

HEALTHY, WEALTHY, & WISE

Live Well. Be Well.



January 2008
Volume 3, Issue 1

Agent's Corner



We're back! After a holiday hiatus, "Healthy, Wealthy, & Wise" returns with more great news you can use. Information on the latest nutrition research and trends, food safety tips, delicious recipes, and other health news will be right at your fingertips!

So sit back, relax, and kick off the new year with the latest edition of the Family & Consumer Sciences newsletter. You'll be glad you did.

Happy New Year!

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

In This Issue:

Agent's Corner	1
Consumer Alert: Lead	1
Put Those Worries on ICE	2
"Good" Bacteria: Worth Their Weight in Gold?	2
OTC Doesn't Mean A-Okay	2
Need More Fiber? Try These Tips!	2
Chew on This!	3
Got Germs? We All Do!	3
Flavor of the Month: Hoppin' John	3
H ₂ O, No!	4
Birthdays/ Calendar of Events	4

The Wordsmith

imbricate \IM-brih-kut\ adj.: lying lapped over each other in regular order

Example: The antique mirror had tiny **imbricate** gold squares around its edge.

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>.

Fast Fact

Our skin is our largest organ. And it has a big job, too: it prevents germs from entering our body, it shields us from harsh environmental threats, and it helps regulate our body temperature. So please remember...keep it protected so it can keep protecting you!

Consumer Alert: Lead

You may have heard or read about all the recent toy and jewelry recalls due to lead that have been in the news in the last few months. Many of these products are imported from other countries where the standards are not as stringent as in the U.S.

The threat of lead poisoning has decreased dramatically in the last 25+ years, but with the prevalence of imported goods, the risk is again on the rise. Products not normally considered to be at risk when produced domestically are found to contain uncommonly high levels of lead when produced overseas.

What can you do? First, you can reduce lead exposure in your home and evaluate the risk of lead in your home by having your home and the things in it tested. Visit www.epa.gov/lead for more information. This is especially important if your home was built before 1978.

You can also have children tested for lead by a physician. If the test is not standard, ask for it. Be sure to also check the recall lists for products that have been found to contain unsafe levels of the heavy metal. Please visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website at www.cpsc.gov.

Living Well



Put Those Worries on ICE

In today's technological world, nearly everyone has a cell phone. They can make our lives easier, putting us in touch with friends and loved ones from almost anywhere. But did you know that it could possibly save your life?

There's a campaign that involves identifying your primary emergency contact in your cell phone's contact list with the letters "ICE" (In Case of Emergency).

Police and other emergency personnel often use cell phones to identify victims who cannot communicate, but do not know which of the many stored numbers is the person's emergency contact. By clearly identifying who your contact person is with the "ICE" designation, you can help solve the mystery for them. For more than one emergency contact, simply use "ICE1", "ICE2", etc.

It only takes a few minutes and it could make a world of difference!



Want to feel better? Research shows that "expressive writing" or "journal therapy" can help boost mental *and* physical health. Try spending 30 minutes a day writing down what's bothering you in free form, not worrying about punctuation, spelling, or style. You just might lower your stress. (Taken from "TopHealth" newsletter, July 2007)

"Good" Bacteria: Worth Their Weight in Gold?

New health claims emerge every day—there's a new wonder food or wonder nutrient that will help us live a longer, healthier life. Not all of them are true.

The latest one is the rise of the **probiotics**, or "good" bacteria, that can aid in digestive health. These bacteria really do exist and we all have them naturally in our gut. These beneficial bugs help us digest food and fight off harmful germs that can make us ill. But they're popping up in foods now, too.

Everything from yogurt to energy drinks to cottage cheese tout that they're rich in beneficial bacteria

that can improve digestion and boost immunity. But be careful about buying those benefits—out of the hundreds of strains of probiotics, only a few have been clinically tested. And manufacturers don't have to list the strain, or amount, of bacteria added to their products.

The bottom line is this: probiotics can help, but different people respond differently to various strains, so what works for your neighbor may not work for you.

If you'd like to try it, be sure to look for the "Live & Active Cultures" seal when purchasing probiotic yogurt products.

"I often quote myself, it adds spice to my conversation." - George Bernard Shaw

OTC Doesn't Mean A-Okay

Just because a product is sold over-the-counter (OTC), doesn't mean that it can't hurt you. Take, for instance, those topical ointments used to treat minor muscle pain. Nearly anything applied to the skin can be absorbed into the body, so overuse of topical treatments can lead to toxic levels of active ingredients in the bloodstream. Methyl salicylate, a compound similar to aspirin, is the active ingredient in those pain-relieving topical ointments and a build-up of the drug in the blood can lead to internal bleeding and neurological problems.

So remember, follow the directions on the package carefully and consult a doctor if your symptoms don't subside after a few days.

When life hands you lemons, make...glass cleaner? Safe, inexpensive glass cleaner can be prepared at home—and the ingredients may already be in your kitchen. Mix one part lemon juice with two parts water, spray, then wipe. To avoid streaks, don't wash windows when the sun is shining. (Taken from *Cooking Light*, November 2007)



Need More Fiber? Try These Tips!

For that extra boost of fiber, try the following:

Eat the skin. Most of the fiber provided by fruits and veggies is contained in the skin.

