On The Home Front

Buncombe County’s Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter

Inside This Issue

Page 2
• A Child’s Shopping Lesson
• Preventing Asthma Episodes

Page 3
• Getting Your Morning Energy
• Nutritious Breakfast Recipes

Page 4
• Adding Insulation for Energy Savings
• Getting the Whole Family Ready for School

Page 5
• September is Food Safety Month
• Act Now to Save Later

Page 6
• Be Cautious With Herbal Supplements
• Cloudy Glassware

Contact Us

Nancy Ostergaard
Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences

Cathy Hohenstein
Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences

Sharon K. Carter
Nutrition Program Assistant
EFNEP
http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu

Buncombe County Center
August/September 2009

Upcoming Classes

Basic Home Maintenance Class - Are there repairs around your home that need to be done but you lack the knowledge and skill to do them yourself? The Basic Home Maintenance Course will give you those skills. This series of five, two hour classes will be held from 5:30pm - 7:30pm, September 23 through October 7th on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Some of the topics to be covered are: saving on your heating and cooling bills, basic plumbing repairs, interior and exterior maintenance, landscaping and lawn care, indoor air quality, common household pest, etc. Registration fee is $20 and includes all materials. YOU MUST REGISTER AND PAY IN ADVANCE.

Tired of Spending Too Much on Winter Heating? - As temperatures drop and energy prices climb, local residents can learn some no- and low-cost ways to save on energy bills by attending this free educational workshop, “Saving Money on Your Utility Bills—You Can Do It!” scheduled for Thursday, August 27th at 6:30 pm with Nancy Ostergaard. Learn where to make changes in your home to receive the biggest energy savings. Hosted by, and held at the Stephens-Lee Center. For more information call the Stephens-Lee Center at 828•350•2058.

Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less - It may seem early to be thinking about the winter holidays, but in order to be prepared to avoid the weight gain that comes with the holidays and the slowing down during the colder months, Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less, a weight management class that gives you practical skills to lose or maintain your weight in a healthy way, is starting in September. This 12 week program will meet on Mondays from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm beginning on September 21st and will run through December 7th. Pre-registration is required and your registration is confirmed with receipt of the $25 fee for materials.

Parenting Matters - It’s not easy being a parent. In fact parenting is probably the most challenging job most of us will ever have. Come to this eight week, hands-on creative learning program for parents who want to make a difference in their child’s life and improve their parent-child relationship. You will learn how to manage stress, improve your communication skills, avoid power struggles with your child, and build a support system to help you. The series will meet on Tuesdays, August 18th through October 6th from 12 pm to 2 pm. Pre-registration is required and there is a fee of $10 for materials.

All classes will be held at the NC Cooperative Extension unless otherwise indicated. To register for classes please call 255-5522.

Persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate in activities mentioned in this newsletter. Please contact this office at 828-255-5522 during business hours at least 3 days prior to the event to discuss accommodations.
A Child's Shopping Lesson

It seems whenever we open the paper numerous Back to School circulars fall out making us aware of what is available to purchase for another school year. Hence, the question to ask as a parent is—what is actually needed for school and what is merely a want on your child’s part. How do you make appropriate choices for your child that meet their school needs plus gives them the styles they want? How much should you spend?

During a time when most family finances are tighter than in the past, a parent needs to be more discriminating with their spending. Young people have quite an influence on the back-to-school purchases that parents make during this time of year. In past surveys, 31 percent of parents stated that half of their back-to-school spending was a direct result of the child’s influence. This is an important fact as you begin your back-to-school shopping.

Children’s influences on parents’ purchasing can be a way to begin a discussion about needed and wanted items for the school year and how they fit into the planned budget. Item’s that don’t fit into the spending plan may provide opportunity for young people to purchase some additional “wanted” items with their own money.

Regardless of the amount other parents will be spending, it’s important to communicate with your child about your family spending plan, and items you feel are necessary purchases. However, it is also important to provide your child with some opportunities to make selections that meet with your approval and fit within the budget.

It is critical to provide young people with some opportunities to make decisions, so they begin to learn about the various consumer decisions they’ll make throughout their lives. Back-to-school shopping provides an opportunity for parents to help guide children through that process.

Preventing Asthma Episodes

It is estimated that nearly one school-aged child in 13 has asthma. Because of this, asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism due to chronic disease. Studies have shown substantial evidence that indoor environmental exposure to allergens, such as dust mites, other pests, and molds, can trigger asthma symptoms. With the beginning of school and a new classroom environment, parents need to be aware of what potential triggers are in their child’s classroom.

