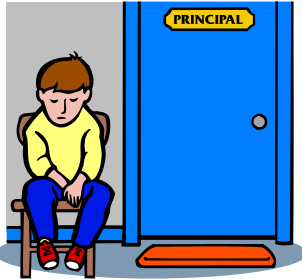


# The GRG :

*A Newsletter for Grandparents Raising*

*Montana State University Extension Service: Family and Human Development*



## Depression: What You Should Know

Depression is fast becoming a common illness across generations. Grandparents and grandchildren are included in these groups, and are at risk for depression as well. Knowing what depression is and how to recognize symptoms may help prevent it, improve it, or get professional help before it becomes a serious problem.



### What you should know

- ◆ Life changes, excessive stress, a series of disappointments, coping with sadness, pain, loss, and anger for longer than you have resources for — all of these can bring depression in susceptible persons.
- ◆ The grandchildren in your care may have been through a lot in their short lives which can put them at risk for depression.
- ◆ You can combat depression by trying successful strategies that have worked for others.

### How to recognize depression

- ◆ A depressed person may be visibly sad, blue, or worried. Increased irritability is another common sign. A person may lose interest or pleasure in activities, things, or people they once enjoyed. Low self-esteem is common, as are negative thoughts about oneself and the future. A depressed young person may be confused or have difficulty making decisions.
- ◆ Symptoms to look for: feelings of excessive guilt, loss of energy; sudden drop in school performance; feelings of hopelessness; sadness; withdrawal from friends and family; inability to concentrate; changes in sleep patterns; changes in appetite; changes in activity; agitation; fidgeting; pacing; wringing of hands; outbursts of shouting or complaining; unexplained irritability; neglect of personal appearance; crying; aggression; use of alcohol and other drugs; feeling that life isn't worth living; risky behaviors and talk of suicide.

### Treating Depression

- ◆ Depression will not just go away, but it can be treated. Treatments can include medication, counseling, diet improvement and exercise. Successful recent strategies with children have included social skills training, assertiveness training, and relaxation training.

Seeking help is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength. It shows you have the courage— and the wisdom— to help yourself.

Reprinted from [www.idahoaging.com/programs/ps\\_GAPkincare.htm](http://www.idahoaging.com/programs/ps_GAPkincare.htm)

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## The Value of Support Groups

If you are raising a grandchild, you know that you face unique challenges. Support groups are available in several areas in Montana, and these groups can be a great way to meet others in similar situations as well as an opportunity to share challenges and successes with those who understand what you are going through. Here are some of the benefits of support groups for grandparents who raise their grandchildren:

### Value of a support group:

- ◆ You can feel safe and supported while discussing concerns.
- ◆ Others will benefit from your knowledge and your strength.
- ◆ You may learn of informational and educational programs.
- ◆ Together you can develop methods and skills for solving problems.
- ◆ You can encourage one another in personal growth and development.
- ◆ Sharing your success strengthens self-esteem.
- ◆ Having others to talk to provides a network of support.

### Benefits of a support group:

- ◆ You can be strengthened by knowing others have walked in your shoes and not only survived but grew and developed personally.
- ◆ Joining in the social life of a support group can help you feel less isolated.
- ◆ Parenting is challenging at any age, actions as small as setting time aside to get emotional support from others can yield positive results.

[www.idahoaging.com/programs/ps\\_GAPkincare.htm](http://www.idahoaging.com/programs/ps_GAPkincare.htm)

*“Having others to talk to provides a network of support.”*

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Groups

### **Billings:**

Bernie Mason  
P.O. Box 35021  
Billings, MT 59107  
256-2828

### **Bozeman:**

Jeannine Sonnier  
Parent Liaison  
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Bozeman, MT 59718  
587-3840

Judy Morrill

Bozeman Senior Center  
807 N. Tracy  
Bozeman, MT 59715  
586-2421

### **Browning:**

Connie Bremner  
Eagle Shield Center  
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### **Charlo:**

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Suite 5  
Polson, MT 59860  
675-3242

