EXTRACTS OF THYME

October, November, December 2013

NEW SCHOOL LUNCH STANDARDS

If you've ever heard the saying "Eat the Rainbow," it's a simple reminder to eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables each day. Eating food of different colors is an easy way to get all the vitamins, minerals, and fiber our bodies need. Limiting fats, sugar and salt reduces the risk of weight gain, and poor health. As a general rule, make fruits and vegetables part of a healthy plate every day and eat less, fat, sugar and salt.

School-aged children across the nation have the option to eat the rainbow and eat healthier as a result of new school lunch standards. The final standards include the following:

- Fruits and vegetables served each day.
- More whole grain foods.
- Serving fat-free and low-fat milk.
- Child-sized portions.
- Less fat and salt in school meals.

The new standards will effect school breakfast, lunch and vending machines. The standards first went into effect July 1, 2012 and schools were given three years to phase-in the changes, starting with the 2012-2013 school year. These new school meal standards will greatly impact the health and nutrition of school children across the nation. Parents can get involved by reading the school lunch menu with their kids and talking about the healthy foods listed. Parents will also play an important role in this national effort as role models. Set an example for your children and show them the importance of eating the rainbow!

Source: http://eatsmartmd.blogspot.com/

LET'S TALK FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS

Strong families are based on good communication. Each month we will provide some good conversation starters for you to use with your children or the children in your care. These starters can help to begin a discussion and are much more effective than asking “how was your day?” The idea is to increase communication while getting to know each other better and sharing family values at the same time.

Some ideas for October/November:

What is your favorite subject in school and why?

- If you won a million dollars and you had to give half of it away, who would you give it to?
- What are important qualities to have in a friend?
- If I were the parent in this family, I would.....
- What is the slowest moving animal you can think of?
- Attitude determines altitude, are you soaring or stuck in the mud? How do you feel today?
- What do you consider to be the perfect age and why?

Source: The Ohio State University Extension
A BRIEF LOOK AT SMART CHOICE FOR HEALTH INSURANCE

What is it?

Smart Choice for Health Insurance is an entrepreneurial, comprehensive, research-based, unbiased curriculum designed by a team of experts led by the University of Maryland Extension. Its purpose is to equip consumers with tools they need to make the best possible decision when choosing health insurance plans for themselves and their families. Smart Choice for Health Insurance will be offered by the University of Maryland Extension.

Why was it developed?

Both the currently insured and the previously uninsured – 200 million Americans in total – have new options for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. Yet research shows almost all consumers are confused about how to purchase and use health insurance. Smart Choice seeks to capitalize on this teachable moment by helping Americans take control of their personal and family financial and health needs.

What is its purpose?

Smart Choice empowers consumers to tackle the often-intimidating task of selecting health insurance coverage by explaining the process in plain language, outlining differences in plans and highlighting factors that may influence their decisions. Smart Choice does not advocate for any one specific plan or source of plan but instead teaches consumers how to make their own informed decisions.

Who will benefit?

Consumers throughout the country will be able to take advantage of workshops held in their communities this fall and in years to come. They will improve their access to health care and their financial stability by making a Smart Choice for themselves and their families.

When will Smart Choice be available?

Workshops for consumers will take place beginning in September during the prime open enrollment period.

Where can I find more information?

For details on workshops contact Dr. Virginia Brown, 410-386-2760. For additional information or to Ask an Expert questions or see questions and answers, go to: extension.umd.edu/insure.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING HEALTH INSURANCE

There has been much focus and debate on the Affordable Care Act and the politics surrounding it. However, the issue of health insurance and the benefits it can have for people is something that many people actually have agreement on. So, to help introduce and launch the new “Smart Choice Health Insurance” education program that Extension is starting this fall, here are four of the top ways health insurance can benefit you and your family.

