



# In Touch, In Tune

[www.extension.purdue.edu/dearborn](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/dearborn)



March 2024

Dear Friends,

March is a recharge month for me. February was filled with programming, so I need to practice self-care now. I have busy months of programs ahead, so I need to prepare myself for these programs. I have included information for strengthening your family, managing your finances, caring for your health and wellness in my monthly newsletter.

Besides my monthly newsletter, you can find recipes to stretch your food dollars or to prepare with family on the Dearborn County website under Sacks of Snacks. This month, you can also participate in March Living Well Month by completing the 31 activities for each day of March, which is also on the website. You might also be up on the Living Well Activities, if you follow the Purdue Extension Dearborn County Facebook page. Check out these other resources of information that can benefit you or your family.

Speaking of family, I hope you find time to laugh, exercise, celebrate, and enjoy family time. I know my calendar has time set aside to be with family. Stay safe!

Warm Regards,  
Marcia Parcell  
Extension Educator, Health and Human Sciences

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

- April 1 Get Walkin'
- April 1 In the Kitchen with Marcia 6-7 PM North Dearborn Public Library
- April 4 Student Empowerment at Manchester
- April 10 & 11 HHS Update
- April 11 Student Empowerment at Manchester
- April 11 *E-Cigarettes & Youth Vaping: What Indiana needs to know in 2024*, 6:00pm, Lawrenceburg High School. Free and open to the public
- April 18 Student Empowerment at Manchester
- April 24 Purdue Day of Giving
- April 24 & 25 IEEEA Spring Conference
- April 25 Student Empowerment at Manchester
- May 2 Student Empowerment at Manchester
- May 9 Student Empowerment at Manchester
- May 10 STEM Enrichment Day at Dillsboro for Manchester and Dillsboro Elementary
- May 13-16 NEAFCS Board Meeting
- June 10-12 Indiana Extension Homemakers Home & Family Conference. Visit [www.ieha-families.org/conference](http://www.ieha-families.org/conference)

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## THE THREE T'S OF COMMUNICATION: TAKING TURNS WITH YOU CHILD

How taking turns can help your young child build strong communication skills.

Taking turns is an important part of communication development for young children.

Communication is a necessary part of life. From making friends, getting and keeping a job, and even buying an ice cream cone, people need to be able to communicate with others. So how can parents help develop these important communication skills?

In the book "Thirty Million Words: Building a Child's Brain," Dana Suskind, Beth Suskind and Leslie Lewinter-Suskind talk about ways parents and adults can help children develop the crucial and incredibly important skill of communication. They identified the three T's of communication: tune in, talk more, and take turns. This article will focus on the third "T," take turns.

### Take turns

Taking turns is an important part of communication development for young children. When children learn to take turns, they learn the basic rhythm of communication, that back-and-forth exchange between people. They also learn about taking turns and communication through serve and return interactions. Think of it like a game of tennis, your child serves the ball by looking at you and babbling, and you return the ball by looking at and talking to your child. When children are actively engaged with adults and practice taking turns, they learn the foundation for conversational exchanges.

Here are some tips for taking turns with your child.

- **Be responsive.** Children communicate their needs in a variety of ways. Infants cry to get their needs met, toddlers might pull you towards the kitchen when they are hungry, and older children might tell you with words what they need. By being responsive to your child's needs, you are doing several things. First, you are doing the most important part of being a parent, taking care of them! They feel safe, secure and loved when you are responsive to their needs. In regards to communication skills, being responsive helps children learn the value of communicating with others. Just like adults need to figure out how to communicate with their boss about taking vacation time, children need to learn how to navigate the world through communication.
- **Keep things open-ended.** Asking "what" or "yes or no" questions often limit the responses a child will have. These questions do not work on expanding your child's vocabulary or help them improve their conversational skills because you're expecting the child to repeat words they already know. Try asking open-ended questions, like "how" or "why." These questions allow children to express themselves using different words or thoughts.
- **Play other turn-taking games.** Whether it is simply rolling a ball back and forth or playing a rousing game of Candyland, games that involve taking turns help build strong foundational skills for language and communication. Challenge your child to practice taking turns. You could play "I spy" and encourage your child to find multiple ways to describe what they see, or make up stories together, taking turns to describe what happens next.

