

HEALTHY, WEALTHY, AND WISE

Practical Knowledge for Everyday Living



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Agent's Corner

Spring is in the air!

The long, cold (at least to us natives) winter is finally over and that means it's time to clean out our clutter, air out our homes, and get out there and have some fun!

But remember to temper that fun with a bit of caution. Springtime can also mean allergies to many people, so be sure to take care of yourself. And watch out for that intense Florida sunshine—it can be a real scorcher!

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The Wordsmith

Boondoggle: (n.) a wasteful or impractical project or activity often involving graft

Example: Many taxpayers believe that the new sports arena is a *boondoggle*.

Simply Florida: A Taste of Flavors from the Sunshine State

Looking for a great gift idea for that gourmet cook in your life? The new *Simply Florida* cookbook created by Family & Consumer Sciences agents throughout Florida is the perfect choice! Order your copy today by calling Samantha at (941) 722-4524 or by visiting <http://www.simplyflorida.org>.

Consumer Alert: Cell Phones

Text messaging. Picture taking. Playing MP3s. Accessing the internet. Sending e-mails.

Sometimes it feels like cell phones have taken over our lives. It wasn't that long ago that the idea of cell phones was just a futuristic fantasy. Now everyone's got one and can't seem to remember how to function without it.

Cell phones are handy. However, be careful about the type of phone you purchase. Salespeople will try to sell you the phone with the most bells and whistles. But think to yourself, do I really need a phone that

plays MP3s when I don't even know what an MP3 is?

If all you need are the basics, then get the basics. Be firm with the salesperson. Tell them exactly what you need and want and refuse their, "But for just a few more bucks a month..." spiel.

And remember, you don't even need to have cell phone service to be able to use a cell phone in an emergency. All cell phones are required to have 911 capabilities regardless of whether they are connected to a monthly plan.

Just remember to keep it charged.



SECTION A: THE GOOD LIFE



Register Your Emergency Contacts

Florida driver license or I.D. card holders are now able to register up to two emergency contacts online. That way, if you are ever in an emergency, law enforcement officers will be able to swipe your license or I.D. card and pull up your emergency contact information more quickly.

It's easy! Simply go to the Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles website at <http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us> and click on the following icon:



Just follow the instructions, click "Save" and *voila!* you're done!

Be sure to keep it updated if any of the information changes so that you can get the best help possible.

Secrets to Smarter Sleep

Our body clocks, or "circadian rhythms," are set to wake us at sunrise, keep us alert until sunset, and then allow us to rest for about eight hours a night.

Sleep requirements differ for each person, but experts claim that eight hours is the ideal length of time to sleep. Sleep and waking times depend on work and family schedules, but it is important to listen to your body. If you feel exhausted, try not to deprive your body of rest any more than needed; your body is trying to tell you to take it easy. Also, if you wake up feeling alert, then get up. Don't give in to the tempta-

tion to sleep in; too much sleep can leave you feeling sluggish.

Avoid caffeine after 2:00pm and alcohol within 3 hours before bedtime. Eating a large meal before bed or going to bed hungry can also disrupt your sleep.

Exercising right before bed can prevent or delay sleep. Dimming the lights at least an hour before bed can help you relax. Listening to relaxing music can make you feel calmer and can lull you to sleep. And avoid reading or watching television in bed—train your body that the bed is for sleeping only.

"You can't stay mad at somebody who makes you laugh."

~Jay Leno~

Think You're a Clean Freak? Think Again!

If you save those old toothbrushes so that you can better clean your grout, you may be a "clean freak." But are you, really?

Many household items are overlooked when it comes to cleaning. Here are just a few items that you may be neglecting:

Gym bag. This should be cleaned at least once a month. Cloth bags can just be tossed in with the other laundry. Nylon bags should be sponged with warm water and soap.

Headphones. Clean these every couple weeks with an an-

tibacterial wipe. Remove the foam covers and rinse them in hot water and soap.

Pillows. Wash these every other month. Feather pillows can be washed, as long as the ticking is intact, in the washing machine in the delicate cycle. Rinse twice and tumble dry. Foam pillows should be washed by hand and left to air dry.

Coffeemaker. Mineral buildup can be removed by pouring 3 cups each of white vinegar and water into the tank and then brewing as normal (without coffee, of course). Run plain water through the machine twice to clean out the vinegar.

Three Easy Steps to Calm

If you're feeling stressed, try the following simple techniques to steer you back towards calm.

Warm your hands. Stress can leave you feeling cold. Run your hands and wrists under warm water for a few minutes, then wrap your hands around a steaming mug of cocoa, coffee, or tea.

Hold a pencil in your teeth. Do not bite the pencil, but hold it gently. Your facial muscles will relax and that will help relieve tension.

Press on your temples. Gently massaging your temples for 3 - 5 minutes will help relax muscles in other parts of your body, making you feel better.