1. Provides Peace of Mind- Good health is important and there are many things we can do to maintain good health, but sometimes we need medical care to help keep us from getting sick or help us get better when we
are sick or injured. Medical care can be expensive, so having health insurance can help us get and pay for the care we need. If you have health insurance coverage, this decreases your out-of-pocket medical expenses. Having health insurance may provide peace of mind to you and your family. Protects your family’s financial future- Having health insurance helps protect your family’s financial future. 2010 statistics show that nearly 42% of all personal bankruptcies are a result of medical expenses. In fact, these medical expenses are frequently just unpaid medical bills and not a result of a single major medical condition or expense.

2. Health insurance helps pay costs when you need care and protects you from very high medical expenses. You may not feel that you need health insurance right now – health insurance is for helping manage risks – in this case potential future health problems. With insurance you have to pay in advance. You don’t sign up for insurance when you get sick. Just as with automobile insurance you don’t sign up when you have an accident. The goal is to have coverage in place well before you need it.

3. Health and wellness services and programs- Many health insurance plans offer services and programs to help keep you healthy, thus saving you time and money over time. In addition to annual wellness visits, some also offer benefits such as personal wellness coaching, healthy pregnancy programs, gym membership discounts, nutrition counseling, online seminars/webinars, checklists, tools and calculators. All you have to do is call your health insurance company to find out what they can offer you.

4. Better Health Outcomes- Having health insurance can lead to better health outcomes. If you and your family have adequate insurance coverage, based on your health care needs and wants; and use your health insurance as it is intended to be used (prevention visits, immunizations, etc.), this can lead to overall better health for everyone.

Source: Smart Choice Curriculum, 2013

PICKY EATER OR JUST LEARNING TO TRY NEW FOODS?

If your child refuses to eat certain foods or does not want to taste something new, they're not alone! Children don't always like new foods right away. They might need your help in learning to like new foods. Here's how!

- **Be a good role model.** Do you enjoy fruits and veggies or other healthy foods? Include them in your meals and show your children how much you like them! Talk about what you like -- the taste or the texture or even the color!

- **Be patient.** Remember that your child might need to try a new food up to 15 times before they like it and eat it every time you give it to them.

- **Keep trying!** Give your child small amounts of fruits and vegetables even if they do not eat them at first. Offer your children small amounts of new foods so that you do not waste food.

- **Try making the new food in different ways.** Make up a silly name for the new food or sing a little song about it; your child is more likely to be curious and try it!

- **Pair a new food with a favorite food.** Serve a new fruit or veggie as a snack when your child is hungry.
- **Give children small amounts to taste or play with at first.** This can be as small as a spoonful of peas or cooked carrots, a piece of an apple, or one section of an orange. Children love to help in the kitchen, so include them when preparing a new food. Let them help get foods ready to cook or eat like tearing up lettuce, scrubbing veggies before cooking, or mixing ingredients for a dish.

Once a month, take your child to the grocery store and let them pick out a new fruit or veggie, then make it for dinner that night. If everyone gets excited about something new, everyone will have a tasty treat ahead!

For more information and tips about parental feeding practices, visit: http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/especially_for_moms_page.htm

**Source:** http://eatsmarmd.blogspot.com/

**EATING ON A BUDGET: BEFORE SHOPPING**

- Compare stores. Discount food stores and national chains usually have the best prices. You will usually pay more for food items at the convenience store, from ten cents to one dollar more than at the grocery store. For example, a 4-stick pack of butter is about 80 cents more at the convenience store than at the grocery store.
- Search in magazines and newspapers for *store specials* and coupons.
- Coupons can save you a lot of money, but only use them on items you were planning to buy anyway!
- Think about joining a wholesale club, like BJ's or Sam's Club. You have to pay a membership fee to join, but the clubs offer great savings, especially on bulk items.
- Find out if there are any *farmers' markets* in your area. Often you can get great deals on fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Try to plan at least one meal a week without meat.
- *Plan meals* around grains like rice and pasta. Add a smaller amount of meat, poultry, fish, or eggs to the dish.

**Source:** http://eatsmart.umd.edu/feed/eating_budget_before.cfm

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

**Walking For Health**

- Walking is safe and easy for most people to do. Do it as often as possible.
- Keep a pair of walking shoes in your car. You'll be ready for activity wherever you go!
- Walk while doing errands. Add an extra lap around the grocery store or mall if you have time.
- Use leg power - take small trips on foot to get your body moving.
- When walking, try walking at a faster pace than usual. Choose a hilly route.
- Walk the dog, then both of you will get healthy!

