

Food For Thought

July - Aug. - Sept.
2009

It's Summertime!

Orange County/
University of Florida
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6021 S. Conway Rd.
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Now that we have entered the summertime season, many are challenged when it comes to eating nutritional and balanced meals. Cookouts can often become a battle ground for many people; hot dogs, hamburgers and pie . . . oh my! Well, don't fear - help is always near. If invited to a cookout, bringing a healthy option not only helps you but the others who will enjoy the dish. Trying to figure out what to bring is no longer a challenge now that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has offered a new link to their website. The new "What's in Season Now?" site helps consumers find out what Florida fruits, veggies and seafood are in season. Updated each week, visitors are able to make shopping lists with the foods shown as in season. This way the foods are fresher and tastier. Since they are local food items, they provide optimal nutritional value and are often more economical. The website address is http://www.florida-agriculture.com/shopping_list.htm which is a part of the state website. Here is a list of some tasty produce you might want to catch before the season runs out:

Available in June

Blueberries
Cabbage
Celery
Chinese Cabbage
Cucumber
Eggplant
Grapefruit
Orange
Radish
Squash
Strawberry
Sweet Corn
Tomato

Available June and July

Cantaloupe
Green Pepper
Watermelon

Available June, July and August

Avocado
Green Bean
Mango

Available in August

Carambola (Star Fruit)
Sweet Corn



Study: Soap & Water Work Best For Ridding Hands of Disease Virus

The largest, most comprehensive study ever done comparing the effectiveness of hand hygiene products shows that nothing works better in getting rid of disease-causing viruses than simply washing one's hands with good old-fashioned soap and water.

Among the viruses soapy hand washing flushes down the drain is the one that causes the common cold. Other removable viruses cause hepatitis A, acute gastroenteritis and a host of other illnesses.

A separate key finding was that waterless hand wipes only removed roughly 50 percent of bacteria from volunteer subjects' hands.

"We studied the efficacy of 14 different hand hygiene agents in reducing bacteria and viruses from the hands," said Emily E. Sickbert-Bennett, a public health epidemiologist with the University of North Carolina Health Care System and the UNC School of Public Health. "No other studies have measured the effectiveness in removing both bacteria and viruses at the same time."

For the first time, too, the UNC researchers tested what happened when people cleaned their hands for only 10 seconds, Sickbert-Bennett said. That represented the average length of time researchers observed busy health-care personnel washing or otherwise disinfecting their hands at work.

"Previous studies have had people clean their hands for 30 seconds or so, but that's not what health-care workers usually do in practice, and we wanted to test the products under realistic conditions," she said.

Anti-microbial agents were best at reducing bacteria on hands, but waterless, alcohol-based agents had variable and sometimes poor effects, becoming less effective after multiple washes, Sickbert-Bennett said. For removing viruses from the hands, physical removal with soap and water was most effective since some viruses are hardy and relatively resistant to disinfection.

A report on the findings appears in the March issue of the American Journal of Infection Control.

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10-Mar-2005

Cool and Crisp

The summer months can get pretty hot down here in Florida. Here is a recipe idea that is sure to cool you off and provide a nutritious meal. It can serve 6 to 8 people depending on portion sizes. You can find this recipe and more in the *Simply Florida Cookbook* sold at any Florida Cooperative Extension office. This is one meal item to add to your summertime menu. Enjoy!

Papaya and Avocado Fruit Salad w/ Lime

1 papaya, cut into ½-inch pieces
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 avocado, cut into 1-inch pieces
1/2 small garlic clove, minced
1 (8-ounce) can sliced water chestnuts, drained
A dash of salt and ground pepper
1 medium tomato, cut into ½-inch pieces
1/3 cup of olive oil
Juice from 1/2 lime
1 tbs of balsamic vinegar

Combine the papaya, avocado, water chestnuts, and tomato in a bowl and mix gently. Drizzle with the lime juice. Chill, covered, for one hour.

Whisk the Dijon mustard, garlic, salt and pepper in a small bowl until combined. Add the olive oil and vinegar gradually, whisking constantly until creamy. Adjust the seasonings to taste. Add to the papaya mixture and mix until coated.