SECTION B: HOME ON THE RANGE



For the perfect hard-boiled egg, place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan and cover with water. Simmer over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to low. Cover and cook for 10 minutes. Drain the hot water and run cold water over the eggs until completely cooled. To peel the eggs, gently crack the shell, then roll the egg between your palms to loosen the shell. Peel the egg starting with the large end, rinsing the egg under cool water to remove any bits of remaining shell.



Use this method to make eggs for decorating this Easter!

"If you want to make an easy job seem mighty hard, just keep putting it off." - Unknown

Sacrificing Safety for Convenience?

Pre-cut, pre-washed produce is a convenient way to add more of the recommended fruits and vegetables to our diets, since our always-on-the-go lifestyles make it difficult to find the time for all the prep work.

But is it safe?

The recent *E. coli* outbreak from bagged spinach was a real eye-opener for many consumers. The "triple washed" label lured consumers into a false sense of security; many equated "pre-washed" with "pathogen-free." This is simply not true.

Eating foods raw always carries some risk. The heat during the cooking process is the best barrier to food-borne illness-causing organisms. But don't despair—this doesn't mean that fresh fruits and vegetables are dangerous. Quite the contrary, in fact.

The benefits of eating fresh produce far outweigh the risks, so by all means, incorporate them into your diet as often as possible.

Just be a food safety-conscious consumer. Wash produce thoroughly before consuming it, even if it is labeled "pre-washed." An extra rinse couldn't hurt and may give you peace of mind.

So enjoy those fruits & veggies safely!

Eggs are almost the perfect food. They're rich in vitamin A and several B vitamins, high in potassium and zinc, and a great source of protein. The yolk does contain cholesterol, but just one egg a day can be part of a healthy diet.

Getting the Skinny on Trans Fat

Trans fat. Those two words have been buzzing around our ears like annoying flies since January 2006. Trans fat is bad. Don't eat trans fat. How much trans fat is in this or that?

Food manufacturers are now required to provide trans fat information on their products' food labels. That's great! But besides knowing they're bad for you, how much do you really know about trans fats?

Trans fat is a type of fat where hydrogen is added to make it more solid and to give it a longer shelf-life. Its molecular shape makes it "stickier," meaning that it's more likely to get stuck in your blood vessels, clogging them. These fats have also been shown to raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol and lower HDL ("good") cholesterol.

Trans fats are present in a lot of processed snack foods such as potato chips, cookies, and crackers. But beware—many healthy foods such as granola, lean meats, and low-fat dairy can also contain trans fats. So read the labels carefully!

Flavor of the Month

Deviled Eggs

- 1 dozen eggs
- 2 tsp. dijon mustard
- 1/3 c. mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. minced onion
- 1/4 tsp. Tabasco
- Salt and pepper
- Paprika

Hard boil the eggs. Peel the eggs, then slice them lengthwise. Scoop out the yolks into a small mixing bowl. Using a fork or pastry blender, mash the yolks and combine with mustard, mayonnaise, onion, Tabasco, and salt & pepper. Spoon mixture into egg white halves. Sprinkle with paprika and serve. Makes 24 deviled eggs.

SECTION G: ODDS & ENDS



Volunteer News: HCE & The Guild

HCE News:

Nominations for the "Pride of HCE" award are due to district president Joe Kadjeski by April 15th. This award honors a member of HCE who has made a difference in their community. If you have any suggestions, please let us know!

We are currently collecting aluminum for the Ronald McDonald House. You may collect whole cans or just the pop tops if you prefer. For more information, please call the office.

GUILD News:

We are still in need of yarn. If you have any extra yarn or know of someone who does, please call us.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated. However, we just do not have the room to store infinite amounts of donated craft materials and books. If you have things you wish to give away, you may bring them to a Guild meeting. Anything left over at the end of the day needs to be taken back or discarded.

Thanks for understanding!

April Birthdays

Yolanda Argeles	April 1
Rita Sanguedolce	April 13
Pat Savageau	April 16

The Manatee County Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon is Thursday, **April 26, 2007** from **12:00 - 2:00pm** at the Manatee Civic Center in Palmetto.

Please call (941) 722-4524 to RSVP. Remember to tell us if you are bringing a guest.

Thank you for all that you do for Manatee County.

Upcoming Events & Important Dates

April 8, 2007	Easter Sunday
April 9, 16, 23, & 30 1:00 - 3:00pm	Guild Meeting
April 15, 2007	Pride of HCE Award Applications due
May 7, 2007 1:00 - 3:00pm	Guild Birthday Lunch
May 7, 2007 3:00 - 4:00pm	HCE Meeting
May 14 & 21, 2007 1:00 - 3:00pm	Guild Meeting
May 28, 2007	Memorial Day Extension Office Closed

Manatee County Extension Service

Solutions for Your Life.

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HAPPY EASTER!

