On The Home Front

Buncombe County’s Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter

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Inside This Issue

- An Apple a Day
- Create a Study Area
- Detecting Air Leaks
- Supporting Social Development
- Safe Afterschool Snacks
- Are You Ready?
- Energy Saving Tips Reminder
- Pumpkin Pancakes
- Non-Food Halloween Treats
- Shopping On a Budget
- Preparing a Family Disaster Plan
- September is Fall Prevention Month
- Active Aging Week

Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less

It may seem a little early to be thinking about the winter holidays, but in order to avoid the weight gain that inevitably comes with the winter holidays and the slower pace of 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 26 and will run through December 12. $25 fee covers all materials.

Heritage Crafts Workshop Scheduled

Beginning in the 1950’s, NC Cooperative Extension began offering handcraft workshops throughout western North Carolina. Many families in our area were knowledgeable and skilled in making quilts, baskets, and other handcrafts in their homes and the Extension workshops enabled them to learn the invaluable skills to market their crafts. We are offering the 2011 Heritage Crafts Workshops to teach heritage crafts to local residents, either for their enjoyment or to enable them to increase their families income during these difficult economic times. The two day Heritage Craft Workshops are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, September 27th & 28th. For a complete list of classes, contact the Extension Center for a brochure or visit: http://buncombe.ces.ncsu.edu/files/library/11/CraftWorkshopBrochureII-1.pdf

Basic Home Maintenance Course

Neglecting the minor repairs around your home will lead to even more expense in the future and lessen a home’s market value. Have you wanted to make those basic home repairs but didn’t know where to start? This five class series Basic Home Maintenance Course will show you how. Beginning Tuesday, October 6, from 5:30 – 7:30pm. The remaining dates for the course are Tuesdays and Thursdays October 11,13,18 and 20. 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 pests, etc. The fee of $20.00 includes all materials and handouts for this five series course.

All classes are held at the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension. Pre registration and pre payment are required for all classes. If you need more information on any class, please call the Extension Center at 828-255-5522.

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An Apple a Day...

Is there any truth to that old saying, “An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away”? Research on the health benefits of apples is on-going. What we do know is that apples are fat free, cholesterol free, high in potassium and low in sodium, a good source of fiber, a good source of vitamin C, are rich in pectin and contain a variety of phytonutrients. All of these are associated with chronic disease prevention and healthy lifestyles.

The healthiest way to get your apples is to eat them whole. Many of the nutrients are found in the peel. Eating whole apples also increases the feeling of fullness and can result in decreasing overconsumption of calories. Especially if eaten in place of other higher calorie foods. Another reason to eat your apples whole is that apples are considered “Nature’s Toothbrush”. The mild fibrous texture of the apple and its non-adherent nature; its juice content; its flavorful, mouth-watering appeal to accelerate salivary action all combine to make it a wonderful natural aid for cleansing the teeth and mouth of other more adherent-type foods. Studies have shown fewer dental caries, when apples are eaten regularly in lieu of excessive amounts of candies and pastries and soft drinks which may leave harmful residues on the teeth for long periods of time.

But even if not eaten whole, apples can be part of a healthy diet in the form of apple sauce or other cooked apple recipes. When using sugar free or low sugar recipes, apples can make a healthier sweet dessert. You can also use apple sauce in place of some of the oil or fat in recipes and make a lower fat baked good. Below are instructions for canning applesauce. Try making your own and leave out the sugar or reduce the sugar for a healthy fall time treat.

Applesauce

Quantity: An average of 21 pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 13½ pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel weighs 48 pounds and yields 14 to 19 quarts of sauce – an average of 3 pounds per quart.

Procedure: Select apples that are sweet, juicy and crisp. For a tart flavor, add 1 to 2 pounds of tart apples to each 3 pounds of sweeter fruit. Wash, peel, and core apples. If desired, slice apples into water containing ascorbic acid to prevent browning. Placed drained slices in an 8- to 10-quart pot. Add 1/2 cup water. Stirring occasionally to prevent burning, heat quickly until tender (5 to 20 minutes, depending on maturity and variety). Press through a sieve or food mill, or skip the pressing step if you prefer chunk-style sauce. Sauce may be packed without sugar. If desired, add 1/8 cup sugar per quart of sauce. Taste and add more, if preferred. Reheat sauce to boiling. Fill jars with hot sauce, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in a Water Bath.

Processing directions for canning applesauce in a boiling-water bath, are given in Table 1. Call our office for instructions if you would like to process in a pressure canner.

