



## The 5 R's for a Healthy Planet

WITH AN EVER INCREASING NUMBER of people on this planet, we generate *a lot* of waste. In fact, Americans on average create about 4.5 pounds of waste per person, per day. That's over 250 million tons a year! We are quickly running out of space in landfills, which pollute our groundwater and emit toxic gasses such as carbon and methane into our environment. It is vitally important we each do our best to ensure we are part of the solution not the problem.

To lessen the demand for landfill, keep in mind these simple tips and teach children the 5 R's so we can make a real difference in the health of our planet.

### 1 The first step is to Refuse

Minimize your waste output by preventing it from entering your life in the first place. Does it come wrapped in tons of plastic that will end up in a landfill? Choose minimally packaged items for a smaller footprint. Avoid those pesky single-use disposable items such as plastic straws, to-go food packaging, plastic cutlery and plastic shopping bags that all end up in the trash. Instead, opt out or bring your own. Involve children in the process



by asking: how can we make a better choice? Teach them from a young age to make good choices and be stewards of the earth.

### 2 Next, Reduce

Be thoughtful when buying things—do you really need it or will it end up in the back of the closet? Is the item made to last a long time or used just once? Impulse buying and products purposely made to be short lived often lead to more “stuff” in our lives and, eventually, more trash. While items such as coffee pods or juice boxes are convenient, they usually end up as trash just seconds after use. Try a paper filter and

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### Farmer Fran's Fun Facts



### Asparagus

- Ancient Greeks and Romans began cultivating asparagus more than 2,500 years ago, both as a food and for medicinal remedies. A member of the Lily family, asparagus is related to onions, leeks and garlic.
- Asparagus can be harvested in three different colors: green, white and purple. California is the nation's leading supplier of asparagus, producing nearly half of the U.S. supply. The harvest season lasts 2 to 3 months and in proper conditions, asparagus can grow as much as one inch per hour—up to 12 inches in one day.
- Look for firm, bright green asparagus with tightly closed tips and pleasant scent. Wrap asparagus spears in a damp paper towel and refrigerate.
- Asparagus is a good source of folate and vitamins K, C, A and thiamin, protecting your body's cells and keeping your immune system, skin and hair healthy.
- Bake, grill, steam or microwave asparagus spears. Dip asparagus spears in low fat dressing or stir-fry chopped asparagus and serve over steamed rice.

## The 5 R's for a Healthy Planet

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coffee grounds that can be composted or glass bottles of juice that can be recycled instead. Reducing your general consumption will reduce the amount of waste you create.

### 3 Reuse everything that you can

Not that long ago our grandparents found a use or reuse for everything, seldom throwing anything away. Avoid using disposable cups and opt for washable ones that can be filled and refilled. Get each child their own stainless steel water bottle or straw to eliminate plastic ones. Repair broken toys rather than getting new ones. Switch out paper towels for cloth napkins, use real dishes instead of disposable ones, use old clothes for dress up or cut them up to use as cleaning rags. Reuse containers and jars to store leftovers in—the ideas are limitless!

### 4 Recycle with care

While many of us may think recycling is the answer to our consumption, as you can see it is actually one of the last options after all other steps have been taken. After refusing, reducing and reusing, you may find you have very little left to dispose of. Congratulations! Be sure what remains is properly sorted to make sure it gets into the correct waste stream. Paper, glass, hard plastic and metal all go into the recycling bin, loose, not in a plastic bag. Clean items are more desirable to recycling facilities than

dirty ones, a quick rinse will do. Have children help by making pictures of “what goes where” and hanging signs on the appropriate bin.

### 5 Rot the rest

Rotting food left in landfill creates methane gas in our atmosphere that is over 30 times more harmful than carbon dioxide, contributing to global warming. Get those food scraps out of landfill and turn them in to beautiful, rich compost instead! All food and food-soiled paper (think napkins, pizza boxes, paper plates and cups) go in the green bin. Known as “black gold” in the gardener world, compost is full of nutrients that are highly beneficial for the soil. If your municipality does not collect green waste, consider calling them to express your interest. Or start your own backyard compost bin to place all your food scraps and take delight in your minimal waste footprint and gorgeous garden! Children will love watching the magic of their food scraps turning in to soil in a few short weeks.

We all live on this beautiful planet together. By being mindful of our choices and taking a few small, extra steps we can make a huge difference. Let’s teach children about their personal footprint and impact so we can sustain a healthy planet for many future generations.

