September/October 2008

Take a Stand — For Better Health; Seriously, Stand Up!

According to researchers from the University of Missouri, most Americans sit too much, and it may be affecting our health. Effects go far beyond the fact that sitting burns fewer calories than standing or walking. Rather, it turns out that sitting for hours at a time may impair the body’s ability to dispose of fat. In this day and age, with so many of us sitting for long periods in front of a computer, watching TV, or playing video games, exercise alone may not be enough to stop the rising tide of obesity.

The University of Missouri study found that when a person sits, fat tends to be collected by adipose tissue, which is a kind of connective tissue that stores fat. When the person sits for long periods, lipase, an enzyme that helps break down fat, drops to 10 percent of normal levels within a few hours of continuous sitting. In other words, fat metabolism effectively shuts down. This has implications not only for overweight and obesity, but also for chronic conditions associated with poor fat metabolism diabetes, high cholesterol, and heart disease.

While it is important to spend at least 30 minutes daily doing moderate to vigorous physical activity, it may be just as important to fidget and putter throughout the day. Standing and moving just a little bit appear to re-engage fat-burning enzymes.

We also have a lot more opportunity during the day to burn calories and optimize fat metabolism through standing compared to the time available for exercise. So ignore the advice of your elementary school teachers who told you to “Sit still!” It may just save your life.

Suggestions to increase the time you spend on your feet during the day:

• Stand up and do 10 toe raises (rise up on your toes and back down) and stretch your arms over your head once every hour.
• Walk over to speak with a work colleague rather than send an email.
• Leave the lawn chair at home when heading to your child’s soccer game (okay, at least use the chair sparingly).
• Take all phone calls standing up.
• Celebrate the fact that you are able to stand, and take advantage of the opportunity as often as you can!


Source: Kathy Gunter, Extension physical activity and community health specialist, Oregon State University; kathy.gunter@Oregonstate.edu
Whole Grains and Breakfast: A Great Way to Start the School Year

When school starts, breakfast should be on the menu, yet it’s the meal most often missed. Eating breakfast may lay the foundation for better learning at school. Children and teens who eat breakfast may have better diets overall.

Breakfast is a good time to introduce whole grains into children’s diets. Dietary Guidelines suggest that half of the grains we eat should be whole grains. Many Americans eat less than that. Try these breakfast suggestions:

- Create a yogurt parfait by layering fresh fruit with low-fat yogurt and granola.
- Roll up scrambled eggs, low-fat cheese, and diced vegetables in a whole-wheat tortilla.
- Toast whole-grain bread, a bagel, or an English muffin, and serve with peanut butter.

Oatmeal is a good whole-grain choice. Based on scientific evidence, oatmeal manufacturers are allowed to make a health claim on their labels that “Eating an adequate amount of oatmeal, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease.” According to an oatmeal box label, eating about ¾ cup of dry oatmeal each day provides the amount of soluble fiber that is needed for the health benefits. A normal serving of hot oatmeal might be ½ cup of dry oats, so additional sources would be needed to get the health benefit.

A recent review of current research confirms that eating oatmeal is linked to cholesterol reduction. “Bad” cholesterol is reduced without adversely affecting “good” cholesterol. Oatmeal also may reduce the risk for other health conditions such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and weight gain, so it’s a healthy start for the whole family.

Use quick oats to make oatmeal in the microwave or on the stovetop. Top with raisins or other dried or fresh fruit and milk as a warm way to start your day.


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

Consumer Use Of Nutrition Labeling Declining, Among Younger Adults

Consumers have had access to standardized nutrition information on food labels for more than a decade. Standardized nutrition labeling on packaged and processed foods was introduced in 1994. In addition to standardizing information on the Nutrition Facts panel, serving sizes were standardized. This made it easier for consumers to compare foods to make healthy choices. About 65-70% of shoppers used the labels in the years that immediately followed, women more than men.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently examined consumer use of the new nutrition labeling. The study revealed that label use for food shopping declined. There was an 11% drop in use of the ingredients list and a 10% drop in use of information about calories, fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Use of fiber information increased 2%; use of sugar information stayed the same.

