Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less Starts February 7th

Losing weight is one of the most common New Years resolutions. A recent report in the International Journal of Obesity found that more than one out of every six US adults who has ever been overweight or obese has accomplished long-term weight loss of at least 10%. This rate is significantly higher than those reported in clinical trials and many other observational studies, suggesting that US adults may be more successful at sustaining weight loss than previously thought. Making the lasting behavior changes to lose weight can be difficult and having support is important. Join us 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 7, 2011 and run through May 16th at our office from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. Plan to attend all sessions or as many you can. A $25 registration fee applies for supplies, a personal journal and magazine. Pre registration is required, and registration is confirmed upon payment receipt. You can call us for more information about losing or maintaining your weight or to register for the class.

Preparing Our Local Bounty: Cooking Demo

"Preparing Our Local Bounty: Cooking Demonstrations Highlighting our Abundance of Seasonal Foods". Join Cooperative Extension and the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project to learn from local chefs ways to prepare meals highlighting different foods and food products that are available from area producers. There will be one class per quarter with the Kick-Off being at the Cooperative Extension Center on Monday, February 21st, 5:30pm, where we will highlight local honey and meats. Each class will include the health benefits and ways of preserving selected foods. So, bring your appetite for tasty local food and your questions for the experts. Pre registration is required and confirmed with receipt of $5. Send your check to, or register in person at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Center located at 94 Coxe Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801. For more information call (828) 255-5522.
Frozen Pipe Prevention

The potential for frozen pipes increases dramatically when temperatures drop below freezing for the amount of time that we have been experiencing.

Be aware of which pipes are most likely to freeze.
- In an outside wall behind a sink.
- Where pipes run through crawlspaces under houses.
- Where exterior faucets are not shut off on the interior.

Look where a pipe may pass a crawlspace vent, basement window, or runs along a sill plate. Look for areas where there is cold air coming in.

Precautions to take
If you haven’t already taken the steps necessary to avoid pipes freezing, here are some precautionary steps you can take:
- Know where and how to shut off your water from the main shut-off valve.
- Seal air leaks around pipes that allow cold air to seep in.
- Insulate pipes near outer walls, in crawl spaces, or in attics.
- In exposed or problem areas, you may use heat tape or heat cables to prevent freezing. Make certain they are UL approved and that you follow manufacturer’s instructions.
- Disconnect garden hoses, shut off and drain water from pipes leading outside.
- Turn your faucet on just enough to have constant dripping (for pipes that may be on exterior wall)
- Open cabinet doors to allow heat to circulate around pipes under a sink. It may be necessary to remove a piece of the drywall so the warm inside air can reach the pipes.
- Leave heat on and set no lower than 55 degrees.
- If you plan to be away from home, have someone check on your house daily.
- Close foundation vents if the temperature drops below freezing for a significant period of time, reopen when weather warms.
- Putting a light near a chronic location where pipes freeze will keep the pipe from freezing. Be careful not to let the bulb or lamp get too close to any combustible surface.

If pipes freeze:
- Shut off water valves. Stopping the flow of water can minimize the damage to your home.
- Call a plumber to thaw your pipes. Thawing yourself can lead to greater damage and can be a hazard. If your pipes burst, call a plumber and your insurance agent.

Although we do NOT recommend thawing pipes yourself, if you do try to thaw:
- Don’t try to thaw the pipes with an open flame or torch. Besides being a fire hazard, the torch’s hot flame may create steam that can burst a pipe.
- Don’t use ungrounded electrical appliances outdoors or near grounded water pipes.
- Be careful of the potential for electric shock in and around water.
- Never start a debris fire to warm pipes.
- When thawing pipes, always work from the open faucet toward the frozen area. This will keep steam from being trapped by ice and bursting the pipe.

The safest approach to thawing a frozen pipe is to wrap a towel around the pipe at the suspected area and pour hot water unto it. Slide the towel along the suspect pipe and keep adding hot water until you reach the area where it is frozen. This method will never overheat the pipe or create a fire danger. Be sure to have the faucet or valve turned on so you’ll know when the water begins flowing.

A quick and effective method to thaw pipes is to use a hair dryer, but it can also pose some risks. Never let the pipe get hotter than what you can touch with your hand as you don’t want to generate steam. As long as the pipe feels warm it should be enough to thaw the ice.
ARE YOU WATCHING TOO MUCH TV?
Television has certainly changed over the years. Not too long ago, families could only get 3 or 4 channels. Think about it now—hundreds of channels, DVD’s, videos, video games, pay for view and much more. We can spend hours just “surfing” and never really watch a show. Television has become a big part of our lives and it’s hard to estimate how much TV we really watch.

