



Healthy, Happy Families

Texas Cooperative Extension, Rockwall County

Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter ~ Winter, 2005

New for 2005 ~ Programs of the Month

The following **free** Programs of the Month have been scheduled with the Rockwall County Library. A Lunch and Learn Series will be taught on the 2nd Thursday of each month from **12:00 p.m. until 1:00 p.m.** at the library. Each program will include current health & nutrition information, recipe demonstrations and fact sheets for the participants.

If you would like to schedule a Program of the Month for your group, please call the County Extension Office, (972) 882-0375. Programs can be scheduled anytime during the day or evening for a group. A complete list of topics for the year are printed on the last page.

January 13 - Cold

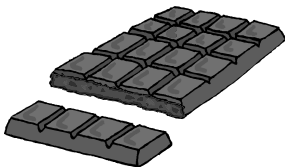
Weather Cooking Come home to delicious tummy-warming meals. Your family will love to come in out of the cold to the aroma and delicious results of meals made with a slow cooker. This helpful kitchen appliance is extra convenient and there's no better time of year than right now to make use of it. Quick and easy recipes will be shared to help you have the family dinner ready and waiting when you want it!



February 10 - Chocolate for Health & Pleasure!

The news keeps getting better about

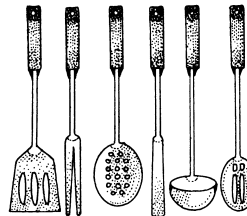
chocolate! Eaten in moderation, a taste of chocolate every day is a good strategy for



weight control and may even prevent heart disease. Learn about the most popular types of chocolate for cooking. Come have some fun, taste some treats and discover the most important fact about chocolate – right before Valentine's Day!

March 10 - Cooking for 1 or 2 - More and more families have only one or two members. Meal planning, food buying and preparing meals pose unique problems for singles and couples. These challenges prompt many small families to settle for convenience foods and snacks - leading to monotonous meals and poor nutrition. A little advanced planning and new techniques can make meals for one or two more enjoyable and nutritious. Participants will receive a cookbook of different recipes for 1 or 2 people. A selection of these recipes will be prepared and shared during the program.

April 7 - Get Organized, Get Happy! - Does the word "organize" sound B-O-R-I-N-G? What if getting organized saves you extra trips to the store and helps you and your family eat healthier and more interesting foods? And, what if you start looking forward to dinner each night with anticipation instead of anxiety? Learn some tips and tools to get you started on organizing your recipes and setting up your kitchen. Quick and easy nutritious snack ideas will be also be shared during the program.



Inside this issue:

<i>Post Holiday Cleanup</i>	2
<i>Smart Goal Setting</i>	2
<i>Money Matters</i>	3
<i>Bringing Up Baby</i>	4
<i>Strengths of American Families</i>	5
<i>2005 Programs of the Month</i>	6
<i>Favorite Crock Pot Recipes</i>	Insert



- ♦ Raising Kids
- ♦ Eating Right
- ♦ Spending Smart
- ♦ Living Well

Information & education at your fingertips to help you live well. Families across the United States turn to the Cooperative Extension system for research-based, non-biased information and education.

Post-Holiday Clean Up ~ Time to Get Clutter Under Control



There are several advantages to putting away those holiday decorations. In fact, this task can be the start of a whole new plan to de-clutter the

house. Rather than putting things back in their usual places, use this time as an opportunity to reevaluate and reorganize your possessions.

Getting rid of excess clutter can reduce housework by **40 percent**. Fewer things to move and clean mean there are fewer places for dust and allergens to accumulate. This is important for everyone, but particularly if there is a family member

that suffers from asthma.

Begin by analyzing what's in the room — one room at a time. Surface clutter is easier to deal with and will produce a quicker change, so concentrate on what you can see rather than what is stored in closets and drawers. Things that do not pass the “I use it” Or “I love it” test should be eliminated. Do not keep duplicates or items that are broken or outdated. Group the “keepers” together by category, so you can see everything you own at a glance. This will make it easier to determine where to store these items.