Findings showed that label use varied among demographic groups. The decrease in use was greatest for those 20 to 29 years old, those with a high school education or less, and those who spoke primarily Spanish.

Individuals over age 30 were most likely to have used the dietary fiber information. This may have been linked with interest in identifying whole-grain foods or the health benefits of fiber for chronic illnesses of older age. Many Americans don’t have enough fiber in their diets.

The decline in use of the ingredient list is a concern because the Dietary Guidelines emphasize consumption of whole grains. The ingredient listing is the only way to identify foods with significant whole grains. Ingredients are listed in order by their amount in the food, with the highest amounts first.


Sources: Carolyn Raab, Extension food and nutrition specialist, Oregon State University; raabc@oregonstate.edu
Parents’ Involvement Helps Kids “Surf the Net” Safely

Social online communities are very popular among today’s youth. With all this connectivity, how can parents be sure their children are safe when they go online? As with any safety issue, it is important to talk to your children about potential dangers online and to monitor their computer use.

While the best protection is through parents, there also are laws to protect children online. The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act requires websites to explain their privacy policies and to get parents’ permission before collecting or using a child’s personal information. This includes name, address, phone number, or social security number. In addition, the law prohibits a site from requiring a child to supply more personal information than needed to play a game or contest.

Online “chat rooms” are very popular with children and teens. A chat room website is a “virtual community” where participants exchange text messages with others in the room. Chat rooms usually are set up according to interest or subject; for example, a room might be just for fans of a certain musician.

Chat rooms present possible dangers from online predators, including adults posing as teens or children. When your child posts a message to a chat room, others in the room can learn her email address. Sometimes, the child can be persuaded to telephone the predator, who then uses caller ID to get the child’s phone number.

Signs of possible problems with your child’s online activity include:
• Spending long hours online (especially at night)
• Phone calls for your child from people you do not know
• Unsolicited gifts arriving in the mail for your child
• Quickly turning off the monitor when you walk into the room
• Withdrawing from family life
• Being unwilling to discuss online activities

Get involved with your child’s online activities.
• Be computer literate and learn how to block offensive material.
• Keep the computer in a common area, where you can monitor its use.
• Share an email account with your child so you can monitor messages.
• Bookmark your child’s favorite sites for easy access.
• Spend time online together to teach your child suitable online manners.
• Do not let your child enter private chat rooms. Block access to them with safety filters provided by your Internet service provider (ISP).
• Monitor your credit card and phone bills right away each month for questionable account charges.
• Encourage your children to tell you if they receive online messages that makes them feel uncomfortable, confused, or threatened.
• If you or your child receives threatening messages, forward them to your Internet service provider.


Source: Denise Rennekamp, Extension associate, Oregon State University; denise.rennekamp@oregonstate.edu
Keeping Positive Keeps Kids Involved In Sports

Every year, too many spectators go out of control when children are involved in sports. As the new school year starts it’s a good time to stop and remember what is important about these activities.

Young athletes face pressure to win from their parents, coaches, and peers. But in reality, it is not possible for everyone to win every event. Young people need to learn the skills to cope with losing. When adults can stay positive, researchers say, youth enjoy sports more. Here are some ways to keep kids interested in sports or other programs.

Encourage them. Keeping children active keeps them healthy and helps them develop healthy habits to last a lifetime.

Be a good role model. Children learn by example, so show them how to practice good sportsmanship. Don’t expect to win at everything. Show them how you handle losing (shaking hands and congratulating the winner, for example).

Keep it fun! Asking “Did you have fun?” versus “Did you win?” says a lot to a young person. Get their input about what sport to sign up for. Don’t force them to play the sport you lettered in, or the sport you always wanted to play.

Teach personal responsibility. Young people can take personal responsibility. If a child made a bad play, so what? Don’t point fingers or pass blame.