The first step if your child has asthma or if you think your child may have asthma, is to take your child to a doctor. Your doctor will work with you to keep your child from having asthma episodes. The doctor will assist you with:

- Learning what triggers your child’s asthma episodes.
- Identifying asthma triggers in both your home and classroom.
- Talking about ways to get rid of triggers in your home and classroom.

Finding out what medicine your child should take.

Ask the doctor to help you create your child’s Asthma Action Plan. The plan will help you learn to prevent your child’s asthma episodes in addition to controlling your child’s asthma on a regular basis.

Asthma proofing the home and classroom.

Triggers of an asthma episode can be found almost everywhere and therefore become a part of everyday life. The challenge is to reduce exposure as much as possible to prevent the sources from becoming triggers.

If the episodes are more frequent when school resumes make a visit to the classroom. Are there old pillows, bean bag chairs, rugs, stuffed animals, curtains, etc. that could be home to dust mites? Dust mites live in various fabric items and can be a source of asthma triggers. There is no such thing as a good animal to have in the classroom. Any animal can trigger an episode, as can aquariums or plants. With the presence of fish or plants in the classroom can come excess moisture leading to mold issues and other sources for asthma triggers.
Beep! Beep! Beep! Rise and Shine! It’s time to get up and get moving!
Where are you going to get the energy you need??

Just like a car, your body needs fuel to keep moving. Breakfast provides the fuel you need. Breakfast is truly the most important meal of the day. Eating breakfast can make a big difference in the way you feel. Studies have shown that kids who eat breakfast perform better in school, score higher on tests, and make fewer trips to the nurse complaining of tummy aches. Adults perform better and have more ability to concentrate and solve problems.

Breakfast can be simple or elaborate, cooked or uncooked, sit-down or on the run. The main thing to remember is to include it in your morning routine. Breakfast can be about anything, from last night’s leftover pizza to cereal and milk. Saving calories is one of the most common excuses for skipping breakfast. Select a breakfast that provides the nutrients to get you going with the fewest calories.

A smart breakfast includes one item from each of these three groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRAIN</th>
<th>PROTEIN</th>
<th>FRUIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tortilla</td>
<td>Low-fat milk</td>
<td>Banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagel</td>
<td>Low-fat string cheese</td>
<td>Raisins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pita bread</td>
<td>Low-fat cottage cheese</td>
<td>Apple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-wheat toast</td>
<td>Low-fat yogurt</td>
<td>Grapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-fat granola bar</td>
<td>Peanut butter</td>
<td>Orange slices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oatmeal</td>
<td>Hard-cooked egg</td>
<td>Kiwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-wheat toaster waffle</td>
<td>Hummus</td>
<td>Tomato Juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-grain cereal</td>
<td>Low-fat ham or turkey</td>
<td>Other in-season fruit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You only need to remember 3 things.
1. Eat Breakfast
2. Eat Healthy
3. Breakfast sets the tone for the day!!

Here are some simple breakfast recipes for you to try:

Layered Pudding and Fruit Cup
- 1 (3.4-ounce) box instant vanilla pudding
- 2 cups skim milk
- 2 cups fresh or canned fruit of your choice, sliced
- 1½ cups crunchy nugget cereal

Directions:
1. Mix pudding according to package instructions, using the 2 cups of milk. Cover with plastic wrap and chill until set.
2. Make individual fruit cups by measuring ½ cup fruit in bottom of cup. Add layer of pudding. Sprinkle with cereal. Add a layer of pudding. Sprinkle top with remaining cereal at serving time.

Scrambled Eggs In A Mug
(Makes 1 serving)
Ingredients:
- 2 eggs
- 1 tbsp reduced fat milk
**Optional:**
- 1 tbsp salsa
- 1 tbsp low fat or shredded cheese

Directions:
1. Spray the inside of microwave-safe mug with cooking spray.
2. Add eggs and milk.
3. Cover and microwave 30 seconds.
4. Stir and cook 30 more seconds (cook additional seconds until done)
5. Stir in optional items.

Did you know that you can get this newsletter via email?
If you are interested, please contact us either by phone at 828-255-5522 or email at debbie_sparks@ncsu.edu.
Adding Insulation for Energy Savings

If you live in an older home that was built with little insulation or your attic has been used for storage and the insulation has been compressed, it may be necessary to increase the amount of your insulation to improve energy use. Begin by looking around your home for areas where outside air is leaking in.

