Preparing for a Winter Storm or Disaster

It is inevitable that sooner or later a winter storm will occur, and preparing in advance will help you get through the event. Advanced preparation will also save standing in grocery lines once the forecast has been given. Purchasing a few non-perishable food items on each visit to the grocery store will help spread out the cost of preparing a home disaster kit. The basic emergency supply kit should include:

- **Water** - one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, used for drinking and sanitation
- **Food** - at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- **Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both**
- **Flashlight and extra batteries**
- **First Aid Kit**
- **Can opener for food** (if kit contains canned food)
- **Cell phone with chargers**
- **Comfort foods**
- **Special items for babies or individuals with more specific needs.**

**After a Winter Storm**

- Continue listening to local radio or television stations or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions. Access may be limited to some parts of the community, or roads may be blocked.
- Help a neighbor who may require special assistance such as families with infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities. People who care for these individuals, or who have large families, may need additional assistance in emergency situations.
- Avoid driving and other travel until conditions have improved. Roads may be blocked by snow or emergency vehicles.
- Avoid overexertion. Heart attacks from shoveling heavy snow are a leading cause of deaths during winter.
- Follow forecasts and be prepared when venturing outside. Major winter storms are often followed by even colder weather conditions.

A disaster may be a tree falling on a house for one family or a severe snowstorm covering the immediate geographical area for another. For additional information on disaster preparation, readiness and recovery, check out Extension’s website: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/disaster/factsheets/
Homeowner / Renter’s Insurance
You may be able to save hundreds of dollars a year on homeowners insurance by shopping around. You can also save money with these tips.

• Consider a higher deductible. Increasing your deductible by just a few hundred dollars can make a big difference in your premium.

• Ask your insurance agent about discounts. You may be able to get a lower premium if your home has safety features such as dead-bolt locks, smoke detectors, an alarm system, storm shutters or fire retardant roofing material. Persons over 55 years of age or long-term customers may also be offered discounts.

• Insure your house, NOT the land under it. After a disaster, the land is still there. If you don’t subtract the value of the land when deciding how much homeowner’s insurance to buy, you will pay more than you should.

• Don’t wait until you have a loss to find out if you have the right type and amount of insurance.

• Make certain you purchase enough coverage to replace what is insured. “Replacement” coverage gives you the money to rebuild your home and replace its contents. An “Actual Cash Value” policy is cheaper but pays only what your property is worth at the time of loss – your cost minus depreciation for age and wear.

• Ask about special coverage you might need. You may have to pay extra for computers, cameras, jewelry, art, antiques, musical instruments, stamp collections, etc.

• Remember that flood and earthquake damage are not covered by a standard homeowners policy.

• If you are a renter, do not assume your landlord carries insurance on your personal belongings. Purchase a separate policy for renters.

Source: http://www.consumeraction.gov

The Loving Role of Grandparents in a Family’s Lives
Grandparents can bring special nurturing to the grandchildren in their lives. They can provide the extra love and listen to children when parents’ lives get busy. They are able to give love and attention within the rules and limits set by the parents. If they spoil or pamper or try and influence the upbringing of their grandchildren too much, their love can be harmful rather than helpful. The way grandparents show their love can influence and build strong, lasting, trusting, relationships with their grandchildren.

Fun-seeking grandparents who take the time to be informal and playful and share activities with their grandchildren usually have joyous relationships. The more a grandparent fosters communication and talking with grandchildren, the stronger the relationship can be between them. The more formal grandparents who still give some attention, gifts, and help occasionally with care for the children can still have strong relationships with their grandchildren, but might not be seen as so playful or as strong a confidante. Grandparents can help children understand the past and how it influences the present. When they share stories of their lives, they give children a positive understanding of growing older and how things change over time and create meaningful memories and experiences. So remember throughout the year, not just at holiday times, if you are a grandparent, to share your time, stories and love with your grandchildren as often as you can. If you are a parent or a grandchild, remember to include grandparents in your lives and listen to their stories, share activities and benefit from the love they have for the family.
~ UP COMING WORKSHOPS ~

Tired of Spending Too Much on Winter Heating?
As thermometers drop and energy prices fluctuate, local residents can learn no- and low-cost ways to save on energy bills by attending the free educational workshop, Saving on Your Energy Bills, scheduled for Thursday, January 21 at 5:30 pm. In addition to learning how to implement energy-saving measures in their homes, participants will have the opportunity to sign up for home energy audits at a special workshop price. The standard cost of $500 will be reduced to $100 and participants can have a qualified Home Energy Rater conduct an audit of their home and make energy saving recommendations on a personal level. The workshop is sponsored by the NC Cooperative Extension – Buncombe County Center. Preregistration is required as space is limited. Register by calling 255-5522. Only individuals attending the workshop will qualify for the reduced audit price.

