look forward to many more lessons in the future! -Anna



High School Days* —Thoughts From a Teacher on Entering High School

* A new bi-monthly column by Mélanie Heffern, Newmarket, Ontario

Is your son or daughter entering high school this fall? Here are a few things to consider...

Get a **school agenda** the first week of school (*usually includes school schedules, policies, etc.*). Encourage them to use it daily to record homework, due dates and tests, and *check it* to see that they are getting into the habit! Using an agenda is an important step in them taking responsibility for their learning.

Keep **absences** in check... Too many absences and missed work eventually reflect in their grades and may put credits in jeopardy. *A few notes...* Yes students do get sick, but they rarely need to stay home an entire week... There must be room for *some* absences due to extracurricular activities and school field trips... When absences are foreseen or unavoidable, *the student* is responsible for communicating with their teachers to keep up with or catch up on missed work... As a parent, *you* are responsible for always keeping the office informed about absences.

Don't wait too long to **seek**

extra help for academics! Right before a test or exam is usually too late! Have them seek help from their teacher, classmates or a tutor when you first recognize that they are struggling.

Go to **parent-teacher conferences** in the fall (*preferably without your teen*). Meet the teachers, get better acquainted with the school, and see how your teen is really doing in this new environment, regardless of their grades. If he or she is struggling, discuss ways that you and the teacher can *work together* to identify solutions that would help them to better succeed (making changes at home or school, increasing teacher-parent communication, etc.).

Encourage **extra-curricular activities**, as getting involved helps students to get settled socially, and gives them a positive outlet outside of academics in which they can build their confidence, and grow as a person. *Beware of them becoming over involved, or not involved at all.* Finding balance is a skill to be learned! There is something

for everyone: music, sports, drama, student council, year-book committee, and various clubs (from auto to quizzing, outdoors clubs to service groups, etc.) If your child is highly motivated, consider looking into the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Program www.dukeofed.org. (*More info on that next month!*)

Part-time jobs... Evaluate the motives behind them getting a job and if it is absolutely necessary... Responsibility and a good work ethic can be learned through school and summer jobs. If it is not financially necessary, consider allowing them to focus on their primary job during the school year: succeeding in school without being stretched too thin! If your child needs to work during the school year, watch the late hours and time commitments not to drain them too much of their time and energy, and to leave room for school work, positive extra-curricular activities, and downtime!

Above all, give them lots of love and a bit of space to spread their wings... *They'll be fine mom!*

High School is...

Making new friends...

Taking responsibility for one's education...

Exploring new disciplines...

Discovering one's gifts and developing them...

Building confidence and self-esteem...

Growing...

Physical Activity Guidelines—What and How Much?

By Caroline Deschamps, RN(EC), PHCNP, BScN, PTS, PFS



Part 4 -Postpartum Fitness

Now that you have this little bundle of joy, how soon can you start exercising again? You're not sleeping well, still having some discomfort from the delivery/c-section... when will you feel human again? First of all, enjoy every second you have with your baby! Sleep when you can. Don't ignore fatigue or pain. If you've gone through a c-section, this is major surgery!

Your recovery time will be longer.

If you're up to it, walking is the thing to do! Start with 5-10 minutes and watch for signs of exertion (changes in vaginal bleeding, dizziness, faintness, joint pain and exhaustion). Increase the time by adding 2-3 minutes per session aiming at 20 minutes by the end of the 4th week, 3-5 days per week at an easy comfortable pace. Don't chart performance progress!

Once you've been given the thumbs up by a doctor or Nurse Practitioner during your 4-6 week postpartum check, you may begin an exercise program. If you had a c-section, start your walking program now and build it up to 20 minutes. Then gradually increase the intensity/speed of your walk and aim at

reaching 30 minutes 3-5 times per week. You can also introduce more vigorous activities such as a low impact fitness class, stairmaster or cycling. Keep in mind that this is a recovery phase! Keep a moderate pace and increase gradually as tolerated.

At any time, stop exercising if you experience heavy vaginal bleeding (if you have to change your sanitary napkin every 30 minutes for several hours), if you have pain of any kind, or if you have a breast infection or abscess.

The hormone relaxin which made your joints more flexible during pregnancy and delivery still lingers in your body up to 12 weeks postpartum. Keep this in mind when you are exercising and stretching. Take it easy and enjoy your new baby!

Caroline is a nurse practitioner and personal trainer specializing in pre/post-natal fitness in Ottawa, Ontario. Email health and fitness related questions/suggested topics to healthnut@mommoments.ca

Portion Sizes for Children 2 to 5

Many of us with young children wonder just how much is enough when it comes to food portion sizes. Surely their little bodies don't need the amount of fuel our adult bodies require. Here is an easy guide to portion sizes for children 2 to 5 years of age.

