



FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Newsline

March 2009

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March is National Nutrition Month®

National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Moms, especially, agree that feeding their family well is very important, said Deana Hildebrand, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension nutrition specialist.

“While moms would like to get their children to eat healthier, they say there are many obstacles that get in the way,” Hildebrand said. “One of the main obstacles is a busy family schedule that makes it difficult to eat together and doesn’t leave enough time to shop or cook. Other obstacles include the family members’ food and taste preferences or the family is on a limited budget.”

Another top concern for moms is that children are not consuming enough fruits and vegetables. Rounding out the top three concerns are picky eaters and kids eating too much junk food.

So what is a mom to do? First, make mealtime family time. Try to have one meal per day together. If busy schedules prevent this, aim for at least one meal per week together. Eating meals as a family can actually improve a child’s food habits.

Involve the family in meal planning and preparation. View your kitchen as a learning laboratory or classroom. Hildebrand said children are more likely to eat foods that they have helped to prepare.

“It’s very important for parents to be good role models for their kids. Healthy eating is a lifestyle, not a fad and it needs to be a family activity that starts early on,” she said.

In an effort to get variety into family meals, try to

include one new food or recipe each week. Some of these new things are sure to become family favorites.

Hildebrand said to try new varieties of fruits such as mangoes or clementine’s as a way of enticing children to eat more fruits. To make fruits easier to eat, cut them into bite-sized pieces and serve with a yogurt dipping sauce.

When shopping, opt for fresh, quality products when choosing foods for your family. Fresher foods provide higher amounts of essential nutrients and have better taste when they are at their peak. Also, select seasonal fruits and vegetables in order to stretch food dollars. If fresh is not an option, remember canned and frozen fruits and vegetables provide similar amounts of nutrients and may cost less.

Most all children love to snack, and keeping a stash of healthy snacks on hand is important. Keep these snacks in key places such as your purse, the car or the diaper bag.

“If you have quick and easy snacks available, you’re much less likely to eat unhealthy options when you’re on the go,” she said.

With the busy and hectic schedules many families face, moms may have to think creatively in order for the family to eat together often. For example, have a tailgate picnic before or after a child’s sporting event or practice.

“Good nutrition is essential and National Nutrition Month® is a good time to seriously focus on what your family is eating,” Hildebrand said. “For addition information on planning healthy and tasty meals, go to www.MyPyramid.gov.”

County Association Meeting

We will meet on Tuesday, March 10th at the Blaine County fairgrounds for our Spring Association Meeting. Serving as hostess – Jolly Workers; Decorations provided by Domestic Engineers, and registration by Pleasant Valley. We will have a potluck meal with the meat/main dish provided by Jolly Workers. Pleasant Valley will be bringing salads & vegetables and Domestic Engineers the desserts. Remember to bring three door prizes for our meeting. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. with Call to order at 6:00 p.m. Hope to see a good group present!

Farm Safety Day – April 23rd

Once again we are asking each group to provide 10 dozen cookies for our Farm Safety Day on April 23rd. Volunteers will also be appreciated that day to help with serving the meal, snacks and monitor students at different locations. We will be asking for volunteers at our Spring meeting.



Hosting NW District 2010 Meeting

I will be meeting with the other Extension Educators to start plans for this upcoming meeting. Do we want to propose a location in Watonga? Please let me know your ideas at our meeting on March 10th. We would need a luncheon location for about 150 and 6-8 smaller meeting rooms. One level and adequate parking is another plus.

Auction Basket Donations

To help start funding needs for the 2010 District meeting, we are asking that each group donate a gift basket to be auctioned at the district meeting to be held in Guymon. I will be attending the meeting and your basket needs to be at the Extension Office by March 16th (or you may bring to our county meeting on March 10th).