Source: Kylie Rymanowicz, Michigan State University Extension

## MARCH 21 – CREDIT CARD REDUCTION DAY

Check out PowerPay. You may want to take the course. Financial stability can reduce stress.

### POWERPAY

Eliminate debt and master your financial situation.

### How To Use the PowerPay Tool

Explore PowerPay

- What if part of my tax refund was put towards debt elimination?
- If I could budget a few additional dollars each month for debt payments how much would it help?
- Could I create an emergency fund account as part of my debt elimination plan?
- What would debit consolidation do for my situation?



- Should I move debt to credit cards with 0% introductory rates?

PowerPay will give you the tools to develop a personalized, self-directed debt elimination plan. Discover how quickly you can become debt free, and how much you can save in interest costs by following your debt reduction plan. Utah State University Extension is pleased to provide this debt management tool without any cost to consumers worldwide. Below are a few exciting features of PowerPay 6.0. Visit [www.extension.usu.edu/powerpay/](http://www.extension.usu.edu/powerpay/)

- PowerPay. How soon can I be out of debt? Eliminate debt faster by making power payments.
- Spending Plan. How much am I spending? Compare what you spend to that recommended by financial experts.
- PowerSave. How much am I saving? Project savings using the different PowerSave options.
- Calculators. How can I look at my finances quickly? Calculate house and transportation costs, emergency savings and more.
- Education Center. How can I learn more? View PowerPoint presentations, articles and facts sheets about various financial topics.

Source: <https://extension.usu.edu/powerpay/how-to>

## NATIONAL CELERY MONTH

I love celery, but my husband is not a fan. I use every bit of the celery stalk. My Mom taught me to add the leaves to soups and stuffings. They provide great flavor and nutrients in dishes. Check out Celerybrating Celery.



### ‘CELERYBRATING’ CELERY

March is National Celery Month. Even though celery may not be one of the most exciting foods to blog about, there are plenty of good reasons to. Celery is an amazingly versatile vegetable that can provide so many benefits for you and your family. Besides, it is a favorite food of mine and has been since my Grandma introduced it to me as a snack with peanut butter and raisins in my childhood.

Celery is native to the Mediterranean and is considered a marshland vegetable. It really is quite easy to grow in the home garden as long as it has plenty of water. Celery adds crunch to salads while adding lots of flavor to casseroles, soups, stuffing and a variety of cuisines. And it is always a great snack with dips, cheese spreads, avocado, or peanut butter. Don't forget that celery leaves are as nutritious as the stalks; the dark green outer leaves have the most flavor but are often a little tough so they are great additions to soups and stews. The tender and milder inner leaves can be chopped along with the stalks for any recipe that calls for celery or used as a garnish. It is also possible to dry celery leaves and use them to flavor anything that needs a 'celery lift.'

Celery is high in fiber and as such is filling. Per serving (2-3 medium stalks), celery has only 16 calories and is 95 percent water. While not a superfood, it is a good source of potassium and vitamins A and C. Celery is also a source of sodium nitrate which our bodies convert to nitric oxide. Nitric oxide helps relax our arteries, which reduces blood pressure and improves blood flow throughout the body. Celery is known as a negative calorie food because it requires more calories to digest it than one consumes by eating it. Plus, it's low on the glycemic index, meaning it has a slow, steady effect on blood sugar. Thus, it is a great food for dieters.

Celery has been used for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. As far back as 850 B.C., celery seed was believed to have healing powers. Celery still plays a role in traditional Chinese medicine because it contains a plant compound called apigenin which is an anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antiviral, and antioxidant agent. Celery also contains a flavonoid called luteolin that has shown promise in preventing the spread of cancer cells. Other benefits include preventing gallstones, aids in indigestion, and helps to lower blood pressure. Because these nutrients occur in relatively small amounts in celery, eating celery alone is not likely to prevent or cure any disease.

