

Family & Consumer News

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Dear Consumers:

Spring is quickly turning into summer and the rain has been abundant. Hope your gardens are doing well. Whether you are canning, freezing, pickling, or making jelly, we are the source of food preservation information. Call before you start for a packet of information.

May is National Osteoporosis Prevention Month and June is National Dairy Month. This newsletter provides you with the latest up to date information on these topics. Have a good month.

Sincerely,

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TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT OSTEOPOROSIS



Every 20 seconds, osteoporosis causes a fracture, so the National Osteoporosis Foundation launches a campaign every May to raise public awareness of this debilitating disease. It is estimated that osteoporosis is responsible for approximately 700,000 vertebral fractures and 250,000 wrist fractures each year.

Osteoporosis occurs when bones become thin and weaken. Although it is largely preventable for most people, the risk factors are age, gender, family history, race and bone structure. Older people often experience a loss of bone density, women have less bone tissue and often lose bone more rapidly than men. NOF advises if osteoporosis runs in your family, you are more at risk. Caucasian and Asian women are more at risk, however African American and Hispanic women are also at risk.

You may think bones are solid as steel and set for life. To the contrary, bone is living tissue needing proper nutrition to stay healthy. Building strong bones can be your

best defense against developing osteoporosis. The first step is getting a balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D. Other lifestyle habits include exercise, eliminating smoking and alcohol.

Dietary Factors - Calcium plays an important role in maintaining healthy bones. It is always best to eat your calcium, so be sure to get calcium-rich foods in your diet each day. Low fat and fat free dairy foods are an excellent source of calcium, aim for three serving each day. Dark leafy greens and broccoli are considered a good source of calcium, eat them often.

In recent years, we have seen an increase in calcium fortified foods. This is in response to the low intake of calcium in the American diet. You can find a variety of foods in the grocery stores that are fortified with calcium; orange juice and cereal are two popular foods that have added fortification. Be sure to read the food labels to determine if the product is fortified.

Another way to add extra calcium to your meals at home is to add nonfat powdered dry milk to food you prepare -- pudding, bread, muffins, soups and even meatloaf

can get a calcium boost. A single tablespoon of nonfat powdered dry milk adds 52 mg. of calcium, and 2 to 4 tablespoons can be added to most recipes.

Vitamin D works with calcium to maintain healthy bones. It actually helps your body absorb calcium. Think of it a key that unlocks the door to allow calcium into your bloodstream. Dairy foods are fortified with vitamin D, other foods include egg yolks, saltwater fish and liver. Your body manufactures vitamin D when you are in direct sunlight. Usually 10 - 15 minutes exposure of hands and arms several times a week is adequate.

For those of you who think it best to pop a high dose calcium supplement, consider this point – your body is

capable of absorbing about 500 mg. of calcium at a time. So, consuming large doses of calcium supplements will not guarantee an adequate intake. It is better to consume a smaller dose several times a day. A food source of calcium and Vitamin D several times a day is the best strategy.

Exercise - Like muscles, bones respond to exercise by becoming stronger. A lack of exercise, particularly as you get older, may contribute to low bone mass. Weight-bearing exercises like walking, jogging, stair climbing, and dancing will help strengthen bones. Weight lifting also works to build both bone and muscle. Before you start an exercise program, consult your doctor.

The National Osteoporosis

Foundation also recommends a bone mineral density test (BMD) for adults. This measures the density of your bones and will determine whether you need medication to help reduce bone loss. Osteoporosis develops undetected over time, so early diagnosis is important.

It is never too early to take steps to prevent osteoporosis. Since bones build mass in childhood and early adulthood, getting into a routine of eating an adequate intake of calcium is for all ages. In addition to eating calcium rich foods each day, include exercise as part of your daily routine to help maintain strong bones.

Reference: NOF website

JUNE IS NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH



June is National Dairy Month. A major food group in the food guide pyramid, dairy foods supply about 75% of the calcium in the American diet. It is an essential nutrient for strong bones and teeth.

The average adult only gets half the amount of calcium needed each day. Children often begin to cut down on dairy foods by the age of ten, just when their calcium needs are increasing for their growth spurt during adolescence. Many people mistakenly think that dairy foods are only important in childhood. The truth is that our bones need calcium on a daily basis throughout our life time. To make matter worse, as we age, our bodies tend to lose bone mass, another reason we should get enough calcium in our diets.

