

Living Well

Raising Kids, Eating Right

Spend Smart, Living Well

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As we approach this season of praise and thanksgiving, may you also reflect on this past year. Charles Schultz, the creator of the 'Peanuts' comic strip, shares this philosophy.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five winners of the Miss American pageant.
3. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners
4. Name five people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize
5. Name the last 5 Academy Award winners for the best actor.

How did you do?

This point is, none of us remember the headlines yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their field. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Now answer these questions.

1. Name three teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people who you enjoy spending time with.

Was this easier.

The lesson here is. The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money or the most awards. They are the ones who care.

Happy Thanksgiving! Happy Hanukkah! Merry Christmas! Happy Kwanzaa! Happy New Year

Kathy Smith,

County Extension Agent—Family and Consumer Sciences—Parker County

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Healthy Holiday Eating

We all love food and especially the meals, snacks and treats this time of year. Pumpkin pie topped with whipped cream, pecan pie, sugar cookies, fudge, turkey, dressing, cranberry salad, home-

made bread divinity, peanut brittle. Is anyone hungry yet? Holidays are a time for celebration, family, friends and good food. But, with all that good food often comes some not so good weight gain. What can you do to prevent weight gain and still enjoy the holidays?



Here are a few simple tips to help guide you through the coming months of holiday feasts.

- Make healthy food and bring it along with you to the holiday meal. This way you will always have something healthy to eat in a dining roomful of high calorie dishes.
- What to bring? A fresh fruit salad is always a good choice and can be refreshing along with other rich food. You can bring a big salad tossed with carrots, grape tomatoes and sliced cucumbers. Don't forget the low-fat dressing. Simply prepare vegetables such as steamed carrots or green beans are healthy and flavorful options.

- Eat something before you go. This may be silly, but your stomach can only hold so much food. If you are starving you may overeat. Eat a little something like yogurt, fruit or lean meat. The point is to not to go hungry.

- Take larger portions of healthier options such as turkey, fresh fruit and smaller portions of more calorie dense foods like sweet potatoes, dressing and bread. When it comes to dessert, take a half piece or just a few bites.
- Drink water. Calories in many beverages such as eggnog, apple cider, wine and hot cocoa can add up. Everything should be done in moderation.
- Choose your favorites. Make sure you only choose the things you really love. Leave off the things that are there and are really not your favorites. Also it is key to watch portion sizes. You can enjoy all of your holiday favorites in moderation.

Hopefully, implementing these tips will help you navigate your way through the holiday feasts so that you can enjoy them and you also get to enjoy your health.

Source: <http://caloriecount.about.com>, and www.extension.org/healthy-holiday-eating.

National Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day is November 15!

Have you heard? It's National Clean Out your Fridge Day? With the holidays quickly coming, now is the perfect time of year to look in your refrigerator and freezer and do some cleaning.



Planning Ahead Can Help Keep Santa Out of Debt

Every year thousands of Americans go into debt over the holidays because Santa and his elves went a little over budget. With Christmas shopping, gas prices and holiday parties, it is no wonder we have trouble staying out of debt.

Dr. Nancy Porter, Clemson University Extension Family Resource Management Specialist, says that it is easy to go over budget, as there are so many expenses most people forget to calculate into their holiday budget. The way to avoid overspending is to plan ahead.

It is important to have a written plan including all expenditures. This is also a great time to teach children about money management, as it is never too soon to begin teaching them how to make and stick to a budget.

The holidays can often be stressful, especially with all of the shopping, entertaining, traveling and planning. These activities can be taxing not just on you, but also on your budget. This time of year often includes a lot of eating out and not just for special parties.

In the hustle and bustle of shopping, it is common for people to just eat while they are out, rather than cooking. However, this expense is often forgotten from the planned budget. It is also common to forget to add in babysitting, and car maintenance. These should be planned for.

People are usually paying more for food, drinks, decorations, postage, greeting cards and charitable contributions during this time as well. To cut down on these expenses, it is suggested to have a potluck get together, where everyone can bring a favorite decoration item, dish or drink. This allows everyone to share the burden of the entertainment.

Sometimes family traditions can be costly. Eliminating one that has less meaning can help.

Gifts are the largest category in the holiday

budget. These can often have more emotional ties and guilt feeling. Sometimes they are the more difficult to cut down on. But if this cannot be slimmed down, it is likely that you will end up with higher credit bills in January.

There are many ways to cut down on holiday gift lists. Start ahead of time by telling people that you are trying to save money this holiday season, they may be more forgiving for not receiving a gift from you.

Try creative gift ideas such as homemade presents such as a recipe box of typed recipes or a scrapbook of memories. Other ideas is to create a memory together as a group or family.

Instead of giving gifts, do something fun together, such as taking the family to the theater or going on a short vacation together.

