

Rowan County Family & Consumer Sciences



NEWSLETTER

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March/April 2025

Welcome pretty weather! The Sun is shining more, days are getting longer, windy days are upon us and spring showers are helping our grass to grow greener. If you get a chance to be out and soak up some rays, take advantage of it all you can, vitamin D is extremely good for you.

Young and old need to play outside, walk, play and run would be amazing! Our body, brain and skin become healthier and will start looking better each day we get out. Thirty minutes a day outside could increase your Happy Mood and cause your Attitude to Improve.

Make sure the more you spend time outside - you also increase your water intake and healthy eating. Also, when children play outside, they start making choices on their own such as what toy to play first, how fast they can run and how high they can climb. This is also a great time to introduce more fresh fruits and vegetables to an outside picnic.

Enjoy spring this year!



Peggy L. Jones

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March

St. Patrick's Day Month

St. Patrick's Day is this month! It's a perfect reminder to eat dark green vegetables! Green colored fruits and vegetables are great sources of vitamins and minerals.

Try broccoli or spinach - fresh or frozen: Compare the prices of fresh and frozen to see which is the best buy right now. Choose how to fix these vegetables depending on whether the recipe needs fresh or frozen vegetables. Some can use either form:

- Add either fresh broccoli or spinach to a salad.
- Try broccoli with a low fat dip or ranch dressing.

- Thaw and drain frozen spinach then add to a dip. Serve with whole wheat breads or crackers.
- Add them to pasta dishes like Macaroni and Cheese.

Make eating fruit and vegetables fun by taking your children to the grocery store on a scavenger hunt for green produce. Let them pick one green vegetable or fruit to try! Children often like foods they help select or prepare.

Eat Dark Green!



Popeye Power Smoothie

1 cup orange juice
1/2 cup pineapple juice
1/2 can plain or vanilla yogurt
1 banana, peeled and sliced
2 cups fresh spinach leaves
Crushed ice

Combine all ingredients in a blender.
Puree until completely smooth,
Serve immediately.

Nutrition Facts: Total Fat 0.5 g; Saturated Fat 0g; Trans Fat 0g; Cholesterol 5mg; Sodium 35mg; Total Carbohydrate 20g; Dietary Fiber 1g; Sugars 15g; Protein 3g.



Source: Foodhero.org/ Oregon State University Extension Service March 2012



WATER: THE NUTRIENT

1

Water is one of the six vital nutrients needed for life. We cannot survive without water. Many people don't know the big part water plays in the body and diet. Water should be your main drink choice. It is cheap and freely available. It not only serves to satisfy thirst, but it does so while adding no extra calories, fat, cholesterol, sodium, or caffeine.

2

Benefits of Drinking Water:

- Prevents dehydration
- Carries nutrients and oxygen to cells
- Lubricates body tissues
- Regulates body temperature
- Helps strengthen muscles
- Helps prevent constipation
- Gives the feeling of fullness when consumed before or during a meal

3

We lose water each day so it is important to balance that loss with intake. The body has a plan in place to maintain water balance. Thirst is the trigger that reminds us that we need to take in more water. As adults age, they may go through a decrease in their thirst sensation. If this happens, you may not notice you are thirsty until it is too late. The body has already begun to dehydrate once a person realizes they are thirsty.

4

Another factor that causes dehydration for seniors is that the amount body water decreases with age, which raises your risk of becoming dehydrated. Remember that fluid can come in the form of juice, milk or soup, too.

Source: Healthy Choices Newsletter April/May 2024



GRAPE BASICS

- ❖ For eating fresh, choose table grapes. They have thinner skins and are sweet and juicy. Grapes grown for juice or wine have thicker skins and much more sugar.
- ❖ Look for firm, plump grapes that are firmly attached to green, flexible stems.
- ❖ Avoid grapes that are shriveled, sticky, have brown spots, or with dry, brittle stems.
- ❖ Grapes are commonly purple, red or pale green. They may be seedless or have seeds
- ❖ Try different colors, size and textures by choosing the variety that is lowest in price.



Raisins

- Depending on the variety of grape, raisins (dried grapes) become dark brown or golden.
- Look for tightly-sealed containers or covered bulk bins. Raisins should feel soft and pliable.
- Store raisins in an airtight container in a cool, dry, dark place.
- Once opened, reseal the package tightly to help prevent hardening. For best results use within 6 months.
- If raisins become hard, soak in hot liquid for 5 to 15 minutes. Drain and use.

