

Uncle feeling snubbed on Thanksgiving Day

Dear Annie: I'm 76 years old and need to know if I'm behind the times where etiquette is concerned. I have never been married and have not been around "young folks" a lot, so maybe I'm just behind the times.

My only niece, "Marji," a 40-year-old, invited me to Thanksgiving dinner at her home. There would be only us and her daughter, whom I'll call "Robin," and Robin's new baby. Although there is no difficulty between us, I've never had Thanksgiving Day dinner at my niece's house before.

As background, I have been helping Marji financially since her mother, my sister, passed away in 2018. Additionally, I am financially helping my great niece (my niece's daughter). They live together and both work, but my niece has told me that they don't earn enough to meet their modest expenses. They are aware that they are my only heirs.

The Thanksgiving Day invitation was made in person two weeks before, and I was delighted to accept. I was asked to bring a favorite side dish, which is no problem. There was no mention of any other obligation they had. Marji called me the night before to give me some details of the get-together. She said that I could join them between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. That sounded strange to me, so I asked her if she had somewhere else she had to be later in the day. She said that she and Robin wanted to visit with the grandmother of Robin's new baby. Robin is not married to the baby's father, and I had been told that the grandmother was not in the baby's everyday life.

I'll have to admit that I was hurt by this backhanded invitation but want to give my niece the benefit of the doubt. Thus my question: Is it

proper these days to invite someone to your house for a celebration dinner and then tell the guest that she must leave at a designated time? — *Perplexed by Modern Etiquette*

Dear Perplexed: These particular days, it's really not proper to invite anyone to your house for a celebration. Maybe COVID-19 cases aren't prevalent in your area, but that could quickly change if people are freely spending time indoors and unmasked with people from other households. I don't mean to lecture, but friends of mine have lost loved ones to this disease, and I feel compelled to speak up on their behalf.

That aside, I understand why you'd feel snubbed with your niece changing plans at the last minute. It sounds as though she's not in the running for hostess of the year. She and Robin care about you and the baby's grandmother and wanted to include you both in the baby's first Thanksgiving. They didn't realize that splitting the difference would injure you. Trust that their intentions were good, and next year, communicate from the outset that you'd like to spend the day with them.

Dear Annie: Your response was spot on to "Not a Fan," the reader who wrote in about her mate singing in the morning and putting on a performance in the evening after he came home from work. He seems like a happy chap! Singing, as you stated, makes people feel good even if they are terrible. And the things we dislike about a mate or good friend are often the things we miss most about them when they are gone.

I sing, too, and I stink at it, too. But guess what? I am in a band! And I am a happy chap, too! — *Robert J.*

Dear Robert: Keep crooning.

New dietary guidelines caution against cake for young kids

By CARLA K. JOHNSON
Associated Press

Parents now have an extra reason to say no to candy, cake and ice cream for young children. The first U.S. government dietary guidelines for infants and toddlers recommend feeding only breast milk for at least six months and no added sugar for children under age 2.

"It's never too early to start," said Barbara Schneeman, a nutritionist at University of California, Davis. "You have to make every bite count in those early years."

The guidelines stop short of two key recommendations from scientists advising the government. Those advisers said in July that everyone should limit their added sugar intake to less than 6% of calories and men should limit alcohol to one drink per day.

Instead, the guidelines stick with previous advice: limit added sugar to less than 10% of calories per day after age 2. And men should limit alcohol to no more than two drinks per day, twice as much as advised for women.

"I don't think we're finished with alcohol," said Schneeman, who chaired a committee advising the government on the guidelines. "There's more we need to learn."

The dietary guidelines are issued every five years by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services. The government uses them to set standards for school lunches and other programs. Some highlights:

Infants, toddlers and moms

Babies should have only breast milk at least until they reach 6 months, the guidelines say. If



Eve Marx

Young children are encouraged to avoid cake.

breast milk isn't available, they should get iron-fortified infant formula during the first year. Babies should get supplemental vitamin D beginning soon after birth.

Babies can start eating other food at about 6 months and should be introduced to potential allergenic foods along with other foods.

"Introducing peanut-containing foods in the first year reduces the risk that an infant will develop a food allergy to peanuts," the guidelines say.

There's more advice than in prior guidelines for pregnant and breastfeeding women. To promote healthy brain development in their babies, these women should eat 8 to 12 ounces of seafood per week. They should be sure to choose fish — such as cod, salmon, sardines and tilapia — with lower levels of mercury, which can harm children's nervous systems.

Pregnant women should not drink alcohol, according to the guidelines, and breastfeeding women should be cautious. Caffeine in modest amounts appears safe and women can discuss that with their doctors.

Alcohol and men

In July, the science advisers suggested men who drink alco-

hol should limit themselves to one serving per day — a 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine or a shot of liquor. Tuesday's official guidelines ignored that, keeping the advice for men at two drinks per day.

Dr. Westley Clark of Santa Clara University said that's appropriate. Heavy drinking and binge drinking are harmful, he said, but the evidence isn't as clear for moderate drinking.

Lowering the limit for men would likely be socially, religiously or culturally unacceptable to many, Clark said, which could have ripple effects for the rest of the guidelines.

"They need to be acceptable to people, otherwise they'll reject it outright and we'll be worse off," he said. "If you lose the public, these guidelines have no merit whatsoever."

More careful scientific research into the long-term effects of low or moderate levels of drinking is needed, he said.

What's on your plate?

Most Americans fall short of following the best advice on nutrition, contributing to obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Much of the new advice sounds familiar: Load your plate with fruits and vegetables, and cut back on sweets, saturated fats and sodium.

The guidelines suggest making small changes that add up: Substitute plain shredded wheat for frosted cereal. Choose low-sodium canned black beans. Drink sparkling water instead of soda.

"It is really important to make healthier choices, every meal, every day, to develop a pattern of healthy eating," said Pam Miller of the Agriculture Department's food and nutrition service.

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Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals H

1-2 CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ON THE FIRST OF JANUARY, I COULD JUST IMAGINE SALAMANDERS WISHING EACH OTHER HAPPY NEW YEAR.

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