



home state health™

Show Me Healthy Kids

MANAGED BY HOME STATE HEALTH

SPRING 2026



Spring into healthy habits!

Time to go and grow!

After a long winter, spring is finally here and Homer is excited to get moving and get healthy with you!

Spring is the perfect time to focus on **healthy food, active play, and learning something new**. One way to do all three is by eating more fruits and vegetables—just like Homer! Try to “eat the rainbow” by choosing fruits and veggies in lots of different colors each day. Each color helps your body grow strong and stay healthy.

Want to make fruits and veggies even more fun? **Grow your own!** It doesn't take a lot of outdoor space to care for a garden of your own! A small, raised garden, pots on a patio, or even containers on a balcony can be a great place to grow food. Gardening helps kids learn where food comes from and makes trying new foods more exciting.

Ask a parent or guardian to help you learn how to get started with gardening tips from the **University of Missouri Extension**. They offer Missouri specific advice, online videos, and even in person classes at local county offices to help your garden grow: <https://extension.missouri.edu/news/beginning-gardening>

HEY PARENTS! Refresh your space, refresh your family's health

Spring is also a great time for families to **reset and refresh at home**. “Spring cleaning” isn't just about tidying up—it can support mental health by helping reduce stress, improve focus, boost self esteem, and even support better sleep. www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en/healthu/2023/12/12/5-mental-health-benefits-of-decluttering

Start small and make it a family activity:

- Let kids help with simple tasks like dusting and wiping surfaces
- Sort through clothes, shoes, and toys that no longer fit or get used
- Donate gently used items to help others in your community

Decluttering together teaches kids responsibility while creating a calmer, healthier space for everyone.



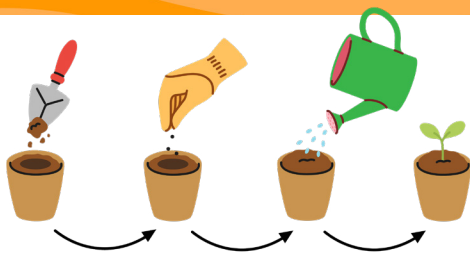
HIPPO FACT

Hippos love veggies!

Hippos are **herbivores**, which means they eat plants—not meat. They are most active at night, when they leave the water to munch on their favorite food: **grass**. In just one night, a hippo can eat **up to 77 pounds of grass**—that's a LOT of veggies.

Just like Homer, hippos need healthy plant foods to grow big and strong. Eating fruits and vegetables every day helps kids do the same.

www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/animals/general-animals/ten-hippo-facts



Start Your Own Plants from Seeds!

Use this guide from Missouri's MU Extension to grow your favorite flowers or vegetables from seeds, grow healthy plants, and transplant them for later harvest. <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g6570>

Get Started with a Parent's Help:

- 1. Pick your seeds:** Choose vegetables that you already like to eat, or ones you want try, or plant flowers just for fun!
- 2. Check your seeding date:** Use the [MU Extension guide](#) to find the right time to start your seeds.
- 3. Choose the right soil:** Look for soil made for potted or raised bed plants.
- 4. Find containers:** Use pots from a garden or farm centers or reuse at home like egg cartons or disposable cups. Be sure they have a drainage hole for watering.
- 5. Clean your containers:** Wash with dish soap and water.
- 6. Follow the MU Extension Guide "STEPS IN PLANTING SEEDS"**
- 7. Grow Healthy Plants** 😊
- 8. Transplant at the right time** to enjoy all season long!

Homer's Heroes Spotlight: School Nurses

National School Nurses Day is May 6, 2026. *Homer wants to give a **big thank you to the everyday heroes who care for students at school!***

School Nurses play a very important role in our school systems and build trusted relationships with the students they serve. Their work goes far beyond Band-Aids® and peppermints for upset stomachs. During a typical school day, school nurses may give medications, complete health screenings, manage special health needs, and help social needs such as access to food and clothing. They also work closely with teachers and school staff to make sure every student gets the support they need to be healthy and ready to learn. (www.mnea.org/school-nurse-day).



Homer knows just how important school nurses are and loves supporting them during special events like **Richland Elementary School's Preventative Service Program Dental Day** last semester in Essex, Missouri. On this special day, school nurse Rebecca McGarity provided dental screenings and fluoride treatments for students. High School Students and community volunteers helped by escorting students to and from class and handing out dental kits to each child.

With help from caring adults and volunteers, Homer made sure all his friends left with a **healthy, happy smile.**



LOOK FOR HOMER IN YOUR SCHOOL THIS YEAR! Home State Health has partnered with the Missouri Office of Dental Health's Preventative Service Program, bringing **preventative dental services** to Missouri Children from the first tooth to seniors in high school. PSP offers oral health education, mouth reviews, and fluoride varnish and helps prevent cavities. Learn more at <https://health.mo.gov/living/families/oralhealth/psp/>.