

Lubbock County Family Network



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BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOPPING REQUIRES DOING SOME HOMEWORK

Back-to-school shopping can be an expensive proposition, especially if you don't plan ahead, said Joyce Cavanagh, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialist in family and consumer sciences, College Station.

Cavanagh said consumers should approach school shopping much like they do grocery shopping.

"Parents need to spend some time planning, budgeting and prioritizing, as well as learning where and when to shop," Cavanagh said. "Find out what you already have and then prepare a list of what you need and try not to deviate from it. Budget for the essential items first and avoid impulse buying."

Cavanagh said it's best to avoid taking young children on school supply shopping trips as "they may beg or whine until you buy something you don't need."

Some tips Cavanagh gave on being a more prepared back-to-school shopper are:

- Check through the drawers and closets of your home and do an inventory of the supply items you may already have.
- After finding out what you already have, prepare a thorough list of needed items and prioritize them. Many schools provide students with a list of supplies they will need for the school year.
- If you take your kids shopping with you, first talk to them about the meaning of the word "budget" and let them know there will be limits on what you'll be spending.

"School shopping can be a 'teachable moment' during which your kids can learn about managing money and staying within a budget," Cavanagh said.

- Comparison shop. Look at various ads for different stores and look for back-to-school specials. Check newspapers, circulars and online sites for coupons. Many stores offer price and/or coupon matching.

"You can buy many basic school supplies at dollar stores and thrift shops," she said. "If you're on a strict budget, thrift shops and resale stores are also a great place to look for clothing bargains. Garage sales are another option, if you have the time to locate where they're being held and do some digging."

- Buy supplies during a sales tax holiday. Texas is one of the states offering sales tax relief on a large number of school supply items during specific dates established by the state's legislature. This year, the official Sales Tax Holiday has been set for Aug. 11-13. For more information go: <https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/publications/98-490/>

"This law exempts most clothing, shoes, school supplies and backpacks under \$100 from sales and use taxes," Cavanagh said. "It applies to items not only bought in stores, but also online or phone or mail. Shoppers are also allowed to use layaway plans to purchase tax-exempt items."

- Shop at the right time. If you know what you need, you can find many supplies on sales before the back-to-school shopping rush begins. Check to see if that sale price with tax will be the same or even better than if bought it during the sales tax holiday.

“You can often find really good deals on items if you can wait until the back-to-school shopping rush is over,” Cavanagh said. “By waiting, you can save a lot of money on some items, but this may also limit your selection.”

Cavanagh also noted textbooks are an expensive item for college students.

“If you’re looking for college textbooks, try a resale bookstore or check online for deals,” she said. “There are sites where you can buy digital copies of textbooks that you can download to your e-reader. There are also sites where you can sell the books when you’re through with them.”

<http://today.agrilife.org/2016/07/20/back-to-school-shopping-requires-some-homework/>

Source:

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WASHING FOOD: DOES IT PROMOTE FOOD SAFETY?

Historically, we equate washing to cleanliness. We wash clothes, linens, cars, dishes, and ourselves. So, it is logical that many people believe meat and poultry can be made cleaner and safer by washing it. Is this true? Does washing meat, poultry, eggs, fruits, and vegetables make them safer to eat?

Washing Meat and Poultry

Washing raw poultry, beef, pork, lamb, or veal before cooking it is not recommended. Bacteria in raw meat and poultry juices can be spread to other foods, utensils, and surfaces. We call this cross-contamination.

Some consumers think they are removing bacteria and making their meat or poultry safe. However, some of the bacteria are so tightly attached that you could not remove them no matter how many times you washed. But there are other types of bacteria that can be easily washed off and splashed on the surfaces of your kitchen. Failure to clean these contaminated areas can lead to foodborne illness. Cooking (baking, broiling, boiling, and grilling) to the right temperature kills the bacteria, so washing food is not necessary.

Using a food thermometer is the only sure way of knowing if your food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy foodborne bacteria. Cook all raw beef and veal steaks, roasts, and chops to a minimum internal temperature of 145° F as measured with a food thermometer before removing meat from the heat source. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least three minutes before carving

or consuming. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook meat to higher temperatures.

Soaking Meat and Poultry

Callers to the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline sometimes ask about soaking poultry in salt water. This is a personal preference and serves no purpose for food safety. If you choose to do this, however, preventing cross-contamination when soaking and removing the poultry from the water is essential. Meat or poultry should be kept in the refrigerator while soaking. Sometimes consumers wash or soak country ham, bacon, or salt pork because they think it reduces the sodium or salt enough to allow these products to be eaten on a sodium-restricted diet. However, very little salt is removed by washing, rinsing, or soaking a meat product and is not recommended.

