Family and Community Health "*Connections*" in Runnels County

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Go GREEN on St. Patrick's Day

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Who provides the Family and Community **Health** "Connections"

Go **GREEN** on St. Patrick's Day and throughout the year. Green fruits and vegetables contain many health-promoting phytochemicals including lutein and indoles. They help protect against certain cancers and help maintain vision health and strong bones and teeth.

Green fruits and vegetables include leafy greens, asparagus, green peppers, broccoli, green beans, peas, cabbage, Brussel sprouts, green apples, green grapes, kiwis and more!

Some **GREEN** ideas for St. Patrick's Day (or any day) include:

- Corned beef with **CABBAGE** is a natural for St. Patrick's
- Add **AVOCADO** slices to salads and sandwiches
- Enjoy your favorite veggie dip in combination **BROCCOLI** florets
- Vegetable pizza with **GREEN PEPPERS**

Start thinking **GREEN**—here are some more ideas shared by Jan Pentenaude, RD: Spinach noodles; spinach souffle; green pepper omelets; pesto on anything; cream of broccoli or spinach soups; finely diced spinach in any chicken noodle soups.

Alice Henneman, MS, RDN, UNL Extension in Lancaster County

Check out more **GREEN** recipes at:

Dinner Tonight Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

- *Cranberry Crunch Salad (Brussel sprouts)*
- *Mint Sugar Snap Peas*
- *Lower Calorie Pesto*
- *Parmesan Kale Chips*

https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/

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Starting a Garden this Spring?

*START EARLY and START YOUR SEEDS IN POTS**

General Information: Most seeds in pots should be started about six weeks prior to being placed outdoors. You can go the most expensive and foolproof route with commercial flats and a humidity dome or you can make your own.

Starting Pots: Egg cartons, clean milk containers or plastic bottles cut down, or pots made from rolled newspaper. *Wash! Don't forget drainage holes! Label! Be creative!*

Soil Choices: The easiest method is to purchase a bag of potting soil. It is sterile and will hold moisture. Potting mix should be moist like a sponge and free of clumps.

Moisture: Potting mix should be moist like a sponge and free of clumps; make sure that the soil is damp but NOT WET. Too much water can cause the seeds to rot.

Seeds: Small seeds will need a 2 inch "cell" or pot. Put in 3 seeds per pot making sure that there is enough room in between them and the sides of the pot.

Humidity Dome: You can add your own humidity dome by inserting straws or something that will hold the plastic off the soil. The plastic can be a cleaner's plastic bag cut open and draped over the seed tray. Once covered, you should not have to water again unless surface feels dry.

Germinating: After your seeds germinate, wait until they produce their second set of leaves. These are their first true leaves. At that point, you will select the best two seedlings and remove the other.

Sprouting: When the seedlings have sprouted remove the plastic and move to more, indirect light. After the plants have several sets of leaves, select the strongest plant and thin the rest by cutting them off. Pulling could damage the roots. Before transplanting, harden the plants off by putting them outside for a week in a shaded area.

Need more details? AggieHorticulture.tamu.edu

East Texas Gardening— https://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/2014/07/27/starting-seeds/

Timely Tips on Starting Seeds at Home—https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/landscape/starting-seedlings-at-home/

How to Create Newspaper Pots—https://www.hgtv.com/design/make-and-celebrate/handmade/create-newspaper-pots-for-seed-starting-pictures

Spring Cleaning Just Ahead

PLANNING on SPRING CLEANING?

Don't' forget your refrigerator and pantry.

The refrigerator and panty are where most people store their food. But these areas may also be one of the less frequently cleaned places in your home, which could be hazardous to your health.

Cleaning and Removing Odors from Refrigerators and Freezers

⇒ Dispose of any outdated, spoiled or questionable food.

⇒ Remove shelves, crispers and ice trays. What them thoroughly with hot water and detergent. Then rinse with a sanitizing solution (1 tablespoon unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water).

⇒ Wash interior of refrigerator and freezer, including the door and gasket, with hot water and baking soda. Rinse with sanitizing solution above.

⇒ Leave door open for about 15 minutes to allow free air circulation.

"Sell By" Date The last date food should be sold.	**"Best if Used By" Date** Eat these foods before this date for best quality
"Use By" Date The last date you should eat the food to get its best quality.	**"Expiration" Date** The last date that a food is considered safe to eat.

Cleaning Your Pantry - Here are some tips for a clean, bug-free pantry:

* Check your cans—Discard cans that are leaking, rusted, bulging or badly dented.
* Throw out any food that you suspect is spoiled—Never taste food to determine its safety.
* Check the dates on your foods—See information above.

How long should foods be refrigerated or frozen?

Check out the FDA Refrigerator and Freezer Storage Chart
https://www.fda.gov/media/74435/download

Resources:

https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2018/03/14/planning-some-spring-cleaning-check-list-food-safe-pantry-and-refrigerator

https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family Community Health Department Handout—Understanding Dates on Food Labels

Spinach Pasta Toss

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 15 ounce Italian-style diced tomatoes, unsalted
- 2 cups whole wheat penne pasta, dry
- 1 cup water
- 3 cups baby spinach leaves
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded, reduced fat

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Bring tomatoes, pasta and water to a boil in a large saucepan; stir
2. Cover; simmer on medium-low heat for 10 minutes or just until pasta is tender
3. Add 1/2 of the spinach; simmer, covered 2 minutes or until wilted; stir
4. Repeat until remaining spinach is added
5. Serve topped with cheese
6. For a spicier dish, add 1/4 teaspoon crushed pepper flakes with the tomatoes

SERVES: 6

PER SERVING: CALORIES 180; FAT 4g (2g sat. fat); CHOL 10g; SODIUM 150g; CARB 29g (2g fiber, 3g sugars)

Recipe from Dinner Tonight; https://youtu.be/jAHrT1BO-Ek

County News

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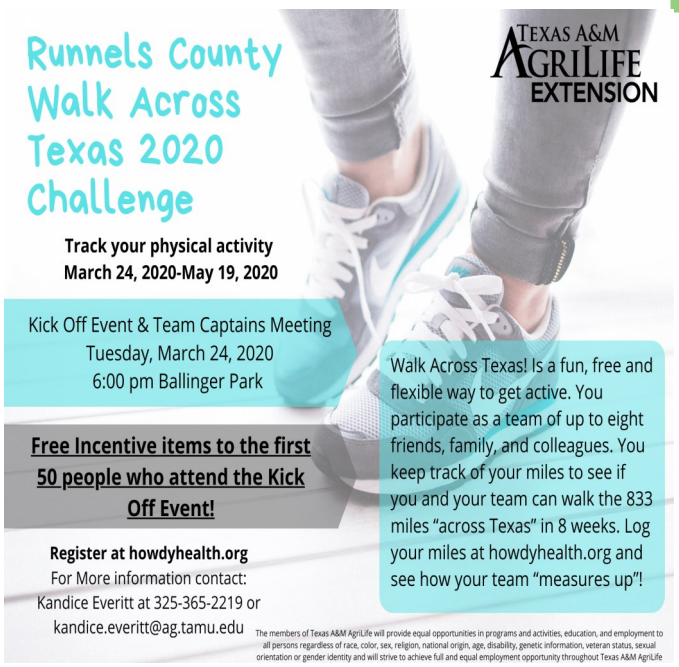

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