

Strengthening Oklahoma Families



Family and
Consumer Sciences

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Concern Is Growing Over Food Loss and Waste

The concern over food loss and waste throughout the United States is growing, and it is an issue concerning both producers and consumers. This is a big issue considering more than 90 billion pounds of edible food goes uneaten each year. Barbara Brown, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension food specialist, said this much waste has a big economic impact. “Food waste is the single largest component going into landfills. Much of this food is still wholesome and could instead be feeding people in need. In addition, producing, processing, transporting, preparing, storing and disposing of discarded food uses resources such as land, water, labor and energy that could be used for other purposes,” Brown said. “People also need to keep in mind that as the population grows, there is an even greater need to set goals and develop initiatives to reduce the amount of food waste.”

Today, consumers account for about 21 percent of food loss in the United States. That translates into about 36 pounds of food per person wasted every month at the retail and consumer levels. “An average family of four leaves more than 2 million calories uneaten each year. This food is worth about \$1,500 dollars,” she said. In an effort to help educate the public about food waste, the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion has developed a new section on the ChooseMyPlate.gov website called “Let’s Talk Trash.” The site offers a variety of information regarding shopping tips, food storage and safety, repurposing and freezing extra food, donating, recycling and composting, organization and checking for quality.

To help cut down on the waste, Brown said there are several things consumers can do.

“First, consumers can develop a game plan to help get organized and save money. Make a list of your weekly meals. Follow that up with your shopping list,” she said. “Be sure to look over the sales flier to find needed items. Stock up on items you use regularly and that you know won’t spoil or go out of date before your family can use them. You’re only contributing to food waste if you purchase more than you can use. Also, clip coupons, but only for items you know you’ll use.”



Proper storage of food is another way to cut down on waste and stretch your family’s food budget. As part of its food waste reduction outreach, USDA has introduced a FoodKeeper app to give consumers easy access to clear, scientific information about

food storage, proper storage temperatures, freezing tips, food product dating and expiration dates. The app also is available on FoodSafety.gov for those that do not have access to smart phones or tablets. There, users can get all the same storage guidance on their desktop or laptop machines. Brown said it is imperative for Americans to be less wasteful and start practicing actions that not only conserve food, but also conserve space in the landfill and that will benefit the environment.

“We need to keep in mind the importance of feeding our people, not the landfills,” she said. “Reducing wasted food in landfills will help cut methane emissions that fuel climate change. In addition, by reducing food loss by just 15 percent would provide enough food for more than 25 million Americans every year. This, in turn, helps sharply reduce incidences of food insecurity for millions.”

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What Is Stress Management?

Source: American Heart Association

Ever notice that a good laugh has a way of lightening your burdens? Or maybe you've experienced a scenario like one of these. Your day feels completely stressful and overwhelming, but then you coach yourself to step away from the frenzy, collect your thoughts, make a list of what's going on—prioritizing what's important. Has your list ever helped you discover that perhaps your day is more manageable than it seemed? Or maybe you usually go walking with a friend before you start your work day. This week seems entirely too busy and stressful to fit in such “frivolities.” But you decide that instead of skipping it, you'll go ahead and walk. Afterwards, you notice it was good for you physically, socially, and emotionally and upon sitting down for the work day, you actually feel **more** able to attack the list of tasks.

Learn to “Pump the Brakes” on Stress

Laughter, physical activity and organizing your thoughts can be effective stress-management techniques. But something as simple as a short break can also be effective. We all need to commit to regular stress management and learn how to “pump the brakes” on stress without loading it onto other people.

The Purpose of Stress

Emotions are signals to help us recognize problems. Stress hormones help us fight-or-flee when we are in danger. But our body's stress response can become a problem when it constantly signals danger about issues that aren't necessarily a threat, or it grows to the point of overwhelming our health, well-being or clear thinking.

Why Practice Stress Management?

Your mind deserves better than to be loaded down with the never-ending job of worrying! Some stress can be beneficial and may lead to actual problem-solving, but a lot of our stress is unnecessary and even harmful. Research is clear that stressed brains do not operate the same way as non-stressed brains. Creativity, productivity, motivation and sometimes even your immune system will all suffer chronic stress.

How Do We Learn to Manage Our Stress?

Step 1: Awareness! Learn about your “Low Zone.” Stress has a way of becoming chronic as the worries of everyday living weigh us down. Or perhaps you've become accustomed to stress in your life, and you allow whatever is currently the most stressful problem to dictate what you will do each day. Everyone needs pleasure, productivity and creativity in their lives and chronic stress robs us of these.



But you don't know how stressful my life is!