Food Group	Servings per day	Serving size per meal	
		2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years
Grain Products	4 or more	Bread: 1/2 – 3/4 slice Pasta or cooked rice: 80 ml (1/3 cup)	Bread: 3/4 to 1 slice Pasta or cooked rice: 125 ml (1/2 cup)
Vegetables and Fruit	4 to 5	45 ml (3 tbsp.) 1/2 fruit	60 ml (4 tbsp.) 1 fruit
Milk products	4	Milk or yogurt: 125 to 175 ml (4 to 6 oz.) Cheese: small cube (2.5 cm x 2.5 cm or 1 in. x 1 in.)	Milk or yogurt: 175 ml (6 oz) Cheese: small cube (4 cm x 4 cm or 1.5 in. x 1.5 in.)
Meat and Alternatives	2	45 ml (3 tbsp.) Legumes: 90 ml (6 tbsp.)	60 ml (4 tbsp.) Legumes: 125 ml (1/2 cup)

Source: D.S.C. of Saint-Luc Hospital

Exercise of the Month—Squat, Jump and Turn!

Start with the left foot on the BOSU ball and the right foot on the floor beside the BOSU. (If you don't have a BOSU ball, you can use an aerobic step or the bottom step of your stairs. If you have no stairs, just do it with both feet on the ground). Squat down pretending to sit back into a chair while keeping your knees above your ankles. Prepare to jump up by placing your arms across the right side of your body and using them to propel your body up as it turns 180 degrees in the air so you can land facing the opposite direction. Your right foot should now be on the BOSU and the left foot on the floor beside the BOSU. Repeat this move ten times. You will be working your glutes, quadriceps, hamstrings, calves and core... and, oh yes... you'll probably feel winded... so you'll also be getting some cardio work done here too!



Nutrition Fact: Folic Acid

New research has shown that an estimated 88% of North Americans suffer from folic acid deficiency. Having said this, we are clearly not getting enough dark green vegetables in our diet. If dark green vegetables are a part of your daily diet, keep in mind that cooking them destroys most of the folic acid.

Women of childbearing age are strongly recommended to take folic acid supplements in order to prevent a complication to the baby called neural tube defect. Start taking it BEFORE you get pregnant as the neurological system develops over the first three weeks of pregnancy (usually before you even know you're pregnant).

Vitamin B12 and B6 are known to help in the absorption of Folic Acid when taken together, so look for a supplement with all three.

It is recommended that adults take 0.4 mg/day of folic acid. Ask your doctor what dosage is right for you and your family!

Although there has been recent news statements that its deficiency has been linked to Alzheimer's disease, atherosclerosis, heart attack, stroke, osteoporosis, cervical and colon cancer, depression and dementia, more research is needed as the scientific evidence for this remains unclear.

Mom's Moments

Reaching out to connect, encourage and support women.

Packing School Lunches

It's easy to get in a rut with our kids' school lunches! Here are a few tips and lunch ideas to help you out!

- Think easy to eat and not messy
- Pack it the night before!
- Involve your children in the process
- Include fruits and vegetables
- Choose 100% whole grains and a variety of breads (pita, buns, wraps)
- Choose low-fat and low sugar products
- Keep hot food hot in a thermos and cold food cold with a mini cold pack to keep lunches safe
- Don't forget napkins daily and forks and spoons when needed!

**Lunch Ideas**

- Sandwiches—meat & cheese, jelly, or egg, tuna, chicken salad
- Bagel & Cream Cheese—add cucumber slices
- Nachos & Salsa—include shredded cheese as well
- Pita & humus with a side of carrots
- Wraps filled with what your child likes (chicken salad, etc)
- Hot soup or chili in a thermos
- Pasta salad—try fun shaped and coloured pasta such as small shells, wagon wheels or ABCs.

Drinks

- Bottled Water
- 100% fruit juice boxes—look for no-sugar added
- Find out if your school has a milk program—take part!

Snacks

- Apples, grapes, bananas and orange slices
- Cut up kiwis, strawberries, watermelon and cantaloupe are a favourite treat!
- Cut cheese sticks
- Yogurt
- Carrots, celery, cucumber slices and cherry tomatoes keep well in the lunchbox
- Homemade rice krispies squares and cookies eliminate the preservatives found in store-bought
- Granola bars (peanut free for most schools!)
- Cheerios, dried fruit, pretzels, bag of popcorn, home made trail mix, baked chips, crackers
- Muffins, banana or carrot bread
- Fruit Salad or cups of no-sugar added apple/fruit sauces
- Yogurt covered raisins

