

Living Well

Raising Kids, Eating Right

Spend Smart, Living Well

November 2015

TEXAS A & M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION
SERVICE,
PARKER
COUNTY

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Avoid Home Selling Turnoffs	2
Essentials of Essential Oils	3
Money Management with Kids	4
Don't Get Weaker As You Get Wiser	5
How to Cook A Pumpkin	6
Home for the Holidays	7
Mark Your Calendar	8

Healthy Eating Through the Holidays

With Fall in full swing and the holiday season upon us, many changes take place. Not only does it get dark early, and weather cools down, but something else happens too—we start eating more. People show a marked seasonal rhythm with increased total caloric consumption, especially from carbohydrates, in the fall, associated with an increase in meal size and a greater rate of eating. This typically provides an additional 200 calories more per day during the fall, which can translate to as much as an annual three to four pounds weight gain. We tend to blame much of this 'fall' weight gain on the holidays; however, there are other causes.

Why do we eat more in the fall? More than likely, it's biological—putting on weight in preparation for the potential winter famine our ancestors faced. Just like all hibernating creatures, when its fall harvest we store up for the long winter. Eating when food is plentiful is a natural, historic tendency, because we never knew when our next meal was going to be available.

- Soups are great for you if they're not made with cream or cheese. Stews can be hearty and fattening. Use loads of fresh vegetables, and go light on the meat and potatoes.
- Avoid unconscious eating while watching football and the new fall TV lineup.
- For pizza, watch the toppings—they can double the calories.
- Celebrate the fall harvest in other ways besides making pies. Apples are low in calories when they're off the tree, not in a pie.
- Turkey is healthy, as long as you keep it lean and white.
- Get out and enjoy the fall weather. The air is cooler, the leaves are turning and the countryside becomes more scenic. Take walks on the beach or by the lake; go to the zoo; or ride a bike.

How about a Holiday Challenge?

Join the Parker County Extension Office in the "Maintain – No Gain Challenge" and enjoy the holidays without gaining weight! The Maintain – No Gain Challenge is a challenge from November 2 until January 2 to maintain your pre-holiday weight or gain no more than two pounds during the holiday season. Rather than focusing on trying to lose weight, this FREE challenge provides participants with tips, tricks, and ideas to help maintain your weight throughout the holiday season.

See the last page of this newsletter on information on signing-up.

Avoid Home Selling Turnoffs

If you're buying a house, you probably know what turns you off in homes that you tour: messy, cluttered houses, strong odors, and so on. When you are selling your house, be sure to prepare. Avoiding these major turn-offs goes a long way toward making your home a place visitors won't be in such a hurry to leave.

- **Pets.** Although pets help make a house a home, signs of pets often turn off home buyers. Clear away messes, put away paraphernalia (litter boxes, food bowls, toys, etc.), and eliminate all pet odors. You might want to leave your pet with friends or relatives while your home is being shown.
- **Children.** Not all homebuyers know what having children is like, and a tour of your home isn't the time you want them to find out. Take the extra time to make your home neat and presentable, with all toys out of sight in a toy chest or storage space. Clean and store dirty diapers, children's clothes, and baby bottles. Eliminate any odors that may be present. Otherwise, prospective buyers might not think your house is sanitary.
- **Cooking/Baking Smells.** Cooking smells are offensive to many homebuyers. If you must cook or bake before a showing, be sure to open a window. A simple trick to freshen up the house after cooking is to boil cinnamon in water. Artificial air fresheners are not a good idea because you never know who is sensitive to those types of smells. Something that smells good to you could send prospective homebuyers out the door.
- **Smoking Smells.** Tobacco, incense, and other smoky smells can be a serious problem for anyone trying to sell a home. These smells linger throughout the house. If smells persist, professionally clean the carpets, draperies, and furniture. Repaint all interiors before putting your house on the market.
- **Dirty Dishes and Clutter.** As long as your house is on the market, keep the dishes clean and the counters uncluttered. Electric appliances could distract home buyers, making enough counter space appear limited. Consider putting appliances in a cabinet when they're not in use.
- **Messy Bathrooms.** Put beauty and grooming items away neatly under the counter, in drawers, or inside the vanity. Clean the shower/bathtub, toilet, sink, and floor thoroughly, removing all hair and toothpaste markings. Keep the toilet flushed and the lid down at all times.