2010 Basic Home Maintenance Course
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 during the day from 10:00am – 12:00 noon, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. February 16, 18, 23, 25 and March 2, 2010. 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. The registration fee of $20 includes all materials

Preparing for the Challenges of Losing Weight: Are You Ready?
Losing weight is one of the top New Year’s Resolutions. After the abundance of the holiday season, many of us are gearing up to pay more attention to what we are eating and become more physically active. Because of New Year’s resolutions to lose weight and have healthier lifestyles, January is the busiest time at the gym. If you are planning to lose weight in 2010, check in with yourself to see if you are ready or if you may have some challenges that will make it harder to lose the weight you want and keep it off.

- Is your life stressful right now or do you have distractions and other commitments that will make it hard to plan the time to be physically active or plan your meals?
- Are you ready to make long-term lifestyle changes that include eating appropriate portion sizes, decreasing high calorie drinks and foods and being physically active on a regular basis?
- Do you truly believe that slower is better? The slower the weight loss the more likely it is that you will keep the weight off for the long term.
- Are you realistic about your weight loss goals? Losing 2 to 8 pounds per week is usually attainable, as well as a sign that you are losing the unhealthy fat weight.
- Do you really believe you can change your eating and physical activity habits and have support from family and friends?
- Are you ready to keep track of what you eat and your physical activity? Those who do keep records or journals are more successful.

Whether you have challenges to overcome or are moving right along with your weight loss goals, join us in February for Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less. This is a 15 week program that gives you practical skills to lose or maintain your weight in a healthy way. The class will meet on Mondays starting February 1st through May 10th at our office from 12pm to 1pm. Plan to attend all sessions or as many as you can. A $25 registration fee applies for supplies and a personal journal and magazine. You can call us for more information about losing or maintaining your weight, or to register for the class.

All classes will be held at The NC Cooperative Extension Office, 94 Coxe Avenue, Asheville, unless otherwise stated. Preregistration is required for all classes by calling 828-255-5522.
The Buncombe County Extension and Community Association (ECA) has scheduled several upcoming craft classes in partnership with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Buncombe County Center. Classes are open to individuals throughout Buncombe County. All classes will be held at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center and require preregistration by calling our office at 255-5522.

Learn to Knit, January 21 and 28, 1:00pm - 3:00pm.
Your grandmother made it look so easy. It is, and this class will show you how to get started with a new pastime. This is a beginning hand knitting class to teach the basics. A list of supplies will be sent once an individual is registered. **There is a registration fee of $5.00**

Beginning Quilting, January 22, 29, February 5, 12, 19 & 26, 1:00pm - 3:00pm.
The beginning quilting class is to introduce participants to the skill of quilting. If a participant already has quilting supplies they can be brought to the introductory class on January 22. If you don’t have supplies the instructor would prefer delaying the purchase of them until after the first class. **There is a $5.00 registration fee.**

Decorating with Gourds, February 25 and March 4, 1:00pm - 3:00pm. Learn to make a beautiful gourd with a pine needle rim. **The registration fee of $20 includes all materials necessary to complete the project. You will need to bring a towel of some kind to set the gourd on as you work and a small pair of scissors. The first class will be preparing the gourd to decorate, so attending BOTH classes is necessary.**

Tatting, March 19 and 26, 10:00am - 12:00pm. Tatting is a technique for handcrafting a particularly durable lace constructed by a series of knots and loops. It can be used to make lace edging to be used for decorative pieces. A list of needed supplies will be provided prior to the first class. Learn how to make doilies, bookmarks, or other decorative items using the old lace making technique of tatting. Tatting is a very inexpensive hobby and lots of fun to do. You will need to bring 2 Tatting Shuttles, a ball of #10 or thicker mercerized cotton thread (2 balls in different colors can make beginner tatting easier), and sharp scissors. **There is a registration fee of $5.00.**

An Extension and Community Association (ECA) Club is made up of women from the same geographical area, women with the same interest, etc. The (BCCEC) would like to start clubs for today's women, whether they are stay at home moms meeting during the day or working women meeting at night. Each club would have the support of the Buncombe County Extension Center which provides the clubs with researched based information relevant to today's needs. Interested individuals can join one of our seven existing ECA Clubs that meet monthly throughout Buncombe County or start a new club of their own. For more information, contact Nancy Ostergaard at the Buncombe County Extension Center. 828-255-5522
Turn Leftovers into Planned-Overs

Calvin Trillin, an American writer, once wrote: “The most remarkable thing about my mother, is that for thirty years she served the family nothing but leftovers. The original meal has never been found.”