— Rachel O’Neal, *Child Health and Nutrition Specialist*

## KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

# Medicine Safety

**MANY MEDICATIONS FOR CHILDREN** look and taste like candy or food. While this might make medication more appealing to children, it also means caregivers need to be extra careful to keep medicines up and away from curious hands. Here are some simple tips to ensure children's safety.

- Put all medicine out of children's reach and sight with caps closed tightly after every use.
- Proper dosing is important, particularly for young children. Use the dosing device that comes with the medicine and read and follow the instructions on the label.
- Educate grandparents and other caregivers about medicine safety.
- Remember to keep visitors' purses, bags and coats out of reach, as they may contain medication.
- Child-resistant packaging is not child PROOF. Put medicine away immediately after every use, even if you need to give another dose in a few hours.
- Save the Poison Help number – 1-800-222-1222 – in your phone and post it visibly at home so other caregivers can find it in an emergency.

— *safekids.org*

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT STORING MEDICINE

### JUST ONE MINUTE

In ER visits for medicine poisonings, parents often say that they only turned their back for a minute.



### CURIOUS CLIMBERS

Research indicates in about half of over-the-counter poisonings cases, the child climbed on a chair, toy or other object to reach medicine.



### CHILD-RESISTANT ≠ CHILDPROOF

Research suggests about half of accidental poisonings involved child-resistant packaging.



### EVERY 9 MINUTES,

a young child (under age 6) goes to the ER because he/she got into medicine, and



### EVERY HOUR,

a young child is hospitalized, and



### EVERY 12 DAYS

a young child dies.



## Thai Curry with Veggies and Crispy Tofu

### CURRY SAUCE WITH VEGGIES

- Thai yellow or green curry sauce** ..... 2 (12 oz.) jars
- Vegetables (diagonally cut carrot, asparagus, zucchini, Asian eggplant, sugar snap peas, red bell pepper, etc.)** ..... 3½ cups
- Brown jasmine rice, cooked** ..... 3½ cups
- Crispy tofu (recipe below)**

1. Heat jars of curry sauce over medium heat.
2. Add the vegetables of choice and simmer just until crisp tender.

### CRISPY TOFU

- Tofu, extra firm** ..... 2 (16 oz.) pkgs
- Sea salt** ..... pinch
- Curry powder** ..... 1 tsp
- Coconut or canola oil** ..... 2 Tbsp

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Place tofu in a large bowl and top with something heavy (like a cast iron skillet) for 5 minutes to press out extra moisture, discard.
2. Cut tofu in cubes and season with salt and curry powder. Heat oil in a large, oven safe skillet over medium heat. Add seasoned tofu and sauté for 5 minutes turning occasionally until lightly browned on all sides. Transfer skillet to oven and bake tofu for 15 minutes until it begins to crisp.
3. Add the crispy tofu to the sauce with vegetables and serve over brown jasmine rice.

For the CACFP 4.4 ounces of tofu credits as 2 ounces meat/meat alternate and tofu must contain at least 10 grams of protein in a 4.4 ounce serving.

Yield: 7 servings

Meets requirement for meat/meat alternate, whole grain and vegetable

— *Minimalist Baker*

## Roasted Asparagus Mimosa

- Asparagus, washed** ..... 1 pound
- Olive oil** ..... 2 Tbsp
- Vinaigrette** ..... ½ cup
- Hard cooked eggs, diced** ..... 3
- Capers, drained (optional)** . 2 Tbsp

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Snap off woody stalks and cut ends of asparagus on a diagonal. Place in single layer on a baking sheet and drizzle with 2 Tbsp of olive oil, salt and pepper, tossing to coat. Roast for 8–10 minutes until lightly browned.
2. When ready to serve, place the roasted asparagus on a platter and drizzle with vinaigrette. Top with diced eggs and capers.

Yield: 6 servings

Meets requirement for vegetable

**Food Q.** What kind of socks do you need to plant asparagus?  
**Funny A.** Garden hose!

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Yoga Pose of the Month



#### TREE POSE

Embody Mother Nature this Earth Day by practicing being a tree.

- 1 Stand tall with both feet on the ground.
- 2 Lift your right knee slightly while keeping the ball of your right foot on the ground. You can keep your right toes on the ground to keep you steady, or you can slide the sole of the foot up the inside of the left leg and place foot on the shin or thigh, just not at the knee.
- 3 Next, grow your tree! Your arms are the branches. Play with different variations, overhead in a V, cactus shaped arms or palms pressed together overhead like a tall cypress tree.
- 4 For an added challenge try swaying as if being blown by a gentle breeze.
- 5 Slowly lower your lifted leg back to the ground and repeat on the other side.

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