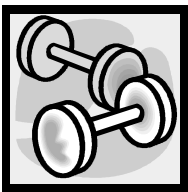
Discards generally fall into one of the following categories: trash, giveaways, garage sale, or belongs somewhere else (such as in storage or in another room). Give each category its own carton so it is

easy to move items to their next destination. Giving items away to a charity may make it easier to part with them. Off-site storage for items such as tax records, college memorabilia or extra furniture is another solution.

When re-organizing, store items near their point of use. Keep accessibility and safety in mind. Do not store anything dangerously out of reach or overstuff drawers.

Once the reorganization is complete, follow the “One In, One Out” rule — nothing new comes in unless something old goes out. Make it a point to put things away as they are used. That way, daily clean up should take no more than five minutes per room, and dusting and vacuuming will become easier and faster.

Smart Goal Setting



Being motivated to make positive changes in your life is the first step toward a healthy lifestyle. People who set goals are much more likely to achieve them. A SMART activity plan includes setting goals that are:

Specific - including enough detail to guide exactly where and when you will be active. (“I will walk the dog for 30 minutes after work five times a week for two weeks.”)

Measurable - measuring your activity gives you clear evidence of your progress. Decide how you will measure your activity—number of steps or amount of time spent being active.

Attainable - Maximize your chances for success by examining your strengths and weaknesses and using this information when setting goals.

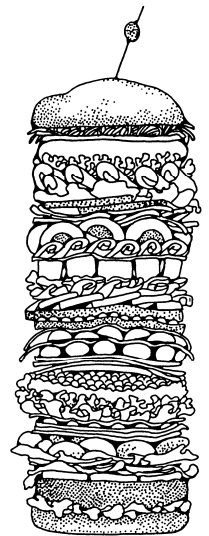
Realistic - Start small and include only what you can do. Plan a few things, rather than many. As you attain smaller or short-term goals you are working toward attaining larger or long-term goals.

Timely - Note when you plan to work at your goal and how long it will take to achieve it.

Winter Sporting Event Snacking Facts

The Super Bowl is ranked as the number two food consumption event of the year, second only to Thanksgiving.

- Americans consume 30.4 million pounds of snack foods during the Super Bowl.
- Americans consume more than 11 million pounds of potato chips on Super Bowl Sunday.
- Americans double their average daily consumption of snacks on Super Bowl Sunday, consuming more than 33 million pounds of goodies in one day.



Olympians and other professional athletes are constant snackers, but munch on healthy treats such as whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and lean meats. This strategy helps regulate blood sugar, fuels muscles, and ensures high performance during stressful workouts and hard competitions.

Money Matters

\$ Consumer debt has more than doubled in the last ten years. In 2003, consumer debt stood at \$1.98 trillion. Consumer debt includes credit cards and car loans, but not mortgages. This averages over \$18,000 per U.S. household.

\$ Credit card debt stands at \$735 billion, or about \$7,000 per U.S. household. 40 percent of card users do pay their balances in full each month, so this means that households who carry balances each month have a balance closer to \$12,000.

\$ Consumer debt has soared even though there have been record numbers of mortgages refinanced. The refinancing from 2001 to 2003 gave consumers cash that was used to lower credit card

balances.

\$ Consumer bankruptcies have exceeded 1 million a year since 1996. They hit a record of 2.54 million in 2002. During the first three quarters of 2003, filings reached 1.25 million and could set a new record when data for the full year is released by the American Bankruptcy Institute.

\$ Americans currently spend a near-record 18.1 percent of their after-tax income to cover debts, including mortgages. This limits their ability to borrow more, to spend more, and consumer spending accounts for about two-thirds of the economy. High debt levels and demanding repayment schedules do affect the economy.

