

May 5, 2011
Release Date: May 11, 2011

Deborah Rhoades, M.A., R.D.
Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Science

MARYLAND WEBSITE FOR STRETCHING YOUR FOOD DOLLARS

This week's column explains a free website for Maryland residents, *Eat Smart, Be Fit, Maryland!* The website address is <http://www.eatsmart.umd.edu> and is part of a research study at the Public Health Informatics Research Laboratory at the University of Maryland to improve community health for Maryland residents.

Originally launched in 2004 the website just gets better and better with continuous updates and new recipes. It is my "go to" resource to find practical, easy to understand tips for eating healthy and being active. Here are some of my favorite features....

What do you need in your pantry to make a healthy, low cost meal? Check out the **Food Pantry Staples** section http://eatsmart.umd.edu/cooking/food_pantry.cfm this is a great guide for anyone responsible for family meals. It tells you how to shop for food, how to store food, and how to use the foods that you cook.

Looking for simple recipes to prepare? Peruse the **Recipe Box** with over 100 plus recipes in every category - breakfast, fruits, vegetables, main courses, meatless meals, snacks, and desserts, http://eatsmart.umd.edu/cooking/recipe_home.cfm Each includes a nutritional analysis. The site links you to other recipes sites and recipe videos, great for the beginner in the kitchen who is learning to cook. I have featured two new recipes from the site.

Are you curious about current grocery store specials? Check out the **Grocery Specials** under the **Community** section for online sales flyers to make your grocery list so you can get the best deals at http://eatsmart.umd.edu/stay_connected/grocery_links.cfm . Seventeen stores are linked to the site including all the major supermarkets in Frederick County, Mom's Organic Market, plus Target and Wall-mart. I use this time and again to plan shopping trips, which saves valuable gasoline and time.

Part of food costs which consumers fail to notice is what gets thrown out. Research estimates that the average family of four wastes \$50 of food each month, frivolous during these challenging economic times when every penny counts. The website links you to **Your Ultimate Shelf Life Guide** http://eatsmart.umd.edu/cooking/foodsafety_home.cfm which tells how to store of foods, beverages, condiments, oil, herbs and spices and for how long. Learn what foods can be frozen to avoid tossing them and your money in the garbage.

Laryessa Worthington, MS, RD, the website coordinator comments, “The Eat Smart website has a wealth of resources and links to help make healthy food choices. We are currently in the process of adding information on the new Dietary Guidelines that were just released. In the fall, we will be launching several new features to help engage our visitors with a blog, Face book page and nutrition education videos.”

The *Eat Smart, Be Fit, Maryland!* Website is a joint endeavor of the Public Health Informatics Research Laboratory at the University of Maryland, University of Maryland Extension, and the Food Supplement Nutrition Education Program.

CROCKPOT SPAGHETTI -- Serves 8

1 (26 ounce) jar of spaghetti sauce

1 pound whole wheat spaghetti noodles

Small amounts of raw vegetables or leftover pre-cooked vegetables

Put spaghetti sauce and any raw vegetables in crockpot and cook for 6-8 hours on low.

Break spaghetti noodles into pieces and add to crockpot with 1 cup water. Add leftover, drained canned, or thawed frozen vegetables. Cook for 1 1/2 to 2 hours until spaghetti noodles are soft.

Note: Other noodles may be substituted for the spaghetti noodles.

Suggestion: Vegetables that may be good to add: carrots, broccoli stems, corn, eggplant, or beans.

FRUIT PIZZA TO GO -- Serves 1

1 English muffin

2 Tablespoons whipped fat-free strawberry cream cheese

2 strawberries, sliced

2 grapes, sliced

2 sliced canned mandarin oranges

Toast the English muffin until golden brown. Spread cream cheese on toasted muffin. Arrange sliced strawberries, grapes, and orange slices on top of the cream cheese. This recipe can be made with any flavor of cream cheese and any fruit you like!

For more information about the Frederick County Extension Office check out our website <http://Frederick.umd.edu/> The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, or national origin.

Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, LDN, is a licensed Registered Dietitian and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences.

DHR:ls