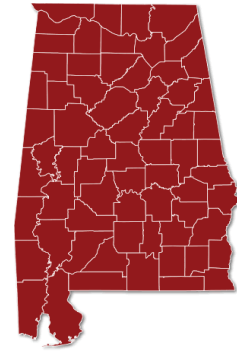




Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter



Quarterly Newsletter

Extension's Nutrition Education Program (NEP) is Helping Schools Implement Wellness Policies

At the beginning of the 2006 school year, schools were charged with establishing a local school wellness policy to benefit students. This federally-mandated policy encourages students to be physically active every day, eat a nutritious diet, get preventative screening and make healthy choices. Many school systems were ill equipped to meet this mandate.

The [Nutrition Education Program \(NEP\)](#), through Extension, had the expertise, manpower and experience needed to help local schools implement a school wellness policy. Since October 2006, 23 NEP educators have been engaging third graders in 46 rural counties to eat a nutritious diet and be physically active. Students learn through a thematic curriculum designed to provide learner-



Kids with Worksheets

centered education. Behavior change of students is being evaluated for dietary practices such as an improvement in fruit and vegetable consumption.

The school-based education through NEP is addressing a dual need. First, NEP is collaborating with schools to meet the requirements of a newly mandated federal policy. Second, this education is addressing a critical societal need of promoting student health through good nutrition and physical activity.

By : Barb Struempler, PhD, Professor and Extension Nutritionist, Auburn University, 334/844-2217 bstruemp@aces.edu

Sondra M. Parmer, PhD, Project Manager, Nutrition Education Program 334/844-2231 sparmer@aces.edu



Kimmie – Randolph Elementary

Practice Food Safety During Your Celebrations

It's spring and there is excitement in the atmosphere. Soon family and friends will be celebrating Mother's Day, Father's Day and Graduations. These events will be followed by family reunions, the 4th of July and other celebrations. It is important to remember some basic food safety techniques when preparing, cooking, storing, and reheating food for your celebrations. Whether you are making a formal dinner or a casual picnic, you want to make sure that foodborne illness is not an invited guest.

Follow these simple food safety techniques:

Clean: Wash hands and food-contact surfaces often. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, knives, sponges, dishtowels, and counter tops. An average kitchen sponge can harbor **70 BILLION** bacteria.

Cook : Cook to proper temperatures. Cooking foods for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature will kill most harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Remember to reheat sauces and gravies by bringing to a rolling boil.



Separate: Don't cross-contaminate--don't let bacteria spread from one food product to another. This is especially true for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Be sure you are thawing your raw meats on the **BOTTOM** shelf in the refrigerator and in a pan so that potentially hazardous juices don't drip onto fresh foods or ready to eat foods. If these foods are eaten, the bacteria from it can make you sick.

Never thaw meat on a counter. If using a sink, place turkey under running water and make sure water temperature does not get above 45 degrees F. The BEST way to thaw meat is in the refrigerator. So, plan ahead.

Chill: Refrigerate promptly. Public health officials advise consumers to refrigerate foods QUICKLY because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. However, DO NOT put hot food directly into the refrigerator. Doing this will heat up your refrigerator's temperature. Chill your food quickly by putting into shallow pans or place pans in ice baths. Don't leave food out for more than two hours. Bacteria can grow rapidly after this time. Refrigerators should be set at 40 F and the freezer at 0 F, and the accuracy of the settings should be checked occasionally with a thermometer.

Timetable for Fresh or Thawed Foods in a Preheated 325 °F Oven

These times are approximate and should always be used along with a properly placed thermometer.

Product	Minimum Cook Temperature	Examples
Poultry	165 F for 15 sec	Turkey, duck, chicken (whole or ground)
Stuffed Meats and other foods	165 F for 15 sec	Eggs, oysters, pasta, fish, poultry, meats
Fish	145 F for 15 sec	Ground, chopped, or minced
Eggs	155 F for 15 sec	Cook thoroughly because raw eggs have Salmonella
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	145 F for 15 sec	Steaks/Chops, Roasts
Ground meats	155 F for 15 sec	Hamburgers and ground fish
Fruits or Vegetables	135 F for 15 sec	Cooked vegetables

By:: Janice Hall
Regional Extension
Agent, Food Safety,
Preparation and
Preservation,
334/265-0233
jehall@aces.edu



Before You Say "I Do" ...