In recent times, celery juice has become popular. While eating celery stalks and using celery in recipes is healthy and important, drinking pure celery juice is more nutrient dense. When celery is juiced, the pulp or

fiber is removed so one is able to consume far more celery as juice than by eating it. Moreover, it's very hydrating and low in sugar making it a great alternative to sugary beverages. While there are health benefits to celery juice, consumers should be wary of claims that celery juice detoxes the body as these claims are not supported by science. Further, celery juice has a high concentration of sodium nitrates which may be of concern to some. People on salt-restricted diets may wish to avoid celery juice as a single cup of celery juice contains around 215 mg of sodium.

Low in calories, packed with flavor, fiber, and crunch, celery is an amazing vegetable that can promote health and with good health, comes happiness—all reasons to celebrate! What are we waiting for? With so many benefits, we should be adding celery to our meals in whatever way chosen not only in March but always. How will your 'celerybration' look?

Source: <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/answerline/author/mrgeiger>



## MARCH IS NATIONAL FROZEN FOOD MONTH

Some of America's favorite, most versatile foods are found in the frozen food aisle. There are some 3,700 frozen food options available to consumers catering to every lifestyle, ethnic cuisine, daily food need, or food occasion.

Frozen foods have definitely made our lives easier and offer great value. With a wide assortment of choices from ready-to-cook meals to ingredients and produce that leave nothing to waste, there are so many reasons to prepare meals using frozen foods. Freezing keeps our foods safe

and fresh tasting. Here are some frozen food facts from the National Frozen & Refrigerated Foods Association:

- Frozen foods are picked at the peak of ripeness and flash frozen, sometimes right in the field, locking in all of the beneficial nutrients and keeping them in their perfect, just-picked state.
- Frozen fruits and vegetables are equally as nutritious as their fresh and canned counterparts.
- Freezing acts as a natural preservative, so many of your favorite frozen foods contain no preservatives.
- Frozen foods are consistently priced year-round. You are paying for 100% edible food – no stalks, seeds or rinds. And many frozen foods are perfectly portioned so there's no waste.
- Frozen foods last much longer than their fresh counterparts. You can use just what you need and put the rest back in the freezer for next time – wasting less food and saving you money.

We can also freeze many things ourselves at home—summer produce, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, leftovers, make-ahead-meals, casseroles, breads, cakes, pies, and more. Our food dollars are saved when we use frozen foods in our meals. Prior to freezing, best practices must be followed for any food to retain best quality and be safe after thawing. Check out Storing Food in the Freezer for helpful and safe preparation tips and Freezing Convenience Foods for using your freezer to help with meal preparations.

Although frozen food is convenient, foods in the freezer only remain safe and at best quality if the freezer temperature is at or below 0 degrees F. Keeping a thermometer in the freezer is helpful for monitoring the temperature. The thermometer should be checked frequently to be sure the freezer is maintaining the appropriate temperature. Further, always date and label foods placed in the freezer. Older foods should be used before newer ones for best quality and to avoid freezer burn. Food Safety.gov has a Cold Food Storage Chart for maintaining frozen food best quality; frozen foods stored continuously at 0°F (-18°C) or below can be kept indefinitely.

Source: <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/answerline/author/mrgeiger>

## TEN-MINUTE CORN CHOWDER

1 teaspoon oil  
1/2 onion, chopped  
1 teaspoon minced garlic  
4 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons mustard  
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme  
black pepper to taste  
2 cups frozen corn kernels

3 cups nonfat milk

4 tablespoons shredded, reduced-fat cheddar cheese

Heat a large, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil and sauté the onion and garlic until golden, about 2 minutes. Meanwhile, place the flour, milk, mustard and seasonings in a small bowl and mix well. Add the milk mixture to the skillet followed by the corn. Stir well until the mixture comes to a boil and thickens, about 3 minutes. Stir frequently to keep the mixture from burning. Divide into four bowls and top each with 1 tablespoon of shredded cheese.

