

Family & Community Development

March 2009

ARE YOU READY? PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED...

If a natural disaster were to occur right at this minute, would you and your family be prepared? Would you or your family know where to go for help and how to navigate the maze of resources available. While natural disasters are not an everyday occurrence, they happen more times than you would think. For example, were you prepared for the winter storm that hit the Mid-Columbia last December?

The Hood River/Wasco County Extension Family Community Development program is hosting a public meeting on March 19. The program is called “Are You Ready? Preparing for the Unexpected” and will start with registration starting at 9:30 AM and the program at 10:00 AM. The meeting will be held at the Hood River Valley Christian Church, 975 Indian Creek Road.

Lynette Black, OSU Extension Agent from Wasco County will be presenting the program. Lynette is a member of the national CERT (Community Emergency Response Team). The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area. CERT is one aspect of FEMA.

The focus of this program will be looking at types of emergencies we could experience in the Mid-Columbia and the pre-planning that is needed. This would include items to include in an emergency kit, family emergency plans and how to look at special needs such as helping your neighbors. The American Red Cross will be available for you to ask specific questions plus there will be resource information for you to take home.

We would like to encourage inviting a friend and attend this important information program. There are many types of natural disaster that could affect our area; being prepared can create peace of mind as well as save loss of property and lives.

For additional information or to reserve a seat, contact the OSU Extension office at 386-3343. Hope you to see you on March 19, 2009.

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CUT FOOD COSTS BY REDUCING FOOD WASTE

If you find yourself discarding food that is left over or of lower quality, you're increasing your food bill, says Carolyn Raab, OSU Extension foods and nutrition specialist. But by using these foods in creative ways, you can save money.

Try these suggestions:

- Heels of bread-Dice with a knife or grind in a blender, then sauté in margarine for a casserole topping.
- Soft apples-Make apple crisp, or dice and cook to make applesauce.
- Overripe bananas-Mash and freeze for future nut bread.
- Leftover plain yogurt or sour cream-Add to a sauce for a casserole or pasta dish.
- Sour milk-Use in pancakes, biscuits, or cooked pudding.
- Bits of cheese-Freeze for later use in macaroni and cheese.

Source: Carolyn Raab, Extension food and nutrition specialist, Oregon State University

GET READY TO GARDEN FOR GOOD HEALTH

Tough economic times have hit Oregon families hard, and many households are trimming spending. None of us can afford to sacrifice food quality to save money, however. Consider planting vegetables and/or fruit to help supplement your food supply. A small investment of your time and energy can stretch food dollars and help your family meet [USDA Dietary Guidelines](http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/) <<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>> for fruit and vegetable consumption.



Benefits of adequate fruit and vegetable consumption include reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes and a better chance of achieving a healthy weight (when combined with an active lifestyle and low-fat diet). Fruits and veggies are colorful, easy to prepare, and taste great, too.

Unfortunately, many Americans do not consume adequate quantities from these food groups. Those with lower incomes consume even fewer fruits and vegetables than those with higher incomes. Substituting low-cost, nutrient-poor foods is a common, but detrimental, strategy for households experiencing food insecurity.

You don't need to have a large garden space or yard to reap the health and budget benefits of growing your own produce. Some vegetables and herbs may even be grown in containers. A number of [resources](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/grow/grow/) <<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/grow/grow/>> are available through Oregon State University Extension Service that can help you plan, plant, harvest, and store home-grown edibles.

Growing your own food doesn't require extensive start-up costs. If you receive benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps/Oregon Trail card), you can use them to purchase seeds and plants that produce food. Purchase second-hand shovels, rakes, and other gardening tools for a fraction of the cost of new tools. [Composting](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/grow/grow/compost.html) <<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/grow/grow/compost.html>> your kitchen waste cuts down on your garbage bill and results in free fertilizer to enrich your garden soil. Invite your neighbors to pitch in and share the bounty.

Children will enjoy growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables as well. Planning a garden includes steps that kids will enjoy: choosing what to grow, identifying where the sunlight is best, measuring the space, digging, and watching plants grow. Planting food helps children discover and appreciate a personal connection to the environment and their own health. And what fun that first harvest can be!

You can have fresh produce for pennies a serving, grown in your yard or in a container. Plant some now for good health!

