

Family and Community Health “Connections” in McCulloch County

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



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Tips on Sending Food Gifts to U.S. Military

Being home for the holidays will not be possible this year for many American armed forces. The next best thing may be receiving greetings and gifts of food items. Many foods are safe to mail. However, you must have the name and address of a military person stationed overseas. Because of security risks, the U.S. Postal Service will not deliver mail addressed to “Any Serviceman.”

It’s important to mail food gifts that are not perishable, can tolerate a range of temperatures, and won’t break with rough handling. Food gifts that can be safely mailed include dried products such as jerky and fruits, shelf stable canned specialties, and regional condiments such as hot sauces. Homemade cookies, candy, and low-moisture breads and bar cookies are also good candidates for mailing.

Perishable foods are not safe to mail. These include foods that must be kept refrigerated (at 40 °F or below) to remain safe -- meat, poultry, fish, and soft cheeses, for example. These foods cannot be safely left at room temperature for more than 2 hours, much less for a week or more in the mail. Foodborne bacteria that may be present on these foods grow fastest at temperatures above 40 °F and can double every 20 minutes. When this happens, someone eating the food can get sick.

As an alternative to homemade gifts, some families may wish to send a military member’s favorite mail order foods. Shelf stable “summer sausage,” cheeses, cakes, and snacks can be ordered on the Internet or through mail order catalogues. Because of the delivery time and distances between the U.S. and duty stations overseas, do not order any food gifts that must be kept refrigerated. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)’s Meat and Poultry Hotline offers advice concerning food gifts for armed forces serving away from home including those overseas. Check at www.usda.gov/media/blog/2013/12/05/tips-sending-food-gifts-us-military

Managing Meltdowns this Holiday Season

Use these strategies to reduce frustration and tears with your child this holiday season. Along with visits from family, gifts, celebrations, meals and special memories, the holiday season can often become very overwhelming to children and adults alike. While adults are better able to verbalize their feelings of stress, children often cannot and end up throwing tantrums, usually at the most inopportune times. Teaching kids how to cope with feeling frustrated can help reduce tantrums and empower children to feel like they can communicate their needs.

It's OK to say no. Many families feel pressure to attend countless family, friend and work gatherings. These busy days and long nights can become quite overwhelming for small children who need their rest. Think carefully about what you say yes to, and be sure your children are getting enough rest and down time. When children are pushed to their limits, we are setting them up for a tough night.

Teach children how to manage their emotions. Oftentimes, parents will say they just want their children to be happy, but the reality is that children need to experience a wide range of emotions appropriately. They will feel mad, sad, tired and frustrated, and we want them to experience these things without losing their temper. Some strategies to teach children to manage their emotions include: **Name it to tame it.** Teach children the words for their feelings. Help them see the connection between how they're feeling and their behavior. Talk and read books about emotions, and help children build a vocabulary for their emotions.

Plan ahead to support your child. Sometimes, especially during the holidays, we can't avoid long days. Pack items to help your child stay occupied, and support them should they need help calming down. Favorite toys, a blanket or lovey, coloring books and crayons, calming music and headphones, a stress ball, play dough or a pinwheel or bubbles to encourage deep breathing are all great options.

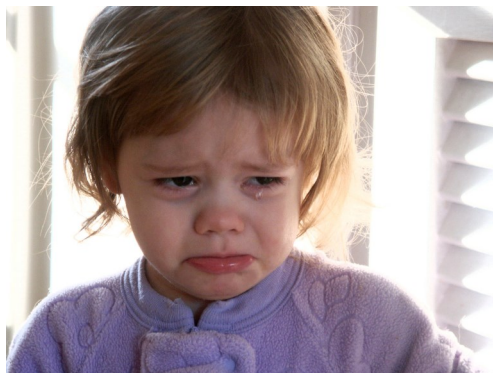
During the holidays, take the time to be extra patient and kind with your children. Instead of thinking of young children as being naughty, reframe our thoughts on tantrums and see that they are learning to handle big emotions. We can support them in working through their stress and frustrations by being supportive and not overwhelming them with busy holiday schedules.