\$ During the first six months of 2003, the nation's savings rate (which refers to what Americans are saving) dropped to just 2 percent of after-tax income. This means that people unable to save do not have a way to deal with financial emergencies. It may also mean that their retirement preparation is inadequate.

Many experts agree that with the passing of the Depression generation, the values of thrift and careful spending are being lost.

Which Comes First— The Asthma or the Excess Weight?

An accumulating body of evidence is linking extra pounds to asthma. In the latest research, scientists looking at more than 1,100 adults, found that overweight men and women were more likely to be afflicted with asthma than their leaner counterparts. As weight went up, so did asthma occurrence.

It is not clear yet whether obesity brings on asthma or vice versa. It could be that excess pounds compress the airways and prevent lungs from expanding properly. Or, overweight people may tend to sit inside more often, and so may be exposed to higher levels of indoor pollutants that could trigger asthma. Then again, a lack of activity among people who already have asthma may also set them up for weight gain. Consider that those with asthma also avoid exercise for fear of bringing on an attack.

But avoiding exercise is not the best approach to managing asthma symptoms. Physical activity is a key component of weight loss and, often, fewer wheezing episodes overall, so asthma sufferers should not shy away from moves that get them huffing and puffing. Even people with exercise-induced asthma can be physically active without breathing difficulties. Of course, proper medication—and gradual warm-ups—are essential.

Source —Tuft University Health and Nutrition Letter, October, 2001

Let Them Through! It Could be

In an emergency, minutes can mean the difference between life and death, and critical seconds can be lost if drivers do not make way for emergency vehicles. Take sirens seriously - make way for an ambulance, fire truck or police vehicle. There are simple things you can do to help emergency personnel reach a person in need. Use the letters S-I-R-E-N to remember the right way to yield to an emergency vehicle.



S: Stay Alert - Keep the noise level down in your car and look for more than one emergency vehicle approaching when you hear a siren.

I: Investigate - Check your rear-view mirror, scan in front and on both sides of your vehicle, try to estimate the speed of the emergency vehicle and plan your next move.

R: React - React quickly, but calmly and scan in all directions before pulling over. Always use a turn signal when exiting the roadway and do not slam on the brakes or pull over suddenly.

E: Enter - Before re-entering the road, make a visual sweep in all directions, turn on your signal, and gradually merge back into traffic.

N: Never - Do not stop at a place that does not have enough room to pull over safely and never follow or try to outrun an emergency vehicle.

Staying Healthy During Cold and Flu Season



As the weather becomes colder and we stay indoors more, people often catch colds or other viruses. The

cold and flu season can begin as early as October and usually ends sometime in April. While there is no way to cure the common cold or flu, there are several things that you and your family can do to stay healthy this season.

Keeping the germs away

The most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands. A common way to catch a cold is

by rubbing your nose or eyes, so to protect against infection, wash your hands frequently. Your hands pick up germs from other people as well as from contaminated surfaces and washing them prevents you from infecting yourself with the germs. Use warm water, soap and wash for several minutes for best results.

Other good health practices include not sharing cups or silverware and cleaning high contact items, such as doorknobs, faucets and telephones, with soap and water.

Boost your immune system

Even when your hands are clean, staying healthy means more than simply avoiding germs. Healthy bodies have an easier

time fighting off infection.

To stay healthy and rev up your immune system:

- ✓ get plenty of rest
- ✓ eat a well-balanced diet
- ✓ exercise regularly
- ✓ decrease stress
- ✓ cut back on unhealthy habits, such as smoking and over consuming alcohol.

Studies have shown that a session of moderate physical activity produces positive effects on the immune system. Over time, this means catching fewer colds and other upper respiratory tract infections.

Happy Valentine's Day



Valentine's Day is a day for all family members to show love and affection to each other – something that for siblings is not always easily done. Starting traditions and rituals for Valentine's Day in your family will not only help children show positive feelings towards each other on this day but hopefully it will spill over to other days as well. Try these suggestions:

Family Mailbox: Get a large box and with all family members help, decorate it for Valentine's Day. Use wrapping paper, ribbon, stickers, lace and hearts galore. Make sure the box can be closed and opened and has a mail slot on the top of it. Add your family name to the box. Place in a prominent area of your home and within easy reach of small kids.