You might be watching too much TV when:

• The first thing you do when you enter a room is turn on the TV.
• You and your family eat all your meals in front of the TV.
• You’re watching a show that’s a repeat and realize you didn’t like it the first time you saw it.
• You know the theme songs to all the prime time shows.
• The number of shows you simply cannot miss is greater than the seven days of the week.
• The cable goes out and you panic.
• The last thing you do before closing your eyes is turn off the TV or you just leave it on.

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

• Families have the TV on an average of 7 hours and 40 minutes a day.
• Americans watch an average of 4 hours of TV per day.
• Children spend 900 hours in school a year and more than 1,023 hours watching TV.

How do you get your family to watch less TV? Here are some hints:

• Get the TV out of the bedroom.
• Plan how much TV you and your family are going to watch.
• Set clear limits and be a good role model.
• Make a list of activities you want to do instead of watching TV.
• Don’t keep the TV on all the time—tune in to specific shows.
• Eat together as a family without the TV.
• Watch TV with your children.

*taken from the EFNEP families Eat Smart-Move More curriculum

Source: Cooking with EFNEP
Recipes for Eating Smart and Moving More Cook Book.
Making It Work

After the holiday spending, many individuals are overwhelmed with the incoming bills. It is important to remember no matter how bad your situation may be, do not ignore your bills and creditors. Prompt action is very important; let your creditors know you are having trouble before you miss payments and the situation becomes worse.

Once you have worked out a repayment plan, follow through with it and make the payments you promised to make. If you fall behind on your new commitments, creditors will be less understanding. If you fail to make the payments, creditors may hire a collection agency to make you pay. Pretending you have no money problems will not make the problems go away. You and your family must face the situation honestly. Openly discuss spending decisions with all family members. This will help everyone realize that changes and sacrifices must be made for your family’s plan to be successful.

Proper Humidifier Use

If you are one of the many who uses a humidifier to add needed moisture during the winter, there are some things you should know. Although humidifiers are commonly used in homes to relieve the physical discomforts of dry nose, throat, lips, and skin, they can also cause some health hazards. Studies have shown that bacteria and fungi grow in the tanks of portable and console room humidifiers and can be released in the mist. Breathing the dirty mist may cause lung problems ranging from flu-like symptoms to serious infections.

The worst offenders are the ultrasonic and cool mist humidifiers (the latter type has a spinning disk that "slings" tiny droplets of water into the air). Use distilled or demineralized water in your room humidifier to reduce the buildup of scale and the release of dust. Do not use tap water because it contains minerals. The minerals normally will be deposited as a fine, white dust from these droplets. Do not allow film and scale to develop in your humidifier. The use of humidifiers are not recommended by most health agencies; however, if an individual is determined to use a humidifier they must alleviate as much of the health risks as possible.

Regular cleaning is a simple but effective measure; however you will be exposing yourself to the pathogens and allergens while cleaning the device. Some units require special maintenance steps, so follow the manufacturer's cleaning directions. Below are some general rules, if directions are not available.

FOR MOST PORTABLE HUMIDIFIERS WITH CAPACITIES UNDER 5 GALLONS:
Always unplug before cleaning and filling.

Clean daily: Empty the leftover water, wipe all surfaces dry with a clean, soft towel, and refill with clean water.

Sanitize Weekly: Empty leftover water and fill with a solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach per gallon of water. Let soak for 20 minutes; periodically "swish" it around the sides. Empty and rinse thoroughly to remove all bleach, prior to further use. Remove any crusty water deposits by scrubbing with a solution of half water/half vinegar, using a soft brush or towel. Some ultrasonic humidifiers can be harmed by chlorine bleach. Unless the manufacturer specifically recommends bleach, the humidifier can be cleaned with a 3% hydrogen peroxide.

FOR HUMIDIFIERS WITH CAPACITIES GREATER THAN 5 GALLONS:

Sanitize every 2 weeks: Follow the previous directions. Refer to manufacturer's instructions for further information.
Understanding Bullying

In the past year we have had some devastating results from bullying. Bullying is a common experience for children and teens. With changes in our society, bullying has taken on a new route and is not just physical or verbal aggressive behavior. Bullying now includes any behavior that is meant to intimidate, stigmatize, or socially isolate its victims. Bullying puts both the victim and the bully at risk for long-term social and emotional problems and academic failure. With the increase in internet and cell phone use, cyberbullying is a real issue for many families. The most common form of cyberbullying is when private information is made public.

Professor David Dupper of the College of Social Work at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville recommends that families understand these things about bullying in order to prevent or to intervene when their children are victims of bullying.