Gifts that can be enjoyed by the whole family also cut down on the number of presents. For example a family with several children might buy a DVD player or stereo system which everyone can enjoy. While this gift can be costly, it may end up being cheaper than buying smaller gifts for everyone.

Giving a charitable contribution in someone's name is a way to take care of two obligations at once, because it gives a gift to a loved one, while still giving to the charity.

Shop at stores on major sale days to save money. Even if it means fighting crowds.

Begin shopping on the Internet. This can often save money and avoid the temptations to buy more than you have planned.

Draw names among family members or coworkers can often help cut down on the number of people for whom you must buy gifts.



Surviving the Holidays with ADHD Children

Many families have an image of the perfect holiday in their minds—perfect food, decorations, and children. Trying to reach the pinnacle of perfection can not only create stress, but can cause them to miss out on the true joys of the holidays. The stress of the holidays can be even more difficult for those families who have children affected by ADHD and other social emotional disorders. The holidays are often a time of frenzy, disorganization and mayhem and for these families, this time of the year needs extra thought and planning to go smoothly. And having a sense of humor doesn't hurt either. One way to start planning this year is to change your expectations so the



holiday works for you, not you working to make it "perfect".

The amount of disruption or routine and stimulation brought on by the

holidays can easily become too much for children affected by ADHD. Children are home from school. They may visit families and have loved ones come to their home. Children have lots of free time. Children may watch more TV and they see many commercials for the latest toys and games. While this can be fun, it can easily become too much for these children.

Children with ADHD thrive on routines and consistency. They do well in structured environments. With the disruption of being home from school and the anticipation of the upcoming holidays, chaos may abound. Children that are normally hyperactive may become even more active. Impulsiveness, distractibility and other focus issues can increase. This can also be a difficult time for children social. Many ADHD children have difficulties with friends and if classmates make plans over the holiday breaks, it can make the children feel even more isolated. Some parents say that sibling fighting increases at holiday time. Here are some tips to help families and children handle the holidays and gain control during these stressful times.

- ◆ **Maintain routines.** Bedtime routines are especially important because children do much better with a good night's sleep.
- ◆ **Keep a calendar.** Mark down all upcoming events, parties, school activities, etc. so children know what is coming up. In addition, you may want to include when relatives are coming to visit and when they are leaving.
- ◆ **Be understanding.** Children with ADHD can have extremes. They may not be as reasonable in their demands or they may make spur of the moment requests for gifts.
- ◆ **Have a list of rules.** Children need to know what is expected of them and a standard of good conduct should be reviewed with children on a regular basis. These rules can be posted on the refrigerator with rewards to reinforce good behavior. You might include daily chores as well as expectations for staying in control.
- ◆ **Children need to have plenty of exercise during the holiday season.** Exercise can help with meltdowns and help calm impulsiveness and hyperactivity.
- ◆ **Before you accept invitations, think about how your child may react in this environment.** How restrictive is this place and will your child be able to move about and not have to sit still for an entire afternoon? You don't have to accept every invitation. If necessary, shorten the time of the visit with family or friends.
- ◆ **Make sure children understand there are different rules at different houses.** If possible, let them know ahead of time what is to be expected. You may want to bring favorite toys or activities with you to keep them occupied so they don't get into things they shouldn't be into when you visit.
- ◆ **You don't have to go overboard with lots of presents.** Too many gifts all at once provide a lot of stimulation and toys can easily get broken as excitement levels mount.

Remember to spend time with your children. Paying attention to your children helps them to keep in focus and helps you monitor their behavior. In addition, it creates great memories for your children.

Most importantly, you need to make a plan that works for you and your children. It is important to PLAN and your holidays will go a lot more smoothly.

Holiday Family Traditions

One of the things we enjoy about Christmas time and New Years are the traditions. Traditions offer family members an opportunity to feel included, share values and connect with each other in meaningful ways. While many link the holiday season with family traditions, celebration is only one type of tradition. The other major types are traditions of connection and traditions of community.

Family traditions that last and have personal meaning for family members are the ones that develop the strongest relationships.

Family traditions of connection are centered on regular, consistent activities such as morning time and bedtime, meals, outings and vacations. Birthdays, family reunions and holidays comprise the traditions of celebration. Traditions of community can include weddings, funerals, other religious events, and community gatherings ranging from block parties to football games.

A key benefit of family traditions is predictability, that sense of regularity and order that families need--especially children. Another benefit of family traditions is identity, the sense of belonging that makes families feel unique.

Building and maintaining traditions have always been based on family decisions, but now that there are so many different types of families, communication is more important than ever before. Single-parent families, blended families, multi-generational families, families with different ethnic backgrounds--each type will need to discuss and select those traditions that work best for them in their specific circumstances. The same is true for families experiencing economic stress or a family crisis such as divorce.

It's important for families to recognize that traditions vary widely and often change over time.

Sometimes, a little bit of change in family traditions is not a bad thing. During tough times, families need to assess their situation and identify those traditions that they can reasonably maintain, along with the traditions they may need to modify or abandon.