Source: <https://extension.msstate.edu/news/feature-story/2020/easy-meals-cook-frozen-foods>

### MARCH 19 LET'S LAUGH DAY

As creation reawakens with spring, bug jokes seemed like an appropriate topic for March along with March 19 Let's Laugh Day.

I just won a Halloween contest dressed as a bee! It was so exciting that I am still “buzzed about it!

**Q:** What is worse than a worm in your apple?

**A:** Half a worm

**Q:** What do spiders order at a restaurant?

**A:** French flies

**Q:** What can be on the ground and a hundred feet in the air at the same time?

**A:** A centipede on its back.

Source: Dr. Jeff Whitworth



### HISTORY OF NATIONAL LET'S LAUGH DAY

Every year, on National Let's Laugh Day, we are reminded to keep things light and pep things up with a little humor. If you have been in the doldrums for a while now, or haven't been feeling too good, then you need to laugh the worries away and take it easy. Laughter is, after all, the best medicine, and it is just what the doctor prescribed for March 19!

Jokes have long been the best way to provide comic relief. The world's oldest joke can be traced back to 1900 B.C. Laughter can also be contagious. This is why laugh tracks were added to television shows to cue when the audience is supposed to laugh and to indicate when a comedic scene happens. The first American television show to use a laugh track was in 1950, in “The Hank McCune Show.”

Where frowns cause wrinkles, laughing creates adorable crinkles that are good for the muscles. ‘Laughter yoga’ is now quite a popular activity, in which muscles of the face, abdomen, and lungs are engaged using laughter as the core exercise. Laughter also releases endorphins and lowers the stress hormone, cortisol, in the body.

The top 5 laugh types are:

🤔 Giggle—31%

😄 Chuckle—20%

🤔 Belly laugh—19%

😭 Cry laugh—7%

🤔 Guffaw—6%.

Many studies have found that laughter really can be good for your health. 95% of Americans say laughter is a stress reliever

Laughter is one of the most popular ways to interact with other people. 96% of Americans like to make others laugh. 77% think they are funny. 39% say they make fun of themselves to make others laugh.

More people think they are the funny one in the relationship. 60% of Americans say they are funnier than their significant other. 68% of men think they are funnier. 54% of women think they are funnier. Who makes people laugh the most?

- 👤 Friends—38%
- 👤 Significant Other—26%
- 👤 Their kids—15%

- 👤 Siblings—8%
- 👤 Mom—7%
- 👤 Dad—5%

Men laugh more often than woman. 33% of men say they laugh more than 10 times per day vs. 29% of women. 86% of people laugh even when no one's around. 79% of people like their own laugh. But, if given a choice, they would prefer to have these kinds of laughs:

- 👤 An infectious laugh—45%
- 👤 A sweet laugh—33%
- 👤 A goofy laugh—14%
- 👤 A belly laugh—5%
- 👤 An annoying laugh—3%

Source: <https://nationaltoday.com/national-lets-laugh-day/>

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

### Month-long observances:

- Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
- Ethnic Equality Month
- Gender Equality Month
- Greek-American Heritage Month
- Irish-American Heritage Month
- National Colon Cancer Awareness Month
- National Kidney Month
- National Multiple Sclerosis Awareness and Education Month
- National Women's History Month

### Important February DE&I calendar dates:

- March 1 – Employee Appreciation Day
- March 8 – International Women's Day
- March 8 – Maha Shivarati (Hindu)
- March 10 – Ramadan begins (Islam)
- March 10 – Harriet Tubman Day (USA)
- March 14 – Equal Pay Day
- March 15 – International Day to Combat Islamophobia
- March 17 – St. Patrick's Day
- March 21 – World Down Syndrome Day
- March 23 – Purim (Jewish)
- March 25 – International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- March 24 – Palm Sunday (Christian)
- March 25 – Holi (Hindu)
- March 29 – Good Friday (Christian)
- March 31 – International Transgender Day of Visibility
- March 31 – Easter (Christian)
- March 31 – César Chávez Day (USA)