- **Understand the difference between teasing and bullying.** Teasing occurs between peers who are comparable. Bullying occurs when one has power over or is part of a more powerful group than the other. It often occurs when there are not adults around. It is common in later elementary school and is most prevalent in middle school years.

- **Understand the difference between genders when it comes to bullying.** Girls usually are emotionally bullied while boys get it both physically and emotionally. Girls tend to gossip, make fun or exclude their victims from the group. Boys will often be verbally abused which can turn to physical abuse as well. Those who are loners or different in the way they dress, look or act are more likely to be victims of bullies.

- **Teach kids the difference between standing up for themselves and dealing with a bully.** Being assertive is not the same as being aggressive. Victims can be assertive and tell the bully to stop but make sure they know an adult will be there to help if it does not stop. Never expect a victim to deal with the bully all by themselves.

- **Be informed about - and be an advocate for - school policies and laws concerning bullying.** Having a policy and heightened awareness about bullying decreases the chances that bullying will occur. Families can talk about what the policies are and what anti-bullying messages are used at school.

- **Don’t be a bully yourself.** Children model the behavior that they see adults do. They can learn to intimidate and overpower others or they can learn to deal with others in respectful ways. How children see their parents and other family members treat others will influence how they treat their peers.

Families need to be tuned in to their children and encourage them to talk about things going on with them. Probe and explore and be ready for them to be hesitant to speak at first. They may feel they can handle bullying or difficult situations or may be afraid that it will make things worse to talk to an adult. The only way a child feels safe talking about being bullied is if they feel that the adult will take the bullying situation serious and do something to protect them or make it stop. For more information on Bullying you can go to [http://www.extension.org/pages/Bullying:_Resources_for_Parents](http://www.extension.org/pages/Bullying:_Resources_for_Parents) or call our office.

The Importance of a Refrigerator Thermometer

Winter storms often mean our electricity will go out. If this happens to you, you may be faced with deciding what food needs to be thrown out and what you can keep. In making this decision you first need to know what the warmest temperature was that your refrigerator and freezer reached. This is usually the temperature right before the electricity comes back on or when you notice the door has been left ajar. If this temperature is still below 40°F, then you can be assured that your food is safe to keep. The only way to know the temperature inside your refrigerator and freezer is to have thermometers that read the exact temperatures for you. You can purchase these in grocery stores or other places that sell kitchen supplies. They are inexpensive and well worth it when you consider that not knowing the temperature means you have to throw out more expensive meats or other foods. So, as we are faced with the winter storms that can sometimes leave us without electricity for an extended time, the cost for two thermometers can save money and time in the long run. For more information on what to do if your refrigerator or freezer lose power or whether food is safe to eat, call our office.
Vitamin D: The “Sunshine” Vitamin

Vitamin D has been in the news this past year. It has been known to be important in helping our bodies absorb calcium and decreasing our chances for osteoporosis and fractures. It also supports our nerves and muscles. Lately there has been some, but not conclusive, evidence that vitamin D may reduce our chances for some cancers, diabetes and heart disease.

Do I have enough Vitamin D?
To determine if you have enough Vitamin D, you need to measure the 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels in your blood. It can be measured in nmol/L or ng/mL. You need to know which measurement is used to determine your status. Your health care provider will decide if you need to take a supplement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vitamin D (nmol/L)</th>
<th>Vitamin D (ng/mL)</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25</td>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>Deficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 37.5</td>
<td>Less than 15</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 50</td>
<td>Greater than 20</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 80</td>
<td>Greater than 32</td>
<td>Proposed “optimal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 250</td>
<td>Greater than 100</td>
<td>Potential toxicity</td>
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How do I get Vitamin D?
We can make up to 1/3 of our daily need for Vitamin D in our skin. Sunlight changes a type of cholesterol in our body into Vitamin D. The amount of sunlight we need each week is dependent on multiple factors. Most of us need between 10 – 15 minutes of sun exposure to our face, arms and legs per week. This exposure is additive and should not be long enough to create sunburns. Ways that Vitamin D production can be decreased or blocked are having dark skin tones, covering exposed skin or using sunscreens, seasonal changes in the sun’s UV rays, age, the further north you live and even window filters that block UV sunlight.

Dietary sources of Vitamin D
To make up the rest of what we need, we can eat foods and drink beverages that have vitamin D in them. Use the Nutrition Facts label to see what % of the daily value is met. Each 25% of the daily value is equal to 100 IU of vitamin D. Below is a list of some good food sources.

