

To Your Health

October 2008

Prepare for Cold and Flu Season

Despite the threat of getting sick during cold and flu season, fewer Americans say they regularly wash their hands. **Cleaning your hands is the single most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others.**

The Centers for Disease Control reports that each year in the United States, on average:

..More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications.

..20,000 of those hospitalized are children younger than 5 years old.

..36,000 people die from flu.

Hand washing is vital:

- Before handling, preparing food.
- Before eating meals and snacks.
- After using the restroom
- After changing a diaper.

- After touching animals.
- When hands are dirty.
- When you or someone around you is ill.

Be clean, be healthy; follow these steps:

1. Wet hands with warm water.
2. Lather with good old soap and rub your hands together for 20 seconds.
3. Wash between your fingers and around and under your nails.
4. Rinse with warm water.
5. Dry with a clean towel or paper towel, or air dry.



For more information, see these ISU Extension publications:

5 Myths of Handwashing

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/N3503A.pdf

Clean Hands for Healthy Living

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/N3461.pdf

Wash Your Hands poster

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/N3503B.pdf

And go to any of the following Web sites for more information:

www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsafety

www.foodsafety.gov

www.fsis.usda.gov

www.fightbac.org

Cleaning your hands regularly throughout the day can help keep you out of the doctor's office or emergency room.

Saving Money on Groceries

Saving money on groceries starts in "our heads." It takes thinking, adjusting and planning before we're even ready to walk through the door of the store.

Shop your refrigerator, freezer and cupboards or pantry first. Before shopping for groceries, what meals can you put on the table without spending a dime? Use up that soup that you made. Turn the roast pork and leftover grated cheese into tortillas.

Keep a running grocery list and keep it handy. If you're running low on milk - put it on the list. If the cereal box is empty - put it on the list. When it comes time to shop, you have a grocery list started. Add the rest of the items that you need for meals and snacks and you're ready to go.

Plan shopping trips. With the price of gas, frequent shopping trips create food-related transportation costs. Whether the grocery store you shop at is in town or out of town, plan ahead and make the most of your trips and stops.

Apple Time

Crisp, juicy, fresh apples. Hm-m. What could be better this time of year?

Some studies indicate that apples may help decrease the risk of heart disease and certain cancers. Weighing in at approximately 80 calories per average apple, they also may help with weight control.

At the orchard, store or Farmers' Market select firm fresh apples without soft spots or wrinkled skin.

Wash before eating or using. Rinse well under cool running water.

Choose the best apple for your needs. For example:

Red Delicious is a favorite for eating.

Gala - with a distinctive yellow-orange skin with red striping, has a crisp, sweet taste. Good for a take-along snack. Great in salads.

Jonagold is a blend of Jonathan and Golden Delicious apples, offering a unique tangy-sweet flavor. It is excellent for eating fresh and for cooking.

Rome Beauty is a "baker's dream," but also a great eating apple.

Granny Smith has a mouthwatering tartness, which really comes through when baked and sautéed. Granny Smiths can also be enjoyed "out of hand" or in a salad.

If you are not sure how to use a variety of apple, ask the grocery store produce manager, orchard owner, or Farmers' Market vendor.

Apple Tips:

- When serving raw cut apples, keep them from turning brown by coating them with an acidic juice such as lemon, orange or pineapple juice. Or use a commercial anti-darkening preparation for fruits, such as Fruit-Fresh® and follow the manufacturer's directions for use. Cut fruits as close to serving time as possible.
- Quickly remove the core of apples with a melon baller.
- Cover and refrigerate cut apples until ready to serve. Avoid leaving cut apples at room temperature for more than two hours, total time.