

Lubbock County Family Network



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Planning, Practice Key to Disaster Preparedness

COLLEGE STATION — The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is supporting National Preparedness Month efforts by offering tips for Texans to help them get ready for and recover from a disaster or emergency.

“FEMA has designated September as National Preparedness Month. said Joyce Cavanagh, an AgriLife Extension family development and resource management specialist in College Station.

Cavanagh said she hopes Texans will take this opportunity to take practical action toward protecting themselves. In particular, she noted the importance of preparing a disaster plan that includes specific needs, such as caring for children, disabled individuals, older adults and pets.

The Texas Extension Disaster Education Network, <http://texashelp.tamu.edu>, has information and materials on specific disasters, plus tips on disaster preparation and recovery, she said. There are AgriLife Bookstore, <http://agrilifebookstore.org>, materials available, many in both English and Spanish. Additional information on current topics can be found by connecting with Texas EDEN on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/txeden>, Twitter, <http://twitter.com/txeden>, or Pinterest at <http://pinterest.com/texashelp>.

Cavanagh said one of the best things Texans can do is map out a family evacuation plan ahead of time and practice it.

“It’s important to create a plan that fits your family’s needs,” she said “All family members need to know how to respond to severe weather or any disaster that could occur in your area. You will need to consider escape routes, family communication, utility shut-off and safety, insurance and vital records. You will also want to consider any special needs that might occur, especially if it becomes necessary for you to relocate due to a disaster or emergency.”

Cavanagh said such a plan should include establishing escape routes, drawing up a floor plan and including all members of the household in a practice session.

People need to know escape routes from each room in their home as well as from their neighborhood, she said.

“To establish escape routes from your house or apartment, draw up a floor plan and make sure that all family members understand the plan. Each room should have two exit points. Include all members of the household when you conduct a practice session. Be sure to select a site outside the home for everyone to meet after they’ve left the house.”

She suggested drawing a map with neighborhood streets and their names so that when authorities provide evacuation instructions so family members will know where to go.

“Prepare a contact card for each family member and have everyone keep a copy of it in a wallet, purse or backpack for easy reference.”

She said if a person is injured because of an accident or disaster, he or she may be unable to speak with emergency medical personnel. As a result, emergency responders often turn to a victim’s cell phone for clues to identity and emergency contacts.

Cavanagh also noted that for some types of disasters, it may be necessary to disconnect utility services to the home.

“Natural gas leaks are the top cause of fires after a disaster,” she said. “Be sure a responsible family member can turn off the gas, electricity and water supplies. Contact your local utility company for proper shut-off procedures.”

“If there are disabled, elderly, unhealthy or non-English-speaking people in your family, you will have to take additional steps to prepare and protect them,” Cavanagh said.

She noted that special assistance may be available in some areas and recommended calling 211. If 211 is not available in your area, call the local emergency management office or fire department to ask about any special assistance programs.

“A disaster plan should also include how to care for pets,” she said. “This might include identifying hotels or motels that accept pets or would waive a no-pets policy in an emergency and listing phone numbers and addresses of veterinarians’ offices. You may also want to identify possible pet-boarding facilities or coordinate with friends outside the area to care for the pets. You may also want to add pet food and comfort items to your emergency supply kit.”

Cavanagh said additional information on preparedness may be found by going to FEMA’s <http://ready.gov> website or its Spanish-language counterpart at <http://listo.gov>.

Source:

<http://agriflivedn3.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FloodPic-300x197.jpg><http://today.agrilife.org/2014/09/29/planning-practice-disaster-prep/>



Developing and practicing a family evacuation plan is key to disaster preparedness. Often roads and other avenues of access are closed off, such as during this flood near San Angelo, so people should plan out alternative routes. Planning also should include family communication, utility shut-off, collecting vital personal and financial records and accommodating for any special needs of family members or pets. (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo by Steve Byrns)

Grill It Safely!

To help you wind up your summer, here are some checkpoints for safe grilling the next time you fire up the grill.

Shopping

When shopping, choose meat and poultry last, and do not put them in the trunk. The temperature there is too hot and bacteria will grow rapidly. Make the grocery store your last stop – meat and poultry should not be out of refrigeration more than 2 hours or 1 hour in warm weather above 90°F. If meat and poultry set out too long, bacteria can produce toxins that can cause illness and stay active even during cooking.

Refrigerate meat and poultry immediately up on arriving home. Always store raw meat and poultry below other foods to prevent possible cross-contamination from their dripping. Keep your refrigerator at 40°F.

Purchase ground meat or poultry no more than a day or two before you plan to grill it. Otherwise, freeze them. Grill larger cuts of meat, such as steaks, within 4 days of purchase or freeze them.

Preparation

Completely thaw meat and poultry in the refrigerator or just prior to cooking in a microwave.

Frozen foods do not grill evenly and may be unsafe. Never defrost on the counter– bacteria will begin to grow. It takes about 24 hours to thaw 5 pounds of meat in the refrigerator.