Source: Foodhero.org/Oregon State University Extension Service

Store Well/ Waste Less

- ❖ Leave grapes on the stem but remove any grapes that are shriveled, brown, or moldy.
- ❖ Grapes can be kept on the countertop for a day or two, but last longer when refrigerated. Place them in an open container or perforated plastic bag. For best quality, use within 7 to 10 days.
- ❖ Rinse under cool water just before eating. Extra moisture during storage speeds spoilage

Source: Foodhero.org/Oregon State University Extension Service

Grape Salsa

- 2 cups grapes, cut in pieces
- ½ cup sliced green onion
- ½ cup diced Anaheim chilies, fresh or canned
- 2 Tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 2 Tablespoons vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder or 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon hot sauce

- Combine all ingredients in medium bowl; mix well. Let stand at least 1 hour. Drain off excess liquid before serving. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours. Makes 2 cups.

Source: Foodhero.org/Oregon State University Extension Service

KIDS PAGE

Spring Word Search

Can you find the words hidden in the puzzle?

C	S	N	U	R	A	I	N	B	O	W	D
F	N	L	P	M	H	K	O	R	T	U	P
L	A	D	Y	B	U	G	O	E	I	R	I
O	W	E	O	L	A	R	B	E	E	I	C
W	B	Y	M	O	S	F	N	Z	D	C	N
E	E	G	U	S	F	O	C	E	I	K	I
R	L	B	R	S	T	T	R	U	S	O	C
S	L	D	B	O	K	I	I	A	G	S	A
R	R	P	R	M	W	E	C	T	I	U	N
S	P	R	O	U	T	S	T	O	R	N	S
D	F	C	O	N	F	O	V	L	U	N	N
A	S	B	U	T	T	E	R	F	L	Y	E

Source: Canva

FLOWERS

BREEZE

RAINBOW

BEE

BLOSSOM

SUNNY

LADYBUG

RAIN

BUTTERFLY

PICNIC

SPROUTS

GROW

Connecting Laughter, Humor and Good Health

Laughter is the biological reaction of humans to moments, or occasions of humor. It is outward expression of amusement.



Facts and Figures

- On average, a child laughs 300 times a day while an adult laughs only 17 times a day.
- The majority of men report that their laughter is a chuckle, and the majority of women report that theirs is a giggle.
- People tend to laugh more when in groups. People should surround themselves with others who laugh, because laughter is contagious.
- Smiling is a mild, silent form of laughing.
- Studies from around the world have shown that an atmosphere of humor results in better patient cure, less anesthesia time, less operating time, and shorter hospital time.
- Laughter can also make you more attractive to your friends, and loved ones.
- Laughter burns calories. In fact, laughing for 10 minutes each day can burn the same number of calories as a half-hour workout.
- Laughter can be infectious. It can make others smile and feel happier. We are more likely to remember and want to be around the people who cheer us up and make us laugh.

The Health Benefits of Humor and Laughter

- Many people find that maintaining a sense of humor is useful for a good quality of life. Our sense of humor gives us the ability to find delight, experience joy, and release tension. Additionally, laughter activates the chemistry of the will to live and increases our capacity to fight disease, which makes it an effective self-care tool.

Following are some of the researched benefits of laughter on:

Blood pressure

People who laugh heartily on a regular basis, have a lower standing blood pressure that does the average person. When people have a good laugh, initially the blood pressure increases, but then it decreases to levels below normal.

Hormones

Laughter reduces at least four of the neuro-endocrine hormones associated with stress. These are epinephrine, cortisol, dopamine, and growth hormone.

The Heart

Laughter, along with an active sense of humor, may help protect you against heart attack, according to a study at the University of Maryland Medical Center. They study, which is the first to indicate that laughter may help prevent heart disease, found that people with heart disease were 40 percent less likely to laugh in a variety of situations compared to people of the same age without heart disease.

Mental and Emotional Health

Humor and laughter are a powerful emotional medicine that can lower stress, dissolve anger, and unite people in troubled times. Mood is elevated by striving to find humor in difficult and frustrating situations. Laughing at ourselves, and the situation we are in, will help reveal that small things are not the earth-shaking events they sometimes seem to be.

Brain Function

Laughter stimulates both sides of the brain to enhance learning. It eases muscle tension and psychological stress, which keeps the brain alert and allows people to retain more information.

Respiration

Frequent belly laughter empties your lungs of more air than it takes in, resulting in a cleansing effect similar to deep-breathing. This deep breathing sends more oxygen-enriched blood and nutrients throughout the body. Source: UK publication HSW-CAW.807 Connecting Laughter, Humor and Good Health



Stretching Your Dollar:

What to do when the “Ends” Don’t Meet

“Making ends meet” is getting harder in today’s economy. If you’ve ever wondered how to make your dollars and resources go farther, think about these tips for managing your money in tough financial times.