The recommendation for calcium intake increased in recent years, because researchers now know these levels help reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Look at the chart

based on USDA recommendations:

Dietary Reference Intake (DRI)	
Infants	210-270 mg
Children 1-3 yrs	500 mg
Children 4-8 yrs	800 mg
Children 9-18 yrs	1300 mg
Adults 19-50 yrs	1000 mg
Adults 51-70 yrs	1200 mg
Adults over 70 yrs	1200 mg
Pregnant under 19 yrs	1300 mg
Pregnant 19-50 yrs	1000 mg

Since dairy foods are the major source of calcium, include a variety of dairy foods in your daily meal choices. Include 3 to 4 cups of a calcium source every day. If you are concerned about the fat content in dairy foods, think again. There is now a large selection of reduced fat or fat free dairy foods at the store.

To boost your calcium intake try the following:

- Drink one to two 8 oz. glasses of skim milk each

day. The milk you add to cereal or coffee counts too.

- Use plain or vanilla yogurt in place of mayonnaise for recipes of potato salad and cole-slaw.
- Make shakes and smoothies with skim milk or yogurt and fruit.
- Add powdered milk to soups and gravies when you cook.
- Use buttermilk for mashed potatoes and baked goods, it is low fat and it adds flavor without calories.

Reference: National Dairy Council

Interpreting Food Labels For Calcium

You may be confused as to how you keep track of your calcium intake when the food labels are listed as a percentage of the daily value, DV. The percent is based on 1,000 milligrams, so you can calculate the amount of calcium in food. Use the following examples to help you learn how to interpret a food label for calcium:

- 15% = 150 mg
- 20% = 200 mg
- 30% = 300mg

FREEZING SUMMER'S FRESHNESS



Fresh fruits and vegetables can easily be classified among the benefits of summer. Whether you grow them, purchase them at road side stands or a farmer's market, they make up for the heat and humidity we endure during the summer months. If you have an abundance of food and need to preserve your garden bounty, freezing is one of the easiest, most convenient and least time consuming methods of preserving foods.

Freezing makes it possible to take foods at their peak of ripeness and stabilize them for later use. This method of food preservation does not sterilize foods. The extreme cold simply retards the growth of microorganism and slows down chemical changes that affect the quality or cause food to spoil.

Another plus for freezing is a food safety issue. *Clostridium botulinum*, the microorganism that causes the greatest problem in canning low acid foods, does not grow and produce toxin at 0° F. Therefore, freezing provides a safe and easy alternative to pressure canning low acid foods. Freezing can not improve the flavor of any food, but when properly done, it can preserve most of the quality of the fresh product.

The amount of food you can freeze is limited by freezer space. If you only have a refrigerator and freezer combination, you are very limited and may only choose to freeze a small amount of your favorite fruit or vegetable. If you have a chest or upright freezer, it runs more efficiently if it is at least 3/4 full. Use food continuously

from the freezer and replace it with other food. The faster the turnover, the lower the operating cost per pound of frozen food.

Packaging and Containers

Proper packaging is vital for frozen food to keep its quality in storage. Unprotected food is subject to oxidation and loss of moisture which is better known as *freezer burn*. It alters the color, texture, flavor and nutritive value of frozen foods.

Containers for freezing should be moisture proof, odorless, resistant to tears and breakage, easy to seal and able to maintain a good seal. Read labels to make sure the containers you choose are designed for freezer storage. Rigid containers, freezer bags or glass freezer jars are all suitable containers. Be sure to leave a head space between the top of the food and the lid to allow for the food to expand during freezing.

Label and Storage

Label foods so they can be easily identified. Freezer tape and markers can be purchased at local stores. Write the type of food, the number of servings and the date it was packaged. Rotate food in your freezer so that those which have been in the freezer the longest are the first to be used.

Maintain the storage temperature at 0° F or lower. Keep a freezer thermometer in your freezer and check the temperature frequently.

Blanching Vegetables

Blanching is a process of quickly boiling vegetables for a short period of time. Most people want to skip this

step because they think it is too time consuming. It is, however, essential for top quality frozen vegetables and has several functions. First, it slows enzyme action which can cause flavor, color and texture loss while destroying any microorganisms on the surface of vegetables. Secondly, it brightens the color and helps retard loss of vitamins. And thirdly, it softens vegetables for easier packing.

Blanching is a confusing issue. When do you start timing the process? Can you blanch an entire bushel of beans if you have a big pot? Over blanching results in loss of flavor, color and nutrients, while under blanching stimulates enzyme activity and is worse than no blanching at all. And, to make matter more confusing, there are different blanching times for different vegetables.

