



Healthy, Happy Families

Texas Cooperative Extension, Rockwall County

Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter ~ Winter, 2004

Residents Invited to Forum on Community Issues

What does our community need? What could be improved? What could make life better for everyone who lives here?

All local residents who are interested in a better future for themselves, their families and our community are invited to participate in the Texas Community Futures Forum on March 18.

The Forum is being conducted in every county as a statewide effort of Texas Cooperative Extension, an agency of the Texas A&M University System, to bring together a diverse group of individuals, groups and organizations to identify issues and concerns.

We want to get broad-based input into this process so that a plan can be developed for



the future of each county and for Texas as a whole. We also want other local, state and federal agencies to participate. Many of the needs and concerns of residents can be best addressed through cooperation and partnerships among the agencies and organizations that serve them.

The Futures Forum process will help Extension develop its long-range plan for the next four years, 2005 to 2008. The true goal of this project is to facilitate the identification of common needs and define a process for addressing these needs to create a better economic, environmental and social situation in communities across the state.

If you would like to be a participant in the Texas Community Futures Forum, please call our office and we will make sure that you get a letter of invitation. (972)882-0375

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In Season for Winter:

Vegetables:

Asparagus, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Greens, Cauliflower, Spinach, Turnips, Sweet Potatoes

Fruits:

Apples, Grapefruit, Grapes, Kiwi Fruit, Limes, Lemons, Oranges, Pears, Tangerines

Comfort Foods for Health

Comfort foods are feel-good, hearty foods that remind us of motherly love, home and tradition. We often crave them when we're feeling blue, when the weather is cold, and when we want to celebrate.

Many favorite comfort foods are warm, creamy, soft and rich. Most of the recipes traditionally contain butter, cream or cheese. Few of them feature a high proportion of vegetables or fruit.

Even your favorite comfort foods can fit into a healthy lifestyle—just make a few simple recipe adjustments and serve with an extra helping of vegetables.

This newsletter includes some of my family's very favorite recipes for comfort foods—some recipes have been modified to be healthier; some have not. Enjoy in moderation, watch your serving size and think of mom!

Winter Saving Tips



Saving money isn't easy for most families, no matter what time of the year. These tips may help to save money during winter.

1. Watch for icicles on the house. Icicles on eaves or a patch of roof that melt quickly after an ice storm may indicate that you need more insulation in your attic. Any place on a house, whether on the roof or around the windows - where ice and snow melt quickly shows that there is heat escaping from that spot.

2. Also, you need to re-caulk around windows to help reduce the heat loss. Stopping these kinds of heat loss in your home will also reduce heating bills.

3. Check the air pressure in your car's tires. Sudden changes in the outside temperature can cause a loss of air in automobile tires. Keep tires inflated to the exact pressure recommended by the manufacturer and the car will be safer to drive and the tires will be protected from unnecessary wear and tear.

4. Another idea is to prepare meals ahead of time and freeze them for use throughout the week to reduce the temptation of eating out. These home-made meals will be more nourishing, which will then increase the body's ability

to fight off colds and flu. Also, take your own lunch to work so that you will not have to get out in the cold weather to go to lunch – and you will then save costs on gasoline and food.

5. Wear hats and gloves. Much of the body's heat escapes out the top of our heads during winter. Wearing hats and gloves helps protect these areas of our body from cold air and keeps us warmer. So, in addition to bundling up your young children, be sure to bundle up yourself. Also, add extra layers of clothing as the temperature drops.

Using these tips can help reduce your overall cost of living, and that's like extra money to put into savings or pay off your debts.

Annual Bargain Calendar

Want to save money? Identify which of the items you need and make a note on your calendar about when they go on sale. Watch the newspapers for special ads at the different times of the year. And, keep in mind the key word "need"!

