

# HEALTHY, WEALTHY, AND WISE

Practical Knowledge for Everyday Living



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## Agent's Corner

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### The Wordsmith

**Louche:** \LOOSH\ (adj.) not reputable or decent

**Example:** Mothers often think that their teenaged sons' friends are *louche*.

### 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>.

It's the simple things in life that make us happy. In the age of multitasking with the latest and greatest hand-held electronic gizmo, I still get the most joy from the simple act of curling up on the couch with a book in my hands and at least one of my three cats snuggled up next to me.

It seems we spend so much time trying to keep up with the Joneses that we lose track of ourselves. Get back in touch with what makes you happy.

Samantha Kennedy, M.S.  
Family & Consumer Sciences Agent



## Consumer Alert: Online Bill Pay

Paying your bills online is just another perk that the internet has to offer. However, be careful.

There are many benefits to online bill pay. It is very convenient, allowing you to pay your bills almost instantly from the comfort of your home. It saves paper since you don't have to send a check (many companies also provide electronic statements as well). You save on postage. And many banks provide the service for free as long as you have a checking account with them.

However, there are also some pitfalls that you need to take care to avoid. You have

the option of enrolling in an online bill pay program with your bank or paying your bills through the company's own website. Please keep in mind that paying through the bank eliminates the middle man and that is one less entity that has your banking information. Also, providing your banking information over the internet always carries some measure of risk. Be sure that the company is using a secure server. (Look for the little padlock symbol in the lower-right and the "https" in the web address.)

Online bill pay is great; just be alert!

## Un-Stick That Sugar

Have you ever reached in your pantry for that sugar you needed for a recipe and found that it was a solid block? That's the result of excess moisture – namely, humidity – causing the sugar crystals to clump together. But have no fear; in most cases the sugar is still salvageable. It just needs a little TLC. Granulated (white) sugar just needs a few good whacks with a mallet or a whirl in the blender to make it pourable again. If powdered sugar becomes lumpy, sifting it can make it useable. Brown sugar stays malleable by retaining moisture. Remove the moisture and the sugar becomes hard. To make it soft again, store it overnight with a damp paper towel or apple slice (something from which the sugar can absorb moisture) in an air-tight plastic bag. You can also microwave it (1 minute per cup), but it must be used before it hardens again.

Researchers from the University of Florida have confirmed that microwaving your sponges kills more than 99% of bacteria that may be hiding in those nooks and crannies. Keep in mind these few hints before popping those sponges into the microwave:

1. Only nuke wet sponges (for no more than 2 minutes) since dry ones may burn.
2. Never nuke a soapy sponge since heating the soap can release toxic fumes.
3. Be careful! The sponge will be VERY HOT, so use tongs.

“One thing you can't recycle is wasted time.”

—Anonymous—

## Building a Better Doctor's Visit

Most of us have left the doctor's office feeling disappointed, not so much because of what the doctor said, but because of what he didn't. Doctors have so many patients and too little time to devote to each one. However, you can get the most out of your appointment by keeping these three things in mind:

**Know your medications.** Many of us take a variety of medications that have been prescribed by multiple doctors. It's important to share with each and every doctor each and every medication you are taking—dosages, when you began taking them, and why they were prescribed. Be sure to also include any side-effects you many have experi-

enced. Over-the-counter vitamins, herbals, and nutritional supplements need to be included as well.

**Bring a notepad.** Before your visit, write down any questions you need to ask the doctor before you forget them. During the visit, be sure to write down any instructions he may give you so that you don't have to call back later.

**Set the agenda early.** If you think that you will need more time with the doctor than what is normally allotted (the average visit is 15 to 20 minutes), then make sure that you let the receptionist know when you are making the appointment. They may be able to give you more time with the doctor.

## Curing What Ails You

Summertime is fun, but it can also be the bearer of a lot of not-so-fun ailments. Luckily, there are many that can be soothed with just a little bit of know-how.

**Poison ivy.** Slathering on some lotion (there are those specifically for poison ivy) can help prevent the irritation caused by this plant by providing a barrier between the plant's oils and your skin.

**Food poisoning.** This is never fun, but the key to a quick recovery (besides being healthy) is drinking plenty of clear liquids and avoiding solid foods until the illness has run its course. Sports drinks will help replace those lost electrolytes.

**Insect bites.** To prevent bites, use a spray with DEET or picaridin on skin and clothes exposed to insects. To soothe those bites after the fact, try using topical hydrocortisone cream, an

oatmeal bath, or a mixture of 3 teaspoons of baking soda and 1 teaspoon of water.

**Ocean itch.** That red rash you get after swimming in the ocean are really the stings from hundreds of larval jellyfish. To prevent it, remove your swimsuit immediately after swimming and take a shower. Then rinse with a mixture of 1/4 cup white vinegar and 1 1/2 cups water.

**Heat rash.** That sudden prickly itch that crops up seemingly out of nowhere in the summertime is caused by the sweat glands under the clothes getting plugged up. The solution? A cool shower. After a quick rinse in cool water, the rash should disappear within a couple hours. Avoid using greasy creams or ointments since these will just clog your sweat glands even more, possibly making the rash worse.