Get involved. Sports teams need adult volunteers as well as encouraging parents. Adults are essential for getting young people involved in programs.

Insurance Scores: the Hidden Factor in Your Rates

Most of us could name our credit scores, but can you name your insurance score? Much like a credit score, many insurance companies use a figure based on your credit history. In many instances, an auto insurer bases policy rates on customers’ potential to file an insurance claim, not their potential to damage cars or the likelihood their cars will be stolen. An insurance score generally emphasizes whether you pay your bills on time—and whether you’ve been doing so for two weeks or twenty years—rather than the amount of your debt.

So whose rates are lower? If it sounds like someone with a few fender benders and a clean credit record might pay less than a perfect driver with a few credit blemishes—that’s about the size of it! The insurance industry believes that drivers with lower credit scores are likely to file more claims than those with higher scores. What this means is that consumers whose credit scores are lower may pay more for their premiums.

Many homeowners insurance companies now use credit data. They still look at the age of the house and roof, prior losses, and the home’s construction type in determining rates. Home insurers are less interested in how much debt you have than in how long you’ve been managing your credit: so a long credit history of sound use is best.

If you’re having credit problems, it’s best to stick with your current insurance until your credit improves. If you must shop for a new policy, ask the insurer if they use credit data. If you have good credit, contact your agent to make sure you’re getting the best rate possible and see what competitors are offering.

How much your insurance score matters depends on where you live. While not all states allow credit histories to be used for insurance purposes, a majority do. Many factors are considered when insurers compute rates. For autos, your age, the type of car, how many miles you drive and whether you live in an urban or rural area are considered, in addition to your credit information.


Source: Denise Rennekamp, Extension associate, Oregon State University; denise.rennekamp@oregonstate.edu

Source: Consumer Action News
Brown Bagging Can Save Money, but Don’t Stint on Nutrition or Safety

Brown bagging your lunch, or thinking about it? With rising fuel and food prices, many consumers are taking their lunches to work as a way to save money. Remember to choose healthy foods and to transport and store your lunch safely. You may opt for a traditional choice: sandwich, fruit, and milk. Alternatively, a salad or a soup might be fun and different. Most important, make healthy choices.

Consider adding colorful fruits and vegetables to your sack lunch. Vegetables and fruits are important because they contain powerful vitamins and phytochemicals (pronounced “fight-o-chemicals”). Phytochemicals, which come from plants and fruits, lower the risk of heart disease, cancer, and eye and digestive problems.

A recent survey found only 9% of brown-bag lunches contained vegetables and 32% contained fruit.

Make your lunch colorful with the addition of some raw veggies; for example, carrot sticks, broccoli florets, or sliced red and yellow peppers. Add a piece of dried or fresh fruit or a packaged fruit cup. Put sliced tomato and a dark green lettuce leaf or spinach on your sandwich. Vegetable juice—for example, a tomato-based juice—can be an easy way to add veggies to your diet.

Improve your health by choosing whole grains at lunchtime. Whole grains have more fiber, vitamins, and minerals and decrease the risk of chronic illnesses. Read the label on the bread package to make sure the bread is whole wheat. You can’t tell by the color of the bread because caramel color may have been added. If you are making a pasta salad or a soup, choose whole-grain pasta or brown or wild rice. Substitute whole-grain crackers and chips when possible.

Dairy products are a healthful addition to your lunch. Everybody can benefit from milk products which contain calcium, an important mineral for healthy bones. In addition, milk has vitamin D which works together with calcium to build strong bones and teeth. Replace carbonated soft drinks with skim or low-fat milk or with calcium- or vitamin-D-fortified orange juice. If milk bothers you, consider soy or rice milk to boost your calcium intake. Make sure milk substitutes have been fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Consider adding some low-fat cheese to a salad or sandwich, or take a yogurt for dessert.