Dresses—January, April, June, November

Sportswear—January, February, May, July

Lingerie—January, May July

Shoes (men and women)—December

Shoes (boys and girls)—January, March, July

Handbags—January, May, July

Costume and Fine Jewelry—January

Cars—September

Furniture—January, July

Linens—January

Appliances—Major holidays such as President's Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day

Source—"Simple Ways to Save", Woman's Day, Feb. 19, 2002

Youth in Sports — Make It a Positive Experience

Parents should:

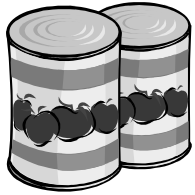
- Be supportive, courteous, and use positive language and actions before, during and after the game
- Bring children to and from each game or practice in a timely manner
- Compliment children on their efforts
- Focus on fun aspects of sports and comment on how much fun your child appears to be having during the game
- Practice sports and attend professional sporting events together
- Read stories about famous sports heroes and share your own experiences
- Know about your child's coach including the coach's philosophy, references and behavior



Parents should not:

- Be intoxicated, verbally abusive, or critical of the coach or referee
- Drop off or pick up children consistently late to games and practice
- Focus on winning or the final score

Wait Out Winter with Frozen and Canned Produce



Contrary to common perception, canned and frozen vegetables and fruits can be very good sources of key nutrients. You can

Increase your fruit and vegetable intake when fresh produce is out of season by substituting packaged options.

Health professionals consistently urge us to eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables every day. Research shows that these foods contain vitamins, minerals, fiber and other powerful substances that help reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic illnesses.

Of course, what is good for our health in the summer, when fresh fruits and

fresh vegetables are abundant, is equally important during the winter, when there are often slim pickings in the produce aisle (in terms of quality and price).

Luckily, advances in food technology – such as flash freezing, which traps the nutrients immediately after harvest – have resulted in packaged fruits and vegetables that offer similar taste and health benefits to fresh produce.

Better than fresh? In some instances, frozen and canned produce may actually deliver more of a particular nutrient. Frozen spinach, for instance, contains 80 per cent more beta-carotene, a cancer-fighting antioxidant, than fresh spinach, which can lose nutrients during shipping and display. Similarly, processed tomato products contain a higher level of the













antioxidant lycopene than fresh tomatoes. And levels of Vitamin C are significantly increased when ascorbic acid is added to both canned and frozen produce to help preserve color.

If convenience is your concern, canned produce and pre-chopped frozen veggies can cut down on preparation and cooking time. Also, since fresh items begin to lose their nutrients after 3 to 4 days, stock your pantry and freezer with packaged fruits and vegetables for times when fresh produce is expensive, inconvenient or scarce. These products can help you reach the recommended five or more daily servings of vegetables and fruit all year round.

Source - American Institute for Cancer Research NEWSLETTER, Winter 2002.

Home Safety Checklist

Check for the following throughout your home:

-  Are extension cords in good condition?
-  Are extension cords not being stretched across heavily traveled areas of your home?
-  Are unused electrical outlets covered?
-  Do you know how to turn off gas and electricity in case of an emergency?
-  Are floor surfaces nonskid?
-  Are fireplaces screened and protected?
-  Are open flames such as candles kept away from walls and curtains?
-  Do you have smoke detectors in your home, and have you checked the batteries lately?
-  Is an approved fire extinguisher kept in a handy place?
-  Is a sturdy stepladder available for climbing?
-  If there are small children in your home, are open windows securely screened?
-  Do interior doors such as those on closets or bathrooms have safety release locks that allow them to be opened from either side?

Great Games for the Family

Board games are a sure fire way of gathering the whole family together for a little friendly competition. From games with simple objectives that help teach the littlest kids about rules and sportsmanship, to complicated, strategy-demanding contests, here is a list of essentials that should be in your game closet. Get out some snacks and get ready to roll the dice!

Ages 3 to 6 — Candy Land; Chutes & Ladders

Ages 5+ — Mancala

Ages 6+ — Sorry!; Twister

Ages 7+ — Battleship; Parcheesi

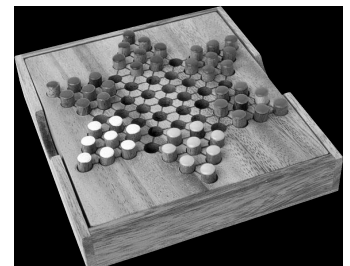
Ages 8+ — Boggle; Clue; Mille Bornes, Monopoly; Pay Day; Quiddler; Scrabble; Stratego; Yahtzee

Ages 9+ — The Game of Life

Ages 10+ — Blurt!

And don't forget:

- ✓ Backgammon
- ✓ Checkers
- ✓ Chinese Checkers
- ✓ Chess
- ✓ Deck of cards



Heart Smart Shopping and Label Reading

What's the first step in lowering blood cholesterol levels? Most people think they have to stick to some unsatisfying, boring, rigid meal plan in order to lower their blood cholesterol. Not so! Changes can be healthful, easy, and tasty.