Approximately 2.4 million well intentioned "I do's" are uttered each year. At least half of them end in "I don't." In fact, step-families are said to be the emerging new face of the family. Statistics reflect that approximately 33% of Americans are members of stepfamilies and about 40% of families with young children will become stepfamilies before the children turn 18 years old. Before we get too comfortable with these statistics, "I don't's" definitely are accompanied by consequences that commonly affect much more than the original two involved. Stress in its many forms coupled with other associated effects of divorce can often be felt within the children and all involved for many years. Although many families *survive* divorce, certainly, the best case scenario is to avoid as many of the threats to marriage as possible. Since deciding to marry is one of the most important commitments many individuals make in life, taking a closer look at issues associated with divorce might prove to be beneficial.

Misconceptions/Danger Zones Associated with Marriage

Infatuation versus love: Puppy love and other early stages of affection can be misidentified as genuine love. Marriage built upon infatuation can dissipate almost as quickly as it begins if it is based in superficialities and assumptions.

Falling in/Running away: Falling too quickly is rarely good, especially relating to love. Likewise, running away from various situations often sets a couple up for disaster. Love should be entered into wisely and treated with much consideration and respect to give it a good start and chance for success.

"Rose colored glasses:" Many are in love with being in love. Oftentimes, this can cloud a person's true view of an individual and the relationships in which they enter.

The Common Consequences:

Severed Spouses: Many relationships end with partners facing troubled finances, fear, hurt, anger and sadness. These problems often do not have

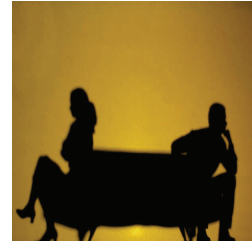
quick fixes and spill over into other phases of life.

Confused Children: Children of divorce often have trouble picking up the pieces. This may be expressed verbally or through covert or overt actions. The effects can possibly resurface in relationships with others.

Frantic Family: New routines, difficult conversations and inevitable conflicts can set a family up for various challenges, short- and long-term. Conquering these problems requires a varying degree of dedication, time and patience from all involved and affected.

Three Ways to Avoid Divorce:

Careful selection: Picking a mate should be done with the care and consideration properly reserved for an individual being invited into another's life "until death..." Marriage will be challenging but making a great decision initially will help to ensure success.



Pre-marital-counseling: Participating in pre-marital counseling can be one of the most enjoyable and eye-opening experiences a couple shares. This gives each a chance to learn more about the commitment of marriage, himself/herself and especially, their potential life-long partner.

Effective conflict management: It is important for couples to explore and develop a healthy mode of conflict management. All healthy and troubled marriages and relationships alike have conflicts. The difference is how individuals handle the issue and each other during these times.

Please feel free to contact your local county Extension office regarding the following related programs:

- Relationship Smarts (Teenage dating and related issues)
- Smart Steps (Step Families)
- PASD (Parenting After Separation and Divorce)

By: Synithia Williams, Regional Extension Agent,
Family and Child Development, 256/354-5976,
willisl@auburn.edu



Save Money On Home Energy

EPA's Energy Star program has new tools and tips for homeowners and businesses to keep money in their pockets, be comfortable, and protect the environment. In 2005 alone, Americans, with the help of Energy Star, saved \$12 billion in energy costs and prevented greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 23 million vehicles.

The average family spends \$1,900 a year on energy bills, nearly half of which goes to heating and cooling. EPA's new interactive tool, Energy Star at Home, shows consumers how they can make energy-efficient improvements in each room of their home.

Did you know that your ceiling fan can help save on cooling costs? Or, that changing the five most frequently used lights in your home to energy saving compact fluorescent light bulbs can save about \$60 each year on energy costs?