Wellness Made Easy

If you are over 75, you can stop being screened for colon cancer, according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Of course, if you have symptoms, previous abnormal test results, or a history of colon cancer, you still need testing, as do people with inflammatory bowel disease or certain inherited disorders. With increasing age, the benefits of screening decline, while the risks from the procedure increase.

If you don't have time for long workouts, short bouts of exercise can be just as good. A recent British study of young men found that 10 3-minute bouts of brisk walking over the course of about 5 hours were as effective in lowering triglycerides (fats in the blood) and resting blood pressure as one 30-minute bout. Most studies on short bouts have compared 3 or 4 10-minute sessions to a single 30-minute bout, and found that the repeated short bouts can be just as healthful as longer ones.

To lesson eye strain when working at the computer: keep the monitor at arm's distance, with the top at eye level so that you look slightly down at the screen. Limit glare by positioning your lamp so it does not reflect in the screen, dimming overhead lights, and closing blinds. Enlarge print size on the screen, as needed. If you wear glasses, have the prescription checked regularly - you may need a special pair for computer work. Don't forget to blink often and take frequent breaks. Artificial tears can be soothing.

If you have arthritis in your hands, are prone to recurrent tennis elbow, or simply have a weak grip that limits your activities, a hand-grip exercise device may help. Sold in some pharmacies and on the Internet, these devices are usually putty, foam, or gel-like balls, or handle-like grips that you squeeze. Try to find one that is comfortable and easy to use, that allows you to exercise your hand through its full range of motion, and that isn't too hard to squeeze. Some gel squeeze balls can be warmed in a microwave, which can be good for arthritic hands. Devices designed for rock climbers or other athletes, sold in sporting goods stores and online, usually provide too much resistance for older people.

Drive with special care when it rains after a dry spell. Obviously, driving in the rain can be hazardous, but it's most risky if the rain occurs after several weeks of dry weather, according to research done at the School of Public Health at UC Berkeley a few years ago, which looked at more than 1 million fatal crashes across the U.S. and matched them up with local weather patterns. During a dry spell, oil and grease can build up on roads, which then be-

come very slippery in the rain.

Steer clear of total release foggers, also called "bug bombs," used to kill roaches, fleas, and other insects. They can cause acute reactions, including trouble breathing, coughing, nausea, burning eyes, headaches, and dizziness, especially if you return to the room too soon. Moreover, they contain highly flammable ingredients, which can set off explosions - if pilot lights or gas fireplaces are on, for instance, or if certain appliances are not unplugged. New York State plans to ban their use except by professionals. There are safer and usually better ways to control bugs. For serious problems, get advice from a pest control service. Some companies use "integrated pest management," which minimizes the need for pesticides and other toxic chemicals.

Agent of Change

The famous Roman poet Publius Vergilius Maro, better known as Virgil, once said "The greatest wealth is health." Our society has become very health conscious, especially within the last decade. More and more consumers are concerned about their state of health and wondering what can they do to improve their status. The "do's and don'ts" are often quite confusing because even what was once thought as healthy is no longer healthy enough. One thing that is certain is that no matter what one chooses to prepare and eat, something has got to change. Consumers can take control through change or improvement of their current practices. The change does not have to be drastic; small steps produce big rewards. For example, losing just 10% of body weight could calculate into thousands of dollars saved in medical bills. Cutting out one can of soda a day saves money and could potentially shed 15 pounds by the end of a year. Those small changes amount to big health gains and ultimately improves quality of life. Be the agent of change for yourself and loved ones to protect your health.

Speaking of change, the Food For Thought newsletter will be experiencing some changes as well. Not only is it going online but the editor will be changing as well, place of residence that is. I will be moving to Colombia, South America where I will be teaching English to a poor school located in the capital, Bogotá. I'll be an agent of change for the youth and I'll be helping as they strive to change their lives and ultimately their country. I hope you've enjoyed these newsletters and I wish the best for you all.

Ciao.

ORANGE COUNTY EXTENSION IS GOING GREEN!

In keeping with our efforts to promote **Eco-Nomic Living**, Orange County Extension will no longer offer a paper copy of the **Food For Thought**. Please support our initiative to conserve and educate by signing up for the *elec-tronic* version of the **Food For Thought** delivered to your email quarterly.

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**Cyndy V. Mondelus
Family & Consumer Sciences Agent I**

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