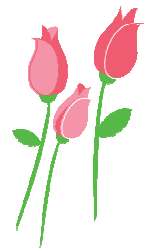
Leader Lesson

Our lesson for April will be “Gardening in Oklahoma/Xeriscaping”. We will be learning about a Xeriscape garden and how to incorporate lower water usage in your current garden. The lesson will be taught at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 26th at the fairgrounds.

The lesson for May will be presented Thursday, April 30th, 10 a.m. (Please note this is a date change due to Farm Safety being held on our regular day). “Passing Down the Dishes” is our topic. We will learn about the inheritance of untitled property.

Thanks for our Volunteers

Thanks for volunteering and assisting at the Farm to You exhibit. Assisting that day were Pat Profitt and Barbara Sinclair from our OHCE Association. Our Farm to You was featured on *Sunup* this past Saturday (Feb. 28th). Approximately 350 children toured the exhibit and over 30 people volunteered during the day-long event.



OHCE Week

OHCE week will be celebrated May 3 – 9, 2009. Make some plans to celebrate our organization and share some of our information with prospective members.

Financial Information Meeting

Everyone is invited to attend a special meeting Tuesday, April 7th, 2 p.m. at the Watonga Public Library.

Guest speaker will be Eileen St Pierre. She is the new Personal Financial Specialist for OSU Cooperative Extension. She will be speaking on “Investing and Saving during Turbulent Times”. The meeting is free and open to everyone.



Nine Sure Ways to Save Money

Audrey Liddil

1. **Know the different between wants and needs.**

We play a game with the clients that I work with and have them write down 13 things they can't live without. Then they par that list down to eight. After a game like this you will have a good idea of what you truly need.

2. **Don't go "shopping".**

If you don't go shopping you won't spend money. The less often you go to the store the more money you will save. If you shop with a plan and a list of items needed you can get in and out of a store quickly with just those items purchased. Each time we go to the store we are subject to advertising for things we do not need. Learn to ignore advertising for stuff you don't need whether in the store, in newspapers, in magazines or TV and radio. If shopping is filling a need other than acquiring needed goods and servings, look at why you shop. Some people shop to socialize, for a reward, as an antidote to depression, to booster self-esteem or self-assertion and status. Shop for the right reason.



3. **Take care of what you have.**

There is one thing we all have that we want to last a long time – our bodies. Simple attention to the proven preventative health practices will save money. Good diet, exercise, adequate rest, needed immunizations and proper dental care will go a long way to helping to keep our bodies healthy. Apply that same principle to the upkeep of all your possessions. Remember that everything we own, owns us. In time and energy expended we are giving away the time we have on earth to care for what we own. Decide today if it is worth your time to possess the items you own.

4. **Wear it out.**

What's the last item you actually wore out? We discard into landfills items that still may be perfectly usable. Think how much money you would save if you simply decided to use things even 20 percent longer, and give away usable items to charity.

5. **Do it yourself.**

Learn to do as many items that you need done as possible. Take classes to learn new skills that would help you be more self-reliant. What you can't do, hire competent people to do.

6. **Anticipate your needs.**

With enough planning you will not need to buy many items until they go on sale -20 to 50 percent off the regular price. Anticipating needs also eliminates one of the biggest threats to your frugality: impulse buying.

7. **Research value, quality, durability and multiple use.**

Don't just be a bargain shopper and automatically buy the cheapest item available. Durability is critical for something you plan to use the next 20 years.

8. **Get it for less.**

There are numerous ways to hunt for bargains. *Comparison shop by phone or check on the internet.* The more educated you are about the product and the more specific you can be about the exact make or model you want, the more successful your bargain-hunting will be. Get at least three prices from different stores for large-ticket items.

Check mail order and email discounters.

Bargain. You can ask for discounts for paying cash, for less-than-perfect items, and for items already marked down. You can ask for discounts anywhere, anything – nothing ventured, nothing gained. *But it used.* You may be surprised at the high quality of much "pre-owned" merchandise. As a matter of fact, donating brand-new items to thrift stores is one way that shopaholics justify excess purchases.

9. **Finally, stop using money**

and the items bought with money to impress other people.