It is possible, with a little thought and planning, to turn a leftover into another delicious meal. A good way to save time and money is to cook ahead. This means to cook enough at one time so you will have leftovers for another meal. Would you go home from grocery shopping and throw away every fourth item? Of course not! Over time, the loss in tossing leftovers is just the same...Remember the old adage: waste not, want not.

Here are some tips for transforming leftovers into promising PLANNED-OVERS.

- All leftovers should be reheated to 165 degrees F, refrigerated or frozen within 2 hours after cooking. The safe period starts after the food is cooked, including the time the food sits on the table and is being served and while the meal is being eaten.
- Remember hand washing with soap and water. Make sure utensils and cooking area are clean.
- Refrigerate leftovers in shallow containers so they will cool faster.
- Never taste leftovers that are of questionable age or safety.
- As a general rule, never keep leftovers for more that four days.
- Date leftovers before refrigerating. (Keep labels and a marker nearby)
- When leftovers have been in the refrigerator too long, or smell or look unusual, throw them out!
- A refrigerator temperature of 40 degrees F will slow bacterial growth.

For a complete refrigerator and freezer storage list, feel free to call Sharon Carter at 828-255-5522.

Here is an easy recipe that can be made using leftovers:

HEARTY BEEF AND VEGETABLE SOUP

1 pound lean or extra lean ground beef, cooked and drained well  1 large onion, chopped
6 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed  3 (15.5 oz) cans diced tomatoes
2 stalks celery, chopped  1 (15.5 oz) can mixed vegetables, drained
6 carrots, grated or diced  1 (15.5 oz) can green beans, drained

Makes 8 servings / Serving size: 1 ½ Cup

NOTE: Frozen or canned vegetables may also be used.

Directions
1. In a large stock pot, brown ground beef. Remove from heat and drain fat.
2. Remove ground beef from stock pot and set aside.
3. In same stock pot, cook potatoes, celery, and carrots in enough water to cover. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to simmer until vegetables are tender.
4. Add cooked and drained hamburger, onion, tomatoes, mixed vegetables, and green beans to pot. Bring to boil.
5. Turn heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes.

Food Preparation Tip: Use leftover diced chicken, ground sausage, or browned stew beef for the ground beef. As you have left over vegetables, freeze in a soup container to be used at a later date.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 410 Calories, Total Fat 9g, Saturated Fat 3.5g, Protein 23g, Total Carbohydrates 59g, Dietary Fiber 9g, Sodium 390mg, Excellent source of iron and vitamins A and C

Source: Cooking with EFNEP
Recipes for Eating Smart and Moving More Cook Book.
January is National Radon Awareness Month

Since radon has not been in the headlines recently, it is often out-of-sight out-of-mind to many homeowners, until it comes time to sell their home. But the health risks related to living in a home with elevated radon levels are still a concern. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking, and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Since radon does not have an odor and is invisible, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer within the walls of their home.

The US EPA has designated Buncombe County as a Zone 1 county, which means elevated levels of radon have been found in some homes. Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. Once your home has been tested and if the results are below the action level of 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter), you will not have to test again unless changes are made to the home. In our area we tend to have the more elevated levels during the winter months, so January is a good time to test. Should your home be found to have elevated levels of radon, the problem can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many other home repairs. In our area the cost can be from $800 to $2500 depending on the home.

A workshop to inform participants about radon, the health issues, how to properly test and what to do if the levels come back higher than 4pCi/L, is scheduled for January 19 at 6:30 pm. (Snow date - January 26) During the workshop you will learn everything you ever needed to know about radon and didn’t know who to ask. Free radon test kits will also be distributed.

Free radon test kits will be distributed to Buncombe County homeowners during the month of January as long as they last. Stop by the Buncombe County Center between 8:00am and 5:00pm to pick up your test kit. Because of the current state budget, the kits will only be available to those homeowners who have not received them in previous years.

Contributors Areas of Responsibility and Expertise

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