**Source:** http://eatsmart.umd.edu/feed/pa_tips_walking.cfm
Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.

Temperatures between 40° F and 140° F allow bacteria to grow rapidly. Refrigerate cooked leftovers promptly – within 2 hours; 1 hour when the temperatures are over 90° F. Use an appliance thermometer to ensure that your refrigerator is at 40° F or below.

Divide leftovers into smaller portions and store in shallow containers in the refrigerator. Hot food can be placed directly in the refrigerator.

Leftovers should be reheated to an internal temperature of at least 165° F. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature. Sauces, soups, and gravies should be reheated by bringing them to a boil.

When microwaving leftovers, make sure there are no cold spots in food (where bacteria can survive). Cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking. If there is no turntable, rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking.

Buying food in bulk can be a money-saver. Remember, whatever the quantity of food – safe handling is a must! Large packages of perishables like raw ground meat and poultry products can be refrigerated for 1-2 days, but then the food should be cooked or put in the freezer.

Temperature and time cause bacteria to grow which is why it is so important your refrigerator be cold enough and you not keep leftovers too long.

There is a limit to how long food can be safely kept!

The Partnership for Food Safety Education saves lives and improves public health through research-based, actionable consumer food safety initiatives that reduce food-borne illness.

See fightbac.org for free brochures, fact sheets, stickers and other great stuff!
## UPCOMING CLASSES

**Terry Serio**

**Size Matters, Serving Size That Is**  
September 30  Westminster Senior Center  9:30-10:30 am  
October 8  South Carroll Senior Center  12:30-1:30 pm  
October 28  Taneytown Senior Center  11-Noon  
October 22  North Carroll Senior Center  10-11 am  
October 23  Mount Airy Senior Center  9:15-10:15 am

**My Plate is the Healthiest Plate**  
November 6  Westminster Senior Center  9:30-10:30 am  
November 12  South Carroll Senior Center  12:30-1:30 pm  
November 24  Taneytown Senior Center  11-Noon  
November 25  North Carroll Senior Center  10-11 am  
November 26  Mount Airy Senior Center  9:15-10:15 am

**Meat is Not the Only Protein**  
December 4  Westminster Senior Center  9:30-10:30 am  
December 10  South Carroll Senior Center  12:30-1:30 pm  
December 23  Taneytown Senior Center  11-Noon  
December 11  Mount Airy Senior Center  9:15-10:15 am

**Let’s Move Child Care (call for fee)**  
October 23  Westminster Public Library  6:30-9:00 pm  
November 12  Carroll County Extension Office  6:30-9:30 pm

**Dr. Virginia Brown**

**Smart Choice Health Insurance**  
September 26  Westminster Public Library  6:30 pm  
October 8  Eldersburg Public Library  6:30 pm  
October 9  Mount Airy Public Library  6:30 pm  
October 16  Bel Air Public Library  6:30 pm  
December 10  UME Harford County Office  6:30 pm

**Green Cleaning**  
September 24  Mount Airy Public Library  7:00 pm

**Let’s Move Child Care (call for fee)**  
October 23  Westminster Public Library  6:30-9:00 pm
APPLE CRISP

- 6-8 apples
- 1 cup sugar or sugar substitute
- 2 cups oatmeal
- 1 egg or ¼ cup of egg substitute

1. Wash apples
2. Peel and slice apples
3. Lay apple slices in pan
4. In a bowl mix, sugar, oatmeal and egg
5. Crumble mixture on top of apples
6. Cover with foil
7. Bake for 30 minutes at 375 degrees.

You can use raisins or berries with the apples or peaches or pears in exchange for the apples, if you like.

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If you have a disability that requires special assistance for your participation in a program, please contact the Carroll County Extension Office at 410-386-2760; fax 410-876-0132, two (2) weeks prior to the program.

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