

Let's Take a Walk

Spring is a great time to break out the shoes and take a walk. Walking is the most natural and affordable exercise you can do. It does not require any special skills. It is safe, free, requires no special equipment and costs nothing to get started.

Physical activity provides both mental and physical health benefits. Walking is one of the most effective forms of exercise to achieve heart health. Walking will help:

- ✓ maintain a healthy weight.
- ✓ prevent or manage various conditions, including heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes.
- ✓ strengthen your bones.
- ✓ lift your mood.
- ✓ improve your balance and coordination.

When starting a walking routine, remember to:

- **Check with your doctor** if you have serious health issues. Talk to the doctor if you're a male over 40 or female over 50 or you've been inactive for a while.
- **Get the right gear.** Choose shoes with proper arch support, a firm heel and thick flexible soles to cushion feet and absorb shock. If you walk outdoors when it's dark, wear bright colors or reflective tape for visibility.
- **Choose your course carefully.** If you'll be walking outdoors, avoid paths with cracked sidewalks, potholes, low-hanging limbs or uneven turf.
- **Warm up.** Walk slowly for five to 10 minutes to warm up your muscles and prepare your body for exercise.
- **Aim for at least 30 minutes** of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, 5 days a week. Physical activity can be accumulated throughout the day. Three 10-minute sessions is the same as one 30-minute session! Aim for 60-90 minutes daily of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity if you want to lose weight.

Source: Adapted from April 2014 Family Matters, Colorado State University Extension

Spring 2014

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Cost of Day Care in Colorado

Many parents worry about how they will pay for college. But, a recent report on the cost of child care found average annual costs for day care of children under age 4 (including infants) was more than the annual college tuition at a public institution in the state where they live.

Child Care Aware of America conducted a nationwide study in 2013 to find the cost of day care and the cost of a year's college tuition in the United States.

In Colorado, the day care cost for infants averaged \$12,735 annually. The cost for children age 4 and under averaged \$9,619 annually. In comparison, the average cost of tuition and fees at a public college/university in Colorado was \$8,416.

(Source: Child Care Aware of America)



Mothers Get Less Exercise Today

While mothers today seem to be busier than in earlier times, it's a different kind of busy. A study of mothers' activity from 1965 and from 2010 was compared. The data was from thousands of dairies containing a record of how people spend time. Researchers tallied hours spent by mothers on housework, child care, laundry, food preparation, cleaning, and exercise. The mothers had children between ages 5 and 18.

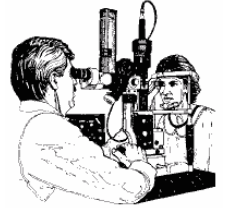
Compared to 1965, the mothers in 2010 reported 11 fewer clock hours of physical activity per week. The difference was even greater in mothers of younger children where they reported 14 fewer hours in 2010 than mothers did in 1965.

The mothers in 2010 also reported they had engaged in 6 to 7 more hours of sedentary behavior such as watching television than had the mothers from 1965.

Source: Diabetes Forecast, March 2014; Mayo Clinic Proceedings, December 2013

Children's First Eye Exam

80% of what we learn we get visually. For children to learn they need to see. The American Optometric Association suggests an eye health screening when an infant is 6 months of age.



At 6 months, an eye doctor can see the overall health and structure of the eye including if the eyes are balanced and how they react to light and movement. Catching problems early can reduce long-term effects.

A complete eye exam should occur when a child starts school. If a child does not have good vision or weak eye muscles, they will have a difficult time learning to read well.

Any time a child shows some type of unusual movement with their eye(s), or you sense a problem with seeing, it's time for an exam.

If a child wears glasses, they should have a yearly eye exam to monitor any changes in their vision. As they become an adult, they most will only need to see an eye doctor every two years.

Talking to Babies

Research now shows what many have believed for some time. The sooner you start explaining the world to your baby, the better. How much and how well parents talk to babies and toddlers helps tune their brains to build crucial language and vocabulary skills.

Research says to stop using "baby talk" and instead use longer and more complex sentences. For example, instead of "see the cat", a parent should say "Let's pet the cat carefully so the cat will know you are a safe person to play with." The idea is to connect words and meanings so the brain becomes primed to learn through context.

Source: American Association for the Advancement of Science

Summer Energy Savings

Simple strategies can help improve the energy efficiency of your home this summer. Here are some things to consider doing around the house before the weather gets hot.