Source: Anne Hoisington, Extension food and nutrition specialist and senior instructor

MARCH IS “EAT RIGHT” MONTH

“Eat Right” during March, which is National Nutrition Month. This annual campaign of the American Dietetic Association (ADA) focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

How well are Americans eating? The ADA recently released the results of its annual consumer trends survey, which interviewed 783 consumers nationwide in February and March 2008. In each survey since 1991, respondents’ attitudes toward maintaining a healthy diet and getting regular exercise have been segmented in three categories. The “I’m already doing it” group was 43 percent of respondents in 2008. “I know I should” was 38 percent, and “Don’t bother me” was 19 percent.

Sixty-seven percent of the consumers said that diet, nutrition, and physical activity were “very important” to them personally; 61 percent said the same about exercise and physical activity. Women were more likely than men to say that both were very important. Forty percent of consumers reported seeking information about nutrition and healthy eating.

Food and nutrients that people were most likely to have consumed more of in the last 5 years included low-fat foods (48 percent), garlic (36 percent), low-sugar foods (34 percent) and low-sodium foods (32 percent). Fifty-six percent had cut back on foods containing trans fat. Reduced consumption of low-sugar foods (20 percent), alternative sweeteners (18 percent), and low-carbohydrate products (17 percent) were the next most often named changes.

Ninety-four percent of consumers in the 2008 survey believed that whole-grain bread is healthier than white bread. Fifty-six percent reported eating more whole grains. Fifty percent ate more fruit, and 48 percent ate more vegetables.

Television was the most popular source of food and nutrition information (63 percent) followed by magazines (45 percent), and the Internet (24 percent). The Internet replaced newspapers as a preferred information source.

Fifty-six percent of the consumers believed that the American Dietetic Association is a credible source of information. Fifty-five percent believed that the ADA’s website (www.eatright.org) is a credible information source.

Source :Carolyn Raab, Extension food and nutrition specialist, Oregon State University

MASTER FOOD PRESERVER TRAINING (FAMILY FOOD EDUCATORS)

Do you enjoy preserving your own food and would you like to learn more about food preservation? Do you have a little extra time and like sharing your knowledge with others? If so, becoming a Master Food Preservers (Family Food Educators) may be for you.

The Master Food Preserve training consist of eight training days, seven days are on Wednesdays, plus one Saturday training. The training is held at The Dalles Senior Center. There is a cost of \$50.00 and each individual will be required to provide “payback hours” by volunteering to share your knowledge to events and programs in the Mid-Columbia.

Applications for becoming a Master Food Preserve are due on March 10. The trainings (except the one Saturday training) will be held from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm and individuals are expected to attend all eight trainings. Training dates are:

- April 1st - Introduction to Food Preservation and Safety
- April 8th - Canning Fruit
- April 15th - Canning tomatoes and salsa
- April 22nd - Canning pickles
- April 29th - Canning jams and jellies
- Saturday, May 2nd - pressure canning meats and vegetables
- May 6th - Dehydrating
- May 13th - Freezing and vacuum sealing food; test review



Applications and additional information available at the Hood River County Extension Office.

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We're on the web
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/hoodriver>

SAVING MONEY AT THE GAS PUMP



In our part of the country, driving is just part of life. But as we watch the price of gas go up and down, it is only smart to look for ways to save at the gas pump. Here are a few tips on how to adjust your driving to help save money:

- Stay close to the speed limit. Lower speeds provide greater fuel efficiency than higher speeds.
- Keep your car light by leaving heavier objects at home. The more weight that your car carries, the more fuel it needs.
- Use cruise control for long stretches on roads like freeways, except on hills.
- Plan your errands so you do not have to make multiple trips to the same general area during the week.
- Use the most fuel efficient vehicle you own.
- Coordinate errands with a neighbor; take turns driving to the grocery store.
- Make a list of what you need for the week to make the fewest trips possible.
- Ride a bicycle, if possible. What a great way to get exercise too.

For more tips check out: <http://www.fueleconomy.gov>

Additional information on helping during these uncertain times can be found at the OSU Extension Website, http://extension.oregonstate.edu/emergency/tough_times.php.

Coming Events

- March 12 **Upper Valley Study Group Meeting**, 10:00 AM at the Parkdale Grange. Lesson: Cheeses of the World.
- March 12 **Mosier Study Group Meeting**, 11:00 AM at the home of Bev Fretz, phone her at 478-3455 for directions. Lesson: Cheeses of the World.
- March 19 Public Meeting: "Are You Ready? Preparing For the Unexpected." 10:00 AM at Hood River Valley Christian Church.
- April 2 **Cascade Locks Study Group** meeting following the Senior Meal. The lesson is: Cheeses of the World.

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