<table>
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<th>Style of Pack</th>
<th>Quart Size</th>
<th>0 - 1,000 ft</th>
<th>1,001 - 3,000 ft</th>
<th>3,001 - 6,000 ft</th>
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<td>Hot</td>
<td>Pints</td>
<td><strong>15 min</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Quarts</td>
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Source: University of Georgia
Create a Study Area

To be good students, children need to develop good study habits at home and at school. As we begin the new school year, provide an atmosphere that will encourage learning by choosing a place that is quiet and free from distractions, such as the TV and other family activities. Make sure there is adequate lighting and provide a desk or table with a comfortable chair. If your space is limited, the kitchen table will work as long as other family members stay out of the area during homework time to allow focus and concentration.

Store needed items such as pencils, pencil sharpener, glue, erasers, markers, scissors and paper near the study area. It is easier and faster to do assignments when everything is at hand. A basket or decorated shoe box can be an inexpensive storage container.

Allowing your child to decorate their study area will make it their own space, encouraging them to spend the extra time. Here are some fun and inexpensive decorating ideas:

♦ Make a chalkboard using chalkboard paint that comes in black or green. There is also a chalkboard spray available. Either can be applied to an entire wall or a small area then add a border of regular latex paint. Always follow the manufacturer’s recommendations for proper application to get the best results.
♦ Turn an old bookcase on its side to transform it into a storage unit. Remove the back, add legs and/or shelves if desired and paint if necessary.
♦ Painting an older piece of furniture can give it new life. Let your young artist decorate it by painting a picture or using decoupage to adhere their favorite pictures.
♦ If a metal file cabinet is unavailable, or unnecessary for the room, and you want something metal to use for various items with magnetic strips to stick to, try using an old cookie sheet, painted and attached to the wall.

Detecting Air Leaks

Most homeowners are aware of some of the areas where the outside air enters their home, such as an under-the-door draft, but you’ll need to find the less obvious gaps to properly air seal your home and make it more comfortable. For a thorough and accurate measurement of air leakage in your home, a qualified technician can be hired to conduct an energy audit, using a blower door test. A blower door test, which depressurizes a home, can reveal the location of many leaks. A complete energy audit will also help determine areas in your home that need more insulation.

If your budget doesn’t permit hiring an energy auditor, there are ways to find air leaks yourself. First, look at areas where different materials meet, such as between brick and wood siding, between foundation and walls, and between the chimney and siding. Also inspect around the following areas for any cracks and gaps that could cause air leaks:

* Doors and window frames
* Electrical & gas service entrances
* Outdoor faucets
* Bricks, siding, stucco and foundation
* Vents & fans
* Mail chutes
* Cable TV and phone lines
* Where dryer vents pass through walls
* Air conditioners

Sealing the air leaks in the home will not only save on the heating and cooling bills, but will also prevent fall pests, like lady beetles and stink bugs, from entering.
**Supporting Social Development**

One of the many responsibilities of being a parent is helping our children build their social skills. Strong social and communication skills are important throughout life. As children mingle, interact, work and play with others, they build these lifelong skills and become more active and productive members of society. One of the biggest challenges to building these skills are our busy lives. With parents working one or more jobs to just meet the needs of their families, many find it hard to give their children opportunities to interact socially. Here are a few ideas for giving your child opportunities to interact more with others and ways to make it work.

- Get involved with neighborhood or community groups. These could be clubs like 4-H, boy scouts, girl scouts or groups like acting, music or dance classes and clubs. Exposing them to different activities allows them to interact with children with different interests and can make them more comfortable with diverse types of people and situations.

- Have your child play sports. They can join community leagues or play at school when older. Get to know families on the team and share the responsibilities of getting to games and practices. If your busy schedule means you miss a game or practices, take the time to ask your child about how things are going with the team and what they like about the sport and playing. As they describe what is going on, it allows you to help your child become aware of how they interact with others and you can even suggest ways to communicate with coaches and other players if they are having a hard time.

- Making an effort to get children together for “play dates” is a way of supporting interactions without the cost of joining a team or club. Many schools have school directories with contact information for families of children in your child's classroom. Getting together outside of school provide times for children and families to get to know each other better.

- Allow your child to interact with adults. When getting together, don’t always separate the children from the adults. Continuing to include children in conversations with adults helps build their communication skills as well as builds their feelings of respect. When adults listen and try to understand children and their views on situations and topics, they feel respected and learn more about how to be respectful to others.

If you find it hard to find the time to give your child opportunities for interaction with others, ask for help. Maybe there are other family members who can help get them to club meetings, sports practices or other activities. If you do not have family members, maybe friends with children the same age can share the responsibilities and give all the children more opportunities.

**Safe Afterschool Snacks**

Many children come home after school and make their own afterschool snack, without anyone supervising their creative concoctions. Will your kids be eating on their own during the week? If so, you might want to go over these guidelines with them—before they run straight to the refrigerator and snack mindlessly in front of the TV, with their feet on the table and the family dog in their lap.