If all this sounds like your house should not be lived in, that is precisely the point. Prospective homebuyers are not your usual visitors and often judge you and your house much more critically than your friends and relatives. Present them with a spotless house they can imagine living in, and your house will sell itself.

Reference: Hoak, A. (2014, April 13). 7 of the biggest homebuyer turnoffs. MarketWatch. Retrieved October 22, 2014, from <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/7-of-the-biggest-homebuyer-turnoffs-2014-04-13>. Source: Robert H. Flashman, Extension Specialist for Family Resource Management, University of Kentucky; College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.



The Essentials on Essential Oils



the practice may have health benefits such as relieving anxiety or depression or improving health and wellness, particularly for those who suffer from chronic illness. Many oils are safe when used as directed but none are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The oil you choose to use depends on the ailment you hope to relieve or cure. No medically endorsed list exists that specifies which oil is best for treating particular health conditions. The chemistry of oils will vary among different locations, climates, seasons, time of day when harvested, packaging methods, storage method and even among plants. This is in vast contrast to pharmaceuticals that are synthetically reproduced to be the same each time. More research is needed to determine essential oils' effect on children and pregnant or breast-feeding women and how the oils might interact with other medications and treatments. Before starting any treatment, research the oil and consult qualified health care professionals.

Oils can be applied in a variety of ways but most commonly are rubbed directly on the skin or inhaled. The application method depends on the health condition you have and the type of oil you are using. (For example, you would most likely apply an essential oil topically if you were using it to heal a wound.) Oils used for mood enhancers are most commonly inhaled for fast relief. Some oils can cause skin irritation and should not be applied directly to the skin. Many oils have to be diluted with another substance such as water or another oil in order to be applied topically. Others may produce an allergic reaction in some individuals or cause sun sensitivity. If you have questions about an application method, you should consult an aromatherapist.

Oils should always be stored out of sight and away from children and pets. Accidental ingestions of oils in amounts as small as a teaspoon have resulted in death.

Source: Nicole Peritore, Program Coordinator for Family and Consumer Sciences Extension, Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota

By now, you've likely heard about essential oils, but may not be familiar with what they are and their benefits and risks. Essential oils are highly concentrated oils derived from plants. While used for centuries, their popularity has recently soared, especially among individuals looking for natural healing options other than prescriptions medications.

A term you may be more familiar with is aromatherapy, which is how essential oils are used. While research is limited into the effectiveness of aromatherapy, some studies have shown

Top 10 Ways to Practice Money Management with Kids



If you teach them, they will learn. One of the most important things that parents can do to help their children develop positive money attitudes and behaviors is to get them involved with the real life, day-to-day financial workings of the family. Additionally, children need opportunities to earn, spend, and save money.

1. Hold regular family discussions about money with specific details about the family's income and expenses.
2. Keep a family income and spending log/diary for 30 days (individual family members can also do this for their personal income and spending).
3. Solicit ideas (and commitments), especially from older children, on how to reduce spending – allow children to keep a % of the savings resulting from any of their cost-cutting efforts.
4. Have older children participate in monthly bill paying and grocery shopping. Teach them about sales and coupons.
5. Have an older child teach a younger child an important money concept.
6. Have family members get together and make short, medium and long term savings goals. Have each family member sign the agreement, and then post it in a prominent location of the home to remind everyone of the things they are working towards.