Cross-Contamination

Hand washing after handling raw meat or poultry or its packaging is a necessity because anything you touch afterwards could become contaminated. In other words, you could become ill by picking up a piece of fruit and eating it after handling raw meat or poultry.

Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food, and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, tending to a sick person, blowing your nose, sneezing and coughing, and handling pets.

It is important to prevent cross-contamination from raw meat or poultry juices by washing counter tops and sinks with hot, soapy water. For extra protection, you may sanitize with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water.

Packaging materials from raw meat or poultry also can cause cross-contamination. Never reuse them with other food items. These and other disposable packaging materials, such as foam meat trays, egg cartons, or plastic wraps, should be discarded.

Washing Eggs

Do not wash eggs before storing them. Washing is a routine part of commercial egg processing and the eggs do not need to be washed again. Federal regulations outline procedures and cleansers that may be used. “Bloom,” the natural coating on just-laid eggs that helps prevent bacteria from permeating the shell, is removed by the washing process and is replaced by a light coating of edible mineral oil which restores protection. Extra handling of the eggs, such as washing, could increase the risk of cross-contamination, especially if the shell becomes cracked.

Washing Produce

Before eating or preparing fresh fruits and vegetables, wash the produce under cold running tap water to remove any lingering dirt. This reduces bacteria that may be present. If there is a firm surface, such as on apples or potatoes, the surface can be scrubbed with a brush. Consumers should not wash fruits and vegetables with detergent or soap. These products are not approved or labeled by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use on foods. You could ingest residues from soap or detergent absorbed on the produce.

When preparing fruits and vegetables, cut away any damaged or bruised areas because bacteria that cause illness can thrive in those places. Immediately refrigerate any fresh-cut items such as salad or fruit for best quality and food safety.

Source:

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/washing-food-does-it-promote-food-safety/washing-food>

THE DANGERS OF LEAVING CHILDREN ALONE IN OR AROUND CARS

Now that we are into summer in Texas, children are spending more time outdoors, which increases the danger of children being left alone in, and around, cars. When we think of children being left alone in cars, our first thought is the danger of children dying in hot cars due to heatstroke. But in addition to heat risks, there are other safety concerns with unsupervised children around cars – including back-overs, the risk of children releasing the gear shift or engaging electric windows, and even becoming trapped inside vehicles or trunks. According to the Safe Kids Worldwide, approximately 39 percent of back-over deaths occurred at home. Drivers in back-over and front-over deaths are often family members or family friends of the child.

Children are more at risk for heatstroke because a child's body temperature rises 3 to 5 times faster than an adult's. A heatstroke can occur at body temperatures above 104 degrees. Even mild outside temperatures can pose a threat, but with Texas summer temperatures climbing into the upper 90s each day, the danger becomes even greater. The problem is that temperatures in parked vehicles rise very quickly. According to figures from San Francisco State University's Department of Geosciences, in just 10 minutes, the temperature inside of a vehicle can increase by almost 20 degrees.

To reduce deaths from heatstroke, Safe Kids USA has launched a campaign titled ACT, which stands for: Avoid heatstroke-related injury, Create reminders, and Take action. The campaign is designed to link together these

simple heatstroke prevention steps. It is important that parents and caregivers are on alert to avoid a heatstroke death, and that they share the ACT campaign steps with spouses, grandparents, babysitters, and other caregivers. Any change in schedule for drop-off or pickup of a child can lead to a deadly mistake. In more than half of the cases of heatstroke, the death was due to the child being "forgotten" by the caregiver. Such deaths are preventable when parents take precautions to make sure that children are not left alone in vehicles and cannot gain access to unlocked vehicles.

So far this year, 18 child vehicular heatstroke deaths have occurred in the U.S., including seven in Texas. Although many parents may think that this will never happen to them, it is a tragedy that can and has happened to many families.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service reminds parents to be extra vigilant to make sure that children are never left alone in or around parked vehicles. Follow these safety tips in this article to be sure that children cannot be harmed in a vehicle.