Making Cards: Everyone has to make everyone else a card. Keep a box filled with supplies – stickers, paper, glue, lace, ribbon, wrapping paper, crayons, markers, paint, ink, stamps, whatever you can put together. Let everyone know that they must finish their card for everyone by the 13th! That way there are no last minute cards put together sloppily because someone forgot. You might even want to write the deadline on the side of the supply box. Each card must contain at least one nice, positive thought about the other family member. No negative thoughts allowed. You may want to read

through the cards before passing them out, depending on how well your children get along! Since Valentines really are supposed to be anonymous, don't force your children to sign their names. This may also make it easier to write nice things about their siblings.

Have a Dinner Party: For dinner, come up with a very "loving" theme. Heart-shaped hamburgers, heart-shaped cake, red punch, whatever you can think of. Use a heart cookie cutter to turn just about anything into a heart-shaped food. After dinner, everyone can open their Valentines. Make sure everyone gets a hug and kiss before bed!

Bringing Up Baby

For more than 40 years, the USDA has issued an annual report detailing the cost of raising a child from birth to age 18. The USDA estimated that it would cost **\$160,140** to raise a child born in 1999. Bear in mind that this figure does not include college years! We have all heard people say to their children, "Money doesn't grow on trees." The question is, where does it go? This is how parents spend their child-rearing budget:

- Housing (33-37%)
- Food (15-20%)
- Transportation (14-15%)
- Miscellaneous Goods and Services (10-13%)
- Clothing (6-8%)
- Child Care and Education (7-10%)

The Strengths of American Families

Let's take a few minutes to reflect on the strengths of American families. What strengths? That is a natural question for some people to ask, given the fearful warnings that the American family is in trouble and the fact that some American families, indeed, are in trouble. The markers of this trouble are well chronicled — alienated youth, disappointed parents, “broken homes”, poverty, violence, abuse, neglect, and just plain unhappiness. It is not a pretty picture. But it is an incomplete one.

With our preoccupation with what's wrong in American families, we sometimes overlook what's right. Researchers are beginning to address this one-sided view by studying how families are actually going about their lives and how families relate to each other.

Contrary to images of youthful alienation and rebellion, young adolescents seem to consider their parents both

helpers and confidants. For example, among 12- to 14-year-olds surveyed:

- The majority reported that their parents “usually” or “always” help them do things that are important to them (79 percent for mothers, and 67 percent for fathers); and
- More than half (54 percent) reported that they turn to one of their parents - rather than a friend or anyone else - when they have problems.

What's more, contrary to the image of on-the-run-no-time-to-get-together lifestyles of American families:

- Almost three-quarters (73 percent) of the young teens surveyed reported that they eat dinner with their families at least five days a week; and
- About half (48 percent) reported that they do something “fun” with their families three or more days a week.

There are other positive markers of the state of America's families. One example

is parental mental health. A growing body of research shows that parents who are depressed are more likely to have poorly adjusted children than parents who are not. Well, the contrary also seems to be true, which should surprise no one — **Happy parents have happier children.** The majority of parents (71 percent) described themselves as being “a happy person” all or most of the time.

All of the examples highlighted here are measures of family strengths. Sharing these research results, is not to deny or to minimize the very serious problems that some American families face. But it would be equally foolhardy to overlook the research-based evidence showing that many American families—indeed, most American families—are doing a pretty good job of raising their children and supporting one another. For that, we should all be thankful.