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- Learn more about Mom's Moments and its team, and access all our newsletters
- Access our growing list of online resources in the areas of Family, Health, Finance, Faith and more.
- Look for changes in the poll, photo gallery and blogs!
- **NEW!!** Read our 'Deeper' quarterly newsletter for those who desire to seek God more and dig deeper in their faith



www.momsmoments.ca

Good Eats - Chili Chow-Down

I was in a cooking slump and came up with this to save the day! Share your healthy easy meal ideas! -Anna

- 1 lb ground beef
- ½ large green pepper
- 1 large tomato, diced
- ½ cup frozen corn
- 1 can kidney beans
- 1 can tomato soup
- ¼ cup ketchup
- 1 lime

Brown beef on medium heat. Add green pepper and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Mix in the rest of the ingredients, except the lime. Cut the lime in half and squeeze the juice into the chili. Cook until warmed through. Serve with rice or whole grain buns, and add a salad. Makes 6-8 servings. Freezes well! Hint: mash the green pepper and kidney beans in food processor to avoid detection from picky eaters!

Tasty Treats - Cinnamon Apple Cake

It's apple-picking season and this recipe is always a hit!

- 1¾ cups sugar, divided
- ½ cup margarine, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 6 oz (or ¾ package) light cream cheese, softened
- 3 medium apples, peeled & chopped



Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat 1½ cups sugar, margarine, vanilla and cream cheese with mixer for about 4 minutes. Add eggs 1 at a time, beat after each addition. Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Add flour mixture to creamed mixture, and beat until blended. Combine ¼ cup sugar and cinnamon. Combine 2 tbsp. cinnamon mixture and apple. Stir apple mixture into batter. Pour batter into 8" spring form pan coated with cooking spray. Sprinkle with remaining cinnamon mixture. Bake for 75 minutes or until cake pulls away from sides of pan. Note: this cake is VERY moist! **Adapted from Cooking Light magazine.**

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September's One Day "On the Go" Menu

From Caroline our Health Nut

Each month, I will be sharing with you a new "one day menu" with easy to prepare meals and snacks, complete with recipes, to give you ideas on how you can eat well throughout your day! This month features the "on the go" menu... Whether it's rushing to take the kids to school, to head out to work, to get some exercise or take part in another activity, this healthy menu can help you stay fuelled so you can get the energy you need to make it through your busy day.

Breakfast

Breakfast pita*
Mango berry smoothie*

Snack

Apple
Handful of raw almonds

Lunch

Whole wheat pita stuffed with chicken salad*

Snack

Crudités (carrots, celery, peppers, cucumbers, carrots, etc)
Hummus*

Dinner

Mediterranean chicken and chickpea stew*

*see below for recipes

Breakfast pita: from Pita Break; can be found at Loblaws or Costco. Comes in a variety of breakfast pitas: Breakfast Muesli, Finland Sunrise Rye, Morning Grain, and Sunrise Apple Cinnamon flavoured.

Mango berry smoothie: Place in blender: ½ cup diced mango; ½ cup mixed berries (frozen or fresh); ½ cup plain or vanilla yogurt; ½ cup milk; 1/8 cup honey (to taste). Blend until smooth and drink up!

Whole wheat pita stuffed with chicken salad: Cut up some left over chicken from your supper the night before. Add chopped up celery and carrots, add some chopped up green onions, mayo to taste, salt and pepper. You can even add grated cheddar cheese if you like. Mix it all together and put in your pita. Because of the mayo, you'll need to keep this cool so make sure you have a refrigerator close by or put an ice pack in your lunch bag.

Hummus: Place the following ingredients in a food processor and blend until very smooth: 19 oz can drained chickpeas; ¼ cup tahini (sesame seed paste); 1-2 garlic cloves; ½ tsp salt; ¼ cup lemon juice or to taste. Store in the refrigerator.

Mediterranean chicken stew: This dish can be made from start to finish in about 30 minutes.

Makes 4 to 5 servings. Ingredients: 2 tbsp olive oil; 1 medium onion, chopped; 1 medium green pepper, chopped; 2 garlic cloves, minced; 1 tsp dried oregano, crumbled; 28 oz can diced tomatoes; 19 oz can chickpeas, rinsed and drained; 1 cup chicken broth; ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped; ½ tsp salt; ¼ tsp black pepper; 1 deli rotisserie chicken, cut into 8 to 10 pieces; ½ cup black kalamata olives, coarsely chopped.

In a Dutch oven or very large skillet, cook the onion and green pepper over medium heat until softened - about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and oregano and cook, stirring, for just 1 minute. Now add the tomatoes, chickpeas, chicken broth, parsley, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring a few times, for about 5 minutes. Now add the chicken pieces and olives, and continue to cook, uncovered, for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Serve chicken and sauce over hot cooked rice, couscous or noodles.