Another decision families need to make regarding traditions is based on this question: Old or new? Answering this question forces family members to determine whether a tradition is serving them in a positive way or whether they are serving the tradition.

Many families have old or established traditions that they would like to continue, but in order to involve younger generations in a meaningful way, the older family members may need to find ways to teach the value of these traditions. At the same time, members of the older generations should also recognize that young families need a chance to begin their own family traditions, and this may require restraint on the part of those who want to make sure certain family traditions carry on.

The best formula for working out concerns involving family traditions involves a maximum amount of discussion and understanding and a minimum of pressure, guilt and other forms of negativity.



Keeping the Holidays Safe

This is the magical time of year for children and adults. However every year during the Christmas season almost 9,000 are injured due to decorations, light, cuts and shock.

This year keep the season a happy one by following these safety tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission..

Trees

Purchase live trees that are fresh. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent the needles don't break. The bottom of the trunk is sticky with resin and when tapped on the grown the tree should not lose many needles.

Place trees away from fireplaces or direct heat as this will dry the tree out quicker. Place trees away from traffic areas and don't block the drive ways.

Live trees need water. Check and add water often.

If you are looking to purchase an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." This doesn't mean that the tree won't catch fire, it does mean that the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.

Decorations

Only use noncombustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Never light a tree with candles. Take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakables.

Holiday Lights

Use lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory that indicates conformance with safety standards. Safe lights bear a testing lab mark and have no visible damage.

Check each set of lights new or old for bro-

ken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires or loose connections and throw away damaged sets.

Use not more than three standard size sets of light per single extension cord.

Never use electric lights on metallic trees. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty light and can electrocute someone.

Before using lights outdoors, make sure they are for outdoor use. Fasten light securely to protect from wind and weather damage.

Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.

Turn off all lights when you go to be or leave home. The lights could short out and start a fire.

Food Safety

No one likes to be sick during the holidays and especially food poisoning.

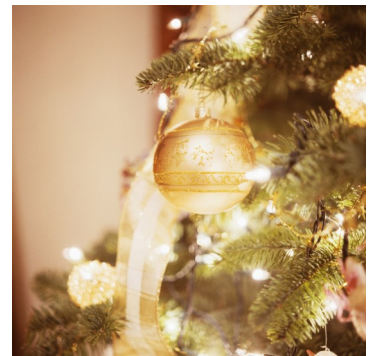
Make sure the food you prepare is safe. First wash your hand frequently before preparing and serving food. Make sure the area you prepare food has been cleaned and sanitized.

Thaw foods that are frozen in the refrigerator or under cool running water. Never allow food to thaw on the countertop.

Keep raw food separate from cooked foods.

Cook food to the proper temperature. Turkey and poultry products and leftovers should be cooked to 165 degrees F.

Food that requires refrigeration should not be left at room temperature for more than two hours.



Upcoming Events

Home for the Holidays—November 14

10:00 a.m.—1:30 p.m.

Couts Memorial United Methodist Church—Weatherford

Cost: \$15.00 (See flyer)

Includes speakers, lunch, a fashion show, raffles, and silent auctions

Parenting Classes – November 18—19

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Parker County Agricultural Services Center

\$10 for both days.

Maintain No Weight Gain Holiday Challenge —November 25, 2013 to January 5, 2014

Cost is Free

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

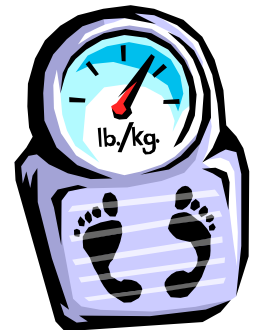
What is included? Twice weekly educational message, tracking log for progress and pre-post survey to show knowledge gained and behaviors changed. Weekly prizes

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 or a set of scales at your work.

For additional information: Kathy Smith at kl-smith@tamu.edu



Pinterest Evening Events—

November 25, 2013—Tomato Cage Christmas Tress 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

November 26, 2013—Gifts Ideas from the Kitchen 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Parker County Agricultural Services Center

Cost: \$25.00 each evening or \$40.00 for both nights

Materials and supplies will be provided each night

For more information call 817-598-6168 or 817-598-6172



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

**TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION**

Home for the Holidays

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

**Thursday
November 14, 2013**

**Couts United Methodist Church
802 North Elm, Weatherford, 76086
10:00 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.**

Holiday Gift Ideas & Inspirations by:

**Antoinette Reed—Holiday appetizers
Couts Christian Academy Students
Shirley Riebe—Wreaths**

Julia Moseley & Barbara Sampson—Decorating Ideas

EEA Blingy Fashion Show

Kayla Neill—Gifts In A Jar

**Kathy Smith—Keeping Your Thanksgiving
& Christmas Safe**

\$15.00 per person
Includes a life 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.

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