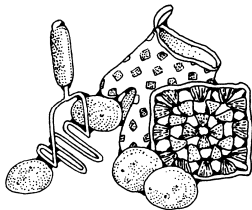
Source—www.childtrends.org

Resolutions to Eat Better in the New Year

1. Don't eat unless you're sitting at a table. You're not so likely to feel you've eaten a satisfying amount of food when, for instance, you have ice cream out of the container while standing in the kitchen. Better to scoop some ice cream into a dish, put the container back in the freezer, walk over to the table, sit down, and eat (at a relaxed pace) the portion that seemed appropriate when you dished it out.

2. Prepare more of your own meals.

If you never make your own dinner, try doing it once a week. If you do it twice a week, shoot for three times. You eat much more healthfully when you cook than when you eat out, take out, or order in.



3. Don't eat when you're not hungry. This is a tough one in a culture where boredom,

anxiety, fatigue, TV ads, and food on every corner encourages eating. But it's worth paying attention to. When people eat in the absence of hunger, they often eat guiltily, which means quickly – too quickly to stop before the calories really pile up.

4. Savor what you are eating. When you eat quickly and inattentively, you lose out on a lot of food's flavor. Consider that much of what we think of as taste is really smell. The taste buds can only detect a few things: salty, bitter, sour, and sweet. But as a person chews, a food's volatiles – odorous, gas-like substances – are released and “pumped” to the nose. There are literally thousands of odors that the human nose can distinguish. It's what allows you to tell the difference between, say, cinnamon and nutmeg or chicken and turkey. The less you chew, however, the less you're going to be able to appreciate those differences.

5. Follow the same principles in restaurants that you would at home. You should expect the same relaxed atmosphere in a restaurant as in your own kitchen or dining room. If you feel rushed by the wait staff; if you have to roar above the din to have a conversation; if you don't feel comfortable asking for special requests, like for some of your entree to be packed in a doggie bag before it ever reaches your table, you're not in the right place.

6. Participate in some moderately vigorous physical activity each day.

Exercise helps with appetite control. Also, if you move your body appropriately, you'll want to fuel it appropriately instead of eating willy-nilly whatever's available. You'll take the time to plan, prepare, and partake of good-tasting, nutritious meals. In other words, one good behavior builds on another.

Source—*Tufts University Health and Nutrition Letter*, October, 2003.

Texas Cooperative Extension, Rockwall County

Janie E. Squier
County Extension Agent —
Family & Consumer Sciences
Rockwall County Courthouse Annex
101 South Fannin
Rockwall, Texas 75087

Phone: 972-882-0375
Fax: 972-882-0374
Email: j-squier@tamu.edu



Pack Smart, Look Smart

Packing tips to keep you and your clothes looking great!

- 1. Clean & dry.** Before packing clothes, make sure clothes are clean and dry.
- 2. Zip it.** Button all buttons and zip all zippers before folding to preserve garment shape.
- 3. In the fold.** Carefully fold garments to avoid stretching, indentations, and excessive wrinkling.
- 4. It's in the bag.** Use a net bag designed for lingerie to help prevent fraying, catching, and tearing of delicate items.
- 5. Sheet action.** Place a dryer sheet in your luggage to help keep clothes smelling fresh.
- 6. Get rid of wrinkles.** When you arrive at your destination, unpack as soon as possible. Hang creased items in the bathroom while you shower to help steam out wrinkles.
- 7. Traveler's kit.** To keep clothes looking and smelling their best while you're on the road, take a laundry travel kit that includes a stain removal stick, gel, or wipe, wrinkle-releasing spray, and fabric freshener.

Programs of the Month

Check each quarterly issue of the "Healthy, Happy Families" newsletter for an update on the Programs of the Month that are coming up!

January—Cold Weather Cooking

February—Chocolate for Health & Pleasure

March—Cooking for 1 or 2

April—Get Organized in the Kitchen

May—Quick & Healthy Breakfast Ideas

June—Berry Bonanza

July—Culinary Herbs

August—Portion Distortion

September—Lunch on the Go

October—A Family Meal in Minutes

November—Healthy Holiday Hints

December—Gifts from the Kitchen