

Growing Healthy Families

WIC Newsletter • Spring 2017

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VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH • 1-800-649-4357 • www.healthvermont.gov

Put your best fork forward



Each bite counts!

March is National Nutrition Month®

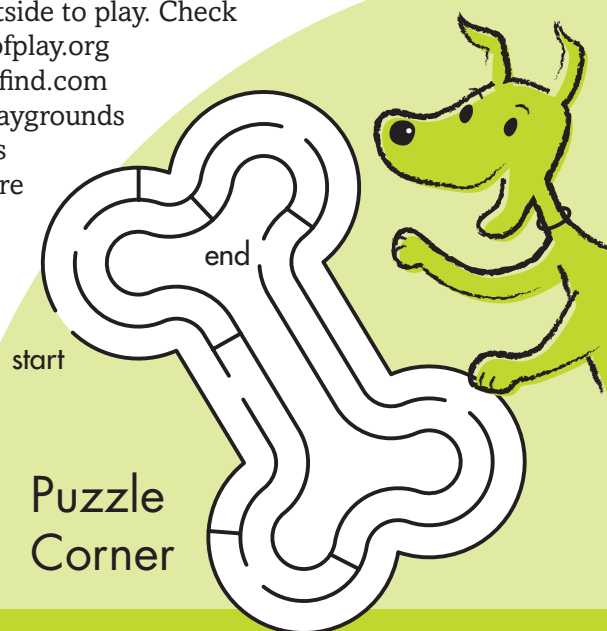
Making small shifts in your family food choices can add up over time and can help you create healthier lasting changes you can all enjoy. When planning meals for your family, *put your best fork forward* to help find your healthy eating style.

- Create an eating style that includes a variety of your family's favorite, healthful foods.
- Practice cooking more at home and experiment with healthier ingredients, including WIC foods, such as new-to-you fruits and vegetables, pulses (find out more in this newsletter) and whole grains (see recipe using whole wheat pasta in this issue). Pick up *ChopChop* magazine at your next WIC appointment or go online at chopchopmag.org for more yummy recipe ideas. Get your kids involved in the kitchen.

NEW! healthvermont.gov/family/wic

Check out the new pages for WIC program, food and shopping information, tips for eating well, including new recipes using WIC foods, and links to your local WIC office.

- How much we eat is as important as what we eat. Eat and drink the right amount for you and encourage your family to do the same. Find more information at choosemyplate.gov.
- Find activities that you and your family enjoy and be physically active most days of the week. Now that spring is here, it is easier to get outside to play. Check out mapofplay.org or naturefind.com to find playgrounds and parks near where you live.



Puzzle
Corner

The power of pulses

No, not your heartbeat! We're talking about a whole different meaning of the word "pulses." While the word itself is not new, pulses are gaining popularity as their health benefits come to light. So, what are these magical pulses? Pulses are a group of legumes that include dry beans, peas and lentils. Most WIC food packages include pulses — dried, as well as canned varieties.

Pulses can be used in so many ways, yet are sometimes overlooked. Their high fiber and protein content make them hearty substitutions for meats, grains, cheeses, sandwich spreads, and even oils. By substituting pulses for these foods, you have the power to lower the amount of fat, saturated fat, and calories in foods while increasing the amount of protein and fiber.

Maybe you're thinking at this point "my family doesn't or won't like 'pulses.'" Luckily, pulses have a neutral taste and can be made into a variety of textures or seasoned to take on any flavor. Pulses can even be added to (or snuck into) your favorite baked goods after they are ground into flours or pureed. For example, some of the flour in a homemade brownie recipe can be replaced with pureed black beans (they'll still be delicious!) — simply drain and rinse a 15-ounce can of black beans and puree in a blender or food processor to substitute for 1 cup of flour. For a savorier substitution, ½ cup of cheese sauce in your family's favorite macaroni and cheese recipe can be replaced with ½ cup of yellow split pea or white bean puree (see recipe for Mac n' Cheese with a Pulse). Beans and lentils can be formed into burger patties or used to fill tacos as plant-based protein sources. These substitutions may be especially helpful for families following a gluten-free, dairy-free, or vegetarian diet. It may take some experimenting to discover which substitutions and recipes your family enjoys most. See some substitution ideas on the next page.

The benefits of including more pulses in your diet are many. Pulses are environmentally-friendly crops, are less expensive than meat, are low in sodium and cholesterol-free, and can take the same amount or even less time to prepare as pasta or rice. They are good sources of protein, iron, fiber, potassium, folate and antioxidants.

For more information, recipes and tips, visit pulsepledge.com.

Mac n' Cheese with a Pulse (aka White Bean Mac n' Cheese)

Serves 5

1 ½–2 cups dried whole wheat pasta
(any shape)
1 15- or 15.5-oz. can white beans
(drained and rinsed)
2 Tbs. water
1 Tbs. butter
1 Tbs. whole-wheat flour
½ cup low-fat or skim milk
1 cup grated low-fat sharp cheddar
cheese (or other cheese if you prefer)
Salt and pepper to taste



Cook pasta according to package directions.

