



Family & Consumer News

Dear Consumers:

Spring is quickly turning into summer and another school year is come to an end. Families will be transitioning into summer mode, take advantage of 4-H summer day camps. May is High Blood Pressure Education Month and National Osteoporosis Prevention Month while June is National Dairy Month.

Hope your gardens are doing well. Whether you are canning, freezing, pickling, or making jelly, we are the source of food preservation information. If you haven't had your canner gauge tested lately, bring it down, our new tester takes a matter of minutes.

Sincerely,

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DASH YOUR WAY TO A LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE



May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month, a time to get your blood pressure checked and know your numbers.

Consumers are often confused by products on the market that claim to reduce blood pressure. One proven meal plan is DASH, a researched based guide that can reduce blood pressure.

First conducted in the early 90's the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH), was a scientific dietary study to determine if a diet plan without medication could reduce blood pressure. The study was funded by the National Institute of Health and conducted at Harvard, Duke, John Hopkins and Louisiana State University. Results showed that both men and women eating the DASH plan

experienced significant drop in both their systolic and diastolic blood pressure readings.

The DASH eating plan emphasizes fresh fruit and vegetables and low fat dairy products. It is moderate in total fat and low in saturated fat and cholesterol. It also includes whole grains, poultry, fish and nuts. It also recommends reducing salt and sodium intake.

Starting on the DASH eating plan is easy. It requires no special foods and no recipes to follow. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- Reduce your intake of sodium and foods high in sodium.
- Make gradual changes like adding a serving of fruit or vegetables at lunch and dinner.

- Gradually increase your intake of fat free and low fat dairy products to 3 servings a day.
- If you eat large portions of meat, cut them back by a half or third at each meal.
- Try two or more meatless meals each week.
- Try serving casseroles and stir-fry dishes, which have more vegetables, grains and dry beans.
- Eat baked or grilled fish during the week but be careful of bottled marinades, they are often high in sodium.
- Eat fresh fruit, raw vegetables, or low fat and fat free yogurt for snacks.

- Use herbs and spices to enhance the flavor of your foods instead of sodium.
- Limit your meals eaten out, since most prepared food is high in sodium.

Make one or two changes each week. Eat a variety of foods and cut back on serving sizes. For more information about the DASH eating plan and recipes, visit the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's "Your Guide to Controlling High Blood Pressure" at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/index.html and click on Prevention.

If you are under a doctor's care for high blood pressure, be sure you take your medication and follow the

doctors' recommendations. Your efforts to reduce sodium intake will help your overall health.

Currently, we are conducting a lesson series, **Keep the Pressure Down**. Join us at the Extension office on Thursday evening at 6:00pm for new information and handouts. We are meeting in an informal setting to learn about dietary changes and physical activity to combat high blood pressure. We go into details of the DASH diet.

Reference: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT OSTEOPOROSIS



May is National Osteoporosis Prevention Month, a serious bone disease that affects 44 million Americans. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation; 10 million Americans currently live with the disease and another 34 million are estimated to have low bone density. Learn all you can to reduce your risk.

NOF wants consumers to know bones are made up of several major components. Collagen, a protein that gives bones a flexible framework and a calcium-phosphate mineral complex that make bones hard and strong. You may think bones are solid and set for life. To the contrary, bone is living tissue needing proper nutrition to stay healthy. Children and teens form new bone faster than they lose old bone. As we age, bone building slows down and sometimes can't keep up with bone loss.

Osteoporosis occurs when bones become thin and weaken. Although it is 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 lose bone more rapidly than men. 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.

Building strong bones can be your best defense against developing osteoporosis. The first step is getting a balance 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. Be sure to get calcium-rich foods in your diet each day. Low fat dairy foods are an excellent source of calcium, consume three servings each day. (Look at the dairy article in the newsletter for ideas on increasing your intake of dairy foods.) Dark leafy greens and broccoli are

considered a good source of calcium, so eat them often. In recent years, more food products have been fortified with calcium such as orange juice and cereal. You need to read the food labels to determine if the product is fortified.

Since our bodies only absorb about 500 mg. at a time, it's important to get a food source of calcium three times a day. If you take a calcium supplement, only take 500 mg. at each meal to meet your calcium needs. If you can't eat enough foods high in calcium, read the ingredient list before you purchase calcium pills. Calcium citrate and calcium carbonate are best absorbed by our bodies. Also look for supplements that include vitamin D.