Children Left in Hot Vehicles

- Never leave infants or children in a parked vehicle, even if the windows are partially open.
- Make a habit of looking in the vehicle – front and back – before locking the door and walking away.
- Carefully check all seats in the van or bus to make sure there are no children sleeping on the seats or hiding under seats.
- Do not let children play in an unattended vehicle. Teach them that a vehicle is not a play area.
- Check with the family when a child does not show up for day care to be sure a parent has not forgotten a child in their vehicle.
- Always lock vehicle doors and trunks – and keep keys out of children's reach.
- If a child is missing, check the vehicle first, including the trunk or storage area.
- If a child is in distress due to heat, get them out as quickly as possible. Cool the child rapidly, then call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

Children Around Parked Vehicles

- Walk all the way around your parked vehicle to check for children, pets, or toys before getting in the car and starting the engine.
- Make sure young children are always accompanied by an adult when getting in and out of a car.
- Identify and use safe play areas for children away from parked or moving vehicles.
- Designate a safe spot for children to go when nearby vehicles are about to move.

- Firmly hold the hand of each child when walking near moving vehicles and when in driveways, parking lots, or sidewalks.
- Teach children not to play in and around vehicles.

Children Left in Running Vehicles

- Lock vehicles at all times, even in the garage or driveway.
- Never leave keys in the car.
- Store keys out of children’s reach.
- Engage your emergency brake every time you park.
- Check to see if your vehicle has a Brake Transmission Safety Interlock (BTSI), which is a safety technology to prevent children from accidentally putting a vehicle into gear. Check your owner’s manual to see if your vehicle is equipped with BTSI. After Sept. 1, 2010, all vehicles with an automatic transmission with a PARK position must have BTSI.
- Use drive-thru services when available.
- Use your debit or credit card to pay for gas at the pump.
- Lock the power windows so that children cannot play with and cannot get caught in them. Power windows can strangle a child or cut off a finger.

Following these safety tips can make all the difference in avoiding a needless tragedy.

Source: Bev Kellner, Program Manager, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Passenger Safety, College Station TX

MULTISTATE OUTBREAKS OF HUMAN SALMONELLA INFECTIONS LINKED TO LIVE POULTRY IN BACKYARD FLOCKS, 2017

Outbreak Advisory

10 Outbreaks	790 Cases	48 States	174 Hospitalizations
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- Since the last update on June 1, 2017, 418 more ill people have been reported. The most recent illness began on June 20, 2017.
- CDC, multiple states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) are investigating 10 separate multistate outbreaks of *Salmonella* infections in people who had contact with live poultry in backyard flocks.
 - These outbreaks are caused by several DNA fingerprints of different *Salmonella* bacteria: *Salmonella* Braenderup, *Salmonella* Enteritidis, *Salmonella* Hadar, *Salmonella* I 4,[5], 12:i-, *Salmonella* Indiana, *Salmonella* Infantis, *Salmonella* Litchfield, *Salmonella* Mbandaka,

Salmonella Muenchen, *Salmonella* Typhimurium.

- The outbreak strains of *Salmonella* have infected a reported 790 people in 48 states and the District of Columbia.
 - Illnesses started on dates ranging from January 4, 2017, to June 20, 2017.
 - Of 580 people with available information, 174 ill people have been hospitalized. No deaths have been reported.
- Epidemiologic, traceback, and laboratory findings link the 10 outbreaks to contact with live poultry, such as checks and ducklings, from multiple hatcheries.
 - In interviews, 409 (74%) of 553 ill people reported contact with live poultry in the week before the illness started.
- Contact with live poultry or their environment can make people sick with *Salmonella* infections. Live poultry can be carrying *Salmonella* bacteria but appear healthy and clean, with no sign of illness.

Tips to Stay Healthy with a Backyard Flock

- Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching live poultry.
- Do not let children younger than 5 years handle or touch chicks, ducklings, or other live poultry without adult supervision.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/live-poultry-06-17/index.html>

GRILLING SAFETY

The weather is warm and more and more people are grilling. Grilling foods is popular for a variety of reasons – not the least of which are the delicious tastes we create when grilling and the joy of being surrounded by family and friends. However, from a nutritional standpoint, grilling is a great way to cook without a lot of added oils or fats.

Most of our favorite foods can be grilled. This includes beef, chicken, fish, pork, and even your favorite fruits and vegetables. However, grilling can be dangerous without taking the proper safety steps.

