



# MIZZOU

The magazine of  
the Mizzou Alumni Association

[Home](#) » [Fall 2007](#) » [Around the Columns](#) » Web exclusive: Help for healthy eating

## Around the Columns

### Help for healthy eating

Melinda Hemmelgarn is passionate about helping children make healthy food choices.

Hemmelgarn, MS '87, whose column the "Food Sleuth" appears nationally and in the Columbia Daily Tribune, recently co-wrote *Treasure Hunt with the Munch Crunch Bunch: A Healthy, Fun Food Adventure*.

Illustrator and co-author Jan

Wolterman of Ross, Ohio, approached her about collaborating because of Hemmelgarn's reputation as a nutritional consultant. Wolterman wanted to convince youngsters that healthy foods are as fun as fast food.

Introducing children to gardening can spark a passion for healthy eating, but fast food dominates popular culture and children's desires, Hemmelgarn says: "They've got toys, a clown and movie tie-ins, for goodness' sake."

*Treasure Hunt with the Munch Crunch Bunch* features a boy who visits a garden with enchanted fruits and vegetables. The book also contains a fold-out board game and trading cards with food riddles. Hemmelgarn hopes they will spark scavenger hunts of produce sections and farmers' markets.

The strategy of both the book and her work as a registered dietitian is to translate knowledge into behavior. "You have to give people action steps," she says.

Her top three tips for raising healthy children?

1. Remove TVs from their bedrooms and limit total screen time. Hemmelgarn taught her children to be critical of the manipulative advertising strategies for junk-food ads. Ask

HemmelgarnNutritional consultant Melinda Hemmelgarn co-wrote *Treasure Hunt with the Munch Crunch Bunch: A Healthy, Fun Food Adventure*, a book designed to help children make good food choices.

[Munchcrunchbunch.com](#) features a recipe starring every fruit and vegetable featured in the book.

Photo by Nicholas Benner

your child: “Do we need this?”

2. Avoid sweetened drinks, whether diet or regular. “All soda, diet or sweet, is acidic and hurts the teeth,” Hemmelgarn says. Soda displaces healthy drinks such as milk, and even diet soda is linked to weight gain. Plus, cans and bottles contribute to the waste stream. “We’d be better off promoting water — local tap water.”
3. Say “no” to fast food. “My kids have never had a fast-food meal with me,” Hemmelgarn says. “It wasn’t easy — they’d beg for it. I’d say, ‘No, because I love you.’”

Adults have a responsibility to help children learn good food habits. This includes growing and cooking food. “Cooking is a life skill,” Hemmelgarn says. “Taking care of yourself includes feeding yourself. It’s basic, like brushing your teeth.”

**[More Fall 2007 Around the Columns »](#)**

---

 [Follow us on Twitter](#)  [Join us on Facebook](#)  [Subscribe to our feed](#)

---

Published by MIZZOU magazine, 109 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, MO 65211 | Phone: 573-882-5916  
| E-mail: [Mizzou@missouri.edu](mailto:Mizzou@missouri.edu)

Opinions expressed in this site do not necessarily reflect the official position of MU or the Mizzou Alumni Association.

Copyright © 2021 — Curators of the [University of Missouri](#). All rights reserved. [DMCA](#) and other [copyright information](#).

An [equal opportunity/affirmative action](#) institution.

**Last updated: Feb. 15, 2013**