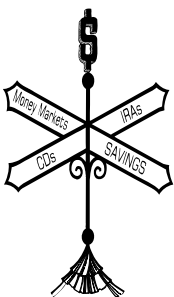
The point to remember when blanching vegetables is to do small amounts at a time. Submerge about 1 pound of cleaned raw food in about 1 gallon of boiling water on a high heat setting.

When the water returns to a boil (about 1 minute) start timing the blanching process. The food must then be rapidly cooled in ice water to prevent overcooking. It may seem like a time consuming step, but the end product will be high quality.

Freeze no more food than you will use within one year. Select food varieties that will freeze well and are ripe and not over mature. Be sure to freeze food promptly after harvest or purchase.

Source: USDA

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR MONEY IN TOUGH TIMES



We are experiencing tough economic times, you may find your money just doesn't go as far as it used to. Some people are faced with smaller paychecks and even job loss. You may feel as if there is little

you can do, everything may feel out of control and you fear the worst may happen -- a very unsettled place to be.

In these uncertain times, you can't control the current economic downturn, but you can control how you react to the economy and make a proactive plan for handling your finances. Barbara O'Neil, Financial

Extension Specialist at Rutgers offer several strategies to help you take control of your personal finances.

Watch Your Spending – In hard economic times, it's wise to live below you means. Easily translated, spend less than you bring home. You can trim a little in all of your spending categories and put money back each

month for a rainy day fund – better known as an emergency fund.

Prepare a Spending Plan – A spending plan is a framework to guide you monthly finances. If you plan your spending and record money as you go, you will gain confidence in your ability to control your cash flow. Write down all fixed expenses (bills that are the same amount each month) and estimate your flexible expenses (bills that are a different amount each month.) Include savings as a fixed expense. Ideally, a plan should balance income and expenses, but if you find yourself short, look at those flexible expenses and begin to trim down. Buy less at the grocery store, cut the lights out when

you leave a room, set your thermostat at 78 or 80 and use ceiling fans. Small changes add up to dollars saved in the long run.

Save Money — You can squeak out a few dollars each week. Empty your change each night, bag your lunch instead of eating out. Put those dollars into a savings account to build a emergency fund.

Consider Professional Advice – If you are nervous about investing money or handling your retirement fund and not sure what to do, consider talking with a professional such as a CPA or a financial advisor. You will need to do your homework to choose a qualified professional who is right for you and

suits your needs.

Take Care of Yourself – Stay healthy and you will eliminate health care cost. It may be a matter of losing weight, exercising, eating better, controlling your diabetes or quit smoking. All will keep you from incurring health care expenses which can add up quickly.

When you take action to be in charge of the things you can financially control, you will feel empowered to keep moving through these hard economic times. And it will make the things you have no control over less intimidating.

Reference: Rutgers Extension

VACATION IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD



This time of the year, many Floridians are thinking about vacations. But with the state of the economy many families do not have to money to take a trip. Vacations can be very costly and may be out of the question.

There are all kinds of vacations available to the family who uses creative thinking and planning. You don't have to take a luxury boat cruise or go on a wild life safari to have a period of rest and relaxation from the daily toils of the job.

Extension Specialist at the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service advise whether you have \$50 to \$500 available to fund your family's fun, you can still manage.

Get your family together and make a list of possible vacations. For instance, you may want to consider one or more mini-vacations. If you use your home as a base you can eliminate the cost of over-night lodging. You can minimize food cost by packing a picnic.

Another option some people enjoy visiting friends or relatives in other

locations. This practice can extend our travel fund if friends or relative can provide lodging. This arrangement can work very well if you are sensitive to their needs and don't overstay your welcome. You can also return the favor when your hosts plan a vacation.

The next step is to determine the amount of money available for your vacation. Then calculate your transportation cost. If you have a car that gets fair gasoline mileage you should be able to make a round trip of up to 300 miles for about \$35 in gas. After you have determined the money available for transportation, identify what you can do and see within that limit.

As you plan these trips, include the children in the discussion and use the experience as an opportunity to teach money management. Kids can help plan and set up a spending budget for the outing or trip. They become more appreciative of the experience and will be less likely to ask for nonessentials as they become aware of the cost involved in taking a vacation.