While pasta is cooking, drain and rinse can of white beans. Place beans and 2 Tbs. of water into a blender or food processor and blend until smooth (alternatively, mash beans and water together with a fork until smooth). Set aside.

Melt butter in a medium skillet on medium-low heat. Once melted, add whole wheat flour and stir to combine. Gradually add milk, stirring constantly so no lumps form. Add white bean puree and stir to combine. Gradually add grated cheese, stirring until melted, and season with desired spices.

Mix cooked pasta with cheese sauce and enjoy!

Optional: Season with additional spices such as garlic powder, basil, oregano, or red pepper flakes for a kick! Try topping mac n' cheese with a thin layer of whole wheat bread crumbs, bake in an oven-safe dish at 350° until golden brown for a crunch!

Nutrient analysis per serving: calories 300, protein 18 grams, carbohydrates 48 grams, fat 4.5 grams, sodium 530 grams, fiber 8 grams

Pulses: Quick reference substitution chart



Replace all or
part of this in
your recipes with... equal parts of this!

flour	chickpea/ garbanzo bean flour
flour (in brownie recipe)	pureed black beans
ricotta cheese	pureed cannellini beans
mayonnaise	hummus (pureed chickpeas/ garbanzo beans)
ground beef	mashed pinto beans
shredded pork	cooked lentils
cheese sauce	yellow split pea or white bean puree
oil	red lentil puree
butter	white bean puree

Save money and eat well with EITC and 3SquaresVT

It's tax season again! Vermonters who made under \$53,505 in 2016 may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), designed to boost the income of working families and worth up to \$6,269 as a tax credit or refund. Income guidelines are based on tax filing status and number of dependent children in the home. Families who receive the Vermont EITC are income eligible for 3SquaresVT food benefits, saving money not only on taxes, but also on grocery bills, with the average 3Squares benefit over \$200/month. Plus, children who get 3SquaresVT can also get free school meals.

Dial 2-1-1 for information about free tax help services, to make an appointment with a certified tax preparer and to learn about 3SquaresVT and school meals. Or go to vermontfoodhelp.com for more information.

Ask Dr. Lewis First

Q: How do I teach my child responsibility and being helpful around the house?

Dr. First: While I have a responsibility to answer a question on responsibility, it is certainly not a chore. And speaking of chores, what better way to teach responsibility to a child than by having them understand the importance of contributing to the family by being helpful around the house?

When you need your children to help out with something (such as older children keeping their room clean and in order), the benefits extend beyond just getting a job done. Chores teach a child how to contribute to a team — in this case the family — and allow them to feel valued and competent, which in turn can enhance their self-esteem by taking responsibility. So, if you want to teach responsibility by having your children help with chores, start early, and teach them to clean up even when they are toddlers. Initially, make a game (such as who can put the most blocks in the bin or animals into the toy chest) to create a routine. Give your child a choice of chores to help them feel more in control of the situation.

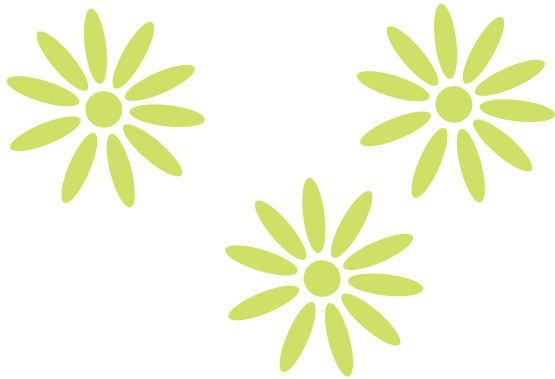
Never surprise your child with a sudden chore but warn them that they need to help you with something. Clearly state the job to be done and build the chore into the structure of your child's day. At first keep the tasks simple and don't offer too many or you will just overwhelm your child, and they will be less likely to want to help.

Don't offer financial or material rewards for cleaning up routine things if you want your children to understand this is a necessary responsibility of being part of the family and not a personal choice on their part. Instead, praise your children and tell them how proud you are of the job they did for you. Positive encouragement can motivate your children to want to do this again, and reinforce the value of taking responsibility.

Finally, parents, set a good example for your children by getting a job done that is your own responsibility. Hopefully, suggestions like these will clean up any concerns you have the next time you want to succeed in getting your children to help around the house and teach them about taking responsibility at the same time.

Dr. Lewis First is Chief of Pediatrics at the University of Vermont Children's Hospital.

WIC Newsletter • Spring



Every spring is the only
spring — a perpetual
astonishment.

~Ellis Peters

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Make healthier lasting changes in your food choices for you and your family**
- **Learn the nutritional health benefits of pulses (and maybe even what pulses are!)**
- **Ask Dr. Lewis First: How to teach your young child responsibility and to help out around the house?**
- **Find out how to eat well and save money this tax season**
- **Recipe: White Bean Mac n' Cheese**