Clean up juice spills immediately so a raw product does not get on a cooked product or on foods that will not be cooked. Juice spills should be cleaned with a paper towel or a clean dishcloth. Toss the paper towel or launder the dishcloth in hot soapy water before using it again.

Marinate meat and poultry in the refrigerator. Sauce can be brushed on these foods while cooking, but never use the same sauce after cooking that has touched the raw product.

Make ground beef patties about ½-inch thick by 4 inches in diameter (4 ounces or 4 patties per pound). This helps assure they cook thoroughly and evenly. The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) advises patties this size will take 11 to 13 minutes to cook to a safe temperature of 160°F based on beef that has been removed directly from the refrigerator; cooked over medium, ash-covered coals and grilled uncovered (www.beef.org). NCBA advises you to consult your owner’s manual for grilling guides for gas grills as brands vary greatly.

Unwashed hands are a prime cause of food-borne illness. Whenever possible, wash your hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds before handling food. When eating away from home, pack disposable wipes for cleaning hands if no handwashing facilities are available.

Transporting

Transport meat and poultry to a picnic site in a cooler kept cold with ice or frozen gel packs. Pack food and cooler immediately before leaving home. Avoid frequently opening the cooler. Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in another.

Keep cooler in an air-conditioned vehicle for transporting and then keep in the shade or shelter at the picnic site. Remove at one time only amounts of food that will fit on the grill. Be sure to keep raw meat and poultry wrapped separately from cooked foods, or foods meant to be eaten raw such as fruits and vegetables.

Grilling

Using a food thermometer is the only way to accurately determine a safe internal temperature is reached!

Insert the thermometer in the thickest part of the food away from bone, fat or gristle.

Cooking is key to meat and poultry safety. If needed, scrape the grill before grilling. Heat the grill to kill microorganisms before placing meat or poultry on it.

Cook ground beef patties to 160°F. The only way to accurately determine doneness is with an instant-read thermometer. The color alone cannot be used to assure a hamburger has been properly cooked. The thermometer should penetrate the thickest part of the hamburger. Insert the thermometer from the side about 2 to 3 inches so it reaches the center of the patty. Unless a food thermometer was used to verify the temperature, do not eat a ground beef patty that is pink or red in the middle.

While the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends ground meats should be heated to 160°F to kill microorganisms, the temperature for a steak can be 145°F for “medium rare.” A “medium” steak is cooked to 160°F and a “well done” steak is cooked to 170°F. Use tongs or a spatula to turn steaks rather than a fork which punctures the meat and introduces bacteria into the interior of the meat.

Whole poultry should be cooked to 180°F in the thigh. Breast meat should be cooked to 170°F. When poultry is done cooking, juices will run clear with no pink when you cut into the meat.

If you are preparing steaks, ground meat and/or poultry at the same time, use a different knife, utensil or thermometer to check for doneness. For example, do not use the same thermometer to test steaks you used for hamburgers. Remember to wash thermometers in hot soapy water and hot rinse water before and after use.

Adding sauces or spices to meat may make it look brown before it is done. Brush or sprinkle sauces/spices on the surface of cooked burgers.

Cook meat and poultry completely at the picnic site. Partial cooking of foods ahead of time allows bacteria to survive and multiply to the point that subsequent cooking may not destroy them.

Use a separate clean tongs or spatula for removing meat or poultry from the grill and place on a clean plate to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked meat.

Discard any food left out for more than two hours or one hour if the temperature is above 90°F. When in doubt, throw it out!

Source: Alice Henneman, MS, RD, Extension Educator, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County and Joyce Jensen, REHS, Environmental Health Specialist, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. *Grill It Safely!*, June 2003

Get Ready... Get Set... Go Shopping!

With food prices on the rise, feeding your family without starving the wallet has become harder to do. With smart shopping skills, you can stretch your food dollars save money at the same time. Keep reading to learn how to get ready, get set, and go shopping.



Get Ready...

Do you have a food budget? A food budget is an amount of money you have or want to spend on food each week/month. To plan your food budget:

- Look at your current income, weekly and monthly bills and other expenses (such as gas money).
- Look at how much you spend on groceries, meals eaten out, and vending machine/convenience store snacks. If you are not sure how much you are spending, try tracking these expenses for a month.
- Set your food budget. Based on your current income, bills and other expenses, and your current food expenses, set a certain amount of money aside for your future food expenses.

Get Set...

Knowing your food budget is important but before you go to the store, you need the right SET of skills to help you stay within your budget:

- Plan meals and snacks in advance. Look at the foods you have right now and what foods are on sale at the store.
- Make a list. After the meals and snacks are planned, make a list of everything you need. This includes food and non-food items (cleaning supplies, pet food, shampoo, etc).



Meal Planner Week of	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

Go Shopping!

Now you are at the store pushing your cart along, list in hand. You want to find the best deal for your dollar. GO shopping with these tips in mind:

- Get the most nutrition for your money. Choose fresh fruits and vegetables in season, making sure they are not damaged or spoiled. Check dates on food packages and check for tears or holes.
- Pick store brands over national ones. The taste and quality is often the same but you usually pay less for store brands.
- Resist impulse buys. Stick to your list to avoid unplanned purchases. Free samples, in-store bakeries and seasonal items displayed early often lead to impulse buys.
- Reduce food waste. Store food properly. Make sure the food you buy can be used before it spoils or becomes unsafe.



