



Cherri Chalifour
Cell: 604.866.0303

Sandra Ennis
Cell: 604.785.9012

RE/MAX Treeland Realty
Each Office Is Independently Owned & Operated
101—6337 198 Street
Langley, BC V2Y 2E3

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

I'm having my first open house. What can I do to make it successful?

Your real estate agent likely has explained about de-cluttering and completing unfinished projects, but there are still some things you can do to prepare. For example:

Make the beds, do the dishes and tuck away the kid's toys. Put clean towels in the bathrooms and shine the fixtures.

Don't fire up the fireplace. Many people have wood-smoke allergies. Instead, light an arrangement of different-sized candles in the firebox.

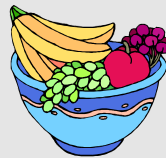
Hide pet paraphernalia and pick up any evidence of Fido from the backyard.

Put flower arrangements everywhere.

Try cinnamon sticks simmering in a pot of water on the stove.

Tuck away family photos and valuables. You don't want your kids or your house to become targets of unscrupulous visitors.

Are those healthy snacks really so healthy?



Eating healthy isn't always easy. In fact, it now seems that many seemingly healthy snacks might actually do more harm than good. Following are three ways to clean up your snack habits:

Energy: Many products are designed to boost energy. Unfortunately, energy can come from a lot of different sources, including caffeine, saturated fats, sugars and vitamins. Select sources that are low in fats, carbohydrates or caffeine.

Juice: Juice can pack a lot of sugar. Opt for naturally sweetened options that don't add sugar. Better yet, go for the fresh fruit to increase fibre levels.

Granola and Grains: Granola and other grains might seem healthy, but high sugar levels combined with intolerance or allergies to gluten might actually do more harm than good. Try millet or buckwheat.

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