Staying Healthy During Cold and Flu Season

How are you feeling today? I hope you are feeling well and that you will enjoy a winter without having a cold or the flu.

Unfortunately, I am not feeling so well, I am fighting a cold that my daughter, son, and husband have already had. I tried my best to prevent it. I made sure that we were all washing our hands. I made sure that everyone was getting enough sleep. I made sure that we were eating healthy meals. I tried everything I could think of, but we all got sick. There are still things I can do to help us get well soon.

Here are the top five things I do to prevent getting sick or, if we do get sick, to help us get better fast:

1. **Wash hands frequently.** Washing hands correctly (http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsafety/content/handwashing) is the best way to stop germs from spreading from one person to another. Wash hands after wiping noses, coughing, going to the bathroom, and before every meal and snack.

2. **Drink plenty of fluids.** Most people need to drink at least eight cups of fluids every day. When we are sick, we need even more, especially if we have a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting. Choose fluids that taste good and are soothing to you. I usually choose hot tea because it feels good on my dry, scratchy throat and I like the taste of it. My husband and children prefer 100% fruit juice when they are sick.

3. **Eat fruits and vegetables.** Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins and minerals that can help our immune systems fight off germs.

4. **Eat chicken noodle soup.** Eating chicken noodle soup when sick has many benefits. The warm broth soothes a sore throat and provides fluids. The vegetables and whole grain noodles supply or bodies with vitamins and minerals. The chicken is a lean protein that can help our immune systems. I try to make a large batch of chicken noodle soup and then freeze it in smaller containers so it is ready to go when I am sick and not feeling like cooking. Spend Smart. Eat Smart has a wide variety of soup recipes (http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/soup).

5. **Get plenty of sleep.** Most adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Children need more. When we are sick, we need even more sleep than usual to heal. It is ok to call in sick to work or school to get some extra rest when sick. This has an added bonus of not spreading your germs on to your friends and co-workers.

Justine Hoover—Registered Dietitian & Assistant EFNEP/FNP Coordinator

For more information on nutrition and health, contact Jill Weber, Human Sciences Specialist—Nutrition & Health at jrweber@iastate.edu or (319) 234-6811

BUCHANAN

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach
Slow Cooker Pork Chili

We would like to start 2015 off with a new chili recipe for you. If you are like me, you have your own special way of making chili and you do not want to make any changes. When I first saw this recipe, I agreed to try it, but at the same time I told myself that I would make this new chili only once and then I would go back to my usual recipe. I was wrong! Since first trying Slow Cooker Pork Chili over a year ago, I have made my old recipe only once.

Here are some reasons why this chili has become my new favorite:

- It uses pork. My grocery bill has been increasing, so I try to save money any way that I can. Recently, the grocery store where I shop had pork shoulder for $2.99 per pound. A similar cut of beef cost $4.49 per pound.

- It makes enough pork for two recipes. You cook the pork in the slow cooker and use half of it for the chili and save the other half for our February recipe (or for another batch of Slow Cooker Pork Chili).

- It is made in my slow cooker. I have a toddler and a preschooler – this means the hour before supper time can get a little crazy. If I have something ready to go in the slow cooker, it cuts down on the stress of making supper. Find out more about making meals in a slow cooker by clicking on our [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfoZSbG1444&feature=youtu.be) or [tip sheet](https://iastate.app.box.com/s/o54bpk5poywdyse16exl).

- It uses ingredients I typically have on hand – green pepper, onion, salsa, beans, and tomatoes. This saves me time and money because I do not have to go to the grocery store and search for and buy an ingredient I will only use once.

- It tastes great! Serve it with some milk and fruit and you have an easy and great tasting meal.

Resolutions don’t have to be about giving something up, resolve to have some fun in the kitchen and try this new healthy recipe!

Justine Hoover—Registered Dietitian & Assistant EFNEP/FNP Coordinator

### Slow Cooker Pork Chili

**Serves:** 6  
**Serving Size:** 1 1/4 cups  
**Cost Per Serving:** $1.52

**Ingredients:**
- 2 pounds boneless pork butt, roast, or shoulder
- 1 cup bell pepper, diced (1 medium pepper)
- 1 cup onion, diced (1 medium onion)
- 1 1/2 cups salsa
- 1 can (15 ounces) low-sodium pinto beans
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) low-sodium diced tomatoes

**Directions:**

1. Trim visible fat from the pork. Cut into 2 inch chunks. Place in slow cooker.
2. Add pepper, onion, and salsa.
3. Cook on a low setting for 6 hours or a high setting for 3 hours.
4. Pull the meat apart into shreds with a fork. (You should have about 4 cups.)
5. Put half (2 cups) of the shredded pork in the refrigerator or freezer. (We’ll post a pork sandwiches recipe in February that will call for shredded pork!). Freeze pork if it will not be used within 4 days.
6. Return the rest of the pork to the slow cooker. Add pinto beans and diced tomatoes. Cook another 30 minutes until hot.

**Tips:**

- Pork chops, boneless pork rib, or pork loin can be used. They will be more expensive but have less fat.
- Trim fat from pork with a clean knife on a clean cutting board.
- This recipe freezes well.
- Other beans can be used.

### Nutrition Facts

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**Build a Better Salad**

How many of you are like me and are trying to start some healthy habits in the new year? Whether you’re trying to save money or eat better, packing a healthy lunch can help you do both! Salad is a common go-to option for people trying to eat better, but not all salads are created equal. Here is a quick guide to simplify packing salads for lunch.

1. **Include protein in your salad.** Choose proteins like a hard-boiled egg, beans, chicken or canned tuna. The protein will help you stay full throughout the afternoon. This is a great use for leftover ingredients from dinner.

