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Calm Your Mind, Boost Your Productivity:

The Benefits of White Noise



White noise is commonly used to help people fall asleep, but now, more people are using it to increase their concentration during the workday. By providing a consistent background sound, white noise can mask environmental distractions like chattering, traffic, or intermittent noises that may otherwise disturb concentration. Here are a few benefits of utilizing white noise in your day.

Calming Effect

White noise, especially calm nature sounds, exerts a soothing effect on the mind,

providing a stable auditory environment that reduces sudden distractions. The calming influence can help you feel more positive and enable the mind to transition to a more conducive state for a deeper focus on work or study.

Boosts Concentration

White noise boosts concentration by increasing background neural "noise" in the brain, which helps essential neural signals to stand out and be detected, which can enhance cognitive performance. This can be particularly useful when you need to train your attention while tackling complex problems.

Enhances Creativity

Some studies suggest that moderate white noise can improve creativity and imaginative thinking. It keeps the idea gateway open during the generative process and enables you to think freely and develop novel solutions.

Whether you're studying, working, or engaging in creative endeavors, the benefits of white noise extend to a wide range of activities, making it a versatile tool for enhancing focus.



ARE YOU CERTIFIED KISSABLE?

How Your Oral Health Can Impact Loved Ones

February is the month of love, and what better way to celebrate it than ensuring you're certified kissable? And we don't just mean by having the softest lips or the best lipgloss. Having a healthy mouth means you won't spread cavities or disease to the ones you love. Yes, that's right — your oral health can affect the quality of your kisses!

It may come as a surprise, but kissing can unknowingly transmit bacteria that can cause cavities and gum disease. Many parents often wonder why their young kids end up with cavities. The answer is often because the parents have cavities! The transmission of bacteria from caregivers (grandparents, babysitters, aunts, and uncles) to children is a common occurrence, and these bacteria cause cavities in kids.

But it's not just limited to parents and children. Couples, too, can share more than just love. If one partner has active gum disease, there's a significant chance of bacterial transmission via kissing. This is why whenever we treat a patient with gum disease, we immediately offer to screen partners for oral health.

However, the campaign to be certified kissable is not just about spreading awareness; it's about taking concrete steps toward

prevention. One of the services we offer at Great Smiles of New Jersey is salivary testing, which is highly advanced and can analyze the activity of bacteria related to cavities and gum disease in the mouth. This testing goes beyond identifying a high risk for cavities — we can even pinpoint the specific bacteria in the saliva and create tailored treatment or prevention strategies accordingly.

And if you're thinking this seems like a lot of testing just for cavities, you'd be right. This is because preventing cavities is a challenging job, and it depends on many different factors. For example, the germs in your mouth and the strength of your saliva can have an effect. Even how you drink your favorite drinks, such as coffee, can impact your dental health. Every time you put something in your mouth, you have a 20-minute window of vulnerability to cavities. Continuous snacking throughout the day increases the risk of cavities, especially with starchy foods that tend to linger on your teeth.

So, this month, let's sweeten the deal. As part of our commitment to your oral health, we're thrilled to offer a special promotion for salivary testing! Get tested and ensure your kisses are not just sweet but certified kissable!

At Great Smiles of New Jersey, we believe in spreading smiles, one certified kiss at a time. Let's make this February a month of love, laughter, and contagious smiles — *not* cavities.

To your great smiles and better health,

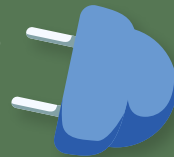


SCAN FOR
MORE
DETAILS!

Dr. Michelle S. Waller



Unplugged Fun — Ignite Your Child's Imagination Beyond Screens



In today's world of video games and streaming for entertainment, one of the most powerful — and rewarding — steps you can take is engaging your child's imagination without electronic devices.

A Make-Believe Store

One great way to do that is by putting your child in charge of a make-believe ice cream store. It's easy and only takes a few common household items, starting with a few bowls.



First, squirt a generous helping of shaving cream into each bowl, then add different colors of food coloring to each. After stirring with a spoon, your child will suddenly have a variety of make-believe "flavors" to offer to their customer — you.

They'll have fun scooping up the flavors you want from each bowl into a plastic cup. You can even have other small household items in other bowls (such as buttons and small craft items) that can serve as the ice cream "toppings."

Balloon Sports

You can also engage your child's hand-eye coordination skills with a fun game of balloon tennis or volleyball.

To start, simply blow up a few balloons of different sizes. Then find a chair or other items around your house that can double as a "net" between you and your child.

The fun comes in batting the "ball" (a balloon) back and forth across the net. When your child bats the balloon to your side and you hit it back without it passing back over the net, the point goes to your child, just like in real tennis or volleyball. You can keep score if you'd like.

