



# Being Present

Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., Food and Nutrition Specialist  
Kim Bushaw, M.S., Family Science Specialist

This month we explore food and humor. Kids tend to enjoy sharing jokes and riddles. Have you heard these jokes?

A man went to a doctor. He had a banana in each nostril and a zucchini in each ear. "I know what your issue is," the doctor said. "You aren't eating right!"

What do you call a lazy spud? A couch potato.



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## EAT

Exploring farmers markets and enjoying seasonal food together is fun! August features several food days, including National Sneak Some Zucchini on Your Neighbor's Porch Day (Aug. 8) and National Potato Day (Aug. 19). Zucchini is a type of summer squash that can be used in many ways. Potatoes are versatile vegetables available in many colors (purple, red, white, gold). Explore these summer crops on your menus with help from your kids.

- Search online for NDSU Extension's "Let's Enjoy Zucchini" with instructions on using zucchini in your recipes – including grilled, steamed, or shredded and added to meatloaf, meatballs, bread and muffins.
- To celebrate potatoes, search online for NDSU Extension's "Let's Enjoy Potatoes" to learn how to make oven fries, garlic mashed potatoes and German potato salad!

Who doesn't like pizza? These mini-bites are fun to make and eat as a snack.

## Zucchini Pizza Bites

- 2 medium zucchini
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup pizza sauce
- ½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella
- ¼ cup mini pepperonis
- Sprinkle of Italian seasoning, optional

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Cut zucchini into ¼-inch-thick rounds. Spray both sides of zucchini rounds with non-stick cooking spray and place on baking sheet. Sprinkle zucchini with salt and pepper to taste. Roast zucchini rounds for five minutes on each side. Top each round with a small amount of pizza sauce, a sprinkle of cheese and pepperoni pieces. Roast for an additional five minutes or until cheese is melted, being careful not to burn. Sprinkle with Italian seasoning and serve.

Makes six servings. Each serving has 90 calories, 5 grams (g) fat, 5 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 250 milligrams sodium.



# CONNECT

Have you heard the phrase “laughter is the best medicine”? It turns out there is truth to this statement. According to the Mayo Clinic, laughter has short-term and long-term effects. These include physical benefits – think heart, lungs, muscles, blood pressure, circulation and heart rate – as well as improving mental health by releasing endorphins. Laughter can reduce stress, depression and anxiety. A really important reason to share laughter with your family and friends is the connection you make when you are having a good laugh together.

Without using sarcasm or hurting someone’s feelings, how can you increase the smiles, giggles, chuckles and belly laughs in your environments? Try a few of these ideas to “see the funny in the world.”

- Commit to sharing a wholesome joke a day this month. Write it on the family whiteboard or send it as a note in your family members’ backpacks. Share it out loud at your family meal or send it in a text before your kids turn in their phones for the night. Use sidewalk chalk to write a cute appropriate joke to share with your neighborhood on their nightly walk.
- Find an appropriate fun podcast your family can listen to and laugh about together.
- Use Common Sense Media at [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org) to find appropriate movies, podcasts, TV, books, games, apps and more that will tickle your funny bone.
- Check out joke books from the library. You read the first part, and your new readers can read the last part for a good giggle.
- Learn to laugh at yourself and help your kids do the same.
- Spend time with fun people.
- For ideas to make parenting easier and life more fun while raising your kids, find a class at [www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/programs/parent-education](http://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/programs/parent-education).



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## Savor (the Savings)

Vegetables can lose some vitamins (especially vitamin C) if they spend several days traveling from the garden to the store to your home. Pick your own fresh fruits and vegetables from a backyard garden or buy locally from a farmers market or grocery store to help you get the freshest and most nutritious foods.

Plan your meals around what is in season to get the most nutrition for your dollar. Summer squash (including zucchini), corn, melon, cucumbers, bell peppers and green beans are among the seasonal favorites in August.

Consider preserving food by freezing, drying or canning. See the “Field to Fork” resources at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork) for information on preparing and preserving many types of vegetables and fruits.

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