Safety is an important consideration when brown bagging it. Remember to wash hands and prepare foods in a clean kitchen. Keep foods cold by transporting perishable foods in an insulated lunch box with a frozen juice box or gel pack. Consider freezing sandwich bread, which will defrost by lunchtime, to keep your sandwich cold. Refrigerate perishable foods at the workplace when possible. If you can’t keep lunch food cold, pack foods such as peanut butter, cheddar cheese, and yogurt. Reduce food safety concerns by reheating entrees in the microwave to 165 degrees or “steaming hot.” Avoid leftovers by packing only the amount of food you will consume that day.

Brown bagging can save money and keep you healthy and safe. Remember to make your lunch colorful and to include whole grains and calcium-rich dairy products.

- Linus Pauling Institute Micronutrient Information Center http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter
- Whole Grains Council www.wholegrainscouncil.org

Sources: Elizabeth Harris, dietetic intern, Extension Family & Community Development; and Carolyn Raab, Extension food and nutrition specialist, Oregon State University; raabc@oregonstate.edu
It’s No Joke — Humor and Laughter Bring Significant Health Benefits

Our sense of humor gives us the ability to find delight, experience joy, and release tension. Laughter is the human’s biological reaction to humor. It also activates the chemistry of the will to live and increases our capacity to fight disease, which makes it an effective self-care tool. 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 stays. The following are some of the benefits of laughter that research has identified.

**Blood pressure** – People who laugh heartily, and regularly, have a lower standing blood pressure than 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.

**Immune system** – Laughter strengthens the immune system by increasing infection-fighting antibodies.

**Muscle relaxation** – Belly laughs result in muscle relaxation.

**Pain reduction** – Laughter allows a person momentarily to “forget” about pains such as those associated with aches, arthritis, etc.

**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 they are taking in, a cleansing effect similar to deep breathing. This sends more oxygen-enriched blood and nutrients throughout the body.

**Heart function** – Laughter, along with an active sense of humor, may help protect you against a heart attack. People with heart disease were 40% less likely to laugh compared to people the same age without heart disease.

A **good workout** – Laughter can provide good cardiac, abdominal, facial, and back muscle conditioning, especially for those who cannot do physical exercise.

**Mental and emotional health** – Humor and laughter are a powerful emotional medicine that can lower stress, dissolve anger, and unite people. Mood is elevated by striving to find humor in difficult situations. Laughing at ourselves will help reveal that problems or annoyances are not the earth-shaking events they sometimes seem to be. Humor also helps us avoid loneliness by connecting with others who are attracted to genuine cheerfulness.

**How you can expand your sense of humor**

- Look for the everyday humor. Start looking for the absurd activities that go on around you each day.
- Observe infants and young children to learn how to find delight and amusement in the most ordinary things.
- Increase your exposure to comedies, comic sitcoms, joke books, comedy clubs, etc.
- Surround yourself with others who laugh, because laughter is contagious.
- Take a 5-10-minute humor break each day. Read jokes, add to a humor notebook, and listen to funny tapes.
- Spend time with those who help you see the bright side. Whenever possible, avoid negative people.
- Avoid conversations, news, or entertainment, that frightens, upsets, or distresses you or makes you feel sad.


**Source:** Denise Rennekamp, Extension associate, Oregon State University; denise.rennekamp@oregonstate.edu
When Preserving Your Garden’s Bounty, Practice Safety First

Rising food prices prompted many people to plant home gardens this year. To reap the benefits throughout the year, you’ll need to preserve your harvest.

The many ways to “put food by” include canning, freezing, and drying. The method you choose will be influenced by many factors including the type of food, personal preferences, supplies/equipment needed, and your skills.

Freezing and drying are good choices for beginners. Some preparation is needed to maintain quality during storage; for example, blanching vegetables to reduce texture and flavor loss, and coating light-colored fruit to prevent darkening. Small electric dehydrators will dry fruits and vegetables efficiently. Appropriate moisture-vapor-resistant packaging is needed for freezing. Keep the freezer at 0°F or below for best quality.