You can also make up your own rules, like players can hit the balloon two times before returning it to the player on the other side of the net. Or, if you want to really challenge your hand-eye coordination, you can use two balloons and try to keep both in play at the same time.

At the end of the day, with fun activities like these, you can engage your child's imagination with a true brand of homemade fun!



DISH OUT MEAL PREP WITH A FEW EASY TRICKS

Let's be honest: Cooking every day can be a hassle, especially for busy people or those who simply want to spend time doing something else. That's where meal prepping can become a valuable tool to save time and money while ensuring you have something healthy to eat.

Thankfully, you can find many ways to make meal prep fast and easy while keeping things exciting for your taste buds. Let's look at four ways to level up your meal prep game.

Use frozen veggies.

Frozen vegetables are a lifesaver for quick and nutritious meal prep. These veggies are usually flash-frozen at peak ripeness, so they retain most of their nutrients. They can be thrown directly into stir-fries, casseroles, or soups without chopping or pre-cooking. This reduces prep and cooking time, making it easier to maintain a healthy diet. Moreover, you can freeze vegetables for up to 8-12 months, so you can always keep a variety on hand whenever you need them.

The slow cooker is your friend.

The internet has innumerable simple, one-pot recipes you can make in a slow cooker. The best thing about a slow cooker is that you throw all of your ingredients in at once, then set it and forget it. You can make a lot of food with little effort and divide the leftovers to eat later.

Get creative with catering.

Many restaurants offer a catering menu where you can order large amounts of already-cooked food. While you have to check prices, some restaurants like Chipotle offer large quantities of food at a reasonable cost. Even if it is a little more expensive than the grocery store, saving that extra time might be worth it.

Use condiments to enhance flavor.

Utilizing condiments wisely can elevate your meals from bland to grand without adding much cook time. Make a batch of versatile sauces or dressings during your meal prep sessions. For example, you can use a good vinaigrette as a salad dressing, a marinade for meat, or a dip for veggies. By premaking these, you can instantly add flavor to your dishes. Premeasure the amounts to accompany each meal for better portion control. This way, you save time and watch your calorie intake.



Baked Salmon With Garlic and Lemon

Prepare to tantalize your taste buds with a zesty dish that combines salmon with the vibrant flavors of garlic and lemon!

Ingredients

- 2 lbs salmon fillets
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. Line a baking dish with parchment paper. Place the salmon fillets on the baking dish.
3. In a small bowl, mix together the garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, oregano, thyme, salt, and pepper. Pour the mixture over the salmon.
4. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the salmon is cooked through. Serve and enjoy!

TALES OF HEROES WHO TRIUMPHED OVER TRAGEDY

It only takes seconds for the peace of a normal day to be shattered by tragedy. Fortunately, in many cases, some brave souls are willing to step forward to triumph over tragedy.

One example of this was 23 years ago in Bucharest, Romania, when Marilena Pascaru visited her village water well with her 2-year-old daughter, Alina.

As a curious toddler, Alina reached for the bucket high above the well as Marilena turned her back. In that instant, the little girl climbed into the bucket, sending both tumbling into the well. Immediately, Marilena's reflexes kicked in. She grabbed the spinning well crank, stopping the bucket with a jolt. Alina fell out of the bucket and got stuck between the bucket and the well wall, preventing Marilena from cranking the bucket back to the surface.

After multiple rescue attempts by several adults and even a bulldozer, teenager Oana Furnica volunteered to help. Oana had ropes tied around her and was lowered head-first into the dark opening so she could reach and hold onto Alina long enough for rescuers to pull them to safety. For her bravery, Oana was given a plot of land and about \$5,000 USD pledged by television viewers, who saw the rescue in real time.

Another recent example of selfless heroism came in August 2023 in Turin, Italy. Mattia Aguzzi was walking with his girlfriend on the street when he heard yelling from above. Mattia looked up and saw a little girl who had crawled out over the ledge outside of an apartment above and was dangling.

Mattia called to the girl to stop her, but it was too late. As soon as he realized that, he rushed to a spot beneath her, trying to calculate what her trajectory would be if she fell. Before he could do anything else, she started falling, and Mattia stepped up.

"When I saw her fall, I stepped in the way, closed my eyes, and hoped that everything was going to be for the best. I blocked her by cushioning the blow, and we both fell to the ground," Mattia explained. "Initially, I didn't feel any sign of life, then she started crying, and I breathed a sigh of relief."

Italy's prime minister thanked him for saving the girl's life, but Mattia told the press not to call him a hero. "I didn't think of anything and tried to do what had to be done," he said.



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