

Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

MARCH into Spring

MARCH into spring armed with habits that help you become your healthiest self. Consider these tips:

MOVE EVERY DAY – Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity daily for better blood pressure, stress reduction, and weight control. This can include three 10-minute bouts of physical activity throughout the day. Choose activities you enjoy, raise your heart rate, build strength, and increase flexibility. An activity buddy can help you stay faithful to your plan. (See *The Kitchen Workout*, page 2.)

AVOID SKIPPING MEALS – When making a shopping list and planning meals, consider MyPlate (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>). Include healthy snacks (e.g., low fat yogurt, vegetables with low fat dip, whole grain bread with peanut butter) to meet your family's nutritional needs. Healthy snacks sustain energy levels between meals and help you stay on track with your health goals.

READ FOOD LABELS – Aim high (20% or more) for vitamins, minerals and fiber. Aim low (5% or less) for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium. For more information on how to read a food label, watch the "Label Reading for Health" video at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/page/online-lessons>.

CHOOSE FOODS CAREFULLY – Become a smart shopper by reducing the amount of convenience foods eaten, choosing fruit canned in juice, and buying no salt added canned vegetables. When you are choosing foods, make half your plate fruits and vegetables and watch portion sizes.

HAVE FAMILY MEALS – Make family meal time a priority. Research shows family meals promote healthier eating. Eat as a family a few times each week. Set a regular mealtime and turn off the TV, computers, and phones. Have all family members help in meal planning and cooking.



Quick Pad Thai

Serves: 6 (Serving size: 1 1/4 cup)

Ingredients

- 6 ounces thin, whole wheat spaghetti
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 24 ounces frozen vegetable mix
- 3 tablespoons light soy sauce
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 pound boneless chicken breast, cut into bite sized pieces
- 3 eggs
- 1/3 cup chopped peanuts

Directions

1. Cook spaghetti according to package directions. Drain in colander and toss with 1 tablespoon oil.
2. Defrost vegetables in microwave for 5 minutes and drain well (as spaghetti cooks).
3. Combine soy sauce, water, peanut butter, and sugar in a small bowl. Stir until smooth and set aside.
4. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in large skillet over medium high heat. Add chicken pieces and cook and stir until no longer pink (heat chicken to at least 165 degrees F).
5. Crack eggs into a small bowl and beat. Add to pan with chicken and scramble until firm. Add the vegetables and spaghetti to the pan with the chicken mixture. Stir to heat through.
6. Add the soy sauce mixture to the pan and stir to coat veggies and spaghetti.
7. Place in serving bowl and sprinkle peanuts on top.

Nutrient information per serving

420 calories, 8 g total fat (3 g saturated fat, 0g trans fat), 130 mg cholesterol, 450 mg sodium, 45g total carbohydrate, 9 g fiber, 24 g protein

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Safe Home Food Preservation

Interest in home food preservation has increased due to the popularity of local foods and gardening. With more people preserving food, there is concern about whether the resulting food products are safe to eat. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report the most common cause of foodborne botulism in the United States is from home-canned vegetables because proper procedures were not followed. It is important to keep food safety in mind every step of the way when preserving foods at home.

1. Follow food safety guidelines when preparing the recipe.
2. Always use up-to-date tested recipes and directions from a reliable source because knowledge and recommendations change over time with scientific developments. Ignoring recommended procedures can result in home canned products that will make you and your family very ill.
3. Use the appropriate canning method. The acidity of the canned food product determines whether or not it should be processed in a hot water bath canner or in a pressure canner.
4. Have the dial gauge on your pressure canner checked each season. Weighted gauges remain accurate and do not need to be tested. Contact your local extension office for information on how to get your dial-gauge pressure canner tested.

ISU Extension and Outreach offers the Preserve the Taste of Summer (PTTS) program that provides a thorough review of research-based, safe home food preservation practices, includes eight online lessons as well as four hands-on workshops (requires completion of online lessons), and is available statewide. The cost ranges from \$25 to \$100 depending on the level you choose.

Participant evaluations show that the program increases knowledge of safe home food preservation practices and is well received by those who have participated. One participant said, "I would never have attempted home canning before the online lessons. Now I know how to do it correctly and will attempt home canning." Another stated, "I plan to make homemade jams and can tomatoes. I wouldn't feel confident in trying these out before taking this workshop. Great opportunity!"

To register for PTTS, visit www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/preservation/home.html.

The Kitchen Workout

Are you having a difficult time getting 30 minutes of physical activity in during the day? Did you know that your kitchen could be a great place for you to get some physical activity while your meal is cooking?

Warm Up: March in place or walk briskly for one minute while breathing deeply (IN through the nose and OUT through the mouth).

Side Arm Raises: Hold cans of fruit or vegetables at your sides with palms facing inward. Slowly breathe out as you raise both arms to the side, shoulder height. Hold the position for 1 second. Breathe in as you slowly lower arms to the sides. Build up until you can repeat 10 to 15 times. Rest; then repeat 10 to 15 more times.

Toe Stands: Stand at your kitchen counter, feet shoulder-width apart, holding on to the counter for balance. Breathe in slowly. Breathe out and slowly stand on tiptoes, as high as possible. Hold position for 1 second. Breathe in as you slowly lower heels to the floor. Build up until you can repeat 10 to 15 times. Rest; then repeat 10 to 15 more times.



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