- Set the thermostat as high as comfortable. Use a programmable thermostat to adjust temperature when you are out of the house or sleeping.
- If the morning or evenings are cool, open the windows to let cool air in and close them during the hot part of the day.
- Shade south facing windows. Deciduous trees work well for this purpose unless you plan to install a solar electric or solar thermal system to your home in the future.
- Close curtains and shades during the day.
- Air dry your clothes rather than running the clothes dryer. If you don't like the feeling of air-dried clothes, simply finish them in the dryer for a few minutes.
- Install compact fluorescent or LED lamps in place of heat-producing incandescent bulbs.
- Whenever possible, use a ceiling fan instead of the air conditioner or swamp cooler.
- Remove any items which might block cooling registers.
- Check all components of the cooling system thoroughly before summer and perform any required maintenance regularly.
- If considering a new cooling system for your home, whole house fans are the most efficient, followed by swamp coolers. Central air conditioning is the least efficient.
- Adding more insulation can significantly reduce the transmission of heat into your home.

Source: Colorado State University Extension, <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/energytalk/home-summer-energy-tips.html>

Dishwasher Efficiency Tips

If your dishes don't seem to be as clean and sparkling as you'd like when you empty the dishwasher, you may need to make some changes in your cleaning habits.

Formulations of detergents have changed due to some environmental requirements. If you have not changed the product you use, consider trying one of the newer types which now come in compressed form.

If you have a new dishwasher, check the owner's manual. Some dishwashers have changed loading schemes to match multiple spray arms and adjustable racks.

You may need to adjust for hard or soft water. If you have a water softener and have etching on glassware, you may need to use less detergent or adjust the softener level. Excessive soft water is a cause for etching. Some higher-priced dishwashers even have a built in water softener which can cause etching depending on other situations such as if you already have softened water.

For those with hard water, a rinse aid can help prevent spotting. If you have a mineral build-up on dishware or the inside of the dishwasher, you may want to use an additive occasionally to clean the dishwasher tub.



Value of Unused Treasures

Who would guess the average value of unused merchandise in a typical American household is \$7,000. This is things you either purchased and never used or maybe it is gifts which just didn't fit your life, things like clothing you've never worn. There really is a treasure in your closets. Check it out!

Source: NDP Group

Maximize Retirement Income

While there is no hard and fast rule of thumb for how much retirement income a person needs, most professionals estimate a person will need about 80% of their pre-retirement income to live comfortably.



How do you know if you're on the right track for putting your retirement funds together? Here are some steps you can take.

1. Calculate your target retirement-savings goal. Figure the number of years until retirement and how much you need to put away monthly/annually to reach the goal. As you calculate this, remember you may have income from a number of sources such as Social Security, annuities, or a variety of investments.
2. Be flexible when you need to make changes in your savings or investment strategies. The more years you have before retirement, the more risk you can take in how you save/invest your money. If retirement is within 5 years, you want to maintain the principal of your funds which means you should select ways to invest or save which have less risk of losing value.
3. Find ways to spend less so you can save more. Most of us have two categories when we make a budget. Mandatory expenses are usually regular amounts you are obligated to pay such as a mortgage or rent, loan payments such as a car, or necessary expenses like utilities or insurance.

The other category is discretionary expenses. These are the expenses where we have considerable choices in when to spend and how much. Look at what changes you can make in discretionary expenses. Even saving \$5 a day can add up to over \$1800 in a year.

Microwave Management

Hard to imagine we've had microwave ovens as standard piece of kitchen equipment for 40 years. While the first microwaves cost \$1000 to \$2000, now a majority of choices are less than \$200.

While we think it's a no-brainer to use this piece of equipment, are you actually getting the most for your time and energy? Keep these tips in mind.

You can use aluminum foil in a microwave, BUT it cannot cover more than one-fourth of the food.

You can test to see if a utensil is microwave-safe. Test by heating the utensil alongside a cup of water for one minute on 100% power. If the utensil is warm, you should not use it in the microwave.

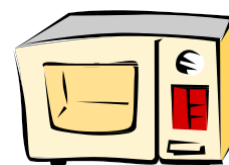
Avoid damage. If sparks fly from your oven, turn it off immediately and remove the food or the utensil you were using. If caught at once, sparks shouldn't damage the oven.

Even if your microwave has a turntable, you should still rotate and stir the food midway during cooking to avoid cold spots.

