



Healthy, Happy Families
 Texas Cooperative Extension—Rockwall County

Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter — Summer, 2006

Traffic Control



As Rockwall County continues to grow, traffic will continue to increase on streets through our towns. Until road improvements are complete, we as motorists need to take control of ourselves when we are trying to get through town. Understand that we can't control traffic, but we can control our reaction to it!

As a driver, we need to keep our cool in traffic; be patient and courteous to other drivers; and, correct unsafe driving habits that are likely to endanger or anger other drivers. Consider these ways to reduce traffic-related stress:

- Consider altering your route. Taking a road less traveled could help you avoid traffic congestion.
- Relax. Turn on the radio to your favorite relaxing music; loosen your grip on the wheel, and take a deep breath.
- Don't drive when you are angry, upset or tired.
- "Keep it cool." Taking out your frustrations on fellow motorists can lead to a crash.
- Pay attention while driving. Reading, eating, or talking on a cell phone can also lead to crashes.

When confronted with aggressive drivers, get out of the way. Put your pride aside. Do not challenge an aggressive driver by speeding up or attempting to "hold your own" in the lane you are in. Avoid eye contact. Eye contact can enrage an aggressive driver. Don't use hand gestures or honk the horn excessively. Both of these actions have been known to enrage aggressive drivers. Just think how much better driving in Rockwall would be if every driver were to follow these rules:

- Don't tailgate. This is a major cause of crashes that can result in serious deaths or injuries.
- Maintain speed. Avoid going faster than the speed limit, being a "road racer," or going too fast in unsafe conditions.
- Stay in your lane. Don't block the passing lane or whip in and out of lanes. If someone wants to pass, let them do so.
- Don't run red lights. Also, do not enter an intersection on a yellow light.
- Use your turn signal. Don't switch lanes without signaling, and make sure you don't cut someone off.

Greetings from the White House

The White House Greetings Office will send U.S. citizens a card celebrating a birthday, anniversary or other special event signed by the President. Birthday recipients must be 80+ years of age and anniversaries must be

50+ years of marriage. To find out more information or to make a request, go to:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/greeting/>



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- Choose more fruits and vegetables.
- Choose to be together.
- Choose to move.
- Choose face time, play time, and family time.
- Choose to "right size" your servings.
- Choose to be sweet without sugar.
- Choose to be involved.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Sixty Second Stress Busters

Stress is a part of life for everyone. Just remember that it is not the stress that causes problems; it is what we do when we are stressed that is important. Here are some good examples of helpful stress busters:

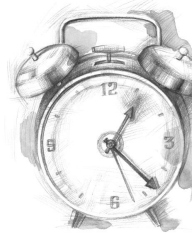
Do something physical. You can run, jump, swing, punch a pillow, do jumping jacks, swim or play. A good rule of thumb is to remember what you did at age five or six and do it again.

Do something nice for yourself. In sixty seconds, you can read a joke; listen to part of a favorite or uplifting song; look at pictures of loved ones; savor a taste of a favorite food; or, just close your eyes

for a break.

Breathe! Just taking a few deep cleansing breaths may do wonders to keeping your cool. Relax a few seconds, then breathe deeply through your nose and exhale through your mouth slowly. With each breath, repeat words that are calming to you.

Tense and relax your whole body. Sit in a comfortable chair and close your eyes. Move through your entire body and tense the muscles there by holding tightly. Next concentrate on relaxing the



muscles completely. Open your eyes and feel the relaxation.

Make a worry box. Write down your worry and put it into a box. At the end of a week, read your worries and divide them into two piles: worries that came true and worries that did not come true. Which pile is larger? **Take control.** Sometimes just a little control can get you started in the right direction. Just choose one simple task and do it.

Talk to someone who makes you feel good. A quick message or email can make you feel more in touch with yourself and those people who are important to you.

For More Information

Each quarterly issue of the “Healthy, Happy Families” newsletter covers a variety of topics. Because of space limitations, you as a reader only receive the highlights or key points of each article. After you read the newsletter, do you ever want to know more about an issue or topic?

Your County Extension Office has a wealth of free resources that will give you more detailed information, worksheets, and publications on any of the topics related to Family & Consumer Sciences.