Spending Wisely

There are two basic ways to balance a budget: either increase your income or reduce your expenses. Scaling back on spending may be the

quicker and easier of the two strategies. Start by taking a look at your spending habits to see where your money goes each pay period. List small purchase (like fast foods, hobbies, and other “wants”) and large expenses (like housing, insurance, and your family’s “needs”). Next use a highlighter to mark more **flexible** categories where you can cut back (or cut out altogether). While not always pleasant, looking for small ways to save in the present allows you to redirect that money where it matters most. This increases your family’s future financial stability. Cancel “wants” until you can make ends meet again, like streaming services or monthly subscriptions. Or, cut back on things like eating out or buying name brands. For example, saving \$10.00 a week is \$520.00 a year; saving \$20 weekly is \$1,040 annually; saving \$50.00 a week is \$2,600 a year; and so forth. Small savings really do add up.

Prioritize Your Finances

To begin prioritizing your finances, use a blank calendar and note every recurring monthly payment your family has (fixed or variable) on its due date. Also, keep a running list of family expenses that are due quarterly or annually, like property taxes or insurance. Be sure to pay bills on time to avoid late fees and additional finance charges or interest.

Saving when Expenses are Tight

To save on groceries, gas, utilities, clothing, and other household essentials, begin by shopping your home. For example, don’t go grocery shopping until you’ve shopped your pantry, fridge, and freezer. Eat or repurpose leftovers, get creative with the ingredients you have on hand and use food before it expires. When we toss food in the trash, we’re trashing out cash too.

Source: UK MoneyWise Newsletter March 2025



Spring Clean Your Pantry!

Spring cleaning doesn't just apply to the house. Some items in your pantry may have been there longer than you realize. It's a good idea to clean out your pantry at least once a year.

Cleaning the pantry can help you use items, and make room for new items. Follow these simple tips when clean your pantry:

1. Remove each item and look at the expiration date. Pile items into these groups:

- Expired items to throw away.
- Items expiring within the next few months.
- Items that you don't see yourself eating and you can donate.
- All other items.

2. Wipe off containers, wipe down shelves or drawers, and get rid of any crumbs that may attract pests.

3. Place items back on shelves with these tips in mind.

- Put items expiring within the next few months toward the front to remind yourself to use them.
- Keep items you eat often, such as cereal, toward the front of the pantry.
- Group similar items together to avoid buying items you already have. Put all canned vegetables together, all canned tomato products, canned fruit items, etc.
- Consider putting snack items in bins.

Source: Healthy Choices Newsletter - March/April 2025

Grocery shopping tips

There are lots of ways to save money while grocery shopping. Here are a few to keep in mind every time you shop.

- Have a plan and stick to a grocery list.
- If possible, do not grocery shop when you're hungry. You are more likely to make impulse purchases when you are hungry.
- Question sale items to avoid food and money waste. Will you eat it, or are you buying it because the price is right? Will you spend the time to prepare the item? Will your family eat it? Source: Healthy Choices Newsletter March & April 2025



Basic Budget Bites-Buying in Bulk

Buying in bulk can save money, but it might not always make sense. Consider these tips before buying in bulk:

- Do you have the room to store the amount of food you are buying?
- Will you be able to eat all the product before the expiration date?
- Is this something you and your family eat often and enjoy, or are you buying something new that you are unsure of the taste?

Source: Healthy Choices Newsletter March & April 2025

Nutrition Tips for Kids

The USDA recommends following these simple tips:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Try whole grains
- Think about your drink
- Mix up your protein foods
- Involve kids in the kitchen
- Be active (Source: Healthy Choices Newsletter March/April 2025



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What's Cooking?



Plate it up!



Kale and Cauliflower Salad

1 15-ounce can chickpeas,
drained and patted dry
1 tablespoon olive oil
4 cups finely chopped kale
4 cups (1 large head) finely
chopped cauliflower
2 tablespoons diced red onion
½ cup roasted sunflower seeds
½ cup dried cranberries

Dressing:

1 clove garlic, minced
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons sugar
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees F.
Toss chickpeas with olive oil and
spread on baking sheet. **Roast** 20
minutes, **stirring** once and then let
cool. **Combine** kale, cauliflower,
onion, sunflower seeds, cranberries,
and cooled chickpeas in a large
bowl. In a small bowl **whisk** together
dressing ingredients until combined.

Pour dressing over salad ingredients
and **toss** to combine.

Yield: 10, 1-cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 200 calories,
11g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 0mg
cholesterol, 200mg sodium, 22g total
carbohydrate, 5g fiber, 9g total sugars,
1g added sugars, 6g protein

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov.