Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

Welcome to the first issue of "Words on Wellness," a monthly newsletter that promotes a healthy lifestyle for Iowans. In each issue, you'll gain reliable, research-based information about nutrition, exercise, and food safety, and explore the power of incorporating healthy practices into daily living for you and your family.

Slow Cooking, Safe Cooking

There's nothing like having dinner cooked for you while you go about your day. Coming home on a cool autumn evening and being greeted by the inviting smells of beef stew wafting from your slow cooker can be a dream come true. Here are some tips for keeping slow food safe:

- Always defrost meat or poultry, being sure to follow safe thawing practices, before putting it into a slow cooker

  Safe meat thawing practices:
  - In the refrigerator (40 degrees or less)
  - In cold water (70 degrees or less)
  - In the microwave followed by immediate cooking
- Prepare foods with high moisture content such as chili, soup, stew, or spaghetti sauce
- Fill the cooker to between half and two-thirds full
- Cut food into chunks or small pieces to ensure thorough cooking
- Vegetables cook more slowly than meat and poultry in a slow cooker so put vegetables in first, at the bottom and around the sides of the cooker
- Keep the lid in place, removing only to stir food or check doneness
- Reheating leftovers in a slow cooker is not recommended

Season for Squash

Fall is the perfect time for squash, rich in vitamin A for healthy eyes and skin. Here is a recipe that is a good source of vitamin A and other healthy nutrients.

Apples in a Nest

Serves 4

Ingredients:

1 acorn squash
2 medium tart red apples, peels left on
1 Tablespoon brown sugar
2 teaspoons margarine
Dash of cinnamon or nutmeg, optional

Cut acorn squash in half and turn cut side down in a baking dish with a half inch water in the bottom. Bake at 350° F. 30 minutes. Core and dice apples. When squash is nearly done, turn squash, and fill each half with diced apples. Top each half with cinnamon or nutmeg, brown sugar and margarine. Continue baking about 45 minutes or until both apple and squash are tender.

Nutrition Facts (1/4 of squash):
107 calories, 2.2g fat, 0.5g saturated, 0mg cholesterol, 26.8mg sodium, 23.3g total carbohydrate, 3.5g fiber, 9.4g sugars, 1.1g protein

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Who ya gonna call? AnswerLine!

- How do I know if my food is bad or naturally green?
- What's the right temperature for my washing machine?
- How do I know if this canned food is OK to eat?
- Or does a 2005 date make it obsolete?

We do have some answers that research will defend, and are here to serve you for that is our Mission's End.

We do our best to answer any question when you call. **1-800-262-3804 or answer@iastate.edu**

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Healthy Tricks and Treats

Halloween is quickly approaching which means lots of candy. With the childhood obesity rates increasing nationwide, it's important to promote healthy behaviors. The calories in the common Halloween "bite-size" treats add up quickly. For example, four "bite size" chocolate bars offer 320 calories, 25 jelly beans have 140 calories, and 20 pieces of candy corn total 100 calories. So for this Halloween, let's give the treat of good health. Share these Halloween goodies that help promote healthy food choices and physical activity:

Healthier Treats

- 100 calorie snack packs
- Animal, goldfish, and graham crackers
- Low-fat microwave popcorn
- Sugar-free hot chocolate or apple cider packets
- Snack boxes of raisins or craisins

"Active" Treats

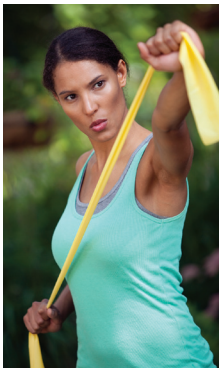
- Bouncy ball
- Jump rope
- Beanbags or hacky sacks
- Sidewalk chalk

Harvesting and Storing Vegetables

When you gather and store fresh produce at the right time, you'll gain the most nutrition from your bounty. Flavor and nutritional value can be maintained for months if food is stored appropriately. Many fresh vegetables can be successfully stored in your home. Refrigeration is helpful but not necessary. Basements, cellars, outbuildings, and pits can be used for storage if they are vented to the outside. For best results, store fruits (apples, pears, etc.) and vegetables separately. Fruits and vegetables have different storage requirements and can adversely affect the storage of others.

For more information on the recommended storage temperature, relative humidity, and storage life for more than 30 fresh vegetables, see the Extension publication, "Harvesting and storing vegetables" (PM 0731) available to download from **http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/pm731.pdf** or purchase for $1.00 from your local County Extension office.

Strength Training with Resistance Bands



Using resistance bands is a good way to look and feel better, and age gracefully with the ability to remain active. Resistance bands are popular for strength training because they are as effective as weights in building strength. In fact, they have an advantage over weights because they don't rely on gravity to produce force. Strength training is important because it helps:

- Increase the rate at which calories are burned
- Increase and restore bone density
- Increase strength and endurance for performing activities
- Decrease joint injuries
- Decrease risk of coronary disease

Resistance bands come in different tensions. Follow the guidelines that accompany your band to start a routine of doing resistance activities 2 or 3 times a week. **Caution:** If you are sensitive to latex, check labels and use latex-free bands. Remember to check with your health care provider before beginning any physical activity program.