Read the Nutrition Facts label. It's not just for decoration, you know. Five grams of fiber is good, eight or more is better.

Cook vegetables briefly. The longer they're cooked, the more fiber they lose. Try steaming those veggies until crisp-tender to maximize fiber and flavor. Also, snack on raw veggies between meals.

"The cat could very well be man's best friend but would never stoop to admitting it."

~Doug Larson~

Chew on This!

Does chewing gum really stick with you? Moms throughout history have reinforced the myth that chewing gum stays in your system for seven years in an attempt to prevent their kids from swallowing it. However, as they say, "This too shall pass." While it is true that the digestive juices cannot break gum down, it will pass through your system, just like everything else, within 72 hours.

And while you probably shouldn't make a habit of swallowing it, you may want to make a habit of chewing it. Chewing a piece of gum can increase saliva production, which in turn can ease the pain of heartburn after you eat. Also, sugarless gums that contain xylitol have been shown to fight off the bacteria that cause tooth decay.

Plus, chewing a piece of gum can help stave off those late-afternoon snack cravings, too!



Chewing gum may help relieve the munchies and prevent heartburn!

Got Germs? We All Do!

Are you a "germophobe"? You know, one of those people who carries a miniature bottle of hand sanitizer and a packet of Clorox wipes wherever you go? If you are, please take note: there are more of them than there are of us and the odds are in their favor. But to aid in your crusade against crud, here are the top 12 germiest places to focus your efforts on:

#12: Hotel room remote controls. (Tune into tetanus.)

#11: Your office phone. (Dial-a-germ, anyone?)

#10: Your bathtub. (Rub-a-dub-dub, there's E. coli in your tub!)

#9: Mats and machines at health clubs. (Puts the "ech" in "exercise.")

#8: Playgrounds. (Ring around the rosy, pocket full of...salmonella?)

#7: Your handbag.

(I wouldn't eat that fuzzy Life Saver if I were you.)

#6: ATM buttons. (A little bit of cash is not all you're getting!)

#5: Shopping cart handles/seats. (And you store your bananas *where?*)

#4: Public drinking fountains. (So cool, so clear, so contaminated!)

#3: A load of wet laundry. (Dirty underwear + a nice warm bath = a day at the spa for germs.)

#2: Airplane bathrooms. (Gives a whole new meaning to "sharing airspace.")

And the #1 germiest place is...(drumroll, please) **Your kitchen sink!** (That sponge holds more than just soap and water, you know...)

Flavor of the Month: Hoppin' John

This recipe, courtesy of the King of Cajun Cooking, Emeril Lagasse, provides a delicious way to ring in the New Year with a little good luck and a lot of fiber!

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 large ham hock
- 1 c. onion, chopped
- 1/2 c. celery, chopped
- 1/2 c. gr. pepper, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. garlic, chopped
- 1 lb. black-eyed peas
- 1 qt. chicken stock
- bay leaf
- 1 tsp. dry thyme leaves
- Salt, blk pepper, & cayenne
- 3 Tbsp. gr. onion, chopped
- 3 c. steamed white rice

Directions

Heat oil in a large soup pot, add the ham hock, and sear on all sides for 4 minutes. Add the onion, celery, green pepper, and garlic; cook for 4 minutes. Add the black-eyed peas (which have been soaked overnight and rinsed), chicken stock, bay leaf, thyme, and seasonings. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for 40 minutes, or until the peas are creamy and tender; stir occasionally. If the liquid evaporates, add more water or chicken stock. Adjust seasonings to taste and garnish with green onions. Serve over rice.

Makes 10 servings.

H₂O, No!

Ah, bottled water. So clean, so refreshing. Such a waste of money. Americans are blessed with one of the cleanest public water systems on the planet, yet we continue to buy more and more bottled water every year. On average, Americans drink 27.6 gallons of bottled water per capita each year. That may not seem like a lot, but considering that it costs upwards of 10,000 times more than tap water, that's a lot of moolah, er, evaporating!

Here are a few cold, hard facts:

- 40% of bottled water, including many top brands, is nothing but filtered tap water.
- More than 10 million barrels of oil are used each year in the U.S. to bottle water. More is used to import it!
- Over 22 billion water bottles are discarded in the U.S. each year. That's over 60 million each day! It can take a thousand years for a plastic bottle to biodegrade.
- Studies have shown that bottled water is generally no safer or healthier than plain old tap water.

January Birthdays

Carole Ransford	January 2
Brenda Rogers	January 3
Vivian Troilo	January 4
Betty McLeod	January 9
Dee Anderson	January 16
Regena Byrn	January 17
Sue Wiedmeyer	January 18
Pat Bartolucci	January 19
Doris Hubley	January 26
Ilona Gans	January 26
Betty Lupinacci	January 28
Diana Bunker	January 30

Upcoming Events & Important Dates

January 1, 2008	News Year's Day – CES Office Closed
January 7, 2008	Guild Birthday Lunch 1:00–3:00pm
January 17–27, 2008	“What's Cooking at the Manatee County Fair”
January 21, 2008	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – CES Office Closed
January 25, 2008	Deadline to Register for the “Take Charge of your Diabetes” Class
February 4, 2008	Guild Birthday Lunch

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Solutions for Your Life.

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CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB!

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January is National Blood Donor Month