Microwave energy is very uneven and may not heat all parts of food even on a turntable.

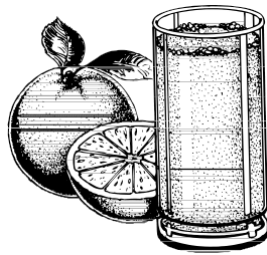
Foods cooked in the microwave need to rest before serving. Foods continue to "cook" even when energy is off. Most people do this when baking potatoes in the microwave, but don't on other foods. A good rule of thumb is let the food rest for 3 minutes.

Wipe out the microwave with a damp cloth or paper towel every time you use. Don't let spatters sit. Periodically wash the turntable with hot water and a little dishwashing liquid. Rid smells by using a bowl of lemon juice and warm water in the oven and run on high 1 minute.



Buying Juice

Looking at all the choices in the “juice” aisle, how do you make a wise decision? Here are tips which can make it easier to select a nutritious purchase.



Narrow choices by eliminating products which do not have 100 percent juice. The percentage of juice in sugary beverages is normally (depending on label placing) listed directly above the Nutrition Facts panel.

Look at the name of the product. To be called juice, it has to have 100% juice. Products with names like “drink”, “cocktail”, “punch”, “beverage”, etc. may contain only 1 to 10% juice. They are primarily sugar or other sweetener with juice flavoring.

Read the list of ingredients for any added sugars which would include fructose, corn syrup, etc. Juice is naturally sweet enough. Proposals for updating the Nutrition Facts include having **Added Sugar** listed under carbohydrates.

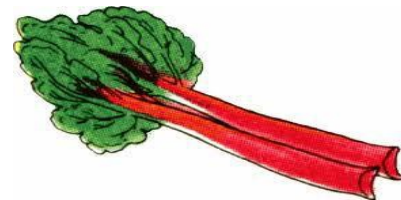
Don't be fooled by a label which says “100% Vitamin C”. This statement is to make you think it's more healthful. The recommended serving of most 100% juice from citrus fruits will give you the daily amount of vitamin C needed for health. The sugary beverage “juices” have added vitamin C in the form of citric acid or ascorbic acid. Beverages which are 100 percent juice can provide a wider array of beneficial nutrients than just vitamin C.

If you want a lower-calorie juice, skip the watered down “diet” and “light” versions or those which use an artificial sweetener. You can simply dilute 100 percent juice with some water or seltzer. Even diluted, an 8 oz serving of 100% juice will provide enough vitamin C to meet your daily needs.

Health & Fitness Apps

There are many free electronic apps which can be used on your smartphone or tablets. One advantage of free apps, if it's something which doesn't fit your needs, you can uninstall. Downside is they may include ads for the app developer.

A free app which could be helpful when traveling and locating where to eat healthy meals is GoMeals from the pharmaceutical company Sanofi-Aventis. The app offers several health and fitness options but one of them is finding restaurant menus for your immediate area. One drawback is it uses mostly information about national chains, so you are less likely to be able to find out about local establishments in the area.



Caring for Early Garden Produce

Anyone who has rhubarb in their garden knows it will soon be time to enjoy the bounty. The problem occurs when the plants produce more than you can use. If you handle it correctly, you can enjoy rhubarb for several months, long after the plants go dormant during the hot summer months.

Immediately cut off the leaves. If you can use the stalks within a week, store **unwashed** in plastic bags in the refrigerator. When ready to use, wash well, trim the ends and remove any blemishes. Slice stalks into the size of pieces you will need for the recipe. If the outer layer of the stalk is tough or stringy, you may want to peel it off.

Rhubarb can also be frozen for up to 6 months. After cleaning and cutting, measure out the amount needed for your favorite recipe and freeze in plastic bags.

Food Safety/Food Preservation

Whether you need to be trained to sell under the Cottage Food Law, want to learn food preservation as a first-time canner, or get updated on current food preservation practices here are some food safety options coming soon in Northeast Colorado.

ServSafe Training

Wednesday, June 11

8:00 am – 5:30 pm

Logan County Extension, Sterling This training meets the requirement for those wanting to sell non-hazardous foods under the Cottage Food Law. Registration is \$100 paid by May 14 or \$125 after that date. Registration includes the Managers' Certification for food safety. Call 970-332-4151 for registration.