Begin by being more selective about the foods you eat and follow the recommended number of servings from the USDA Food Guide Pyramid. Choose lower fat foods to replace those higher in fat. Your goal is to eat a diet lower in saturated fat and cholesterol. Here is a list of helpful hints to get you started:

♥ Drink 2 or more servings of 1% or skim milk daily. If you drink whole milk, switch to 2% milk and then eventually to 1% or

skim so you get the same nutrients without the fat. Once you have trained your taste buds, they won't really know the difference.

♥ Use egg whites and egg substitute in place of whole eggs. Keep your egg yolk consumption to no more than 4 per week.

♥ Limit your consumption of cheese. Select cheese varieties with less than 6 grams of fat per ounce (part-skim mozzarella, string cheese or those made with fat substitutes).

♥ Choose two 2-3 ounce servings daily of lean meats, poultry, and fish.

Trim all excess fat before cooking. Also, remove the skin from poultry to reduce the fat by a third.

♥ Switch from butter to margarine.

Margarine contains less saturated fat than butter and tub margarine contains less saturated fat than margarine in stick

form. Go easy on the amount you use since all types get 100% of their calories from fat.

♥ Eat plenty of vegetables—fresh, frozen, or canned (3 to 5 servings daily).

♥ Eat plenty of fruit—fresh, frozen, canned, or dried (2 to 4 servings daily).

♥ Eat more whole grain products (6 to 11 servings daily).



Reduce your total fat intake to 30% or less of your total daily calories.

Get Moving ~ All It Takes Is 30 a Day

Calling all couch potatoes! It's time to get up and get moving! You can look better, feel better, and reduce your risk of health problems with just 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. Does 30 minutes sound like a lot? Don't sweat it! You can rack up your daily thirty in eight to ten minute chunks throughout the day. Here are ten ways to get moving today:

1. **Out to Lunch**—Take a brisk walk on your lunch break.
2. **Clean House**—Vacuum, scrub, sweep and mop with gusto!
3. **Take a Shine to It**—Wash and wax your car.
4. **House Beautiful**—Rake the leaves, trim the shrubs, or pull weeds.
5. **Go In Circles**—Take a bike ride through a scenic area or use a stationary bike at home.
6. **Get Maximum Impact**—Sign up for a low - impact aerobics class.
7. **The Grass is Always Greener**—Mow the yard with a power mower instead of a riding mower.
8. **Cut the Rug**—Turn on your favorite tune and dance around the living room
9. **Kid Around**—Play catch, touch football, or tag with the kids. Throw a Frisbee. Play on the swing set.
10. **Walkie-Talkie**—Get a long telephone cord or a cordless telephone so you can pace while you chat.

Tackling Super Bowl Spills

How to clean up common stains after the big game:

Salsa: Pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Then laundry. Repeat as necessary.

Sour Cream / Cheese: Pretreat using a pretreat product, liquid laundry detergent or paste of granular detergent. Then launder.

Mustard: Pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Then laundry with chlorine bleach if it's safe for the fabric, or use a color safe bleach.

Tobacco: Dampen stain and rub with bar soap. Then rinse. Pretreat using a pretreat product, liquid laundry detergent or paste of granular detergent. Then laundry. If the stain remains, laundry again using a bleach if it's safe for the fabric.

NOTE: Pre-test the effects of the stain removal products and techniques on a hidden area of the garment before using them. After washing, check garments to make sure stains are removed before placing in the dryer. If not, repeat the stain removal process before drying, as the heat may set the stain.



House for Sale! Tips for Getting It Buyer Ready

When a house is for sale, the goal is to make it as attractive as possible for the potential buyers. The most cost effective way to spruce up the house is to clean it thoroughly.

Many potential buyers may not see past dirt and clutter. If the house is crowded with the owner's "stuff", they will assume that the house is going to be too small for their possessions.

Begin by purging the house, including all closets, the attic and the garage, of items that are no longer needed. Things that are in good condition can be sold or can be donated to a charity. The remainder can be thrown in the trash. Rooms will

appear much more spacious, closets will look bigger and shelves will look roomier to the potential buyers.