- Put books, book bags, and sports equipment on the floor, not on kitchen counters or the table. Germs from their stuff could wind up on the eating surfaces.

- **Wash hands!** Hands carry lots of germs, and not washing is a top cause of food poisoning. This is especially important after greeting pets, giving it a treat, or even touching its toys or housing.

- Always use clean spoons, forks and plates.

- Wash fruits and veggies with running water before eating them, even if you plan to peel them.

- Do not leave cold items, like milk, lunchmeat, hard cooked eggs, or yogurt, out on the counter. Put these foods back in the fridge as soon as you've fixed your snack. Items left over from lunch that needed to stay cold, may need to be thrown out if not still cold, and can not become the afternoon snack.

- Take care with the microwave: Don't use it if it is over your head, you can drop hot food and burn yourself. Read package instructions carefully and make sure they know what settings to use for their favorite snacks.

- Review how to make the most popular snack, popcorn: let the bag sit for several minutes before opening. Steam from the bag can burn your face, eyes, arms, and hands.
Are You Ready?

For the past several years we have heard about preparing our households for a disaster. However, most homes in Buncombe County are probably not ready for a disaster such as a flood, hurricane, an excessive snow or just a long term power outage. With September being Disaster Preparedness Month, it seems appropriate to once again promote disaster readiness. Being ready means having your own food, water, medications and other supplies in a quantity to last at least three days. Basic services of electricity, gas, water, sewage and telephone services may be cut for days or even longer. Ask yourself, what would I do?

Prepare a Disaster Kit (Recommended items to include in a basic emergency kit)

♦ Water, one gallon per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation. To keep stored water fresh, change it every six months.

♦ Food, at least a three day supply of non-perishable, easy-to-prepare items. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. Buy foods your family likes and in container sizes that can be used in one meal.

♦ Flashlight and extra batteries

♦ Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, with batteries if needed)

♦ First aid kit

♦ Medications (7-day supply) and medical items (glasses, syringes, etc.)

♦ Tools (multi-purpose, wrench/plier to turn off utilities, non-electric can opener for food)

♦ Sanitation and personal hygiene items (feminine hygiene products)

♦ Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for sanitation

♦ Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, bank accounts, credit card account numbers, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies). Keep these records in a waterproof, fireproof, portable container, and store copies in a separate, safe location.

♦ Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger

♦ Extra cash

♦ Emergency blanket and whistle to signal for help

♦ Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting to shelter in place

Additional items to consider: diapers, pet food, sleeping bags, paper plates and utensils, matches, fire extinguisher, activities for children, change of clothes, chlorine bleach and medicine dropper and Emergency reference materials.

To prepare warm food, include: charcoal, wood for fireplace, fuel cups like Sterno, and gas for a gas grill.

Energy saving tips we have heard, but may need a reminder to do:

• Turn off your computer and monitor when not in use.

• Plug home electronics, such as TVs and DVD players, into power strips; turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use (TVs and DVDs in standby mode still use several watts of power).

• Drive sensibly. Aggressive driving (speeding, rapid acceleration and braking) wastes gasoline.

• Install a programmable thermostat to keep your house comfortably warm in the winter and comfortably cool in the summer.
Non-Food Halloween Treats

With the growing concern of food safety and children getting an abundance of extra calories from sweets, many people are looking to give non-food items for Halloween. Non-food treats also benefit those of us giving out the treats because we don’t end up finishing off the sweets that we don’t give out. We’ll have plenty of other opportunities in the coming months for extra calories during the Holidays, so skipping the chance for calories from Halloween candy can help prevent the usual 10 pounds gained over November and December.

Clemson University has some great ideas for alternative treats. Plan to get a variety of items in order to have something for all ages. Be aware that you may need treats especially for children under three which are large enough that they are not a choking hazard. You can even promote physical activity with items like bouncy balls, jump ropes, bean bags for hacky sack and plastic or foam fliers. Here is a longer list of items. Sometimes you can find them with Halloween theme wrappings, but if you want to save the leftovers for other uses like birthday treat bags, buying the regular packages might be a better idea.