## Flavor of the Month

### Spinach and Strawberry Salad

#### Ingredients

2 bunches of spinach	1/2 cup white sugar
4 cups sliced strawberries	1/4 tsp. paprika
1/2 cup vegetable oil	2 Tbsp. sesame seeds
1/4 cup white wine vinegar	1 Tbsp. poppy seeds

#### Directions

1. In a large bowl, toss together the spinach and strawberries.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, sugar, paprika, sesame seeds, and poppy seeds. Pour over the spinach and strawberries and toss to coat.
3. Makes 8 servings.

## Feeling the Burn?

Love spicy food but hate the accompanying burning sensation? There are a few common foods that can help alleviate the fire on your tongue. (And cold water is not one of them!)

**Dairy products.** Foods such as milk, sour cream, yogurt, and cheese contain a protein called casein that can help neutralize the chemicals that give chiles their heat.

**Chocolate.** This delectable treat is also a good source of casein and can help ease the burn.

**Citrus.** The acidity of these fruits counteracts the alkalinity of the oils in the chiles, easing the pain of the spiciness. Try drinking orange juice or lemonade with that spicy meal instead of plain water.

**Sugar.** This food has been proven to ease the burn better than water alone, so drinking sweet tea or fruit juice with your meal can help ease the burn.

Water just spreads the heat around and carbonated drinks just make the feeling worse, so try to avoid these beverages if high spice is on the menu.

## We Need Your Help!

In an effort to save money while still providing you with the quality educational information you desire, we are asking you to provide us with your e-mail address (if you have one) so that we may send an electronic version of "Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise" each month. That way, we are saving on both paper and postage.

If you would like to receive the newsletter via e-mail and have not yet provided your e-mail address to us, please do so as soon as possible. You may e-mail Sharon at [shaylee@ufl.edu](mailto:shaylee@ufl.edu) or Samantha at [skennedy@ufl.edu](mailto:skennedy@ufl.edu). Please remember to include your full name in the e-mail.

Thank you for your help in this matter!

## Just Breathe

The keys to better health may reside in your chest cavity. Proper breathing can help lower blood pressure, ease stress, and soothe headaches.

Humming your favorite song for two minutes a day can improve the oxygen and carbon dioxide balance in your blood as well as relax blood vessels. But be careful, because that song may just stick for the rest of the day!

Use your abdominal muscles to draw a deep breath into your lungs; don't just expand your chest. This method of breathing draws more air into the lungs and thus more oxygen. Five minutes of deep breathing can go a long way to reducing stress, but only if you do it right.

A University of Pittsburgh Medical Center study showed that five minutes of daily breathing exercises helped reduce the occurrence of migraines by 80 percent. Focus your breathing by pretending you are blowing out a candle or trying to keep a pinwheel spinning as you exhale.

When I hear somebody sigh, 'Life is hard,'  
I am always tempted to ask,  
'Compared to what?'

Sydney Harris

### Summer Grilling Tip



How do you test the temperature of a grill if you don't have a thermometer? There's a quick & easy method to determine grill temperature. Place your open palm about 3 inches from the rack. The temperature is high if you have to move your hand in 2 seconds, medium if you have to move your hand in 5 seconds, and low if you have to move your hand in 10 seconds.

## An Ode to Volunteers

### You Never Know

By Helen L. Marshall

You never know when someone may catch a dream from you.

You never know when a little word or something you may do,

May open up the windows of a mind that seeks the light .

The way you live may not matter at all; but you never know, it might.

And just in case it could be that another's life, through you,

Might possibly change for the

better with a broader and brighter view,

It seems it might be worth a try at pointing the way to the right.

Of course, it might not matter at all; but then again, it might.

Volunteers are the foundation upon which Extension programming is built. Through the efforts of all of the Family & Consumer Sciences volunteers, we are able to reach so many more people that we could do alone. Improving the lives of others through education and outreach is what we are all about.

Thank you for all you do.

## June Birthdays

Samantha Kennedy June 8

Cindi Edwards June 8

Joyce Sandberg June 29

**83rd Annual FAHCE Conference  
October 8 -10, 2007  
Plantation Inn & Golf Resort  
Crystal River, Florida**

**Deadline for Hotel Registration  
& FAHCE Registration is  
September 21, 2007**

**If you have any questions or are in need of a registration form, please contact the office.**

## Upcoming Events & Important Dates

June 11, 18, 25  
1:00 - 3:00 Guild Meeting  
Rogers Auditorium

June 17 Father's Day

July 2  
1:00 -3:00 Guild Birthday Lunch  
Rogers Auditorium

July 2  
3:00 - 4:00 HCE Meeting  
Rogers Auditorium

July 4 Independence Day  
CES Office Closed

July 9, 16, 23, 30  
1:00 - 3:00 Guild Meetings  
Rogers Auditorium

## Manatee County Extension Service

*Solutions for Your Life.*

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CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB!  
[HTTP://MANATEE.IFAS.UFL.EDU](http://MANATEE.IFAS.UFL.EDU)

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June is Adopt a Shelter Cat Month

