Volume 7, Issue 5, May 2020

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

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Apparently you have to eat healthy more than once to get in shape. This is cruel and unfair.

Lifestyle and Managing Stress

Do you have a go-to comfort food when you feel stressed? If so, you are not alone. During times of stress, many of us may reach for foods or snacks and often these are high in saturated fats or added sugars. The fact that stress can impact food choices is not new. However, are there also foods or nutrients that can help you to reduce stress?

Our Body's Fight or Flight Response

Your central nervous system releases stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol when you feel anxious or stressed. These hormones trigger the fight or flight response, which gets your body ready for action. For example, your heart can beat more rapidly, your blood pressure may rise and your rate of breathing might increase. Being in a chronic state of stress can cause long term health problems. In addition to feeling anxious, many may become depressed, struggle to get a good night's sleep or experience digestive issues.

Can Certain Nutrients Ease Stress?

Research linking certain nutrients to stress management is limited. Recent studies have focused on nutrients the brain needs to function normally. This can include nutrients like antioxidants or B vitamins. Studies have looked at how supplements may help manage stress but results have been limited. As these nutrients are already important in a healthy eating pattern, the best way to get them is through the foods you eat. For example, fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants along with other nutrients that may work together to promote health. And many foods provide a variety of B vitamins naturally, including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, beans and meats.

Some studies also report a potential link between low levels of nutrients in the body such as vitamin D and stress. These studies did not prove that inadequate intake of foods with this nutrient causes stress or that increased intake of foods with this nutrient eases stress. However, your body does need it to function normally. And there are lots of foods that contain vitamin D including fatty fish and fortified dairy and soy products.

Do Vitamin and Mineral Supplements Combat Stress?

Some supplements claim to help manage stress. At this time, however, the evidence supporting these supplements is limited and much more research is needed. Talk with your health care provider before taking any vitamin and mineral supplements.

Stress-Busters

When it comes to food and stress, one of the best things you can do for your body is to choose a balanced, healthful eating style. Participating in regular physical activity is also beneficial for managing stress. As little as five minutes of exercise a day can be beneficial. A Registered Dietitian Nutritionist can help you establish an individualized healthy eating plan that includes specific food preferences and goals for physical activity.

Other ways to help ease stress might include:

- Socializing with friends and loved ones for emotional support during stressful situations.
- If stress has you craving crunchy foods, reach for lower calorie, healthful foods such as carrots, celery or plain popcorn.
- Relaxation activities, such as meditation, guided imagery or breathing exercises.
- Consider seeking professional help. Stress can become debilitating. Counselors and other health care providers can offer treatments to help combat stress.

Resource: www.eatright.org

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Cooking with Dry Beans

Dry beans are nutritious and inexpensive. They are also very low in fat and sodium. Dry beans are great sources of fiber, folic acid, and protein. Cooked dry beans are also a good source of iron. To get the most protein from the beans, serve them along with grain foods such as corn, rice or wheat. A serving size of cooked dry beans is ½ cup.

Uses

Use beans as a tasty side dish or include it in casseroles, soups, and salads. Beans are often packaged in 1-pound bags. One pound of dry beans is equal to 2 cups. One cup of dry beans makes 3 cups of cooked beans (6 servings).

How to store them

Store dry beans in an airtight container and keep in a cool, dry place. For best taste, use them within 1 year of receiving them.

Cooked beans can either be frozen or refrigerated. Freeze cooked beans in a shallow (no more than 3 inches deep) airtight container and use them within 6 months. Cooked beans stored in the refrigerator should also be stored in a shallow covered container. This helps the beans to cool more quickly and safely. Never place a large pot of cooked beans in the refrigerator or freezer. They may not cool fast enough to prevent someone from getting sick. Store the cooked beans within 2 hours of preparation. Use them within 4 or 5 days.

Dry Beans (makes 6 servings, ½ cup each)

WHAT YOU NEED

1 cup dry beans

1 small onion, chopped (if you like)

jalapeño pepper (if you like)

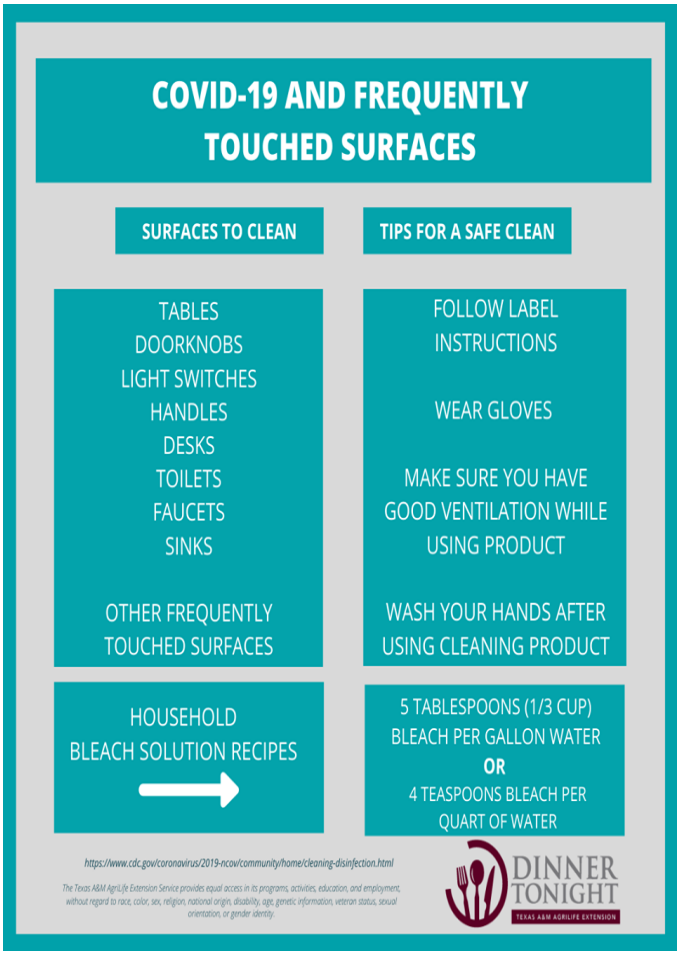
salt (to taste)