Did you know that programming the thermostat to turn off the HVAC system at night and restart one hour prior to employee arrival, can reduce your HVAC costs by as much as 30 percent and still make a comfortable work environment? Cooling and ventilating uses almost 20 percent of the energy in commercial buildings. EPA's Energy Star Challenge encourages businesses and other organizations to improve their energy efficiency by 10 percent or more by following five energy saving steps. These steps put your business on the path to significant savings, while helping to protect the environment now and in the future.

Tips on making your home more energy efficient:

<http://www.energystar.gov/home>

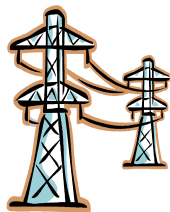
Tips on lowering your company's energy bills:

<http://www.energystar.gov/challenge>

Laura B. Booth
Extension Associate,
Environmental Health Programs
334-844-5638

boothlb@auburn.edu

<http://www.aces.edu/crd>



Options for Short-Term Savings

The average family tends to: spend more money than they make, save little [or nothing] for the future, pile on debt, and [according to Bankrate.com] earn about 1/2% interest on savings accounts. Families should know that there are many ways to save for short-term goals [house down payment, car, emergency fund, etc.]. Briefly outlined here are a few options designed to preserve your principal balance (with no or very minimal risk). Be sure to thoroughly investigate these options just like you would with any financial decision.

Savings Accounts. In the "good 'ol days" savings or passbook accounts were the most popular spot to save for short-term needs. Although this has changed a great deal, the internet has made a savings account more financially productive than many realize. Check the internet for online savings accounts that pay above average interest (4%-4.5%) in an FDIC insured account with no fees and no minimums.

- (+) Savings are FDIC insured
- (+) Typically low account minimums
- (-) Typically low return

Money Market Deposit Accounts This type of account requires a minimum balance and will typically permit a small number of account transactions (checks written on the account, possibly even ATM transactions).



- (+) Liquidity - very easy to get to the money.
- (+) Offered by banks and FDIC insured.
- (-) Overall return may be sacrificed in part by liquidity & easy access to the money.
- (-) Falling below a minimum required balance or exceeding the allowed number of transactions will result in penalties/fees.

Money Market Funds Offered by brokerages and mutual fund families, these funds invest in liquid, "safe" securities such as certificates of deposit, government securities, etc.



- (+) Liquidity - often have check-writing/ATM capabilities.
- (+) The return on money market funds is typically higher than on the money market

- deposit accounts mentioned prior.
- (-) Not FDIC insured.
- (-) Although your principal investment is "relatively safe" there is no guarantee.

Certificates of Deposit (CDs) CDs are debt instruments with a specific maturity (commonly from 3 to 60 months). Most are offered by banks & credit unions, but are also available through brokerages & other financial service providers.



- (+) CDs are very safe since banks are FDIC insured (your CDs are as well).
- (+) Depending on the length to maturity, CDs may pay more than money markets (the longer the time to maturity, the higher the rate of return).
- (-) The money is off limits until the CD matures - you can redeem the CD early if necessary, but you'll pay a penalty.

US Governments Bills or Notes *Treasuries* are backed by the full faith and credit of the US Government. Treasury bills mature in less than a year, treasury notes mature between 2 and 10 years.



- (+) Treasuries are considered to be one of the safest investments in the world.
- (+) Can be bought directly, commission-free ().
- (+) Exempt from state and local taxes.
- (-) Shopping around could result in a better return from money markets, CDs, or corporate bonds.
- (-) If you need your investment before the security matures, you may not get back all of your original investment.

For more information contact your financial advisor or the Alabama Cooperative Extension office in your county.