7. Have children develop a specific family spending goal (vacation, big screen TV, etc.). Allow them to contribute some of their allowance or earnings toward the goal.
8. Have each child set personal earning and spending goals. Regularly discuss progress and setbacks. Teach them to avoid compulsive buying.
9. Given a certain amount of money, regularly have children plan a meal, purchase the ingredients, and prepare the meal.
10. Regularly have a "no -frills" entertainment night ("old fashioned" board games, \$1 video rental, talent shows, sandwiches in the park, storytelling, etc.). Fun activities don't have to be expensive.

This article was written by Margie P. Memmott, M.S., C.F.C.S., Juab County, Utah.



Don't Get Weaker as You Get Wiser

The risk of disability increases with age. Inactivity, poor diet and smoking, among other unhealthy behaviors, are associated with a wide range of chronic diseases, some of which can even lead to premature death.

New studies reveal that this kind of lifestyle affects everyone, especially older adults. Older adults often fear the loss of independence and disabilities and yet they sometimes submit themselves to unhealthy behaviors. In a recent study found in The BMJ Journal, researchers in France reported that people who ate fruits and vegetables less than once a week, were physically inactive and who smoked or had quit smoking within the last 15 years, were more than twice as likely to develop a disability than their peers who did not participate in these lifestyles.

A disability is defined as "difficulty or dependency in carrying out activities essential to independent living, including essential roles, tasks needed for self-care and living independently in a home, and desired activities important to one's quality of life." We are seeing our current population aging into their "golden" years with disabilities that are preventable. How can you avoid disabilities as you age?

The first step is to get moving. In the research, it was shown that one predictor of developing a disability was the fact that the person had a low or intermediate level of physical activity. Low activity was defined as walking less than one hour a day and exercising less than once per week. High activity was considered the opposite. It was walking more than one hour a day and exercising more than once a week. Anything in between is considered intermediate.

The next step to preventing a disability as you age is to stop smoking. This study showed that those who smoke or have quit within 15 years have a 26 percent higher risk of developing a disability than those who did not smoke. Poor nutrition was close to smoking as far as developing a disability. In the study, this was determined by how many times a person ate raw and/or cooked fruits or vegetables. The results showed that adults who ate fewer fruits and vegetables, i.e. less than once a day, increased their risk of developing a disability by 24 percent.

Eating fruits and vegetables, while healthy, is only a part of a healthy diet. Miriam E. Nelson, Ph.D., professor at Tufts' University, Friedman School and author of the "Strong Women" series of books states, "Stick to whole and minimally processed foods, and emphasize the choices available on the perimeter of the supermarket – the produce and dairy aisles, for instance – rather than on the boxed, bagged and other packaged goods, many laden with added sugar, lining the center aisles."

While things such as chronic conditions, trauma, body mass index and other health issues are certainly factors, the study still showed that more than two-thirds of the additional disability risks were directly linked to unhealthy lifestyles.

So get out and move at least once a week, take a walk and get other exercise as well. Remember what your Mama said, "Eat your vegetables," and might I add, your fresh fruits as well. Help yourself become more active, eat healthy and perhaps you will lower your risk of having a disability.

References: Artaud, F., Dugravot, A., Sabia, S., Singh-Manoux, A., Tzourio, C., and Elbaz, A. BMJ (2013). Unhealthy behaviors and disability in older adults: three-city Dijon cohort study. URL found: <http://www.bmjjournals.org/content/347/bmj.f4240>

This article was written by Christine E. Jensen, USU Extension associate professor, Emery County, Utah



How to Cook A Pumpkin

Yummy Pumpkins—When the summer air turns crisp and autumn leaves are falling many people crave dinner in a pumpkin!

It must trigger memories of Cinderella- watching days. Seeing her garden pumpkin turn into a beautiful golden carriage with the flip of the fairy godmother's wand. So I got to thinking, without a fairy godmother of your own, cutting into that golden orb for the first time may seem a little daunting! Here are my tips and tricks for selecting, preparing and cooking pumpkin.



-Eating: Due to their tough outer skin, pumpkins are cooked and only the inside flesh is eaten. Pumpkins are most commonly used to make bread, cookies, pies, pumpkin butter, custard, and soup.