Focus on rooms that buyers are most interested in—living room, dining room, kitchen and bathroom. Look at each room as a potential buyer might and see what catches the eye first. Make that area the starting point for the cleaning process.

Give major attention to the kitchen and bathrooms. Mildew is really a problem in bathrooms. Use liquid household bleach or cleaners with bleach to remove mildew



stains.

Don't forget to wash the windows, vacuum carpets and dust thoroughly.

If repainting is not in the budget, carefully clean surfaces to remove dust,

grime and fingerprints. Painted surfaces are usually washable, but first test the cleaning product on an out of the way place.

Keeping on top of the cleaning chores will make your home look its best. And once a buyer is found, it will be easier to pack up your belongings and move out!

Is It Cold or Flu?

Both colds and the flu are caused by viruses. There are hundreds of these viruses that cause colds and flu, each manifesting itself in it's own way.

The flu is an airborne virus—spread from one person to another by droplets from coughing and sneezing.

How do you know if what you are experiencing is a cold or flu? Here is a chart to help you identify the cause of your symptoms.

Common Symptoms

Fatigue

Fever

Muscle Ache

Joint Pain

Loss of Appetite

Headache

Cough

Stuffy Nose

Diarrhea / Vomiting

Cold

No

No

No

No

No

No

Yes

Yes

No

Flu

Yes

100—104°F

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

No

Make Your Time Count

⌚ If you feel overwhelmed by having too much to do, learn to say *no!* It's okay.

⌚ Learn to ask for help. You may be surprised by how willing your family and friends are to help.

⌚ Number tasks in order of importance. Organized to-do lists are helpful on busy days.

⌚ Know what's important to you. Maybe it's time to downsize your activities or let go of some jobs.

⌚ You don't have to do everything everyday. Choose two things each day to accomplish.

⌚ TV, computers, magazines ... Decrease your information overload and take a break.

⌚ Find time for YOU. Try to spend at least 15 minutes every day on your favorite thing.

⌚ Think about what you can do "better" tomorrow to maximize your time, energy and good feelings.

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As an Extension educator,
my prime concern is people.

I believe it is my responsibility to give
the best of my ability and develop
myself to be an effective educator.

I accept the opportunity to empower
individuals, families and communities
to meet their needs and goals through
a learning partnership.

May I always be willing to accept the
challenges of the changing times.

*Creed of the National Extension Association
of Family & Consumer Sciences*

A New Year 's Prescription for Nutrition

Here are several suggestions that can easily be incorporated into your dietary plan and that are sure to get you started on the road to good health.

Get your 5 a day! Fruits and vegetables have long been known to provide vitamins, minerals and fiber essential for the normal, everyday functioning of the human body and they may help lower the risk for some cancers, heart disease and other chronic health problems. In recent years, researchers have also discovered that fruits & vegetables contain phytochemicals. While the exact role that phytochemicals play in the body is still under investigation, they are thought to aid in the prevention of cancer and heart disease.

Enjoy a little whole grain goodness! Whole grain foods pack an extra nutrition punch because they are also good sources of several vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and dietary fiber, all of which are essential for good health and may help reduce the risk for heart disease and some cancers.

Catch the catch of the day! Diets high in fish, especially cold-water fish like salmon, herring, mackerel and whitefish, have been linked to a reduced risk for heart disease, stroke and some cancers. People who eat large amounts of fish tend to have

lower blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels. The high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids found in fish are believed to be the reason. Omega-3 fatty acids are also being investigated for a possible role in the prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and depression.

Bone up on calcium rich foods! No bones about it, your body needs calcium, and a fair amount of it. Unfortunately, less than half of Americans meet the current recommendations for calcium intake. Calcium has long been known to help prevent osteoporosis, a bone-crippling disease, and new research indicates that it may help reduce the risk for colon cancer as well as high blood pressure. Most doctors and nutritionists recommend that people look first to food for their calcium because food sources which contain calcium tend to supply other important nutrients such as phosphorus, vitamin D and lactose, which help the body absorb and use calcium. Milk, yogurt and cheese products are our most concentrated sources of calcium. Other sources include dry beans, dark green leafy vegetables, tofu made with calcium sulfate and calcium fortified orange juice.

Get moving! Good nutrition and regular physical activity go hand in hand. Research studies have repeatedly demonstrated that regular physical activity has tremendous health benefits!