One technique you can use to identify possible mini-vacations is to sit down with a map, pencil and paper and mark your home on the map. Then draw a circle around your home to

represent the distance you can travel on the amount of money available for transportation or the distance you can go and return in one day. Within this circle of say a 50 to 150 miles, make a list of all the vacation, recreation, or historical spots that you have not visited or would like to visit again. Identify cities within the radius; check maps for areas of special interest. Contact Chambers of Commerce and automobile clubs, or visit your local library for more information on these scenic or recreation spots.

Rank your destinations in this priority order according to places you want most to visit. You will probably be surprised at the number of vacation ideas in your own backyard.

DOING THINGS TOGETHER AS A FAMILY FOR LESS

Our national Extension network, eXtension, came up with a list of activities families can do together for less money. Spending time with children has much more value than high priced events. Here is a list of ideas:

Take advantage of public resources

- Spend time together at a park.
- Go for a hike or bike ride.

- Go for a family picnic.
- Go swimming at a local pool, lake or springs.
- Take advantage of free programs offered by the library, museums and community bands or other free community events.
- Check out books, music, and videos for free from the library

Find cheaper entertainment at home: Help Children Learn New Skills:

- Have a family game night.
- Rent or borrow movies and have a family night at home.
- Bake or cook together as a family.
- Read stories to one another.
- Go on evening walks together.
- Teach children craft skills you enjoy and spend time doing these together.
- Teach children about issues that are important, such as current events or taking care of the environment.

Source: Florida Extension and eXtension

MAKE IT A BRAINY SUMMER



Research shows that many of the skills children learn during the school year are lost in the summer months because they do not have the opportunity to reinforce their learning at home. That old saying of use it or lose it applies to our brains as well our bodies. To keep your children in top notch learning mode during summer vacation, follow these suggestions to provide an enriched summer.

Grades K-3

- ◆ Help children work on classification skills using dinnerware. Ask your child to match and stack dishes of similar sizes and shapes. This same

skill can be practiced with flatware. At the same time, you get a little help with kitchen clean up.

- ◆ Make a list of telephone numbers of friends and relatives your child can call. This helps them practice reading numbers from left to right.
- ◆ Ask your child to look for letters of the alphabet on boxes and cans of food and household supplies. You might ask your child to find three B's or six A's. You'll be building reading skill with this discovery activity.
- ◆ Let your child help sort laundry. Count the number of socks or towels to increase math skills.

Grades 4-5

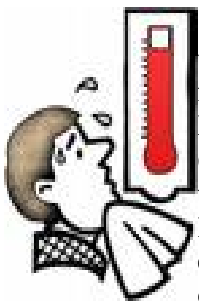
- ◆ Read to your youngster by taking roles in stories and acting out

dramatic poems. Whenever possible, tape record these sessions; then listen to it and enjoy these performances together.

- ◆ To develop imagination and creativity, have your child select four or five pictures from magazines and newspapers, and put them together to tell a story. Ask your child to number the pictures 1,2,3,etc. First, ask them to tell the story with the pictures in numerical order.
- ◆ Exchange notes instead of words at different times during the day – when getting up in the morning, at dinner, or at bedtime – or whenever the noses level becomes too high.

Source: U.S. Department of Education

BEWARE ABOUT SUMMER HEAT



Each year in the US, up to 1,500 people die from excessive heat. Most victims are age 65 or older, which puts this age group at risk. In Florida, we especially need to keep our eyes on the

weather forecast and caution family members to be proactive and keep cool.

The Environmental Protection Agency warns both young children and older adults are at highest risk from excessive heat event. Contributing factors that increase senior citizens' risk are the body's impaired ability to cool, certain medications and lack of air conditioning.

When temperatures soar, our bodies sweat to cool off. If a person doesn't stay hydrated and continues to sweat, the body becomes overloaded. As a result, the person may begin to exhibit symptoms of confusion and the presence of dry, hot, flushed skin. If not treated, heat exhaustion or a heat stroke may occur.

The good news is we can use defensive strategies to reduce risk of heat related illness. The following are good precautions to follow:

- ◆ During high temperatures, stay in air –conditioned buildings. It may mean visiting a library, senior center, or shopping mall.
- ◆ Take a cool shower or bath.
- ◆ Drink lots of water. Stay away from

beverages containing caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar because they contribute to dehydration.

- ◆ Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing that is loose fitting. Clothing made of natural fibers like cotton will allow air to pass through and enhance cooling.
- ◆ If you have a family member who is at-risk, check on them during periods of high temperatures.
- ◆ Call 911 if medical attention is needed.

Reference: EPA