

FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH "CONNECTIONS" IN TOM GREEN COUNTY

Meal Plans and How They Help

Eating healthy foods is important to make sure your body gets the nutrients it needs every day. It is also important to stay within your daily calorie goal, whether that's designed to help you lose, gain, or maintain your current weight. Eating healthy foods will help to lower your risk for heart disease and other serious health conditions. By planning out your meals ahead of time, it is more likely that you'll make healthy food choices rather than choosing food for convenience instead.

Path to well being

Before you go to the grocery store, it can be helpful to sit down and consider what you'll need to make a healthy eating plan. Look for recipes that are easy to make in bulk, especially if you'd like to plan out and make your meals in advance. Many people find that cooking and packaging their meals on the weekend for the coming week helps keep them committed to healthy eating.

Depending on your taste preferences, your menu should include:

- **Plenty of vegetables and fruits.** A general rule of thumb is that veggies and fruits should take up half of your plate.
- **Whole grains.** At least half of your grains should be whole grains, which provide more fiber and nutrients than refined grains. You can look at the labels for terms like "100% whole wheat" or "100% whole grain."
- **Fat-free or low-fat dairy products** that contain calcium and other essential nutrients but have fewer calories.
- **Lean meats and other sources of protein**, such as beans, eggs, and nuts.
- **Limited saturated and trans fats, sodium, or added sugars.** If you are using ingredients such as mayonnaise, butter, or salad dressing while cooking, try those that are lower in calories and total, saturated, and trans fats.

Be sure to factor in snacks and meals that you can eat on the go in your grocery trip as well. This might include fruits, washed and chopped vegetables, yogurt, low-fat cheeses, whole-grain crackers or breads, and protein choices like nuts or low-fat turkey slices.

Also, consider buying a week's worth of food containers. This way, if you prep meals a week at a time, you'll have an organized way to store them for grab-and-go.

Things to consider

Making healthy food choices is important for your body no matter how much you weigh. It's not just about the number on the scale. However, if you are working to slim your waistline, your diet will be very important. To lose weight, you usually need to reduce the number of calories you consume and increase your physical activity, or the calories you burn. The National Institutes of Health says that if you want to lose 1-1.5 pounds per week, your total daily calorie intake should reduce by 500-750 calories. This does not mean you should cut out all food. You must eat to remain healthy. For most women, eating 1,200-1,500 calories each day can help you to lose weight safely. For men or for women who weigh more or exercise regularly, an eating plan that contains 1,500-1,800 calories per day can help you to lose weight safely. Do not follow diets with an intake of fewer than 800 calories per day without first speaking to your doctor. They will want to monitor you if this does end up being a necessity for your health.

Inside this issue:

Meal Plans and How They Help	1
Top 10 Ways to Make Vegetables Tasty	2
8 Strategies For a Healthy Spring	2
Egg Essentials	3
What Not to put Down Your Drain	3
Recipe	4
County News	4



Source: familydoctor.org

Top 10 Ways to Make Vegetables Tasty

1. **Pair with Cheese.** Make your own version of the classic caprese salad by adding low fat mozzarella and basil to your dish, or simply sprinkle parmesan cheese on top of your cooked veggies.
2. **A Tangy Surprise!** Add a squeeze of lemon juice after you steam your veggies. It can add a nice surprise to spinach and broccoli.
3. **Sauté with Herbs.** To infuse your veggies with flavor and mouth-watering aromas, sauté them in olive oil, garlic and herbs of your choice (basil, oregano, thyme, etc..).
4. **Spice Them Up!** Slice up some green and yellow squash. Add sliced mushrooms, diced tomatoes and onion. Then chop up a jalapeno pepper (or two, depending on how spicy you like it!) and add into the vegetable mix. Sauté in a pan and serve over brown rice for a spicy new favorite.
5. **Healthy Dipping!** Dip your raw vegetables (such as carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower) into a nutrient rich dip like hummus, which itself can be eaten as a side-dish or with whole grains since it has vegetables in it!
6. **Mix with Fruit.** A great way to combine both fruit and vegetables is in a salad. A tasty way to do this is to start off with spinach, add halved cherries, sliced strawberries and walnuts and toss in an orange based vinaigrette.



Source: fruitsandveggies.org

8 Strategies For a Healthy Spring

Help prevent chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer with these 8 healthy habits for spring.



1. **Move More, Sit Less.** Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity every week. That could mean 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. Do muscle-strengthening activities 2 days a week.
2. **Eat Healthy Foods.** Try healthy food choices like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products.
3. **Choose Your Drinks Wisely.** Substitute water for sugary drinks and alcoholic drinks to reduce calories and stay safe.
4. **Get Enough Sleep.** Adults need at least 7 hours of sleep per night.
5. **Be Sun Safe.** Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, a wide brimmed hat, and sunglasses and use broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15.
6. **Brush Your Teeth.** Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
7. **Don't Use Tobacco.** Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free support to quit smoking.
8. **Learn Your Health History.** Talk to your family doctor about your family health history.