Source: Michigan State University

* Teach calming activities * Keep your child's temperament in mind * Remember the routine



THIS



not THIS

Bring on the HOLIDAYS Giveaway

ENTER TO WIN: Skillet/Cookbook Combo
HERE'S HOW: Share + Tag 5 Friends in Comments



Giveaway Alert* It's officially the season to give thanks and share our gratitude. So we'd like to say THANK YOU to our fans by giving away a skillet + Essentials Cookbook prize package just in time for the holidays! Are you a Texas resident? Enter to win on Facebook. To see the Official Rules go to:

<https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/bring-on-the-holidays-giveaway>

NATIONAL PEAR MONTH

All December long, National Pear Month recognizes the flavor and versatility of this delicious fruit.

Whether they are enjoyed fresh off the tree or as a preserve, pears add significant nutritional benefits to any diet. In the United States, there are ten varieties of pears. They range in color, texture, and sweetness making them useful for a wide range of dishes. Subtly alter a pear by lightly baking it and releasing the juices. It makes an elegant presentation and even more delicious dessert. Pair it with wine and cheese for an elevated flavor. Add pears to soup to take advantage of their luxurious texture and forgiving character. Pears offer so much with their variety and abundance. During National Pear Month, enjoy all they have to offer!

HOW TO OBSERVE

Try a new variety of pears. Check out the recipe page for several new pear recipes and use #NationalPearMonth to share yours!

HISTORY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture proclaimed December National Pear Month in 2004. There are over 1,500 national days. Don't miss a single one. Celebrate Every Day with National Day Calendar



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WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
MCCULLOCH.AGRILIFE.ORG

Nutrition Facts

12 servings per container
Serving 3 inch X 3 inch square size (199g)

Amount per serving
Calories 220

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 5g 6%

Saturated Fat 2.5g 13%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 70mg 23%

Sodium 180mg 8%

Total Carbohydrate 19g 7%

Dietary Fiber 3g 11%

Total Sugars 3g

Includes 0g Added Sugars 0%

Protein 24g

Vitamin D 0mcg 0%

Calcium 43mg 4%

Iron 4mg 20%

Potassium 680mg 15%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4



Ingredients:

Mashed Potatoes

2 pounds peeled, chopped, boiled (or about 4 cups of leftovers)

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons 2% milk

1/4 teaspoon salt

Beef Mixture

2 pounds lean ground beef

1 1/2 cups frozen peas

1 cup carrots chopped

1/2 cup onion chopped

1 tablespoon rosemary

1 tablespoon thyme

1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce

1 tablespoons minced garlic

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Directions.

1. Heat the oven to 350 degrees
2. Mash the potatoes with the butter, milk and salt. You can also use leftover mashed potatoes.
3. Brown the ground beef in a large skillet over medium/medium high heat.
4. When the beef is mostly browned, add in peas, carrots, onion, rosemary, thyme, Worcestershire sauce and garlic. Stir and combine until beef is completely browned
5. In a 9 by 13 inch pan, make a layer of the beef mixture and then make a layer of the potatoes.
6. Bake in the oven for 35 to 40 minutes and broil on high for 5 minutes to brown the potatoes on top.
7. Enjoy!

More recipes can be found at

dinnertonight.tamu.edu

McCulloch County News

Maintain No Gain is an online program in progress currently. It provides motivational tools, healthy recipes and fitness tips to help you control your weight over the holiday season till New Year's. There is currently no cost for the sessions this year but may have a cost next year. There are interactive activities related to nutrition, physical activity, stress and emotional eating, and social support. Go to learnonline.agrilife.org to create a free account. Then select "Maintain No Gain, Healthy Holidays 2018" and type in "holidays18" for the enrollment key.

In youth events, McCulloch County is hosting a County Food Challenge for members K-12 on December 6 at Tractor Supply Company at 5:30. Come check it out!

Congratulations to our McCulloch Nutrition Quiz Bowl Team who won 4th place at the district contest ! Way to go Seth Beimer, Lily Beimer, Dovelynn Powers, and Kyrie Pyle!

Family and Community Health "Connections" is provided by the following AgriLife Extension Family and Community Health Agents:

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