Since insulation does not restrict air flow, it is important to seal all areas of outside air leakage prior to insulating. Maximizing your energy savings comes from sealing any air leakage you find, plus the addition of extra insulation. It will be more difficult to seal the leaks after new insulation has been installed.

Once the air leak sealing has been accomplished, continue the energy audit by looking at the present insulation. First check the attic; then walls and floors adjacent to an unheated space like a garage or basement. In these places, the structural frame elements (the ceiling joists or wall framing boards) are often exposed, making it easy to examine the insulation (if any) and to measure the depth or thickness of the insulation. It is more difficult to inspect finished exterior walls. One method is to use an electrical outlet on the wall, but first be sure to turn off the power to the outlet. Then remove the cover plate and shine a flashlight into the crack around the outlet box. You should be able to see whether or not insulation is in the wall. You may need to pull a little out to see what type of insulation was used. It is important to check separate outlets on the first and second floor, and in old and new parts of the house, because wall insulation in one wall doesn't necessarily mean that it's everywhere in the house.

Once you have located the areas in your home requiring insulation, and have determined what R-value is needed, you need to decide what type to buy. You should consider the several different forms of insulation available, their R-values, and the thickness needed. Here are some of the most common insulation varieties.

### Types of Insulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Insulation</th>
<th>R-Value per inch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blankets &amp; Batts -Fiberglass or rock wool</td>
<td>3.2 R per inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose-Fill- Fiberglass or rock wool</td>
<td>2.5 R per inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellulose</td>
<td>3.7 per inch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the U. S. Department of Energy, the recommendations for existing buildings in the Buncombe County area are: attic-R 49, floors-R 25 and walls-R 21 to R 25. The minimum insulation that a house should have is: attic-R 31, floor-R 20, walls-R 16.

For a free measuring tool to determine your present R-value contact the Extension Office.

Getting the Whole Family Ready for School

Adjusting to school starting can be hard for the whole family and not just the kids. The adults in the family as well as the kids will have changes to their schedule and it can be a good idea to start transitioning to the new schedule slowly in the weeks leading up to the first day of school. It can be even more of a change if this is the first year your child is going to school. Start off by working on the evening schedule.

Start taking about 15 minutes of quiet time and have your children read or look at books if they are not reading yet. This can get them used to the time needed for homework or reading during the school year. Get back in a routine for bed. During the summer you may have been more lenient in getting baths and cleaned up before bed. Start adjusting the lights out time back to the time you use during the school year. Adults need to also look at their evening schedule. Do you need to adjust and start making time in your schedule to help with homework or getting ready for bed? Do you need to find quieter things to do in order for the whole family to get to bed on time?

Once you have worked on the evening schedule start working on the morning schedule. Adjust the wake up time to allow for enough time to get ready for school and work with out rushing. This is easier if you have already been adjusting the evening time to allow for the sleep needed to feel rested in the morning. You may need to adjust your morning schedule if your children are attending new school or have a new bus stop. Being prepared for these changes will make the first weeks of school run smoother and be less of a shock to you and your family. For more tips on preparing for the new school year call our office.
September is Food Safety Month

With food safety in mind, this can be a good time to go through the cupboards, refrigerator and freezer and get rid of older foods and clean those shelves well. Though most of our shelf foods will remain safe pass their “best used by” dates, you may still want to cycle out any foods that you just are not eating or have been there a while and have lost their quality. The same is true for your freezer. Those foods will remain safe if kept frozen but can lose their quality over time. If you don’t have a system for stocking up, try the First In First Out or FIFO system. It simply means you need to label your foods with dates you get them or want to use them by and put the older foods in front or on top so that you use them first. This system allows you to find your foods quicker and use them more efficiently.

In the refrigerator you need to check for any forgotten leftovers and other foods that have become more of a science experiment rather than an edible food. To ensure safety of leftovers follow these guidelines.

- Temperatures between 40° F and 140° F allow bacteria to grow rapidly. Refrigerate cooked leftovers promptly - within 2 hours; 1 hour when the temperatures are over 90° F. Use an appliance thermometer to ensure that your refrigerator is always 40° F or below.
- Divide leftovers into smaller portions and store in shallow containers in the refrigerator. Hot food can be placed directly in the refrigerator.

