

Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

Holiday Mealtime

During the holiday season, don't forget to make time for family meals. Children who often eat dinner with their families are more likely to do well in school, have positive peer relationships, and resist the harmful effects of substance abuse. In addition, regular family mealtime improves communication and nutrition, builds stronger family bonds, and is an opportunity for parents to teach important skills to their children. Furthermore, meals prepared at home are often less expensive and more nutrient rich.

Here are ways to enjoy family mealtime during busy holiday schedules:

- Make family mealtime a priority. Set aside specific times of the week when family members will eat together.
- Be creative and flexible about when and where you eat. Make the most of opportunities instead of worrying about following a strict timetable.
- Make mealtime pleasant. Children learn social skills from listening and watching their parents. Parents can set a positive tone for family meals and set a good example by listening and sharing.
- Eliminate distractions. Turn off the electronic devices (cell phones, television, etc.). Commit to device-free meals on or during the week of December 3, 2018, by participating in the initiative "Dining In" for Healthy Families, from the [American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences](http://bit.ly/FCSdaypledge) (<http://bit.ly/FCSdaypledge>).
- Keep meals simple and easy. Use a slow cooker to prepare a meal that can be ready to eat when the family is ready to eat.
- Use family mealtime [Conversation Cards](http://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/6605) (store.extension.iastate.edu/product/6605).



Source: Adapted from PM 1842, Say "Yes" to Family Meals, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, March 2015



Vegetable Pasta Soup

Serving Size: 1 1/2 cups | Serves: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon oil (canola or vegetable)
- 4 cups vegetables (like onions, carrots, and zucchini) (chopped or sliced)
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes with green chilies
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) low sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 cups water
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning or dried basil
- 2 cups small whole wheat pasta (shell or macaroni)
- 6 cups fresh spinach leaves (about 1/2 pound)

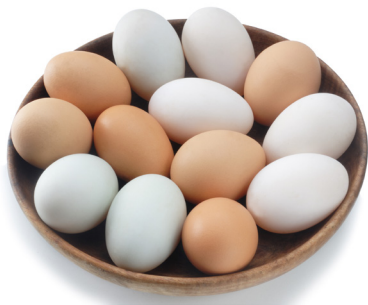
Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat until hot. Add onions and carrots. Cook until they are softened. Stir often. This should take about 3 minutes.
2. Stir in zucchini and canned tomatoes. Cook 3–4 minutes.
3. Stir in the broth, water, salt, and Italian seasoning or dried basil. Bring to a boil.
4. Stir in the pasta and spinach. Return to a boil.
5. Cook until the pasta is tender using the time on the package for a guide.

Nutrition information per serving:

130 calories, 16g total fat, 6g saturated fat, 1g trans fat, 100mg cholesterol, 210mg sodium, 21g total carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 2g sugar, 35g protein

Recipe courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit the [Spend Smart. Eat Smart site](http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu) (spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu).



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Adapting Recipes with Raw Eggs

Does your favorite holiday recipe include raw eggs as an ingredient? Raw eggs may contain Salmonella bacteria. These bacteria cause food poisoning, especially if consumed by pregnant women, young children, older adults, and those who may have a weakened immune system.

To safely adapt recipes containing raw eggs, try one of the following options:

- Add the eggs to the amount of liquid called for in the recipe, then heat the mixture until it reaches 160°F on a food thermometer.
- Use store-bought versions of the home-prepared item. Check the label to be sure items are already cooked or pasteurized.
- Purchase eggs labeled “pasteurized.” Options include the following:
 - Fresh, pasteurized eggs in the shell (found in the refrigerator section)
 - Liquid, pasteurized egg products (found in the refrigerator section)
 - Frozen, pasteurized egg products (found in the frozen food section)
 - Powdered egg whites (found in the baking section)

Source: Food Facts, FDA, January 2017, <https://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/BuyStoreServeSafeFood/ucm328131.htm>

Let's Deskercise!

Do you sit at a desk for prolonged periods during the day? If so, try deskercising to reduce the harmful effects of sitting for long periods of time. Deskercise includes 20 short bouts of cardiovascular, strength, and stretching exercises that can be performed at your desk throughout the day. To download a free poster—**Deskercise! 20 Ways to Get Moving While You Work** (www.nchpad.org/fppics/deskercise%20poster_updated.pdf)—from The National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD).

Other ways to get moving at work include the following:

- Take a quick walk around the office every time you need a refill of coffee or water.
- Instead of emailing your coworker a few offices down, get up and go converse in person.
- Pace while on long conference calls.
- Have a walking/pushing meeting.
- Take the long route to the restroom.
- Swap your office chair for a stability ball.



Source: Desker-what?, NCHPAD; <https://www.nchpad.org/1061/5452/Deskercise~20~Ways-to-Get-Moving-While-you-Work>