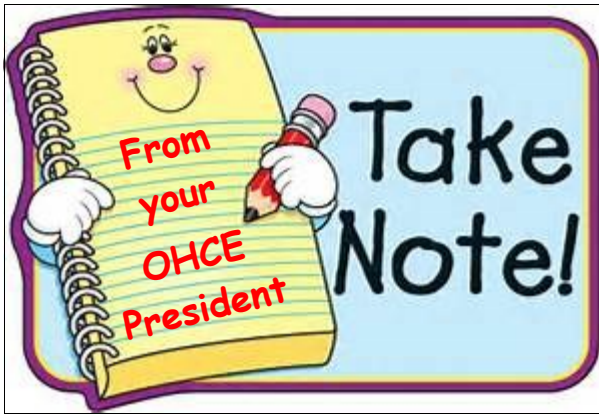
Clearly some people have more stressful environments than others, and those people will likely pay a toll for it unless they learn to manage stress and improve their quality of life. For example, the stress of becoming a caregiver often results in health difficulties and emotional health challenges. If you are a caregiver, it's especially important that you learn stress-management skills so that you can keep yourself in the “low zone,” find ways to enjoy your life and allow your caregiving to have moments of satisfaction and joy.

Step 2: Learn to Live in the Low Zone. Once you've passed the mid-zone mark into the high-stress zone, it's time to take a stress-management moment. Maybe that means that you call a friend, take a short 5 minute walk outdoors, remind yourself of what you can and cannot change or keep a funny book on hand that you can visit when you need a laugh. Whatever works best for you, take the time to bring your stress level back closer to the “low zone.” Notice what happens to your body and mind when you take these breaks.



The Benefits of Low-Zone Living

The benefits of low zone living are plentiful! You'll feel more creative, more alive, and more able to enjoy small moments of happiness. Furthermore, you reserve your “high zone stress responses” for times when it's more appropriate. When life and death are not on the line, we do not need chart-topping emotional responses. *So let's learn to enjoy the gifts of life and put aside the stresses whenever we can even if it means staying away from stressful people.*



There are some good things coming up. Take note:

August 16 Extension Café in Poteau: The lessons start at 10:00, so we will need to leave the Extension Office at 8:00 sharp. We will need at least two cars for carpooling. LeFlore County will be hosting the lunch and will be serving ham. Pittsburg County is to furnish the side dishes. There is usually about 30 people in attendance. Please let me if you would be willing to bring a dish.

August 23 Pittsburg County Council Meeting: Membership dues are to be turned in at this meeting. The dues are \$15.00 (\$12.50 to State and \$2.50 to the County). The Pittsburg County Fair Work Schedule will be passed out at this meeting. It's very important that every group attend or send a representative to the meeting.

*Hope to see you at our next function.
Frances*

**Aug 16 4-County Leader Lessons—Poteau
10 a.m. Cost \$5. Leave OSU
Office sharply at 8 a.m.**

**Aug 23 County Council Meeting 10 a.m.
OSU Extension Office**

Aug 23 OHCE dues at County Co. Meeting

Sept 6-10 Pittsburg Co. Free Fair



Grilled Corn-on-the-Cob With Pepper Seasoning

1 red bell pepper, roasted peeled, seeded & diced
1 TBSP margarine
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
2 TBSP chopped green onions (*scallions or chives*)
1/4 tsp salt 1/8 tsp freshly black pepper
1/8 tsp Tabasco (*optional*) 4 ears fresh sweet corn
Preheat the outdoor grill.

In a blender or food processor, combine red pepper, margarine, green onions & cilantro. Add salt, pepper and Tabasco. Husk & clean the corn. Place each ear individually in the center of a piece of aluminum foil, shiny side up. Coat each ear with a quarter of the pepper seasoning mixture. Wrap the foil around the corn, making sure the ear is well sealed by the foil. (*Refrigerate until ready to grill*). Place corn on grill near the edges or cooler areas. Grill until tender, turning frequently, about 10 to 15 minutes. Carefully unwrap the corn and serve.



Nutrition: Calories 103; Saturated Fat .6g; Iron .5mg; Protein 3g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 192mg.

Fruit Yogurt Shake

1 cup fruit (peaches, strawberries, bananas) cut up
4 scoops (1 1/3 cups) nonfat frozen yogurt
2 cups skim milk, ice cold
2 TBS sugar
Cut up fruit. Put all ingredients into blender, then puree. Ready to serve.

Nutrition: Calories 291; Saturated Fat 0.3g; Iron .3mg; Protein 12g; Cholesterol 16mg; Sodium 201mg.



A bit of advice:

Say nothing often. You can learn a lot about a person by how much they don't say.

David Cantrell

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