Dear Consumers:

Its summer and time seems to be moving by fast. School is out and many of you are taking vacations and trying to stay cool. Hurricane season has begun and you can get materials from our office to help you prepare ahead of time.

The articles in this newsletter will help you survive the season. Have a good summer.

Sincerely,

Diann Douglas
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MAKE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES WHEN TRAVELING

Summer trips and vacations often find you ordering at a drive-through window of a fast food restaurant. Although these foods are quick to order, they are often high in fat and calories, while leaving you short on nutrients. When traveling, don’t leave your healthful eating plan at home when you hit the road. It only takes a little thoughtful planning to make healthy food choices when you travel.

The next time you take a trip, the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics suggest you use the following healthy suggestions:

- When ordering food, try to include different food groups: meat, dairy, fruit, and vegetables. Most fast food restaurants give you healthier alternatives.
- If you order tacos or burritos, ask for salsa and leave the cheese off, you’ll save calories.
- Top a pizza with chicken, Canadian bacon or lean ham and vegetables. Try loading up on bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, tomatoes, broccoli, spinach, artichoke heart. Or order a plain pizza and add a side salad.
- Ask for a grilled chicken sandwich instead of the fried version. Some fast food restaurants now offer a grilled version of the chicken nuggets.
- If you order a burger, make it a smaller-sized version, add lettuce and tomatoes and skip the mayonnaise.
- If you order fries, share them with a friend or better yet, find a substitute for fries. Many restaurants now offer an alternative such as a baked potato or a salad so ask for an alternative.
- Low fat chocolate milk is a great substitute for a milkshake; you’ll get calcium and protein without the fat.
- Drink water or skim milk instead of sodas or sugary drinks.

A great option when taking short trips is to pack your lunch. Most major highways have picnic tables alongside restroom facilities. This means you pack a cooler with adequate ice to keep any perishable foods safe. To avoid vending machines, foods that don’t need refrigeration may be...
packed for snacks. Try these quick, safe and easy foods to take on the road.
- Single-serving boxes of cereal, trail mix, energy bars, granola bars, bagels, muffins or crackers.
- Raw fruit and vegetables including carrot and celery sticks, grapes, single-serve applesauce or mixed fruit. Any whole fruits such as apples, peaches or bananas are a convenient snack.
- Peanut butter can be used for sandwiches, take along a loaf of bread and single serving jellies or honey. It also works well as a snack when spread on celery or apples.
- Don’t forget nuts and single-serve packages of cheese and crackers.
- Bottled water and juice boxes also travel well.

Reference: American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

### STAY HYDRATED THIS SUMMER

With the heat and humidity levels of summer, we tend to forget how quickly a person can become dehydrated. During these days of high temperatures, you need to be cautious about dehydration which can lead to serious complications. Water, an essential nutrient, is the best and easiest choice to keep hydrated during summer heat. Drinking water throughout the day is especially important in our hot Florida weather. Normal everyday activity will produce a loss of 8 to 12 cups of water per day; this loss needs to be replaced. Experts suggest men need 12 cups of fluids daily and women need about 9 cups. Many factors, however, play a role and may increase the need for more water. Exercise, hot weather, caffeine and alcohol will increase fluid loss, which means you need to increase your intake of fluid.

Nutritionists recommend most of your fluid needs should be met by drinking water. To ensure an adequate amount, drink a minimum amount of 8 cups of water each day. The rest of your fluid requirements can be met from other food sources like 100% juice and milk. Even fruits and vegetables can help hydrate, watermelon for example is an excellent source of water. Be aware, however, caffeinated beverages (tea and coffee) and soda do not increase your body fluid because the caffeine in these drinks acts as a diuretic and actually causes a water loss.

Keeping hydrated is as simple as drinking plain water from the tap. Drink water throughout the day to maintain a fluid balance. Getting an adequate daily intake of water is as important to a balanced diet as eating a variety of foods from all of the food groups. Extension Specialist suggest the following:
- Start your day drinking a glass of water.
- Carry water with you at all times: drink frequently.
- Use water fountains in public places, take a drink whenever you see one.
- For every cup of caffeinated coffee, tea or soda, drink a cup of water.
- If you have a choice, drink decaffeinated coffee, tea or soda, do so.
- In a restaurant, order a glass of water with a lemon instead of a caffeinated drink.
- Drink a glass of water before each meal or snack.
- For a refreshing dessert, add a scoop of low-fat sorbet to seltzer water.