Basic 101 Food Preservation

Friday, June 13 OR Saturday, June 14

9 am – 12 noon

Morgan County Extension, Fort Morgan

Freezing Fruits & Vegetables

Jams and Jellies

Water Bath Canning

Salsa and Tomato-Based Mixtures

Advanced Preservation – Pressure Canning

Friday, June 13 OR Saturday, June 14

12:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Morgan County Extension, Fort Morgan

Pressure Canning Details

Processing Low-Acid Foods

Includes Pressure Gauge Testing

These workshops will give you all the information needed to do food preservation according to accepted research standards. Registration for these workshops is \$15 for morning or afternoon; \$25 for both paid by June 9. Registration \$5 more after June 9. This hands-on workshop is limited to 15 participants. Call 970-542-3540 for registration.



Food Allergy or Food Intolerance

Food intolerance can often cause the same symptoms as a food allergy, so people may be confused as to what is really happening.

Food Intolerances are due to the inability of the body to digest, absorb, or efficiently metabolize a food or a component of the food. Symptoms of food intolerance involve nausea, gas, bloating, or diarrhea. While the symptoms are certainly not pleasant, they are not usually life-threatening.

Food Allergies involve the immune system. The body recognizes a normally harmless food as a potentially harmful foreign invader. As a result, the body goes into a defense mode to produce IgE antibodies. These are designed to attack the “foreign invader”. Symptoms of a true food allergy range from less severe like a rash, itchiness, or abdominal pain to more severe and life-threatening such as anaphylactic shock.

If a person experiences abnormal symptoms when eating certain foods, it is recommended they consult a doctor or registered dietitian. They will discuss your food habits and possibly have you keep a food log and symptoms including the time lapse after a suspected food is eaten.

Many individuals who believe they have food allergies are diagnosed as having an intolerance. In some cases the intolerance is due to food additives, dyes or colors and other items used in manufacturing of the food or in the presentation for foods eaten away from home. Often the intolerance discomfort can be solved by avoiding highly processed foods.



Q & A About GMO's

GMO's (Genetically Modified Organisms) are in the news a lot. If you have questions about what they are, are they safe, etc., here is information which may help.

GMO technology is using a selected section of DNA from one organism to insert into the DNA of another organism. In plants, it converts it as its own DNA into protein. For agricultural production, GMO has allowed farmers to use less pesticides and fertilizers on crops.

The protein and DNA only affects the pests which are not desirable, and do not affect people. When food from the plant is eaten, the DNA and protein is broken down just as it is with all other plants.

While growing plants using GMO technology may be controversial, the plants have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration as safe. The testing for approval is very rigorous to verify the food produced from the plants is safe as well as maintaining the original nutritional value.

While labeling of GMO foods is not currently required, many are voluntarily labeled. If a person is concerned about consuming GMO foods, read product labels thoroughly. The voluntary declaration is usually found right below the ingredient listing where you will also find information about any allergens in the food.

Source: adapted from *FastFacts*, Sedgwick County Colorado Family & Consumer newsletter, May 2014; Iowa State Wellness Extension Blog



Cooking to the Right Temperature

Cooking food to the proper internal temperature is necessary to inactivate foodborne pathogens. You can't judge doneness by looking at food since factors other than temperature can influence appearance. A food thermometer is recommended to ensure food reaches a safe internal endpoint temperature.

Recent surveys found only 12% of consumers use food thermometers while cooking smaller pieces of meat and poultry, and only 6% use one when cooking hamburger! Even though consumers associate specific pathogens which cause food borne illness (salmonella, campylobacter and E-coli O157:H7) with improper cooking temperatures, this doesn't translate into safer practices. This is especially true if they perceive cooking to the recommended temperature may alter the taste of food.

Research shows consumption of raw or undercooked animal products is still relatively common in the United States. In one study of 4,548 young adults, it was reported:

- 53% consumed raw cookie dough,
- 33% ate eggs with runny or soft yolks,
- 11% ate raw oysters, clams, or mussels, and
- 7% consumed rare hamburgers.

The only way you will know if food is cooked to the correct temperature to prevent illness is to use a food thermometer. Dial-type food thermometers can be purchased for \$6 to \$8; a digital thermometer will cost more, usually \$12 to \$20. Most hardware stores, department stores, and grocery stores carry thermometers.

For more information on food safety and a chart with all recommended temperatures, go to www.fightbac.org.