### **Great Falls:**

Claire Del Guerra  
1807 Third St. NW  
Great Falls, MT 59404-1922  
454-6980

### **Helena:**

Jeannette B. Mattfeldt  
562 Broadway  
Helena, MT 59601

### **Kalispell:**

Melody Dumph  
The Nurturing Center, Inc.  
146 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. W.  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
756-1414

### **Missoula:**

Miriam Morgan  
Casey Family Programs  
2510 S 7th West  
Missoula, MT 59801  
543-3632 X218



## Summer Fun Idea: Treasure Hunt

Plan a treasure hunt with each clue leading to the location of the next clue. Just make the clues easy to identify (use orange paper). Children as young as 2 can play this game by using pictures instead of words. (e.g. Put a picture of a bathtub at the spot. The next clue should be in the bathtub.) The final clue would lead to the treasure (plate of cookies, invitation to go to the water slides, movie pass, lemonade).

For older children, the clues could be riddles they need to solve. In the beginning, limit the number of clues to the age of the child (7 year olds could follow seven clues to the treasure).

- ◆ Make a treasure map (or list of directions) that would lead to the treasure.
- ◆ Use a single type of paper to make the letters that spell out the location of the treasure (e.g. guest bed). The kids need to find the letters, than unscramble the word to find figure out where is the treasure.
- ◆ Write up a list of common objects and have the kids find every item. If there's lots of kids, divide them into teams, and then give each team a list.
- ◆ Get a roll of 100 pennies or any collection of coins. Either hide the change around the house, or toss it on the lawn or a gravel driveway. Kids will spend lots of time making sure they've found every coin.



### How to Make a Treasure Map

- ◆ Think about the map you want to make. It could be a path that uses landmarks, or it could be a verse that includes directions and distances. Make sure the start is easy to find, and the treasure is hidden somewhere where it won't be disturbed until the treasure hunters find it.
- ◆ Use a piece of white paper and draw your map. Include the compass points and any verse or written clues needed by the hunters to find the treasure. Different colored inks work fine, some pencil crayons will work too. Tear the edges off the page, to make it look like a treasure map.
- ◆ When you map is finished, wipe the wet tea bag over both sides of the page. The page will turn a light brown color. The page should be soaked through by the time you are finished.
- ◆ Crumple it into a ball and let dry over night.
- ◆ Gently open the map, and wipe both sides with cooking oil. Blot off the excess with paper towels.
- ◆ By this point, you treasure map should look hundreds of years old!

[http://creativekidsathome.com/activities/activity\\_28.html](http://creativekidsathome.com/activities/activity_28.html)



## Grandparent Stories and Photos Needed!



On June 30th, the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project will be hosting a State Partners Meeting in Bozeman, MT. The GRG project is funded in part through a grant from the Brookdale Foundation based in New York, and Janet Sanier, Program Officer, will be attending the meeting. We would like to provide the State Partners as well as Ms. Sanier with a true picture of Montana grandparents raising their grandchildren, and to do this we need your help! We would like to present the photos and the stories to the partners so they may have a clear picture of what it means to be a grandparent raising a grandchild today in Montana. We would welcome challenges you have faced as well as successes you have had while raising your grandchild.

If you have pictures or stories that you would like to submit for the meeting, please send them to Sandy Bailey, 316 Herrick Hall, Bozeman, MT 59715. Please include a name and address to return the photographs once the meeting has concluded. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sandy at (406) 994-6745.

## How Does Your Garden Grow?

Montana is known for its four distinct seasons and erratic temperature changes, not to mention snow in June! Montana State University Extension has several resources to help you plan your garden and flower gardens. If you have internet access, please visit the following site: <http://www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/indexyardgarden.html>. If you don't have internet access, you can visit your local County Extension Office for free copies of the following Monguides as well as access to other valuable MSU Extension publications



*Can I Grow That Here?* -offers numerous different vegetables and dates you should plant, when to transplant, and sun requirements.

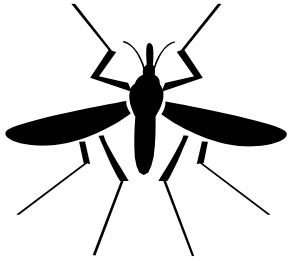
*Growing Tomatoes in Montana*- if you have trouble with tomatoes, this is your guide. This article discusses timelines as well as weed control.