Reference: UF Extension

### HOMEMADE ICE CREAM WITHOUT RAW EGGS

July is National Ice Cream Month and what better way to celebrate summer than with a bowl of this delicious frozen food. Many families will get out the ice cream churn and freeze a batch. Old family recipes call for raw eggs, which add a rich flavor to the texture, but in recent years, food safety experts have discouraged the use of raw eggs, which has resulted in the development of new recipes using cooked egg or no eggs at all. Protect yourself from the danger of possible Salmonella infection by using a homemade ice cream recipe made with a cooked egg base, made without eggs or made with pasteurized egg substitute.

Egg mixtures used in making cooked bases for ice cream are safe if they reach 160°F when tested with a thermometer. At this temperature, the mixture should coat a metal spoon.

Try this recipe for a cool treat:

**Frozen Custard Ice Cream**

6 eggs
2 cups milk
¼ cup sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
2 cups whipping cream
1 tablespoon vanilla
Crushed ice
Rock salt

In a medium saucepan beat together eggs, milk, sugar and salt. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is thick enough to coat a metal spoon with a thin film and reaches at least 160°F.

Cool quickly by setting pan in ice or cold water and stirring for a few minutes.

Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, at least one hour.

When ready to freeze, pour chilled custard, whisking cream and vanilla into a 1-gallon ice cream freezer can.

Freeze according to manufacturer’s directions using six parts ice to one part rock salt. Transfer to freezer containers and freeze until firm.

Source: Henneman, A. University of Nebraska Extension, Recipe: American Egg Board

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PROTECT YOUR FOOD DURING A POWER OUTAGE

Summer weather brings thunder storms and we have been experiencing our share. Although the rain is welcome these storms often cause a power outage. Most electricity is restored fairly quickly but you may find yourself without power for several hours. Consumers risk losing food stored in the refrigerator and freezer during long periods of power loss and it can have a significant drain on your wallet if you have to replace all that food. If you find yourself in a situation where the power is out, USDA has recommendations you can take to safe guard your refrigerated and frozen food.

If the power fails, do not open the freezer. I know it is hard to resist, but keep the door closed! Our first instinct is to check on the food, but opening the door will raise the internal temperature and speed up thawing. Food stays frozen longer if the freezer is full, well insulated and located in a cool area. A half-filled freezer will keep foods frozen only about 24 hours. Cover the freezer with blankets to help hold in the cold; but don’t cover the air vent.

If power is not to be resumed within one to two days or if the freezer is not back to normal operation in that time, use dry ice to keep the temperature below freezing and to prevent deterioration of spoilage of frozen foods. To locate dry ice, check with companies that transport food. When dry ice is obtained quickly after a power interruption, 50 pounds of dry ice should keep the temperature of food in a full 20 cubic freezer below freezing for three to four days.

**Refreezing Thawed Food**

The first rule of thumb is, “When in doubt, throw it out.” It is not unusual for me to get calls each summer concerning a freezer crisis and half frozen food. Some partially thawed foods can be refrozen; however, the texture will not be as good. Extension Specialist in food safety recommends the following:

- **Meat**—Refreeze meat and poultry only if the temperature is 40°F or below and if the color and odor are good. Check each package and discard if signs of spoilage such as an off color or order are present.
- **Vegetables**—Refreeze only if ice crystals are still present or if the freezer temperature is 40°F or below.
- **Fruit**—Refreeze if they show no signs of spoilage. Thawed fruits may be used in cooking or making jellies, jams and preserves. Fruits survive thawing with the least damage to quality.
- **Cooked foods and shell fish**—Refreeze only if ice crystals are still present or the freezer is 40°F or below. If the condition is questionable, throw the food out.
- **Ice cream**—if partially thawed, throw it out. The texture after thawing is not acceptable. If its temperature reaches above 40°F it could be unsafe.

During the summer months, it may be a good practice to lower the temperature of your freezer to make sure food is frozen and at a colder temperature. This will give you more time if the power does fail.

Source: USDA

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEND

Most of us at some time or another will buy something on the spur of the moment, without a plan or though. Credit cards help make this practice easy. Money experts estimate that only three out of ten purchases are decided upon in advance, while about half of all purchases are made completely on impulse.

