

Living Well with Stephanie

October, November
December 2012 Newsletter

*Exercise is king. Nutrition
is queen. Put them together
and you've got a kingdom.*

~Jack Lalanne



A note from Stephanie



It is Fall and that is my favorite season! The changing colors and cooler temperatures make it a great time to enjoy outdoor activities with family and friends. While the seasonal vegetables and fruits make for delicious healthy recipes. Take this time of the year to *fall* into a new activity that helps you stay active and be inspired to change a favorite recipe to make it just a little healthier!

As always, remember to move more, eat healthy, keep your food safe and manage your finances in order to stay out of debt. Inside this edition of "Living Well with Stephanie" find interesting articles and information on programs that will help you do just that! Please feel free to contact me with questions about future programs, or feedback on the newsletter.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Parker-Helmkamp
Associate Area Agent, Family and Consumer
Sciences



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Hand Washing is Important!

With “The Common Cold” season fast approaching, it is important to take the necessary cautions to reduce your risk of developing a cold. There are many ways to reduce your risk of developing a cold or passing one on, from avoiding being close to people who have a cold to keeping your hands away from your eyes and nose. But the easiest way to reduce your risk of developing a cold is to properly wash your hands.



When washing hands be sure to use soap and warm water. Another thing to remember is that in order to wash your hands thoroughly you must scrub all over and even under your fingernails and around your wrist for a twenty seconds. A good trick to remember is to sing “Happy Birthday” twice or

Row, Row, Row Your Boat, or the “ABC’s” song by the time you are finished singing the song you are done washing your hands. Once you have finished washing your hands use a single use paper towel to dry your hands thoroughly, use the same paper towel to turn water off and open the door. Also, be sure to wash your hands often, especially, after cough, sneezing or using the restroom, and before eating or preparing food. December 2-8 is National Hand Washing Awareness Week so spread the word about proper hand washing and why it’s important.

-Information for article was taken from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Healthy eating during the holidays

Sticking to your healthy eating behavior is tough enough from January to September but when the leaves start changing, the air gets cooler and the holiday season roles around, it gets even harder! Here are a few tips to help make it easy for you this holiday season.

- Remember you can still have you favorite recipes just give them a make over! Substitute fat-free or low-fat items in recipe (example: low-fat cream cheese instead of regular, fat-free milk instead of 2% milk)
- Use sugar substitutes such as spices that taste sweet when warmed, store bought sugar substitutes, honey or just cut the amount of sugar you add to your recipe
- Remember your ‘right size’ portions, and that you can have more of that tasty dessert tomorrow.
- Try not to keep all those sweets lying around the kitchen.
- Be sure to keep moving, take family walks before or after meals instead of sitting all day, or have family games that include physical activity.
- Most importantly remember all the benefits you will have and how good you will feel for staying on track!

What's in Season?

Versatile Sweet Potatoes Virtually Year-Round

Sweet potatoes are a naturally sweet, nutritiously rich Southern favorite. Though these orange spuds are harvested in the fall, they can be stored for up to eight

months in a cool, dark place for enjoyment throughout the year. So don't be afraid to stock up. It won't be hard to find locally grown sweet potatoes in North Carolina. More than 40 percent of the nation's sweet potatoes are grown on 43,000 acres of North Carolina soil. Tips from The Produce Lady will help you enjoy the versatility of this abundant North Carolina crop that offers plenty of nutrition and flavor with little preparation.

Nutrition

Sweet potatoes are an excellent source of vitamin A from beta-carotene. In fact the amount of beta-carotene is directly related to the color of the sweet potato flesh. The darker the orange, the greater the health boost. You may also find white or even purple-fleshed sweet potatoes. Purple sweet potatoes rival the blueberry in antioxidant activity. Sweet potatoes are also a good source of vitamin C and dietary fiber.

Selection & Storage

Look for sweet potatoes that are firm and smooth (not soft and wrinkled). Avoid potatoes that have worm holes, cuts or other signs of visible injury. All the sweet potatoes from one plant are harvested at the same time, so they will vary in size. The larger potatoes are good for casseroles, breads or preserving. The medium-sized sweet potatoes are ideal as an individual vegetable serving, while the small, fingerling potatoes are perfectly sized for kids.

Store sweet potatoes like Irish potatoes—no refrigeration, just a cool, dark, well-ventilated place. You may also preserve sweet potatoes by canning or freezing. In both cases, you will need to cook first.

Preparation

Sweet potatoes have smooth, thin skin and a blocky shape with tapered ends. The skin is edible, but wash it thoroughly to remove any remaining soil. Baked sweet potatoes or roasted sweet potatoes are two simple preparations. No peeling is required nor is flavor enhancement necessary, though you might experiment with sweet or savory toppings to please the palate. Baked sweet potato "fries" are a kid-friendly favorite. Sweet potatoes can be boiled, but they may lose some nutrients using this cooking method.

History

The sweet potato originated in Peru and Ecuador and is considered a prehistoric plant. Botanically speaking, the sweet potato's name is *Ipomoea batatas*. While sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes both grow underground, the vegetables we eat originate from different plant parts. The sweet potato is actually a root, while the Irish potato is a swollen underground stem.

Watch The Produce Lady give cooking demonstrations with sweet potatoes and other fresh produce at farmers markets across North Carolina during the late summer and fall. For more information – visit www.theproducelady.org.