Our offices hours are 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. We are closed for a lunch

break from 12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m. All you have to do is:

- Call—972-882-0375
- Come by—we are located in the Courthouse Annex at the corner of Rusk and Fannin in old downtown Rockwall.
- Email—j-squier@tamu.edu
- Check out our local website—<http://rockwall-co.tamu.edu/>
- Check out these websites from Texas Cooperative Extension—
<http://fcs.tamu.edu/>
<http://tcebookstore.org/>

Find out more about these Family and Consumer Issues:

Physical Health
Nutrition and Diet
Family and Human Relationships
Healthy Lifestyles
Financial Management
Housing and Living Conditions
Food Safety
Coping with Stress
Parenting and Childcare
Aging Issues and Caregiving

Watermelon—Eat All You Want

Whole watermelon should be firm and symmetrical in shape. It should be heavy for its size and have a healthy sheen on the rind. There should be a yellowish underside from sitting on the ground while ripening. Thumping a watermelon doesn't tell if it is ripe.

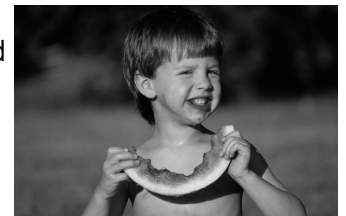
Cut watermelon should have a fresh, firm

texture and a bright color with a minimum of white streaks.

Watermelon will keep just fine at room temperature, but it's best if the melon is refrigerated to preserve the sweetness.

Cut watermelon chunks can be stored in an air tight container in the refrigerator for about a week.

One serving of watermelon has only 45 calories. This delicious fruit is very low in sodium and is a significant source of Vitamin C and a good source of Vitamin A.



Let's Read!

Which books are best to read with your child? Young children enjoy books with brightly colored pictures. They like to listen to stories that have good rhythms. They like words that rhyme and repeat. But each age also has some unique needs. Here's some expert advice to keep in mind.

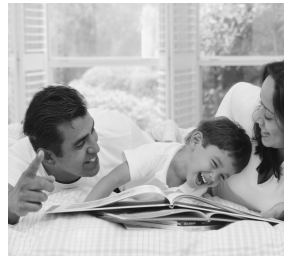
Good baby books:

- Have little or no text.
- Have pictures of high contrast.
- Show simple objects.
- Feature people's faces and bodies; and mother and baby animals.
- Are childproof. Large cardboard,

cloth and plastic books are great.

Good books for toddlers:

- Have simple stories.
- Depict colors and familiar objects.
- Feature favorite characters.
- Relate to your child's current experiences: visits to the doctor, toilet training, visits to grandma, etc.
- Can be interactive (pop up, move or provide other astonishments).
- Are funny. They appeal to your



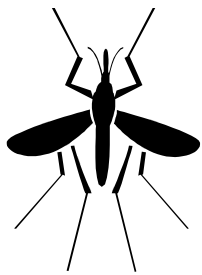
child's developing sense of humor.

Good books for preschoolers:

- Can have a slightly more complex story line.
- Describe other children's lives.
- Contain activities—coloring and stickers.
- Cover subjects your child enjoys (animals, dinosaurs, etc.).
- Teach concepts you want your child to learn—like sharing and safety.
- Help your child deal with issues they are facing, such as friendships and family situations.

Source—*The Parent Institute*

Using Insect Repellents Safely



When purchasing insect repellent, check the container to make sure that the product bears an EPA - approved label and registration number. Never use a product

that has not been approved by the EPA!

Read the entire label before using the insect repellent. Follow the directions carefully; use only the amount directed, at the time and under the conditions

specified, and for the purpose listed. Store insect repellent away from children's reach, in a locked utility cabinet or garden shed.

Do not apply over cuts, wounds or irritated skin. Do not apply near the eyes and mouth of young children.

Do not allow young children to apply this product, and do not apply to children's hands. When using on children, apply to your own hands; then put the repellent on the child.

Do not spray in closed areas. Avoid breathing a repellent spray, and do not use near food.

Use just enough repellent to cover exposed skin and/or clothing. Do not use under clothing. Avoid over application of the product.

After returning indoors, wash the treated skin with soap and water. Wash the treated clothing before wearing them again.

Summer Cleaning in Style

Want cleaning products that are simple, easy, and appealing to use? Look for these products in the cleaning aisle at your favorite store:



Scented for success. New cleaning products with sophisticated, exotic fragrances. Bouquets of fresh herbs, fruits, and flowers join traditional scents like lemon and pine.

Mop away. All-in-one mops use moist, electrostatic cloths that contain a cleaning

solution to clean floors easier and faster.

