Dear Consumers:

Spring is quickly turning into summer and another school year will come to an end. Families will be transitioning into summer mode, take advantage of 4-H summer day camps and camp Cherry Lake. 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. We will be conducting a food preservation workshop in June, look for details in this newsletter.

Sincerely,

Diann Douglas
Extension Agent IV – CED
Family and Consumer Sciences

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

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

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 Amy Porter, Executive Director of 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.

According to the NOF, 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, bones 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.

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. 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 this 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 500mg 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 500mg 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 52mg 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 arms 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 weights 1-2lbs are a great way to begin, 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
It’s National Dairy Month and the one thing you need to know is that you never outgrow your need for milk! Dairy foods supply 75% of the calcium in the American diet; it is a nutrient that plays an important role in maintaining healthy bones and teeth.

Eating habits have a profound impact on our overall health, eating habits are formed early in life and continue throughout a lifetime. That is why it is so important for kids to learn to eat a variety of foods. Research show 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. Adult too, need to get an adequate intake of calcium and Vitamin D.

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 740mg of calcium per day, well below the amount needed for their normal growth and development.

For a number of years now, nutritionists have recommended adults over fifty get 1200mg of calcium. Bones tend to lose density as we age, so this age group’s recommended daily allowance of calcium is almost as great as the teenager. Researchers now know these levels help reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

If you are worried about the calories and fat in dairy food, look again. There are so many low fat and fat free dairy foods on the market today you have a large selection at the grocery store. To boost your calcium intake try these suggestions:

**Breakfast**
- 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

### Recommended Amounts of Calcium Per Day

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<tr>
<td>4-8 years</td>
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<td>9-18 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults 50+</td>
<td>1,200mg</td>
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Source: Extension and National Dairy Council

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**READING FOOD LABELS HELP**

To help you add up the amount of calcium each day, check out the food labels on packaging. Look at the % Daily Value (DV) next to the calcium number on the food label. Try to eat or drink foods with 20% of more DV for calcium, these foods are a good source of calcium.

**PRESERVING FOOD IS A SCIENCE**

Gardens will soon be overflowing with fresh vegetables and it won’t be long before summer fruits are ready for picking. Whether you can or freeze, make pickles or jellies, preserving the summer’s bounty is easier than you think. Any food preservation method, done correctly, can help you store good quality food for use all year long.

Home canning has changed greatly since it was introduced more than 170 years ago. Changes arise from scientific research and new technologies have resulted in safer, higher quality products. In recent years, there has even 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 212°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 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.

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, join us on June 17th for a workshop, see the details below. For all food preservation information, call or stop by the office.

Reference: UF Extension, GA Extension

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**FOOD PRESERVATION BASICS WORKSHOP**

Come join us on June 17th at the Madison County Extension Office for a Food Preservation Workshop to learn recommended procedures for canning and freezing. We will be having two different time slots that you can choose from, 9:30AM and a 6:00PM. Call 850-973-4138 to register by June 13th and let us know which time slot you will be attending.

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**SUMMER FUN ON A BUDGET**

With summer’s arrival, you may find yourself outdoor more often, taking weekend trips or even a vacation. Given the recent downturn in the economy, 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 garden as a family project. Vegetables are nutrition 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 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 even. Facts that increase senior citizens’ risks 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

REDUCE TELEVISION TIME

Television watching takes time away from other activities and opportunities to read and learn. Over the summer months, many school age children will lose a portion of the knowledge they gained during the school year and TV is a contributing actor. What can we do in our own families to decrease the amount of television they watch? Here are some simple ideas developed by the National Extension network.

- Get the TV out of the bedroom—According to the Faiser Family Foundation Report, 1/3 of 2-7 year olds and 2.3 of 8-18 year olds have a TV in their bedroom. Allowing a child to have a TV in their bedroom makes it easy to watch too much TV as well as watch it unsupervised.
- Set clear limits and be a good TV role model—Rules like no TV on school nights or no TV after 8 PM, etc. Enforce the rules, don’t waiver. Be a good media role model and set limits for the adults in the house as well.
- Plan how much TV you and your family are going to watch—Let children have some input into the decision, but come to an agreement on how much TV, video watching, video games and computer use will be allowed. Post your planned schedule on the refrigerator.
- Make a list of activities you want to do instead of watching TV—Involve the kids and come up with things you can do as a family like riding bikes or a game of ball in the backyard.
- Keep the TV off—We often watch TV out of habit and flip around the channels never watching a show. Turn on music for background noise and turn the TV on only when the show you want to watch is on.
- Eat together as a family without the TV—Some families now buy TV’s or TV furniture before they buy a dining room table. Meals should be a time for family interaction, not silence while you watch a show.
- Watch with your children—When the children do watch television, watch the show with them. Talk with them about the characters they see on TV as well as the advertising they see (a great teachable moment about persuasive advertising).

References: eXtension and National Institute on Media and the Family