- Selecting: Select pumpkins that are firm and heavy for their size. Round pumpkins tend to be lighter and less meaty than oblong pumpkins.
- Cleaning and Preparing: Clean the pumpkin when you are ready to use it. Rinse with cold running water. If the pumpkin has been waxed, scrub it well.
- Storing: Store pumpkins in a cool, dark place. They have a 2 to 3 month average storage time.
- Cooking: To make pumpkin puree, cut a medium (about 6 pound) fresh pumpkin into 5-inch square pieces. Remove the seeds and fibrous strings. Arrange the pieces in a single layer, skin side up, in a large, shallow baking pan. Cover with foil. Bake at 375 degrees F for 1 to 1- 1/2 hours or until tender.

Scoop the pulp from the rind. Place part of the pulp in a blender container or food processor bowl. Cover and blend or process until smooth. Transfer the pumpkin into a strainer lined with cheese-cloth or overlapping, large coffee filters. Set over a large bowl and press out any liquid. Cover the surface of the puree with plastic wrap and let it drain, chill overnight.

This article was written by Amanda Christensen, Extension Assistant Professor for Utah State University

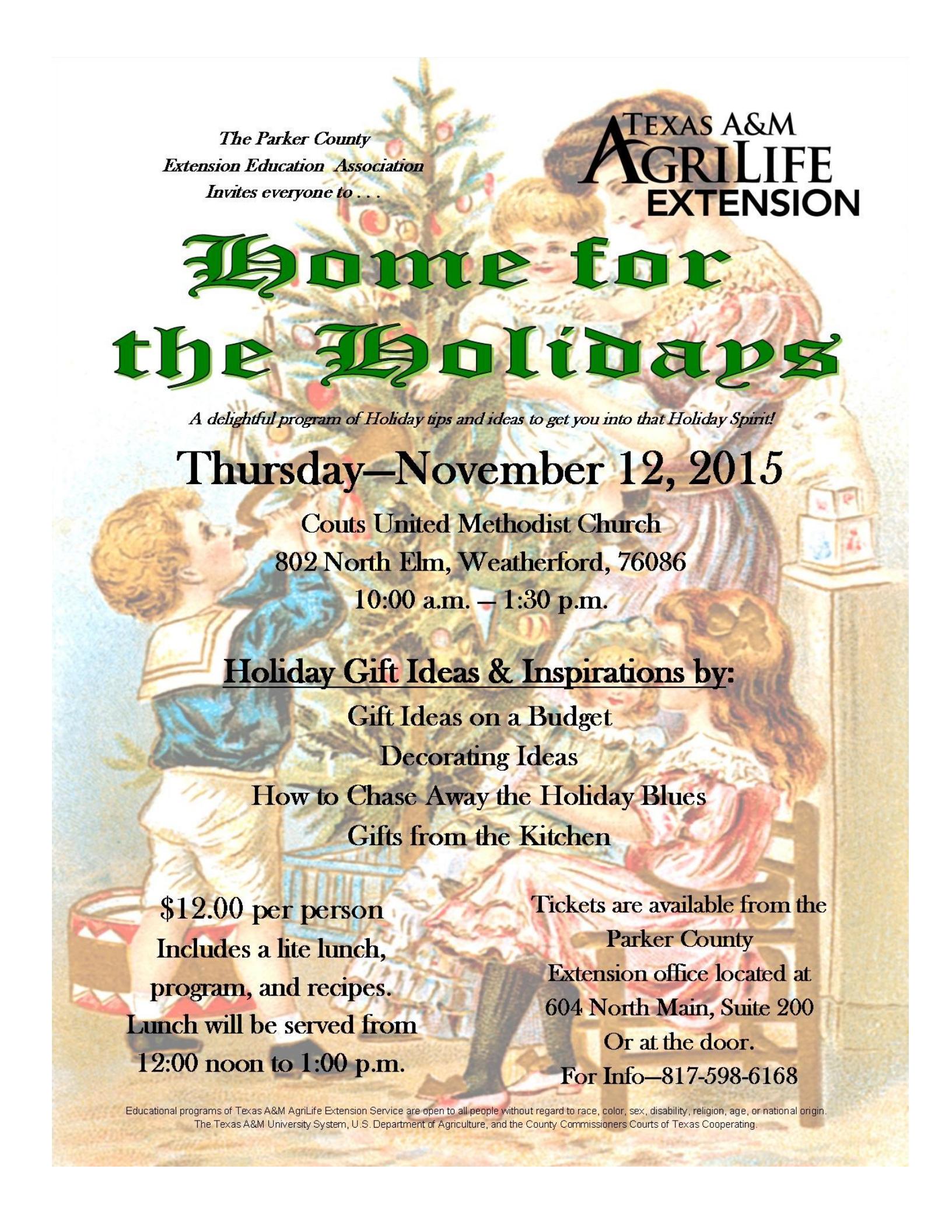
Pumpkin Delight

1 can pumpkin
3 eggs
3/4 cup sugar
1 12 oz. can evaporated fat free milk

1 spiced cake mix
1 cup margarine or better melted
A cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a mixing bowl combine pumpkin, eggs, sugar and milk. Mix well. Pour into greased 13x9 inch cake pan. Sprinkle spiced cake mix over pumpkin mixture. Pour melted butter or margarine over cake mix. Sprinkle chopped pecans over cake.

Bake for 1 hour. Top with whipped topping if desired.



*The Parker County
Extension Education Association
Invites everyone to . . .*

TEXAS A&M
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Home for the Holidays

A delightful program of Holiday tips and ideas to get you into that Holiday Spirit!

Thursday—November 12, 2015

Couts United Methodist Church
802 North Elm, Weatherford, 76086

10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Holiday Gift Ideas & Inspirations by:

Gift Ideas on a Budget

Decorating Ideas

How to Chase Away the Holiday Blues

Gifts from the Kitchen

\$12.00 per person