Wipe out. Wipes for every conceivable use—from dishwashing to dusting, from floor wipes to flushable wipes—are making as-you-go cleanup faster than ever!

Bacteria attack! A wider-than-ever variety of cleaning products with germ-fighting formulations help kill germs and bacteria throughout the house.

Kiss stains goodbye! Say goodbye to stains with these new laundry products:

- Detergents with bleaches or bleaching benefits. They can be excellent stain removers.
- Bleach pens. They're filled with chlorine bleach in gel form that can "write" out stains on white, white-and-colored striped, floral, and patterned clothes.
- Pre-measured detergent tablets. They are portable, lightweight, and dribble-free, so there is no mess!

Source—*Soap & Detergent Association*

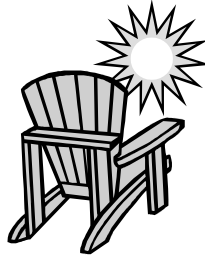
Outsmart the Sun

Whether you call them “The Dog Days of Summer” or describe it as an “Indian Summer,” you are experiencing one of the hottest parts of the year. As you go outdoors to enjoy the sun and blue sky, remember to take a few precautions when exposed to the sun and heat.

When working outdoors, you should always protect yourself from the harmful Ultraviolet (UV) rays being emitted by the sun. Over time, these UV rays cause damage to the skin making it less elastic and contribute heavily to the development of skin cancers. In fact, 90% of all skin cancers occur on sun-exposed skin. Wear a hat, sunglasses and protective clothing when exposed to the sun. While

you should avoid sunbathing, you should use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 while in the sun. Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going out into the sun and reapply every 2 hours.

Another major summertime concern is dehydration—not enough water in your body. When you body loses too much fluid, it begins to take fluid from the blood, which leads to cramping in the muscles and may result in shock. Early symptoms of dehydration are dry



mouth and sticky saliva in addition to dark urine and reduced urine output. To reduce the risk of dehydration, drink plenty of fluids, water or sports drinks, especially when working outdoors in the heat. You should also avoid drinks containing caffeine and alcohol—they increase urine output and make you dehydrate faster. Should you start to notice cramping or feel dizzy or fatigue, stop whatever activity you are doing and rest somewhere out of direct sunlight.

Everyone should enjoy a sunny day. By taking a few simple precautions while in the sun, you won't have to pay for your day of play.

Laundry and Mildew



Laundry—nobody's favorite task. However, it's even more difficult when stains won't come out of the wash. What should you do? Start by making sure damp or wet clothes are not placed in the laundry basket and left for several days.

Warm summer temperatures, high humidity, and any remaining food on clothing—especially kids' clothes—create the perfect conditions for the growth of mildew. Mildew is a fungus and appears as dark colored spots and splotches. When the fabric is left in a warm, humid location with little or no light or air circulation, you have created the perfect condition for very difficult to remove mildew.

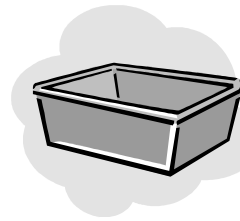
Prevention is the key. Dry any wet items before placing them in the laundry hamper or basket. Some typical items might include infant's and children's clothing, sports wear, tee shirts, kitchen towels, bath towels, and other common items. Avoid tossing damp clothing in a dark laundry hamper or pile in the closet. If you can't get to the laundry immediately, hang or drape the wet items in an area with good air circulation until it is dry.

What removes mildew? Actually only chlorine bleach removes and kills mildew growth and stains. Since not all fabrics are safely treated with bleach, preventing the growth of mildew may be a better solution than trying to remove it later and possible ruining the item.

Metal or Glass Bakeware?

If you are uncertain about which pans to use for baking, these tips may help you decide the best type for different foods.

The two major differences in bakeware materials are their effect on baking time and how foods brown. Foods absorb more heat and bake faster in glass or dark metal containers than in shiny lighter-colored metal pans. Also, they may be done in less time.



When substituting a dark metal or glass baking pan in a recipe specifying a shiny lighter-colored metal pan, some bakers reduce the oven temperature by 25 degrees to allow for a faster baking time.

Foods brown more in glass and dark metal baking pans than in shiny lighter-colored metal ones. Some cooks bake cookies and cakes in the shiny lighter-colored metal pans because they prefer a lighter brown crust for these foods. When baking breads and pies, darker pans or glass pans may be preferable.

Some bakers choose glass over dark metal because it is easier to see how a food is browning.