-Article and recipe taken from The Produce Lady at www.theproducelady.org.

Healthy Recipe:

Roasted Sweet Potato Wedges

Ingredients:

- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. curry powder
- 1/4 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

Directions: Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Cut sweet potatoes in half lengthwise; cut each half into six wedges. Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Toss gently to coat. Place wedges on a baking sheet so they do not overlap. Bake at 425 degrees until very tender. Serves 4.

Medicare Annual Election Period: Oct 15 – Dec 7

The Medicare Prescription Drug (Part D) plan program offers plan members the ability to make changes in their coverage each year during the annual election period. Between October 15 and December 7, Medicare recipients can make changes to their Medicare health or Part D coverage. It is during this period a beneficiary should review all 2013 plan options. SHIIP can provide unbiased information and comparisons of the 2013 Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage options.

Medicare prescription coverage may be obtained in a stand-alone Part D plan or as part of a Medicare Health Plan. Information on the Part D plans and Medicare Health Plans to be offered in North Carolina in 2013 are available at www.medicare.gov or from the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) now, www.ncshiip.com.

A beneficiary should not assume that a plan that meets their needs in 2012 will provide the same coverage in 2013 or that it is the best plan for them in 2013. Part D plans contract on a yearly basis with the Medicare program. This allows for changes to formulary lists (the prescription medications covered by the plan), restriction and limitation requirements, monthly premium payments, and pharmacy copayments for any medication each year. SHIIP encourages each Part D participant to compare the coverage offered by his or her current plan with the coverage that will be offered by all plans available in 2013.

Another item of importance to consider is that many plans offer a mail order pharmacy option that can save money with a 90-day supply of a medication at lower

copayment levels. If this is an option you are interested in, then make sure your plan offers a mail order option.

Medicare recipients who have not previously enrolled in a Part D plan are allowed to do so during this period (although they might see a premium penalty if other creditable coverage did not exist). Further, Medicare beneficiaries with low incomes and limited resources, an Extra Help/Low Income Subsidy (LIS) program is available to reduce or eliminate the monthly premium and annual deductible and to reduce prescription copayments. SHIIP can help determine eligibility and help with the application process.

SHIIP is a Division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance and can assist anyone with questions about Medicare Part D coverage information and enrollment. Stephanie Parker-Helmkamp is the SHIIP Coordinator for Gates County. If you are in need of assistance with your Medicare Part D enrollment, please contact her at the Gates County Cooperative Extension Center by calling 252-357-1400.

The SHIIP Coordinating Site for Hertford County is the Hertford County Senior Center. Contact Alicia Mitchell at 358-7856.



Energy Conservation: Save Money and Stay Warm this Winter

Take steps now to improve energy efficiency during the home heating season. Energy dollars can pour out of homes through drafty doors, windows, and uninsulated attics, walls, floors, and basements. Most winterizing investments pay for themselves relatively quickly with lower heating bills. Weather-stripping and caulking are inexpensive and among the simplest, most effective ways to boost efficiency and cut energy costs year round. A small investment now can pay big dividends in keeping your home warm this winter. **Don't overlook simple energy-saving steps that are low cost – or no cost:**

- ★ Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable this winter. Turn down the thermostat when you go to bed, leave for work, or when you will be away for an extended period of time. According to the Department of Energy's Energy Savers, setting your thermostat 10 to 15 degrees lower for eight hours can save you up to 10 percent on your annual heating and cooling

costs.

- ★ Wear multiple layers of clothing and warm socks and slippers inside. Dressing warmly will help you stay comfortable while your thermostat is set a little lower.
- ★ Make sure a throw blanket is located within easy reach when relaxing.
- ★ To reduce water-heating costs and water bills, lower the temperature of the water heater to 120 degrees F and install low-flow water restrictors on showerheads and faucets. Repair all leaky faucets.
- ★ Replace or clean the furnace filter according to manufacturer's instructions. Check the filter at least once a month and replace when dirty. Dirty or clogged filters can reduce the efficiency of the system and block air circulation. If you have pets, you may need to change your filters more often.
- ★ Use drapes, blinds, curtains, or shutters on all windows to reduce heat loss through the glass. To maximize thermal energy from the sun, open window coverings during sunny days and close them at night to keep heat inside.
- ★ Use kitchen and bathroom vent fans

- sparingly during the winter to minimize the heated air that escapes to the outdoors.
- ★ Make certain that furniture and window coverings don't block air flow from supply ducts and air returns. Arrange the sitting area so that sofas and chairs are away from drafty windows.
- ★ Close the damper and the glass doors on the fireplace when not in use.

- Article taken from the Fall 2009 edition of the NC State University Extension's Successful Family newsletter.

Upcoming Programs:

No upcoming programs due to Medicare Annual Enrollment Appointments! If you are in the Gates County area and need assistance with Medicare Part D or other Medicare benefits please call 357-1400 to make an appointment.



National Health Observances:
October, November, December

October:

- National Breast Cancer Awareness
- National Bullying Prevention Month
- National Down Syndrome Awareness Month
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Awareness Month

November:

- American Diabetes Month
- Lung Cancer Awareness
- Great American Smokeout – Nov. 15

December:

- World AIDS Day – Dec 1
- National Handwashing Awareness Week – Dec. 2-8

For more information about the Hertford County FCS program

Please contact

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Check us out online at

<http://herford.ces.ncsu.edu/>



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