Whether you use a gas, charcoal, or electric grill, it is important to follow the operating directions carefully and locate your grill in a safe place to avoid accidents. To help you get the most out of your grilling experience, we’d like to offer you a few tips:

1. Clean your grill. It’s important that you clean your grill before cooking. To clean your grill, remove the grates and wash in hot soapy water. Scrub off

- any food particles or drippings with a brush or scrubbing pad. Rinse with clean water and air dry. Remember to remove and clean, or replace, the drip pan. Clean the outside of the grill with hot, soapy water and rinse clean. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning the burners and interior of the grill.
- Do not use the same plate for raw and cooked meats to avoid cross-contamination.
 - Use a food thermometer to ensure that meats are cooked to a safe temperature.
 - Heat the grill for 10-15 minutes before adding food so that foods will be seared instead of steamed or baked.
 - Use tongs to turn solid pieces of meat. This is safer and will keep the juices of the meat inside.
 - Be creative. Remember, your favorite vegetables and fruits taste great if grilled properly. In fact, you might find that even your pickiest eaters will enjoy their vegetables after the foods are grilled!

HOW TO KEEP GUACAMOLE FROM TURNING BROWN



What's the best (and easiest!) Way to keep guacamole from turning brown if you make it in advance of a meal or party?

The Internet is filled with answers from covering it tightly with plastic wrap, to keeping the pit in the bowl, to using more lime juice. All of these methods get mixed reviews. Then, according to Alice Henneman of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, she came upon this method that was rated positively by everyone that mentioned it: Cover it with water!

Ms. Henneman couldn't track down the original source of this idea...it was mentioned in several places. But, basically, here is how it works:

- Pack guacamole firmly (to remove air bubbles) and so it is level into a container with a tight fitting lid. I pressed down on the guacamole with a spoon as I was packing it.

- Cover with about ½ -inch of lukewarm water. Place lid on container and refrigerate.



- Carefully pour off the water before serving. Stir guacamole to mix in any remaining moisture.

Henneman says "I have read and seen photos of guacamole stored for about 24 hours this way that remained green. The guacamole in the above photo was stored about 2 hours under water. This was sufficient time for me to get the rest of the meal together and clean up preparation dishes before eating. Plus tidy myself up!"

Source:
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

<http://food.unl.edu/how-keep-guacamole-turning-brown>
Questions or comments? Email author, Alice Henneman, MS, RDN at ahenneman1@unl.edu



Recipe Corner

Grilled Chicken Salad

Makes: 4 1-cup servings

- 4 chicken thighs, skinless
- 1 15-ounce can of corn, drained
- 1 16-ounce can of black, pinto, or Northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 tablespoon of cilantro, chopped
- 1½ cups of lettuce (your choice)
- Low-fat salad dressing (your choice)

Grill the chicken over medium high heat from 10-15 minutes. Remove the cooled chicken from bone and dice it into large pieces. Combine the chicken with the remaining ingredients. Toss the salad ingredients with the dressing.

Grilled Vegetables

Makes 6 servings

- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- 2 garlic cloves (finely chopped)
- 3 sweet potatoes (cut into 1-inch slices)
- 3 corn on the cobs (cut into 2-inch sections)
- 1 eggplant (cut into ½-inch slices)
- 12 green onions (trimmed)

1. Mix the oil and garlic in a large bowl before adding and tossing the vegetables.
2. Place the vegetables on the broiler pan or grill. Cook for 10 minutes, turning twice until the vegetables are tender.
3. Place the vegetables on a clean platter and serve.

Source: BLT Newsletter, June 2017

GUACAMOLE ON THE GO



Avocados are so full of flavor; you don't need much to turn them into delicious guacamole. Here's a really quick recipe.

1 ripe avocado

1/8 teaspoon powdered cumin

Dash of cayenne pepper, optional (about 1/16 teaspoon)

1/2 to 1 ripe Roma tomato, diced; or use about 1/4 cup of grape or cherry tomatoes cut into smaller pieces.

Salt (if desired)

1. Mash avocado with potato masher, pastry blender or fork.
2. Mix in cumin and cayenne pepper.
3. Stir in tomatoes.
4. Taste; add more cumin and cayenne as needed. Add salt to taste, if desired.
5. Enjoy!

NOTE: Guacamole prepared without lime or lemon juice may turn brown sooner, so it is best to eat this version right after preparation.

Tastes great served with low-fat corn tortilla chips!

Though avocados are high in fat, most of the fat is heart-healthy monounsaturated fat. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, avocados are loaded with nutrients such as dietary fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin C, vitamin E, potassium, magnesium, and folate. They're also cholesterol and sodium free. Avocados contain 60 percent more potassium per ounce than bananas. Two tablespoons of mashed avocado or 1/5 (about 1 oz.) of a medium avocado provides about 55 calories.

Questions or Comments: Email Alice Henneman, MS, RDN, UNL Extension in Lancaster County at ahenneman1@unl.edu

Source:

<http://food.unl.edu/guacamole-go>

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (<http://ianr.unl.edu/>)



Sincerely,

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