Avoid flimsy metal pans, which often bake unevenly and tend to warp at high temperatures.

Water Conservation ~ How Does Your Home Check Out?

The availability of water, now and in the future, should be a concern for everyone. The ongoing drought situation has placed a relentless demand on our limited water supply.

By becoming more aware of your habits, you can reduce water use (consumption), eliminate waste, and save energy and money.

This checklist is designed to help you see how effectively you are using water, and to alert you to ways to save. As you read this list, check the steps you have already taken to conserve water. Note what you still need to do to become a better manager of water resources.



PLUMBING SYSTEM

- Check all faucets, inside and out, for drips. Make repairs promptly. These problems get worse—never better.
- Teach children to turn off water faucets quickly and tightly after each use.
- A toilet leak can waste lots of water. Put a small amount of food coloring into the tank, if the color trickles into the bowl there is a leak and repairs are needed.

LAUNDRY

- Wait until you have a full load before washing items, or use a lower water level setting.
- Check garments to make sure they need washing. Don't wash clothes more often than necessary.
- Buy clothing that does not require special washing cycles.

PERSONAL CARE

- Urge family members to take 4 minute showers instead of tub baths. Showers usually use less water than a bath.
- Seek other ways to relax besides standing in the shower for long periods of time.
- Turn off the shower water while you apply soap to the body or lather hair.
- Turn off water while you shave, brush teeth, etc.

FOOD PREPARATION

- Use a pan of water when peeling and cleaning vegetables and fruit rather than letting the sink tap run.
- Limit the use of a garbage disposal. Save food scraps and run the disposal once to conserve water. You can use the disposal even less by saving food scraps for a compost pile.
- A tight-fitting lid on a pan saves water from boiling away and also cooks food faster, thereby using less energy.
- A pitcher of drinking water kept cold in your refrigerator saves running the tap to get cold water.

DISHWASHING

- Cut down on the number of utensils used in food preparation, and on the plates and glassware used with meals. This will save on dishwashing water used to clean them.
- Wash only full loads of dishes in the dishwasher. A dishwasher uses about 9 to 13 gallons of water per cycle.
- Avoid unnecessary rinsing of dishes that go into the dishwasher for immediate washing. Scrape if necessary.

HOUSEHOLD CLEANING

- Wipe up small spills as they occur to avoid frequent mopping of floors.
- Regularly vacuum carpets and rugs so you will not need to shampoo them as often. There is less danger of permanent stains when you take care of spots as they occur.

OUTSIDE THE HOME

- If the water rationing allows use of an outdoor pool, cover the pool when it's not being used to prevent evaporation.
- Clean the swimming pool filter often. You will not have to replace the water as often.
- Use the broom, not the hose to "sweep" the garage, sidewalks, and the driveway.

PURCHASING DECISIONS

- Install and use low-volume showerheads.
- Select water saving toilets.
- Select a water heater sized for your family's needs, and insulate it to prevent heat loss.
- Replace older fixtures and equipment with water efficient models.

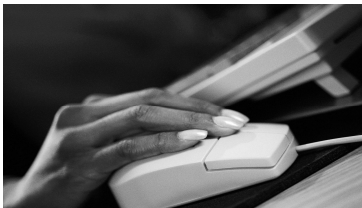
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Learn with a Click in 2006 ~ Over 90 Fact Sheets Available



FCS Technology Outreach

Extension educational outreach to county residents continues to take a different track for 2006. By offering research based publications online, you can download the information from the comfort of your home! These resources will be PDF documents so you will need the free Adobe Acrobat Reader to access the information.

Go to <http://rockwall-co.tamu.edu/> and hit the Publications link at the top of the home page.

Currently, there are over 90 fact sheets available in the following categories:

Clothing
Family
Food & Nutrition
Health
Housing & Safety
Money

The fact sheets are condensed — usually two pages of information on the different topics.

Examples of available fact sheets are:

- Care Labels and Your Clothes
- Be an Active Father
- Ingredient Substitutions
- Ask the Doctor Checklist
- Child Safety Seats
- Piecing Together Retirement
- Water Conservation Checklist
- Fun Snacks for Home and School
- Stepping Stones for Step Families
- Cleaning & Storing Wedding Gowns
- Brothers, Sisters and Aging Parents
- Nutrient Needs at a Glance
- Women and Heart Disease
- How to Select a Termite Control Service
- So You Want to Start a Home Based Business in Texas
- Career Planning for Teens
- Athletic Shoes
- Building Positive Relationships