Source: cdc.gov

Eggs are front and center during Easter time. Hard-boiled, dyed and decorated eggs are a beloved Easter tradition. But are you up to speed on your egg expertise? Get the answers to these common egg questions.

Are Easter Eggs Safe to Eat? Yes, as long as you store them in the refrigerator, hide them in places above the ground and away from bacterial sources such as pets and dirt, and toss any eggs that are cracked, dirty or have been out of the fridge for more than two hours. They also should be washed, re-refrigerated and used within one week to prevent food poisoning. Better yet, minimize health risks by cooking two sets of eggs. Use one set for an Easter egg hunt or centerpiece display, and the other for eating. That way, the eggs you eat can stay properly refrigerated. Also consider using plastic eggs for hiding.

Are Eggs OK to Use after the "Sell By" Date? Eggs should be purchased before the "sell by" date and used within three to five weeks of the purchase date. Store eggs in the refrigerator at less than 40°F. When purchasing eggs, make sure they are sold in a refrigerator case and that none of the eggs are cracked. When you get home, put the eggs in the refrigerator as soon as possible and keep them in their original carton displaying the expiration date. The egg rack on the refrigerator door is not the best place to store eggs because the temperature is warmer there than on the interior shelves.

How Do I Hard Boil an Egg? Hard-boiled eggs should be cooked until the white and yolk are completely set. To do this, place eggs in a saucepan and cover with water. Bring water to a boil, cover the saucepan, then turn off the heat. Let eggs stand in water for 15 minutes.

Remove eggs and place in a bowl of ice cold water to cool.

Do Hard-Boiled Eggs Spoil Faster than Fresh Eggs? Yes. When eggs are hard boiled, the protective coating is washed away, making it easier for bacteria to permeate the shell and contaminate the egg. Hard-boiled eggs should be refrigerated within two hours of cooking and used within a week.

What Makes Hard-Boiled Eggs Hard to Peel? The fresher the egg, the more difficult it is to peel after hard boiling. That's because the air cell, found at the large end of the shell between the shell membranes, increases in size the longer the raw egg is stored. As the egg's contents contract and the air cell enlarges, the shell becomes easier to peel. For this reason, older eggs are better candidates for hard boiling.

Why is the Inside of a Hard-Boiled Egg Green? A green ring on a hard-boiled yolk is a result of overcooking.

It's caused by sulfur and iron compounds in the egg reacting on the yolk's surface. The green color can also be caused by a high amount of iron in the cooking water. The green-colored yolk is safe to eat.



Source: eatright.org

What Not to Put Down the Drain

Certain foods can cause major problems with your drains by clogging them up. Keep your drains and your kitchen in tip top shape by remembering not to pour these things down the drain (even if you have a garbage disposal!):

1. Cooking Oils (this included mayo and salad dressings that have high oil content)
2. Butter and Margarine
3. Grease and other Fats
4. Egg Shells (look into composting these)
5. Coffee Grounds
6. Pasta
7. Rice

8. Flour
9. Produce Stickers

These ingredients may seem harmless but overtime they can get sticky and create residues and buildup that can cause some serious havoc in your pipes! Keep your kitchen ready for healthy cooking with these tips!



Source: dinnertonight.amu.edu

Lightened Up Carrot Cake Bars

Ingredients:

Carrot Cake Bars:

- 3/4 cup all purpose flour
- 1/4 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup carrot, shredded
- 3/4 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1/3 cup refrigerated egg product (or 3 egg whites)
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1/4 cup fat-free milk

Fluffy Cream Cheese Frosting:

- 1/2 cup frozen light whipped topping, thawed
- 4 oz. reduced-fat cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup low fat vanilla yogurt

Source: dinnertonight.tamu.edu

Instructions:

Bars:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9x9x2 inch pan with foil, extending foil over the edges of the pan. Lightly coat foil with nonstick cooking spray and set aside. In a medium bowl, combine all dry ingredients. Add shredded carrot, 1/2 cup of the walnuts, eggs, oil and milk. Stir until combined. Spread mixture evenly in the prepared pan. Bake for 15-18 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool bars in pan on wire rack. Using the edges of the foil, lift the uncut bars out of the pan. Spread top evenly with Fluffy Cream Cheese Frosting. Sprinkle remaining 1/4 cup nuts and cut.



Fluffy Cream Cheese Frosting:

In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Beat in yogurt until smooth. Fold thawed whipped topping into

Tom Green EEA News:

Veribest Club Meeting:

Irion County EEA Style Show & Luncheon

April 21, 2022

Tickets \$20

@ Mertzon Methodist Family Life Center

Theme "Kentucky Derby"

(wear your fancy hat)

Tickets are sold at:

*Irion Co. Extension Office, Hargraves or
Blair's Western Wear in San Angelo*

Tickets will not be sold at the door

Family & Community Health "Connections" is provided by these Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family and Community Health Agents:

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