



Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program
A joint project of Texas AgriLife Extension,
Texas Department of Human Services,

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Swisher County
310 West Broadway
Tulia, Texas 79088

May, 2015

Spring Fun Food

Start a Container Garden

If you want to eat local, know where your food is coming from, save money and reap healthy rewards, start a home garden. There's a harvest of benefits when you involve kids in the process, too. A study published in *The Journal of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology* found that children who lived in a home with a garden ate significantly more vegetables than a group that did not have access to a home garden.

A Fun Alternative

If the space you have available at home limits your ability to garden, or if time constraints, neighborhood regulations or poor soil quality are concerns, consider container gardening. "Container gardening is a great way connect kids to where their food comes from. And eating what you grow is one of the most fun and wonderful things you can experience — no matter how old you are

Choosing a Container

Barrels and buckets work well, but get creative — some people even use things such as wheelbarrows for containers. Hanging baskets are good options for small spaces. Clay pots can work for plants that don't need much soil. Match the size of the containers to the depth and amount of soil needed for the plants you want to grow, using seed packets as references. Before using a wood container, get advice from a local hardware store about safe types to use, as some old woods might have harmful chemicals. Similarly, avoid using containers that previously held toxic materials.

Finding a container with adequate drainage is key. If your container doesn't have holes in it, make a few half-inch holes near the bottom to allow water to run out. This will keep plant roots from rotting. To protect surfaces, you can put a saucer under the container to catch water, but be sure to empty it regularly.

Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate

When the weather heats up, make sure you drink enough fluids throughout the day to stay hydrated, and enjoy water-rich foods including crisp lettuce, watermelon, grapefruit, broccoli and yogurt.

Always remember Water is one of the body's most essential nutrients. People may survive six weeks without any food, but they couldn't live more than a week or so without water. That's because water is the cornerstone for all body functions. It's the most abundant substance in the body, accounting for up to 75 percent of body weight. It helps keep body temperature constant at about 98.6 degrees, and it transports nutrients and oxygen to all cells and carries waste products away. Water helps maintain blood volume, and it helps lubricate joints and body tissues such as those in the mouth, eyes and nose. And water is truly a liquid asset for a healthy weight — it's sugar free, caffeine free, and — most importantly — calorie free. Source: www.eatright.org

Planting the Crops

Start with a mixed blend of soil for best results, and then think of the colorful possibilities! Starting with something easy to grow — such as sugar snap peas, or sweet cherry tomatoes. But you can try any vegetable that you are interested in growing. Potatoes and carrots will grow in a container. Seed packets will tell you the best times to plant different crops. You can start seedlings inside and transplant them at the right time, or put starter plants from a greenhouse in your container.

Caring for Your Garden

A plant in its natural environment has ample soil with nutrients that are constantly being replenished. Since soil in a container is limited, you should give your plants some extra nutrition in the form of commercial fertilizer or compost materials. Ask the experts at your local agricultural extension program or garden center to help figure out what your plants need. Container plants need to be watered a little more often, too — up to twice per day in hot weather. Pinch off dry leaves and buds to make room for healthy new ones to thrive.

Then, when harvest time comes, celebrate the labor that led up to the finished product!

Cooking Tips for One or Two

It can be tricky when cooking for one (or even two) to make the most of your ingredients and to minimize dishes — particularly when many recipes focus on making a meal for a family and serve four to six people. But just because you have a smaller household doesn't mean you should abandon the kitchen for take-out.

The best part of cooking for one is that there are no worries about what anyone else wants for dinner. You have the flexibility to enjoy beans with salsa and avocado or a quick omelet with veggies for dinner if you want.

The first step to dinner-for-one success is to make cooking healthy meals a priority. Planning ahead and arming yourself with a few tips and tricks will put you on the path to triumph in the kitchen.

The best strategy when cooking for one is to become friends with your freezer. Instead of scaling down, cook up full recipes: cook once, eat twice. Save time, money and clean up by freezing soups, chili, pasta dishes and extra vegetables. Pull these 'frozen meals' out when you don't feel like cooking or just need a quick meal.

Scrumptious Strata

Ingredients

2 whole eggs
¼ cup reduced-fat milk
1 slice whole-wheat bread, torn into small pieces
¼ cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
¼ cup diced onions (frozen is easiest)
¼ cup diced bell peppers (frozen is easiest)
1 pinch each of garlic, oregano and crushed red pepper
Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Spray an oven-safe glass dish with non-stick cooking spray and preheat oven or toaster oven to 350° F.
2. In a small mixing bowl, beat eggs and milk. Add veggies, cheese and bread and toss to coat.
3. Pour into prepared dish and bake for about 25 minutes, or until top is browned and knife inserted into the center comes out clean.

Cooking Note

This recipe is flexible — feel free to change the vegetables to what you have on hand. It is also easily doubled (or quadrupled) to serve more people.