Packing A Safe Lunch

Don't get Bugged by your lunch

- Wash hands with soap and warm water before preparing lunch.
- Clean all food preparation areas including countertops.
- Keep perishable foods out of the temperature danger zone (40-140°F) until lunchtime.

What is safe at room temperature?

Foods like nuts and peanut butter, unopened containers of pudding, juice boxes, unopened canned meat, dried and canned fruit, chips, and whole fruits.

Keep COLD foods COLD and HOT foods HOT

COLD - Keep cold foods like meat, eggs, lunch meat, cheese, milk, cut fruit and cooked pasta, vegetables, and rice cold. Use 3 ice packs, freezer gels, or frozen juice boxes to keep foods cold until lunch.

HOT - Keep foods like soup and chili hot with a wide mouth insulated bottle. Pour boiling water into the bottle to heat the inside. Then heat the food 165°F. Drain the boiling water from the bottle and replace with the hot food.

Other Tips!

- Keep lunch boxes clean.
- Use paper bags only once.
- Do not reuse plastic bags or wrap.
- Keep lunches out of direct sunlight or other heat sources.
- If you bring leftovers from lunch, throw away what is not eaten.
- Only use leftovers that have been in the refrigerator for less than 1 or 2 days.

Bagging a lunch that makes the grade

- Try to include the food groups
 - Grains (bread, tortilla, crackers, pita)
 - Fruits (fresh, dried, canned, 100% juice)
 - Vegetables (vegetable sticks with dressing)
 - Meat & beans
 - Milk

Remember...

The South Plains Fair is September 25-October 3. Get your fair books at the Lubbock County Extension office and plan on entering your baked or canned goods, crafts, antiques, etc. Judging is Wednesday, September 23 and Thursday, September 24.

Simply Prepared Meals and Menus

With school starting soon, making time for family meals is difficult. Studies show that parents spend 40% less time with their children than parents did just a decade ago. Whether it is dance, music, soccer, or parent meetings, everyone has someplace to go and family meal-time is placed on hold. Make some of these quick and easy main dishes ahead and freeze. Remove a bagged main dish a day or two before and thaw in the refrigerator. While the dish is cooking in the oven, prepare a bag of frozen vegetables and add purchased rolls to complete the meal. Crock pot dishes are even faster since they have cooked all day and are ready when you get home for you to add the side dishes.



Recipe Corner

Russian "Dump" Chicken

1 bottle (16 oz) Russian or Catalina Salad Dressing
1 pkg. Onion Soup Mix
1 jar (10 oz.) Apricot Preserves
1 ½ lbs. chicken pieces
Salt and pepper, to taste

For immediate cooking, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place all ingredients into a large baking dish, turn chicken to coat. Bake until chicken juices run clear (45 to 60 minutes for pieces, or 20 to 30 minutes for breasts).

Write instructions on bag. Thaw overnight in refrigerator. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Dump contents of bag into a large baking dish and bake until the juices run clear (45 to 60 minutes for pieces, or 20 to 30 minutes for breasts).

To freeze, place all ingredients into a 1-2 gallon freezer bag. Lay flat in freezer.

Crock Pot Salsa Verde Pork

2 lbs. boneless pork loin
Salt and Pepper, to taste
¾ cup diced onion
2 cans (4 oz. ea.) diced green chiles
2 tablespoons chopped jalapeno
1 can (10 oz.) diced tomatoes and green chiles
½ cup chicken broth
1 tablespoon cumin
½ teaspoon garlic powder
Serve with rice, if desired

Write instructions on bag. When you are ready to prepare your meal, thaw overnight in the refrigerator. Add package contents to slow cooker. Cook on HIGH 4 to 5 hours or LOW 7 to 8 hours.

To freeze, place all ingredients in gallon freezer bag and freeze.

Beef Green Chile Taco Casserole

1 lb. ground beef
1 onion, chopped
1 can (4 oz.) diced green chiles
1 can (10 ¾ oz.) cream of mushroom soup
1 soup can milk
1 can (4 oz.) chopped olives
1 clove garlic, minced
2 cups sour cream
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 dozen corn tortillas
1 ½ cups shredded Monterrey Jack cheese
½ cup shredded Cheddar cheese

Brown meat and onion together. Drain. Combine chiles, soup, milk, olives, garlic, sour cream, salt and pepper. Alternate tortillas, sauce, meat and cheese in a 9 x 13 inch baking dish. Top with cheese and bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Makes 8 to 10 servings. This will freeze well. If you do not need this much make in two 8 x 8 inch baking dishes. Eat one now and freeze the other for later. Thaw overnight before cooking. Label.

Source: Extension Home Economics Newsletter by Connie Moyers, Roosevelt Co., NM County Extension Home Economist.

Sincerely,

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