Emergency Food Preparedness

Springtime in Colorado can be unpredictable in terms of weather. However, it is a good time to make or review your plans and preparations for emergencies, especially due to weather related situations.

Whether it's because of a tornado, flooding, power failure, or illness, do you have enough food on hand if you can't get to the grocery store? Whatever the situation, knowledge of food safety and storage is important.

Plan ahead for an emergency supply. To keep food safe and avoid food borne illness, you need to know which foods are good for storage and how to handle food afterwards.

- Keep a 3-day supply of food and water on hand for each person in the home.
- Each person needs one gallon of water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene.
- Stock foods which require no refrigeration such as ready-to-eat fruits, beans, meat, tuna, jerky, dried fruits, canned or bottled juices, cereals, granola, nuts, peanut butter, jelly, cookies, candy.
- Select foods your family normally eats, plus favorite treats. A crisis is not the time to learn to eat new foods.
- Avoid too many foods high in salt, as this will increase thirst.
- Select single servings or one-meal size to avoid leftovers, as refrigeration may not be available due to power outage.
- Canned foods keep almost indefinitely as long as cans are undamaged. The can may also be used as the cooking and serving dish. Open the can and remove the label before heating. Do not place metal cans in a microwave.

Food Safe Containers should only be used when you are selecting something for food storage. A food-grade container is one that will not transfer non-food chemicals into the food and contains no chemicals which can be hazardous to human health.

Emergency Food Preparedness (continued)



The safety of storage containers can be determined by contacting the manufacturer and asking if a particular container is approved for food use. Many manufacturers are beginning to indicate on the container label if it is approved for food use.

Containers NOT approved for food use are trash or garbage bags, paint or solvent cans, industrial plastics and fiber barrels which have been used for non-food purposes.

Don't assume all plastic containers are food grade. For example a plaster bucket and a pickle bucket look the same but only one of them is safe to hold food. **If you're not sure, don't use it.**

Food Storage Areas should be kept at an average temperature above 32 degrees and below 70 degrees. The cooler the storage area, the longer retention of quality and nutrients in the food. Storage area should be dry (less than 15% humidity), and adequately ventilated to prevent condensation of moisture on the food or packaging.

Food should not be stored on the floor. The lowest shelf should be 2-3 feet off the floor in case flooding occurs.

Minimize areas where insects or rodents can hide. If possible, seal all cracks or crevices where insects could enter the area.

Select storage areas where there are no electrical appliances such as hot water heaters, freezers, refrigerators, or furnaces. The heat generated by these increase storage temperatures.

Date and rotate food every 6-12 months. Replace foods as used.

Mark Your Calendars

For details on any event listed, contact the Extension Office in the county where the event will occur. Contact information for each office is listed on the first page of this newsletter.

June --

- 5/6 **Lillian Fountain Smith Nutrition Conference**, current and emerging nutrition issues, Fort Collins; information: <http://www.fshn.chhs.colostate.edu/outreach/lfs/Conference-Program.aspx>
- 7 **Working Effectively with Children: Learning Matters**, 9 am – 12 noon, Morgan County Extension Meeting Room, Fort Morgan
- 10 **Yuma County Cake Show**, Yuma County Fairgrounds, Yuma; 8:15 – noon Cake Entries and Show – 4-H and Adult Classes; 1:15 – 3:30 Cake Decorating Workshop by Heidi Spitz
- 11 **ServSafe Managers' Training**, 8 am – 5:30 pm, Logan County Extension Office; Registration includes National Restaurant Association Managers' Certification; this training meets the food safety training for Cottage Foods to sell at Farmers' Markets, etc.
- 13 **Food Preservation Workshops**: Food Preservation 101 9 am – 12 noon; Advanced Food 12:30 – 3:30 pm, both at Morgan County Extension Meeting Room, Fort Morgan
- 14 **Repeat of Food Preservation Workshops presented on June 13**
- 21 **Cooking Matters Training for Child Care Providers**, Morgan County Extension Center, Fort Morgan

July –

- 4 Independence Day Holiday, Extension Offices Closed



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<https://www.facebook.com/CSUExtensionNortheastFCS>

The social media tool of Facebook is a place to share some tips and links, and see your interests and concerns. Please visit this joint page for the five Family and Consumer Science agents in Northeast Colorado. Some agents also have a county page ([Phillips County Extension](#)) or an individual page ([Gisele Jefferson](#)). Let us know what's on your mind. We would love to hear from you!