Source: Internal Revenue Bulletin No. 2005-47, IRS Rev. Proc. 2005-70

By: Lelia Wissert, Regional Extension Agent,
Consumer Sciences and Personal Financial Mngt.
(256) 766-4846
wisselc@auburn.edu

Diabetes and Obesity Conference in Montgomery

Alabama's obesity trends are exceedingly grim compared with other states. For example, data compiled by the nonprofit Trust for America's Health shows that Alabama ranks just behind Mississippi as the nation's heaviest state. The data is even grimmer when one considers the close link between obesity and diabetes, a chronic disease that is exacting an increasingly heavy toll on Alabamians of all ages. "Tackling the Diabetes and Obesity Epidemic One Piece at a Time" was the theme of the 6th annual Alabama Diabetes and Obesity Conference, April 4 to 5 at Auburn University Montgomery.



Sponsored by the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the conference is tailored to health professionals, pharmacists, dietitians, social workers and nurses, as well as the general public.

"For the past six years, the Extension-sponsored Alabama Diabetes Conference has provided a forum through which many of the state's leading public health authorities and researchers share cutting-edge information with those involved on the frontlines of this raging epidemic - dietitians, nurses and childcare providers," says Herndon-Jones, regional Extension agent, Human Nutrition, Diet and Health.

A special focus of this year's conference was a review of dietary management and healthy cooking. Experts reviewed prevention and treatment options for dealing with diabetes-related foot problems.

Other topics included a discussion of research findings related to dental and obesity trends in Alabama children. Speakers explained research findings associated with diabetes intervention and prevention strategies and discuss treatment options for diabetes-related eye diseases.

As always, a heavy emphasis was placed on the importance of physical activity in reducing the prevalence of diabetes.

Representatives with Auburn University's Harrison School of Pharmacy conducted health screenings on cholesterol, blood glucose and bone density.

Keynote speakers included Dr. Stuart Lockwood, state dental director, Alabama Department of Public Health; Dr. Jamy Ard, Assistant Professor, School of Nutrition, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Lynn Bright, registered nurse and certified diabetes educator; Cheryl Vasse, MS, Regional Extension Agent, Human Nutrition, Diet and Health, Alabama Cooperative Extension System; Dr. Perrin Underwood, Montgomery ophthalmologist specializing in diabetes-related eye diseases; Dr. Jose Fernandez, assistant professor, Department of Nutrition Science, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Dr. Suresh Mathews, Assistant Professor, Department of Nutrition and Food Science, Auburn University; Dr. Robert Judd, Associate Professor, Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology, College of Veterinary Medicine, Auburn University; and Pam Green, MS, RD, CDE, manager, Center for






Diabetes and Nutrition Education, Baptist Health Hospital.

By Helen Herndon-Jones
Regional Extension Agent
Human Nutrition Diet & Health
334/201-6775
herndhj@auburn.edu



Back to School Safety

-  Choose clothing that does not have hood or neck drawstrings that can catch on playground equipment.
-  Wear the right helmet for the activity when riding bikes, scooters or skateboards and playing football.
-  On the playground make sure there is shock absorbent material underneath the equipment and no exposed hardware or free hanging ropes.



August

28 Diabetes Support Group, Randolph Co.

September

6 Care Giver Training, Bullock Co.
7 Estate Planning, Calhoun Co.
12 Investor University, Macon Co.
13 Care Giver Training, Bullock Co.
15 Care Giver Training, Butler Co.
20 Care Giver Training, Bullock Co.
26 Diabetes Cooking School, Calhoun Co.
27 Small Business Roadshow, Pickens Co.
27 Care Giver Training, Bullock Co.
30 Diabetes Cooking School, Calhoun Co.

October

3-5 Respite Conference (Caregivers), Huntsville
11 Family Conference, Madison Co.
11-12 Career Development Workshop, Bullock Co.
24 Investor University, Montgomery Co.

Newsletter Publisher: Dr. Evelyn Crayton, Extension Assistant Director for Family Consumer Sciences Programs, Professor, Nutrition and Food Science, Auburn University
334/844-2224
craytef@auburn.edu

Editor: Carol Centrallo, Extension Specialist, Associate Professor, Consumer Affairs, Auburn University
334/844-1325
centrcb@auburn.edu

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