Source: University of Idaho Extension – Two Cents Tips Newsletter, January 2009

Clean & Safe

Why home-brewed cleaning products can be a risky way to economize

When it comes to health and hygiene, cleaning products are a necessity, not a luxury. In an economy where everyone is looking for ways to save money, it's tempting to consider creating your own cleaning products. It may sound like a good idea, but there could be serious safety implications.

- **Labels:** Homemade cleaning products aren't stored in properly labeled containers! While you may feel confident that you know what's in them, consider the fact that a child or a pet may get a hold of them when you're not around. How would other members of the household know what's inside or what to do in an emergency if there's no label with safety instructions?
- **Testing standards for safety:** Commercial products are tested to meet strict government safety standards, while alternative cleaners are not tested or held to any standards. Testing ensures that the chemicals are compatible and will remain stable over time. A homemade mixture may not be stable for storage and could even become a breeding ground for bacteria.
- **Testing standards for use:** Untested homemade mixtures may have unforeseen consequences, such as damaging your kitchen counters or stripping the finish from your brand-new wood floors.
- **Secure storage containers:** Child-resistant packaging, generally not used for homemade cleaners, is essential for the safety of your family. An ingredient may be labeled as "natural" but that doesn't mean it's safe for ingestion by children or pets.

A better way to economize is to look for sales, use coupons or purchase cleaning products in bulk. Many bulk sizes are packaged with a corresponding smaller, refillable version of the product. If your choice doesn't come that way – and/or you want to keep the cleaner in multiple locations – purchase a small size and refill the container as necessary. That way, no matter where you use the product, it'll be properly labeled in case of an emergency.

March 15 – 21 is National Poison Prevent Week. It's the perfect time to review the way cleaning products are handled.

Guidelines include:

- ✓ **Close cleaning product caps securely.** Even child-resistant packaging doesn't work if the container isn't properly closed.
- ✓ **Lock products up.** Store them in a location that's away from children, pets, and food. Install child-resistant locks on cabinets and doors.
- ✓ **Keep cleaning products in their original containers.** If an accident occurs, the label provides information concerning the product's contents and advice on what immediate first-aid to perform.
- ✓ **Carefully dispose of empty cleaning containers.** Replace the caps and then discard in a sealed recycling bin or garbage container that's safe from curious children and pets.

If there's a poison-related emergency, contact the **U.S. Poison Control Center's** nationwide toll-free number: **1-800-222-1222**. Post this number, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, next to every phone in the house and add it as a contact into all your cell phones. If someone is unconscious, not breathing, or having a seizure, call 9-1-1.

Source: Soap & Detergent Association, Cleaning 101 Newsletter, March-April 2009.

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Joy Rhodes
Extension Ed. –FCS/4-H

Go Clean & Green

Earth-friendly household practices

Whether it's a spring cleaning sweep or everyday household practices, there are ways to go green while making things clean.

1. Unless you only run the dishwasher every few days, rinsing dishes before putting them in the dishwasher is an unnecessary step that wastes water. Scrap the dirty dishes, and then load the dishwasher.
2. When washing dishes by hand, use a sink filled with soap and water rather than washing under running water.
3. Replace incandescent lightbulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL). According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), if every household in the U.S. replaced one lightbulb with a CFL, it would prevent enough pollution to equal removing one million cars from the road.
4. Select the appropriate load size on the washing machine and follow the detergent manufacturer's instructions for the proper measure.
5. Sweep sidewalks and driveways rather than hosing them down.
6. Start a compost pile for food scraps, grass and other yard clippings, and dead plants. It'll reduce your amount of garbage and using compost will improve your garden.
7. Sort out the trash and recycle whatever you can. Recycle paper (printer paper, newspaper, mail, etc.), plastic, glass bottles, cardboard and aluminum cans. If your community doesn't collect recycling at the curb, take yours to a collection center.
8. Think before you throw something out. Donate duplicates or things you no longer use to a charity. You might also check out the web-based Freecycle Network. Freecycle is a grassroots, nonprofit movement of people who are giving and getting stuff for free in their own towns. Each local group is moderated by a volunteer and membership is free. Visit www.freecycle.org for more information.
9. Limit your use of paper cups, paper plates and paper napkins in favor of washable dinnerware and cloth napkins.
10. When replacing appliances, look for those that have an Energy Star rating. The right choices can save families about thirty percent (\$400 a year) while reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases.