- Glow sticks
- Mini-magnifying glasses
- Pencil toppers
- Stickers
- Bottles of bubbles
- Crayons
- Trading cards
- Costume jewelry
- Tiny decks of cards
- Pencil erasers
- Rub-on or stick on temporary tattoos
- Bookmarks
- Coloring tablets
- Fancy pens
- Funny Halloween glasses
- Pencils
- Markers
- Coins (pennies, dimes, nickels)
- Whistles
- Small books
- Plastic bugs or animals

Pumpkin Pancakes

Ingredients:
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 2 cups pumpkin puree
- 1/2 cup molasses, or maple syrup
- 3 to 4 tablespoons buttermilk or milk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, or margarine, melted
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans or hazelnuts, optional

Directions:
In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, salt, and pumpkin pie spice. Set aside. In another bowl, beat egg slightly. Add pumpkin puree, molasses or syrup, milk or buttermilk and melted butter or margarine. Mix until smooth. Blend in the dry ingredients all at once. Mix until batter is smooth. Allow batter to rest for 30 minutes or more. Stir nuts into batter, and add additional tablespoon of buttermilk or milk if batter is too thick. To make pancakes, spoon a heaping tablespoon of batter onto a lightly greased preheated griddle or heavy skillet. With the back of the spoon, flatten batter to about 1/2-inch thickness. Cook slowly until bubbles appear on top and bottom is golden brown. Lift edge to check. Turn and cook until other side is golden brown. Place on a platter and set platter in a warm oven. Continue making pancakes until all batter is used. Makes about 24, 3-inch pancakes. Garnish with powdered sugar or serve with maple syrup or your favorite pancake syrup.

Source: University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
Shopping on a Budget

When family budgets are tight, it is often difficult trying to buy the entire family clothes for a new season. Like everything else, the cost of clothing seems to go up each year. Don’t get discouraged, with planning it is possible to stretch the clothing dollar to cover these expenses.

The first thing to do is go through everyone’s clothes. Decide what still fits and looks good, is usable, may need repair, needs changes or needs to be tossed out. Then make an individual list of each child’s clothes. List the number and color (if it’s solid or print) of skirts, slacks, blouses, shirts, dresses, and so on. Review your list to see what clothes can be worn together. The garment color will be a key part to making several different outfits. Also keep the color in mind when purchasing new items to get the most out of combining them with the clothes already in the closet. Neutral colors will be worn more.

After deciding on what you already have, make a list of what each family member needs. Be aware of the difference between your wants and needs, as your needs will be to give you more of the mix and match with the existing clothes and maximize the children’s clothing choices.

Some ideas to help in reducing clothing costs:

♦ Know your budget prior to going shopping.
♦ Update clothes with belts, or added accessories.
♦ Know what to look for when buying clothes to get long lasting use out of them.
  • Do the zippers work easily?
  • Are the seams wide enough to let out if there is a growth spurt?
  • Are the seams finished or will they ravel when washed?
  • Is the machine stitching even?
  • Are buttons, snaps, and hooks sewed on securely?
♦ Buy clothes at the end-of-the-month, end of season, or during clearance sales.
♦ Buy clothing that is easy to care for. Read the care label in the garment to make sure it can be washed instead of dry cleaned.
♦ Buy usable clothing from garage sales, rummage sales, thrift shops, resale shops, discount stores, etc. A clothing exchange program with friends, family, schools and church can also be helpful.
♦ Learn how to sew on buttons, shorten or lengthen hems, and mend tears. Clothes will last longer and save you money.

Paying for clothes with cash will cost less than buying on credit. Using cash will also help to stay within your budget and will allow you to shop anywhere.

When Preparing a Family Disaster Plan

How will your family stay in contact if separated by disaster?

• In an emergency, normal communications may not be available, so choose two meeting places.
  ♦ A place near your home in case of a fire, and
  ♦ A place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home after a disaster.

• Have one out-of-state and one local friend or relative as a check-in contact for everyone to call. (Sometimes it is easier to make long-distance calls than to make local calls in a disaster situation.)

• Know the emergency plans for your children’s school or daycare center.
• Find out how you would be notified about an emergency.

Check out our website: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/disaster/ for more information.
September is Fall Prevention Month

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), falls are the leading cause of injury deaths among adults age 65 and older. One in three adults age 65 and older falls each year. It is estimated that approximately 17 percent of older North Carolinians have experienced a fall in the past three months, with one-third of those falls resulting in an injury.

The good news is that most falls are preventable. Recommendations for preventing falls among older adults include: exercise regularly, have medications reviewed, get vision checked, and reduce hazards in the home that can lead to falls.

For a home safety checklist contact the Extension Center or


Active Aging Week: September 25th through October 1st

Continuing to be active as we age, is one of the best ways to control and prevent chronic diseases, memory loss and keep us healthy as we get older. September 25th through October 1st is National Active Aging Week. There will be a variety of events throughout the week in our area. For a list of the activities, times and locations you can go to www.activeagingweekwnc.org or contact Rebecca Chaplin at (828) 251-7438 or Rebecca@landofsky.org. Even if you are already physically active, join the educational programs on diabetes, nutrition, cooking demonstrations and other ways to have a healthy lifestyle. The interaction during these activities is a way to stay socially active which is also an important part of aging well.

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