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Wash your hands; make sure your cooking area is clean.
2. Rinse the beans with running water. Sort out any broken beans, pebbles or other objects that might be present. Rinse the sorted beans again.
3. Soak the beans: Place them in a large pot. For every 1 cup of dry beans, add 5 cups of water. Bring the beans and water to a boil and boil for 2 minutes. Remove them from the heat, cover the pot, and let it stand for 2 hours.
4. Drain the liquid from the beans and replace with fresh water (the same amount you used for soaking).
5. Add the onions and jalapeño peppers to the beans. Bring them to a boil, then reduce the heat and cook for about 2 hours or until the beans are tender. Add water as needed.
6. Add salt and serve.

Tip: Add salt when the dry beans are almost done cooking. If you add the salt when you start cooking the beans, they will be tough.

Resource: https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/health-nutrition/cooking-with-dry-beans/



UNDERSTAND SIGNAL WORDS ON DISINFECTANTS

When deciding on a safe disinfectant to use in your home or workplace, consider the signal word. The signal word provides a quick reference to the relative hazard associated with using a product. One of three signal words – DANGER, WARNING or CAUTION must be on the front panel of any disinfectant product.

- DANGER signals the highest warning. Such products may be highly toxic when ingested or may induce irreversible eye or skin damage if used without proper protective gear.

- WARNING labeled products are moderately toxic if ingested or may cause reversible skin or eye Irritation.

- CAUTION labeled products will be the least hazardous, and would be best for home environments, especially where children are present.

Resource: agrilifetoday.tamu.edu

Mindful Living Digital Awareness

Being mindful of technology encourages healthy connections with oneself and others rather than losing yourself in mobile devices. It also helps to refocus your concentration to be present by avoiding compulsive use of technology.

WHY BE MINDFUL? Use of technology has changed the way we approach our work and daily activities. The average person checks their phone several times a day. Time spent on digital devices replaced our time spent on exercise, bonding, and creative activities e.g. playing an instrument, brain games, enjoying family meals, and playing outdoors.

Highly stimulating screen-based activities, the bright lights from digital devices, and the constant urge to check our phones for texts, phone calls or emails can become repetitive and compulsive, which may induce stress and disrupt sleep. Being mindful of technology use allows meaningful face to face interactions and conversations.

HOW TO BE MINDFUL? A digital detox will help you unplug and disconnect from technology and to reconnect with friends and family. Have a morning routine without your phone or other digital devices. Allow at least an hour each day of screen free time.

Take breaks from social media to go outdoors to exercise or connect with the real world. Turn off social media notifications.

Encourage screen free family meals to reconnect with family members and focus on what is served. Avoid screens in your bedroom and do not use any screen 1 hour before bedtime.

Stretch your body every 30 minutes while using your computer and focus on natural objects that are restful to the eyes.

Avoid talking or texting while driving. Distracted driving is dangerous so always stay focused on the road.

Resource: fch.tamu.edu

Kandice Everitt, CEA/FCH
608 Sealy Ave
Ballinger, TX 76821

Phone: 325-365-2219
kandice.everitt@ag.tamu.edu
Facebook: @runnelscountyfch
Website: runnels.agrilife.org

Broccoli Cheddar Egg Muffins

Ingredients:

8 large eggs

1/4 cup water

1/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. black pepper

1/4 tsp. garlic powder

1 head broccoli or 10 oz. bag frozen broccoli

1 cup reduced fat cheddar cheese

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Rinse broccoli head under cool running water. In a bowl, combine eggs, water and seasonings and whisk until well combined and smooth.

Prepare broccoli: If using fresh, cut into florets and place in microwave safe container with 1/2 cup water.Cover with microwave safe covering and steam for 4 minutes. When done, drain the broccoli and wait until cool enough to handle, chop into small pieces. If using frozen, follow package directions to steam drain, and wait until cool enough to handle, chop into small pieces.

Spray a non-stick muffin tin with nonstick cookng spray. Evenly distribute broccoli among muffin cups, pour egg mixture over broccoli up to about 2/3 full. Top with cheddar cheese.

Bake for 14-16 minutes or until egg is done but cheese is not burnt.

Recipe source: dinnertonight.tamu.edu

County News

All face to face meetings and programs have been cancelled through May 18th. Please like the Runnels County FCH Facebook page for virtual learning opportunities during this time.

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

Courtney Parrott, Brown County

London Jones, Burnet County

Vacant, Coleman County

Milissa Wright, Concho Valley

Kelli Maberry, Jones County

Karen DeZarn, Lampasas County

Whitney Whitworth, Llano County

Jacque Behrens, McCulloch County

Staci Winders, Nolan County

Kandice Everitt, Runnels County

Kailey Miller, San Saba County

Kim Miles, Taylor County

Courtney Redman, Tom Green County

Stacy Drury, D7 Regional Program Leader

Barbara Brown, BLT Regional Project Specialist