Source: Soap & Detergent Association, Cleaning 101 Newsletter March-April 2009

What Can You Do To Protect Yourself In Times of Recession?

Having a secure job is number one. We can't all have a secure job; however, it is something to consider and do what you can to ensure you have one.

Have money in the bank. Having an emergency fund to cover necessary expenses is a must in times of economic problems.

Reduce your monthly payments – as in reduce your debt. Try to payoff anything that you can. Having less monthly obligations means that you could take a job that might pay less and it won't impact you as much.

Make a budget and stick to it. Save as much money as you can. Don't take on more debt, or spend a lot of money on something not completely necessary during a recession. Stick to your budget!

Don't just have three months of money in the bank. Have three months of food and toiletries in the house as well. It is like an edible emergency fund. If you are struggling to pay your bills one month, then at least you won't have to worry about groceries. Eat from your stock pile and use the food money to pay your bills. It could make the difference in whether you have electricity or not.

A recession will likely impact everyone in the United States. How severely it impacts you depends on what you do to prepare for it. Making sure your finances are in order and being proactive in protecting you and your family will make a recession a lot easier to deal with.

Source: Grant Co. FCS Oct-Nov 08 Newsletter; Take from "What Is A Recession and How Will It Effect You"

Ten Ways to Save At The Supermarket

Stretch Your Food Dollar with These Money Saving Strategies

Grocery prices continue to rise, so shopping smart is more important than ever. Do you know about these money saving strategies?



1. Keep a master list of the items you replenish weekly, such as milk, bread, cereals, produce, etc., and add additional items you need at the bottom of the list. This keeps your priority items at the top of the list and saves time. By pre-planning your week's menu or eating plan, it is easy to make sure you have the items you need.

2. Look for sale cycles. Many supermarkets cycle the various categories of food on sale about every 12 weeks. If you shop for just what you need every week, you miss out on many of the sales. Buy larger quantities of self-stable foods, including canned, dried, and nonperishable foods, when they are on sale and stock your pantry.

3. Cut coupons from many sources including on-line coupons. You will save the most, if you use coupons only for items you normally purchase.

4. The higher priced foods are often placed on the shelves at eye-level. Look at higher and lower shelves for store brands and sale items.

5. Check the unit price on the shelf. The bigger box may not contain more food and larger quantities may not be cheaper. Individual servings of foods cost much more. Buy the larger quantity and divide into small containers.

6. Chop, slice, grate, peel, and cook you own. Pre-made meals are always more expensive. However, if you find that you are always ordering in or eating out, a ready-to-cook meal may be less expensive and more convenient than eating out.

7. Watch the scanner when you check out and check your receipt before leaving the store. If possible, leave children at home. You may spend an additional 20% shopping with children.

8. Look for products that are on sale that are close to the sell-by-date. Be ready to use the food soon or freeze it and use later.

9. Look for meat savings. Many butchers will package smaller cuts of meat or un tougher cuts through the tenderizes, if asked. Ask what time of the day they do their markdowns and shop accordingly. If you find a package with a sell-by-date "today", ask if they will mark it down. Also, check if larger packages cost less per pound. You can divide a "family size" package of meat into individual servings and freeze for use later.

10. Go shopping as few times as possible. Frequent trips add to family food costs because we tend to buy extra items each trip.

Daylight Savings Time Begins
Sunday – March 8, 2009

Be sure and move your clocks ahead one-hour before retiring Saturday evening!