A great 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 2-4 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 as a key that unlocks the door to allow calcium into your bones. Dairy foods are fortified with vitamin D, other foods include egg yolks, saltwater fish and liver. Your body manufactures its own vitamin D when you are in direct sunlight. Usually 10 to 15 minutes exposure of hands and arm several times a week is adequate.

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 exercise 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.

Small hand weight 1-2 lbs. are a great way to get, find exercises specifically designed for bone strengthening.

It is never too early to take steps to prevent osteoporosis. Get enough calcium rich foods and include exercise as part of your daily routine will go a long way to help you maintain strong bones.

Reference: National Osteoporosis Foundation

CELEBRATE NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH



Eating habits have a profound impact on our overall health. For years, we've known eating habits are

formed early in life. That is why it is so important for kids to learn to eat a variety of foods.

Research shows that most kids do not get enough calcium in their diets. Calcium is a nutrient that helps to make bones and teeth strong and healthy. It is used to build bone mass during childhood and early adulthood.

Calcium needs are highest during the childhood and teen years due to the fact that bones are growing fast. Unfortunately, most children and teens do not meet calcium recommendations. National nutrition surveys show that only 19% of teen girls and 52% of teen boys get the recommended amounts of calcium.

In fact, teenage girls only average about 740 mg. of calcium per day, well below the amount needed for their normal growth and development.

Ideas for High Calcium Meals and Snacks

Breakfast

- * Pour low-fat or fat-free milk over your breakfast cereal
- * Have a cup of yogurt
- * Add low-fat or fat-free milk instead of water to oatmeal and hot cereal

Lunch

- * Add low-fat or fat-free milk instead of water to soups
- * Add cheese to a sandwich
- * Have a glass of milk instead of soda
- * Make mini-pizzas or macaroni and cheese

Snack

- * Try flavored milk like chocolate or strawberry
- * Have a frozen yogurt
- * Make a "smoothie" with fruit, ice and milk
- * Dip fruits and vegetables into yogurt

Dinner

- * Make a salad with dark green, leafy vegetables, such as spinach
- * Serve broccoli or cooked, dry beans as a side dish
- * Try pudding made with low-fat milk for dessert.

How Much Calcium

You may be confused as to how to 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. So, how much is in a food item when the nutrition label gives a %, but you need to get a number of milligrams, say 1,200 for example. A simple step is to add a zero on the end of the number and you will arrive at the amount of calcium in a food. Knowing this can help you keep track of your total intake of calcium each day.

Use the following examples to help you learn how to interpret a food label for calcium.

15% = 150mg

20% = 200mg

30% = 300mg

Source: National Institute of Health

Recommended Amounts of Calcium	
Age	Calcium Recommended Each Day (in mgs)
1-3 years	500 mg
4-8 years	800 mg
9-18 years	1,300 mg
Adults 19-50 yrs.	1,000 mg
Adults 51-70 yrs.	1,200 mg
Pregnant women under 19 yrs.	1,300 mg
Pregnant women over 19 yrs.	1,300 mg

PRESERVE SUMMER GARDENS



Gardens are beginning to overflow with fresh vegetables and it won't be

long before summer fruits are ready for picking. Whether you can freeze, make pickles or jellies, preserving the summer's bounty is easier than you think. Any food preservation method, done

correctly, will help you store good quality food for use all year long.

Home canning has changed greatly since it was introduced more than 100 years ago. Changes arise

from scientific research and new technologies have resulted in safer, higher quality products. In recent years, there even has been improvements in equipment resulting in newer, safer canning directions.

Pressure canning vegetables and other low acid foods like meat, fish and poultry is still the only safe canning method. Your grandmother probably boiled her jars of beans for hours, but you can't kill botulism spores at 202°F and that is the highest temperature you are going to get if you boil a pot all day long. Pressure canners raise the temperature inside the jars to 240°F, a temperature high enough over a period of time, it will destroy botulism spores. The recommended time is different for each food and jar size.

If you have a pressure canner with a gauge, it needs to be tested each year for accuracy before you begin any canning. We have a gauge tester at the Extension office and you are welcome to call and make an appointment for testing. If we know in advance, we can have the tester ready, and it will not take much time to determine the accuracy of your gauge.