Think of the times you go to the store for one or two items in mind and check out with a full cart. Or you run to a mall on the weekend just to look and leave with a trunk full of sale items. After all, it’s a bargain if you never wear it. Or so that little voice inside would have you believe.

It takes a new shopping strategy to gain control of that compulsive habit we call impulse buying. A shopping list is essential whether it is a mental one or a well though out written plan. Your grocery list as well as your household supplies, gifts, clothing, appliance or home furnishings list should allow some flexibility so you can switch and save, but it is a guide to keep you on track with your purchases.

Extension Family and Consumer Economics Specialists suggest you ask yourself three basic questions to help you separate impulse buying from planned buying.

1. **Do I need it?** The answer to this question can immediately eliminate impulse buying.
2. **Will I use it?** The answer to this question can be misleading. It is easy to
convince yourself that you will use most anything, but further analysis will help clarify the answer. Add the questions: “How will I use it?” and “How soon will I use it?”

3. **Can I afford it?** This probably is the true test. You can answer this question by asking another. “What will I have to give up if I buy this item now?” The answer to these questions separates impulse items from necessities. They tell if you can have those things you could live without but that would be more fun to have.

To avoid the drain that is caused by impulse buying:
- **Shop alone.** It is usually easier to say no to yourself than to a spouse, child or friend.
- **Shop when you are refreshed.** If you are tired, you won’t be as willing to take time to compare prices, to consider uses and to answer the three questions that work out impulse buying.
- **Shop for food when you are hungry.** Hungry shoppers tend to buy more.
- **Shop less often.** Consumers who have difficulty controlling impulse buying can avoid the temptation by making fewer shopping trips.
- **Shop sales, but be alert!** Just because it is on sale does not mean it is a good buy for you or your family. Answer the three questions about sale items.

Modify your shopping behavior to eliminate impulse buying from your spending patterns.

Reference: UF Extension

**MAKE BACK TO SCHOOL A FAMILY PROJECT**

Not sure where summer time goes, but August means it’s time to gear up for a new school year. For most families, getting the kids ready to start a new school year makes a huge dent in the family budget. This year, the weekend of August 1-3 will be tax free weekend in Florida and August 1-2 in Georgia, a great time to take advantage of the savings.

One of the first and most obvious categories for back-to-school spending is clothes and shoes. Shopping for new back-to-school clothes is a necessity in more cases because the kids have usually grown over the summer months and may no longer fit in their school clothing from the previous year. It is important for families to make the most of your clothing dollars.

First, find out what each child needs by taking a clothing inventory to determine what clothes can be worn or passed on to another child. Make a shopping list for new purchases needed to fill the wardrobe gaps and plan shopping trips to take advantage of sales. If your child is experiencing a growth spurt, it may be wise to purchase a few items now and buy larger sizes in a few months. Since it is so hot when school begins, many kids will not be wearing long pants for a few months. Hold off purchasing long pants because your child may be in a different size in three to four months when the weather cools down.

School supplies are another large expenditure in back-to-school preparation. If you can get a list of supplies needed, then plan to take advantage of sales. By using this strategy, you will be able to save as much as 20 to 40% on school supplies purchased during back to school sales. Anticipating the child’s needs for supplies throughout the year and buying them at one time will save money in the long run, if you have storage space.

Planning for back to school expenses helps keep you on track with purchases that won’t put you into debt for months to come. Let your children be a part of the planning process, they will begin to develop money skills for the future. It is also a good lesson to know that planned spending helps you get the most for your dollars without overspending. This means, back-to-school purchases can’t exceed a certain amount without getting the family into debt and you must stay within the amount of money budgeted for school.

Have children check advertisements for sales and compare prices before the big shopping day. They can prioritize the items on their list according to immediate needs and a wish list of wants. You may discover it’s necessary to make some purchases now and postpone some until next month. Getting kids involved in the planning, selection and purchasing helps them become more financially responsible and aware of family finances.

When you go to the stores, take along a calculator and let your children keep a running total as they select and put items into the shopping cart. It is a great exercise in learning about price comparison and getting the best value for your money. Planning and working together will help your money go further and give each family member a sense of accomplishment because you’ve stuck with a spending plan.

Reference: UF Extension