**Includes a lite lunch,
program, and recipes.**

**Lunch will be served from
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.**

Tickets are available from the

**Parker County
Extension office located at
604 North Main, Suite 200**

Or at the door.

For Info—817-598-6168



Home for the Holidays—Christmas Around the World—November 12

10:30—1:30 p.m., Couts United Methodist Church, 802 North Elm Street, Weatherford

Cost: \$12.00 per person, includes lunch

Do Well Be Well with Diabetes—Tuesdays—November 3—December 1

6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m., Parker County Agricultural Service Center, Cost is Free

For more information or to register for these classes call 817.598.6168

Pinterest Party- November 16

6:00—9:00 p.m., Parker County Agricultural Service Center

\$30 per person, for more information or to register for this class call 817.598.6172

Safe Sitter—November 24 from 8:30 a.m. — 6:00 p.m., Parker County Agricultural Service Center

Ages 11 & Up—Medically accurate program to teach boys and girls ages 11 and up how to handle emergencies when caring for children.

\$50 per child, please pre-register by calling 817-598-6172.

Maintain, No Gain—Begins November 22 and ends on January 2, 2016

Cost is Free

Who can participate? Any adult with an email account can participate

What is included? Twice weekly educational message, tracking log for progress and pre-post survey to show knowledge gained and behaviors changed. Weekly prizes.

Why sign up? To improve your overall health and wellbeing. How do I sign up? Email: kl-smith@tamu.edu Weigh-in and tracking forms are at www.parker.agrilife.org There are scales for you to weigh in at the Parker County Extension Office, or you can use your own scales .For additional information: Kathy Smith at kl-smith@tamu.edu

Let's Cook

A FREE 3 week series: December 2, 9 & 16 - 6:00—7:00 p.m., Parker County Agricultural Service Center

Sample nutritious and delicious cold-weather recipes, learn valuable nutrition and shopping tips. For more information or to register for these classes call 817.598.6168

Kathy Smith,
County Extension Agent—Family & Consumer Sciences
Parker County

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.

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