Freezing food is fast and safe. It is more expensive when you consider running a freezer year round. The extreme cold simply retards the growth of microorganisms and slows down the chemical changes that affect the quality and causes food to spoil.

The amount of food you freeze is limited by freezer space. If you only have a refrigerator and freezer combination, you are very limited

and may only 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 ¾ 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.

Jelly and pickles require time, patience and a quality recipe. Too many things can go wrong that result in a less desirable product or even spoilage. Get directions from a reliable preservation source and don't take short cuts.

The Madison County Extension office has complete and accurate instructions for all food preservation procedures. Call or stop by the office for copies.

Source: UF Extension, GA Extension

TEENAGE YEARS ARE A TIME TO DEVELOP MONEY SKILLS



During the summer months, teens often take on a part-time job; even pre-teens earn monthly babysitting and mowing lawns. These work experiences give adults in their lives the opportunity to help kids learn and practice money management skills. A JumpStart study (2006) of high school students showed approximately 60% of students learned money skills at home. Since financial literacy isn't always taught in school, it is up to families to make sure kids become money smart.

Help kids create a spending plan that includes savings and spending. Give them room to make decisions on how they will spend their money, but guide them toward sound money practices. Suggest they write up a monthly budget and keep track of daily spending. Start

the habit of paying yourself first by putting money into a savings account when the paycheck is cashed. If the paycheck is direct deposited, money can be transferred into a saving account before any spending takes place.

If your teen gets a debit card, teach them to record all deposits and withdrawals. A very common mistake many teens make is to overspend when using a debit card. Fees and penalties can add up quickly, an experience they can avoid if they keep record of their spending. It's these early habits that impact future credit scores and their ability to attain a lower interest rate when borrowing money.

Teens need to take responsibility for their own money and begin to pay for expenses. When teens pay for their own gas, they become more conservative about hopping in the car to make needless trips. When teens pay for their own clothes, they have the opportunity to

develop consumer skills in comparison shopping. Teens can save for major high school expenses like class rings, senior pictures and prom.

If a car purchase is in the picture, parents may have to foot the bill since a teen would probably not be approved for a loan. It is a good idea, however, to set up a monthly repayment plan to reimburse the parents. It gives a teen the opportunity to experience monthly payments for an item, something they will be doing as an adult. It is a maturing experience to be responsible for paying off a loan, even if it is to a parent.

Money skills, like any other skill can be learned through hands-on experience. Give your teens the opportunity to practice managing money before they reach adulthood and have to be on their own.

DOING THINGS TOGETHER WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK



With summer right around the corner, you may find yourself outdoor more

often, taking weekend trips or even a vacation. If you are on a tight budget, recreational activities and trips need to take a back seat when it comes to family expenses. So, the question becomes—How do you have fun without spending too much money? Get the family together and brain storm ideas that are low or no cost. Here are a few suggestions from Extension educators around the country.

- ☆ Spend time together at a park or local community festival.
- ☆ Go to a state park and hike or have a family picnic.
- ☆ Take an afternoon and go swimming at a local lake, spring or beach.

- ☆ Take advantage of free programs offered by libraries, if you are willing to drive a short distance, larger communities often have community orchestra concerts and other events.
- ☆ Check out books, music and videos for free from the library. Make a habit of everyone reading at night, it is a great way to keep up reading skills during summer vacation.
- ☆ Start a family game night. Games create a powerful bond between family members and keep the brain exercised.
- ☆ Rent or borrow movies and have a family movie night at home. Check local listings for family movies during the week.
- ☆ Cook meals as a family. Grill food and let kids help prepare salads and set up the table.
- ☆ Grow a family garden. Vegetables are nutritious and

very low cost. If you grow too much, be sure to take some to the neighbors and elderly friends. When kids are part of feeding the community, they feel empowered. If flowers are your preferred crop, kids can help cut and deliver small bouquets to family and friends.

- ☆ Teach children craft skills you enjoy and spend time doing these together.
- ☆ Teach children about issues that are important such as the environment or local food pantry. Volunteer as a family for the causes you believe in.

Reference: Extension

BEWARE OF 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. Facts that increase senior citizen's risk are the body's impaired ability to cool, certain medications and lack of air conditioning are all contributing

factors that put this older population at higher risk.

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