Nutrition Information

Serves 1: Calories: 389; Calories from fat: 206; Total fat: 23g; Saturated fat: 11g; Trans fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 462mg; Sodium: 507mg; Total carbohydrate: 19g; Dietary fiber: 3g; Sugars: 6g; Protein: 27g

Here are more kitchen tips for one:

Grains

- Cook a batch of whole grains such as brown rice or barley and freeze in individual portions using a muffin pan. Once frozen, the discs can be stored in a zip-top bag.
- Have a six-pack of whole-grain English muffins or a whole loaf of bread? Tuck those extras into the freezer for another day; wrap them tightly in plastic wrap to prevent freezer burn.
- Visit the bulk bins at your local health food and grocery stores. You can buy exactly what you need with no waste and it's often less expensive per pound. In addition to grains, you can score a deal on dried herbs and spices as well as nuts, seeds and dried beans.

Veggies and Fruits

- "If you're not able to go food shopping a few days a week (most of us aren't), embrace frozen produce," says Moore. "Frozen produce can be just as nutritious as fresh and it's there when you need it. Just choose options without added sauces and sugar." Since they're already chopped up, frozen fruits and veggies are ready to add to smoothies, soups and stir-fries. And because they're frozen, there is no rush to use them before they spoil.
- Bulk bags of fruits and veggies are only a better deal if you eat them before they spoil. Only buy what you can reasonably eat before the produce perishes: take extra grapes or cherries out of the bag and pare down that bunch of bananas to what you'll eat.
- Be strategic. Enjoy your most perishable fresh produce like berries and spinach early in the week. Save heartier produce like cabbage, carrots and potatoes for meals later in the week.

Protein: Meat, Poultry, Eggs, Beans

- Eggs can make a meal happen in a flash, anytime! They are an excellent source of protein and contain a bounty of nutrients such as vitamin D and choline. You can hard-boil a few on the weekend to have as an easy breakfast, snack or quick salad addition.
- Buy a whole package of meat or poultry and wrap individual portions in freezer-safe paper; label each with the date and contents.
- A potato masher can easily tame a can of pinto beans into delicious refried beans — a pinch of cumin, garlic and chili powder and you're ready to eat!

Source: www.extension.iastate.edu



Healthy Weight– it's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!
How much physical activity do older adults need?
10 Minutes at a time is fine

150 minutes each week sounds like a lot of time, but it's not. That's 2 hours and 30 minutes, about the same amount of time you might spend watching a movie. The good news is that you can spread your activity out during the week, so you don't have to do it all at once. You can even break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day. It's about what works best for you, as long as you're doing physical activity at a moderate or vigorous effort for at least 10 minutes at a time.

When it comes to weight loss, there's no lack of fad diets promising fast results. But such diets limit your nutritional intake, can be unhealthy, and tend to fail in the long run.

The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight isn't about short-term dietary changes. It's about a lifestyle that includes healthy eating, regular physical activity, and balancing the number of calories you consume with the number of calories your body uses.

A healthy lifestyle involves many choices. Among them, choosing a balanced diet or healthy eating plan. So how do you choose a healthy eating plan? Let's begin by defining what a healthy eating plan is.

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars
- Stays within your daily calorie needs

A healthy eating plan that helps you manage your weight includes a variety of foods you may not have considered. If "healthy eating" makes you think about the foods you **can't** have, try refocusing on all the new foods you **can** eat—

Fresh fruits — don't think just apples or bananas. All fresh fruits are great choices. Be sure to try some "exotic" fruits, too. How about a mango? Or a juicy pineapple or kiwi fruit! When your favorite fresh fruits aren't in season, try a frozen, canned, or dried variety of a fresh fruit you enjoy. One caution about canned fruits is that they may contain added sugars or syrups. Be sure and choose canned varieties of fruit packed in water or in their own juice.

Fresh vegetables — try something new. You may find that you love grilled vegetables or steamed vegetables with an herb you haven't tried like rosemary. You can sauté (panfry) vegetables in a non-stick pan with a small amount of cooking spray. Or try frozen or canned vegetables for a quick side dish — just microwave and serve. When trying canned vegetables, look for vegetables without added salt, butter, or cream sauces. Commit to going to the produce department and trying a new vegetable each week.

Calcium-rich foods — you may automatically think of a glass of low-fat or fat-free milk when someone says "eat more dairy products." But what about low-fat and fat-free yogurts without added sugars? These come in a wide variety of flavors and can be a great dessert substitute for those with a sweet tooth.

A new twist on an old favorite — if your favorite recipe calls for frying fish or breaded chicken, try healthier variations using baking or grilling. Maybe even try a recipe that uses dry beans in place of higher-fat meats. Ask around or search the internet and magazines for recipes with fewer calories — you might be surprised to find you have a new favorite dish!

Source: www.cdc.gov

Spring Fun Food Facts Newsletter is produced by the Swisher County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Sincerely,



Calley Runnels
CEA-FCS Swisher County

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
MONTHLY Educational Programs

PROGRAMS

Nutrition and Exercise Class

May 6, 2015

2:00 p.m. **Mid Tule Village Activity Room**

317 SE 7th Tulia

Car Seat Class

May 20 & 27, 2015

Safe Riders Car Seat Distribution Program

at 2:00 p.m. in Annex Meeting Room

Pre-Registration Required

Call 995-3726

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program -- SNAP. The Better Living for Texans and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.