A good resource for food storage guidelines for safety and quality is Virginia Tech’s publication “Food Storage Guidelines for Consumers” which can be found at http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/348/348-960/348-960.pdf. A good explanation of dates on packages is the USDA’s “Food Product Dating” which can be found at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Food_Product_Dating.pdf. You can always call our office for more information on keeping your stored food safe.

Act Now to Save Later

As our budgets get tighter, we often neglect the areas around our homes that aren’t the squeaky wheels. That is, the preventive maintenance that is necessary on our homes. As difficult as it may be, your monthly budget should include money for routine maintenance and repairs. Remember your grandmother’s saying that “a stitch in time saves nine”.

Home maintenance helps provide a healthy, safe environment as it protects your biggest financial investment. At least once every 6 months, inspect your home and yard thoroughly to identify items needing work. Regular inspection and maintenance of your home will help you keep the house in good condition and maintain its value. Doing maintenance and repairs as the need arises also keeps small problems from becoming bigger, more costly problems.

If you have never really inspected your home for preventive maintenance and are overwhelmed as to where to begin, contact the Extension Center for a complete check list.

To assist in getting you started:

- Water that hits the house or drips down from the roof should drain a minimum of 6 feet away from the foundation wall. Water should not be permitted to pool near the foundation. Be sure gutters and downspouts are clean and working.
- Water lines and outside faucets need protection from freezing during cold weather.
- A septic tank needs periodic cleaning to keep it working properly. It is recommended to have it pumped every five years.
- Check the condition of caulking where two different materials meet, such as where wood siding joins a window or door.
- Check that windows and doors close properly. Also check weather-stripping on windows and doors for damage and tightness.
- Examine all exterior trim for tightness of fit, damage, or decay.
- Trim back tree branches that scrape against or overhang the roof.
- Check stairs for loose treads, handrails, or carpeting, and repair as needed.
- Replace caulking around sinks, bathtubs, and showers as necessary to maintain a water seal.
- Ceilings and walls should be checked for cracks, loose or failing plaster, signs of leaks or stains, dirt, finish damage.
Herbal Supplements: Can there be risks to your health?

Many of us are moving towards trying to find more “natural” ways to treat chronic diseases or even minor ailments. When deciding to use herbal supplements we need to remember that just because they are “natural” or come from nature they may not always be safe. Herbal supplements can contain ingredients that affect our bodies and our body functions. In many cases they may work similarly to medications. In some cases there can be life-threatening problems such as liver or kidney damage, uncontrolled bleeding, or heart arrhythmias. Some herbal supplements may also alter or affect other medications you are taking or impact the safety of surgical procedures. The bottom line is that if we are considering taking or are taking herbal supplements we need to know fully how they affect our bodies and how they interact with other medications or supplements. You also need to make sure you discuss with your health provider any herbal supplements, teas or tinctures you are using or thinking of using to ensure that you use them safely and that you are not putting yourself at risk for other health problems.

Cloudy Glassware

To identify the cause of the cloudiness to your glassware soak the items in undiluted white vinegar for approximately 5 minutes, rinse and dry. If the film is removed, it is due to hard water filming. If it is not removed, the glassware is etched.

Etching is a permanent pitting or eroding of the glassware surface. Initially, etching appears as shades of blue, purple, brown or pink when the glassware is held at an angle towards the light. In more advanced stages, the glassware appears cloudy, and in severe cases it appears frosted. There is no way to restore the glassware once it has become etched. It is impossible to predict what glassware may be affected since it is not related to cost or quality of the glassware but rather how the glass was made. Causes of etching are:

- Manually pre rinsing dishes before loading.
- Not adjusting the amount of detergent according to the level of water hardness.
- Water temperature is too high.
- Using the pots and pans or normal cycles when only the light/china cycle is needed.

Contributors Areas of Responsibility and Expertise

Nancy Ostergaard
Extension Agent
Family & Consumer Sciences
- Housing
- House Furnishings
- Human Environment and Health
- Environmental Issues (i.e. solid waste, air quality)
- Aging Issues
- Extension & Community Association Liaison

email: nancy_ostergaard@ncsu.edu

Cathy Hohenstein
Extension Agent
Family & Consumer Sciences
- Foods
- Food Safety
- Nutrition & Health
- Human Development
- Clothing & Textiles

email: cathy_hohenstein@ncsu.edu

Sharon Carter
Extension Nutrition Program Assistant (Adult)

email: sharon_carter@ncsu.edu