Home canning is a science that must be done correctly. If it isn’t, a life-threatening foodborne illness called botulism could result. Foods that have lower acidity (such as meat, fish and seafood, nonpickled vegetables, and poultry) must be processed in a large pressure canner to kill the harmful bacteria. Your pressure canner must be in good working order, and the gauge should be tested for accuracy.

The length of time and pounds of pressure needed to process low-acid foods will be influenced by the type of food, the way it’s prepared, the size of the jar, and your altitude. It’s very important to use up-to-date instructions that have been developed by food scientists. If you use a favorite recipe instead, you’ll need to freeze the food. This is especially important for homemade salsa which has caused botulism in the Pacific Northwest when canned improperly.

Foods higher in acid (fruits, pickled vegetables, tomatoes) may be canned safely in a boiling-water canner. Processing times must be adjusted at higher altitudes. It’s again important to follow laboratory-tested methods to ensure both safety and quality of your canned food.

Safe canning instructions, based on U.S. Department of Agriculture research, are available on the OSU Extension Service website at http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/ (Click on nutrition and foods, then on food preservation and storage.)

Publications are available on canning fruits, vegetables, pickled vegetables, tomatoes, salsa, and other foods. Instructions for freezing and drying fruits and vegetables are also available online or at the Extension office that serves your county.

For answers to your questions, contact the OSU Extension Food Safety/Preservation Hotline between July 14 and September 30. Call 1-800-354-7319, Monday through Thursday from 9 am to 4 pm. (except holidays). Trained volunteers and Extension staff will answer your questions.

Source: Carolyn Raab, Extension food and nutrition specialist, Oregon State University; raabc@oregonstate.edu
Extension Study Groups Announce Lesson Topics

Would you like to be part of a group that is interested in continual learning? Then the OSU Extension Study Groups are for you. Groups meet monthly to learn about topics related to home and family. These groups are open to all interested people and meet in both Tillamook and Clatsop Counties. Lessons for this year are:

- **September**: Organizational Meeting
- **October**: Potato Power
- **November**: Group Determined Program
- **December**: Holiday Activities
- **January**: Group Determined Program
- **February**: The Whole Story: Using Ancient and Alternative Grains
- **March**: Are You Ready? Preparing Yourself for the Unexpected
- **April**: Cheeses of the World
- **May**: End of Year Activities

For more information about where and when each study group meets contact the person listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Study Group (Meeting Place)</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Phone #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Wed.</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Clatsop County (Astoria area)</td>
<td>Terry Pellissier</td>
<td>503-717-0751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Mon.</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Nehalem Bay (Manzanita)</td>
<td>Jan Markle</td>
<td>503-368-6166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Tues.</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>South County (Pacific City)</td>
<td>Onnie Beyer</td>
<td>503-965-6587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Wed.</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Kilchis River (Tillamook)</td>
<td>Evelynn VonFeldt</td>
<td>503-377-2019</td>
</tr>
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Autumn Festival Gardening Classes

The annual Fall Festival Gardening classes will be held on Saturday, October 18 at the OSU Extension Service office in Tillamook. A variety of gardening topics will be presented, including classes the following classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Class Titles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Life with Diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Healing with Herbs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Control of Aquatic/Riparian Weeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Noodles, Noodles, Noodles, Container Gardening, Rock Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Stretching Food Dollars, Small Lot Landscape Design, Conifers for Small Gardens</td>
</tr>
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See the enclosed flyer for more information. Early registration is encouraged to assure your space in the classes of your choice and to make sure classes have adequate enrollment and will be held.

Calendar

**September**

- **Sept. 23**: Canning Tomatoes and Salsa, OSU Extension Service office, 6 p.m. (pre-registration required to make sure class will have adequate enrollment to be held).
- **Sept. 24**: Study Group Advisory, OSU Extension Service office, 10:30 a.m.

**October**

- **Oct. 5-11**: National 4-H Week
- **Oct. 12**: 4-H Recognition Dinner, Tillamook High School, 1:30 p.m.
- **Oct. 18**: Fall Festival Classes, OSU Extension Service office, Tillamook