   **Be careful about your dressing choice.** Salad dressing can be expensive and high in fat, calories and sodium. Keep dressing portions small (approximately 1 tablespoon). One way to save money and be certain about the ingredients in your dressing is to make your own. Let our video on homemade dressing (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyHJexS6-j0) or this helpful handout https://iastate.app.box.com/s/qbf9feulk9315mpirkrf) be your guide!

2. **Choose toppings you enjoy, but avoid common pitfalls.** Many restaurant salads are topped with lots of high-calorie ingredients like bacon and cheese. It is ok to eat these tasty ingredients from time to time, but they can quickly turn your healthy homemade salad into a meal that is high in fat and calories. Instead, choose lots of veggies to top your salad. In the winter, choose those that taste good all year round like carrots, peppers, celery, green onions and even defrosted, frozen peas.

3. **Prepare your salads ahead of time.** We all know what it is like to run out of time on busy mornings. Sturdy greens like spinach hold up well for a few days in the fridge. You can also chop your veggies like peppers, carrots, celery and onions ahead of time. I avoid watery veggies like cucumbers when I am prepping salads ahead because they tend to get a bit soggy after a day or so. Also, wait to put the dressing on your salad until right before you eat it.

If you would like some more ideas about healthy salads, check out the Whole Meal Salad recipe template on our website.

**Whole Meal Salad**

Serves: 1

**Ingredients:**
- 2 cups salad greens (romaine, spinach or mixture)
- 1 cup chopped vegetables and/or fruits, such as cucumber, frozen peas (thawed), onion, tomato, mango, avocado, carrots, or salsa
- 1 ounce* chopped cooked chicken, beef, or pork, or 1/4 cup canned beans, drained
- 1 tablespoon chopped dried fruit, shredded cheese, or chopped nuts
- 2 tablespoons low-fat salad dressing

*1 ounce is about 1/3 the thickness of a deck of playing cards.

**Instructions:**
1. Wash hands.
2. Arrange greens on large plate or bowl.
3. Add vegetables and/or fruits plus meat or beans.
4. Add dried fruit, cheese, or nuts.
5. Add dressing.

**Tips:**
Use fresh produce to tempt hot weather appetites. Add a few oyster crackers if you want more crunch.

**Whose Plate? MyPlate!**

With a New Year just under way, many people are focused on losing weight. Unfortunately, some of the diets people follow to lose weight are not healthy. People tend to cut out foods or food groups, go on restrictive diets or spend money on unnecessary
supplements and drinks. At a recent health and wellness fair I spoke at, one participant mentioned to me that she “just wanted someone to tell her what to eat”. I can totally understand where she was coming from! It seems like every day we hear about a new fad diet or food that we thought was healthy that someone says is not. It can get very confusing.

I told her to ‘model your plate after The MyPlate icon and recommendations given on www.choosemyplate.gov are healthy, sensible, and easy to remember’. MyPlate is based on a 10-inch plate so be sure to check your plate size. Forget about the fads and miracle diets, follow these simple ideas and you’ll be well on your way to a healthy plate.

- **Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.** Choose from fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables. Include more red, orange, and dark-green vegetables such as broccoli, leafy greens, tomatoes, and sweet potatoes in your meals.
- **Make at least half your grains whole.** One-quarter of your plate should be grains. Choose 100% whole grain cereals, bread, crackers, rice, and pasta. You might also try quinoa, barley, or bulgur.
- **Vary your protein food choices.** One-quarter of your plate should be lean protein such as beans and peas, seafood, meats, poultry, eggs, and nuts. Visit our Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website (http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/) for main dish recipes using a variety of protein sources.
- **Switch to skim or 1% milk.** In addition to low-fat milk, drink more water and unsweetened beverages. If drinking juice, choose 100% fruit juice.

When people commit to losing weight or eating healthy, they tend to focus on what they ‘shouldn’t’ eat. Instead, focus on what you should eat for good health. Go to www.choosemyplate.gov to find out how many servings of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and low-fat dairy you need.

When it comes to eating healthy and weight loss, people tend to get confused about what kind and how much fat they should be eating. Fat is necessary for good health, however, some types of fat are healthier choices than others. Read the blog next week to learn about the different types of fat and the foods they are in.

Jody Gatewood—Registered Dietitian & Assistant State Nutrition Program Specialist

**How to Clean and Organize Your Refrigerator**

Recently I was on a crusade to get my kitchen more organized. After creating better centers in my kitchen and organizing the pantry, I started on the refrigerator. I hate wasting time hunting for items and juggling containers to make something fit in the refrigerator. Throwing away food, feels like throwing money in the trash. I save money and time with a more organized refrigerator.

If your refrigerator needs to be cleaned and organized, check out the step by step guide How to Clean and Organize Your Refrigerator (http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/files/2013/01/How-to-organize-your-refrigerator.pdf).

If you are not ready to tackle this job, here are a few quick tips to properly store food in your refrigerator.

- Make sure your refrigerator temperature is 40°F or slightly below and your freezer is 0°F or below. Higher temperatures mean faster food spoilage.
- Air circulates constantly in a refrigerator and foods dry out quickly. Everything needs to be wrapped in foil, plastic, or put in airtight containers. Moisture- and vapor-proof materials are best.
- Perishables like dairy, eggs, and meat should be kept in the coldest part of the refrigerator (not the door). Fresh meat should be in a drawer or in a container on a bottom shelf so juices do not drip on other foods.
- Identify a spot for leftovers and label them. Make a plan to use them. If you know you will not use them within four days, freeze them or throw them away.
- Wipe up spills in the refrigerator when they happen to prevent bacteria (germs) and odors from developing. Use hot soapy water to clean up any spill and rinse with clean water.

Peggy Martin—Registered Dietitian