*Strawberries in the Home Garden*- If you love strawberries, this guide will help your next attempt at planting to be successful.

*A Montana Gardener's Book of Days*—\$14.95. This annotated book of days is a perpetual calendar and journal packed with specific information and dates of interest for Montana gardeners. Includes monthly to-do lists, week-by-week annotations, average soil and air temperatures taken in Bozeman, estimated water use by plants, dates of historic and horticultural interest, space to jot notes, plus a four-year calendar of moon phases for the years 2004-2007



## What Grandparents Need to Know About West Nile Virus



West Nile Virus season is rapidly approaching, and there are a few things you should know before it hits. Last year Montana reported 222 human cases of WNV, and each year the number of cases increases, as well as the number of West Nile related deaths. Individuals over the age of 50, or those with poor immune health are at a greater risk of developing serious complications from the virus. Here are some tips to keep your yard and yourself bite free this year.

West Nile Virus is spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes. West Nile Virus (WNV) is often first discovered through the death of birds in the area, and then through the infection of horses. People who contract WNV exhibit a variety of symptoms ranging from no symptoms to death. Many people develop flu-like symptoms with a fever, nausea, and body aches. The symptoms of severe infection (West Nile encephalitis or meningitis) include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis. It is estimated that approximately 1 in 150 persons infected with the West Nile virus will develop a more severe form of disease ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)). The symptoms of severe infection (West Nile encephalitis or meningitis) include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis. It is estimated that approximately 1 in 150 persons infected with the West Nile virus will develop a more severe form of disease ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).

The gestation period for WNV is 3-14 days. Milder WNV illness improves on its own, and people do not necessarily need to seek medical attention for this infection though they may choose to do so. If you develop symptoms of severe WNV illness, such as unusually severe headaches or confusion, seek medical attention immediately. Severe WNV illness usually requires hospitalization. Pregnant women and nursing mothers are encouraged to talk to their doctor if they develop symptoms that could be WNV ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).

There are a few things you can do to reduce the chances that you will become infected with West Nile Virus this summer.

### Avoid mosquito bites

- ◆ Apply insect repellent containing DEET (for instructions on how to use, please see the CDC site on safe use of repellent containing DEET). Exposure for even a few minutes is long enough for a mosquito bite.
- ◆ Wear long sleeved clothing when outdoors. Apply repellent to exposed areas of skin.
- ◆ Be aware of prime mosquito hours. Hours from dawn to dusk are peak times for many mosquitoes.

### Mosquito proof your home

- ◆ Dispose of unused water-holding containers outdoors, empty and turn over wading pools when not in use, change bird bath water frequently, clean gutters so they don't trap stagnant water, aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish, use landscaping to eliminate puddles ([www.montana.edu](http://www.montana.edu)).
- ◆ Keep screens in good repair.

### Help your community

- ◆ Report dead birds to local and state health departments. If you notice birds dying in your area, there is a good chance that West Nile Virus is the culprit.
- ◆ Help keep your neighborhood clean and clear of places where mosquitoes may breed. Notify local agents of standing pools of water that could be drained.

Adapted from [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and [www.montana.edu](http://www.montana.edu)



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The Montana State University Extension Service is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference Employer and educational outreach provider.

## Recipe Idea: BLT Wrap

### Ingredients

1 pound thick sliced bacon, cut into 1 inch pieces  
4 (12 inch) flour tortillas  
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese  
1/2 head iceberg lettuce, shredded  
1 tomato, diced

### Directions

- 1 Place bacon in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium-high heat until evenly brown. Drain, and set aside.
- 2 Place 1 tortilla on a microwave-safe plate. Sprinkle tortilla with 1/4 cup cheese. Cook in microwave 1 to 2 minutes, or until cheese is melted. Immediately top with 1/4 of the bacon, lettuce, and tomato. Fold sides of tortilla over, then roll up. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Cut each wrap in half before serving.



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