- Fish (salmon, catfish, trout, mackerel, canned tuna fish, canned sardines)
- Cod liver oil
- Vitamin D fortified cereals
- Vitamin D fortified milk and yogurt
- Soy products (soy milk, tofu)
- Whole eggs
- Liver
- Beef

Am I getting enough Vitamin D?
In 2010 the Institute of Medicine came out with new recommendations for Vitamin D intake. This intake can come from foods and beverages and supplements (if your health care provider recommends it.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA)</th>
<th>Upper limit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year – 70 years old</td>
<td>600 IU (15 µg) per day</td>
<td>Less than 4,000 IU per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 + years</td>
<td>800 IU (20 µg) per day</td>
<td>Less than 4,000 IU per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have questions about your vitamin D status and needs, ask your health care provider.

Source: East Carolina University Department of Medicine/NC Cooperative Extension and Purdue University Cooperative Extension.
**CO Poisoning or Flu?**

Have you had symptoms similar to the flu for most of the winter? Is your heating system fueled by gas, oil, kerosene, or wood? Do you have a gas oven? Gas hot water heater? Gas clothes dryer? Your heating system or gas appliance may be producing carbon monoxide and what you have is low level carbon monoxide poisoning and not the flu.

Breathing carbon monoxide causes symptoms very similar to the flu such as headaches, dizziness, and weakness in healthy people. It can also cause sleepiness, nausea, vomiting, confusion and disorientation. At very high levels, carbon monoxide causes loss of consciousness and even death. Since many of the symptoms parallel those of the flu or other common illnesses, individuals can have low-levels of carbon monoxide poisoning and not even be aware of it.

Dangerous levels of carbon monoxide can be prevented by proper appliance installation, maintenance, and use. If you have a combustion appliance it is recommended that you also have a Carbon Monoxide detector that meets the requirements of Underwriters Laboratories standard.

**Termites**

As the outside temperature warms up, you may begin to see swarms of termites. They are often seen swarming on mornings or afternoons following some rainfall. Outdoor swarms near the house may end up landing on the siding for a few hours, giving the impression that the termites are actually infesting the house. Outdoor swarms are simply nature’s way of reminding you that termites are all around. On the other hand, an indoor swarm means that the termites are likely infesting the structure. Regardless of which scenario you have, it’s a good idea to get the house inspected and make a determination of whether or not treatment is necessary.

Certain species of ants also swarm this time of year and are many times confused with termites. As a homeowner you will need to make the right identification to avoid any structural damage to your home. The North Carolina Cooperative Extension recommends that a homeowner call three pest control companies and compare their inspections and cost of proposed treatment prior to hiring a company.

**Stay Away from the T-Zone**

Do you know that it takes only one touch to "give" yourself the flu or flu-like illness? Although a delayed response, there is a direct correlation. What will it take to change adult behavior to prevent touching their T Zone? Your kids or grandkids can tell you about the T-Zone. It isn’t a new video game or movie. It is the area of your face that has the mucus membranes of your eyes, nose and mouth. These are the ONLY portals of entry into the human body for ALL respiratory infections. Imagine never being sick again from a respiratory infection and a winter of staying well. Beware of eye rubbing, nose rubbing, picking and blowing your nose, nail biting and putting your fingers in your mouth; these are all ways of transferring germs that cause illnesses. Use the principles of Hand Awareness.

**Four Principles of Hand Awareness:**
1. Wash your hands when they are dirty (ex: after blowing your nose) and before eating.
2. Do not cough into your hands. (Use your elbow)
3. Do not sneeze into your hands. (Use your elbow)
4. Above all, do not put your fingers into your eyes, nose or mouth (The T-Zone).

The power literally is in your hands to prevent respiratory infections.

*Source: Henry the Hand by Dr. William Sawyer.*
Chicken & Cheese Enchiladas

Ingredients:
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 8 flour tortillas (6 inch)
- 1½ cups leftover chicken or turkey, cooked and shredded
- 2 cups (8 oz.) extra-sharp, low-fat, cheddar cheese shredded and divided
- 1 (13 oz.) jar salsa, divided
- 1 package (3 oz.) ⅓ less fat cream cheese, cubed
- Non-stick cooking spray

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly spray baking dish.
2. Cook and stir onion in margarine in large skillet until tender.
3. Stir in chicken, ¼ cup salsa, cream cheese and cumin. Cook until thoroughly heated.
4. Stir in ½ of shredded cheese.
5. Spoon about ⅓ cup chicken mixture in center of each tortilla; roll up.
6. Place seam side down in 12 x 7 inch baking dish. Top with remaining salsa and cheese.
7. Bake at 350° F for 15 minutes or microwave 3 to 5 minutes or until heated through.

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