

Family and Community Health “Connections” in Tom Green County

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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Inside this issue:

Ways to Boost Your Immune system	1
Regrow Your Vegetables	2
Family Mealtime	3
Recipe	4
County News	4

Ways to Boost Your Immune System

Since experts believe that your body absorbs vitamins more efficiently from dietary sources, rather than supplements, the best way to support your immune system is to eat a well balanced diet.

Adapted from Houston Methodist Leading Medicine Blog On Health, Katie McCallum (Dec. 14, 2021)

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET

Make sure you eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, lean protein and healthy fats. A healthy diet can ensure you are getting sufficient amounts of the micronutrients that play a role in maintaining your immune systems including:

- ◆ Vitamin B6 found in chicken, salmon, tuna, bananas, green vegetables and potatoes
- ◆ Vitamin C, found in citrus fruits, strawberries, as well as broccoli and spinach
- ◆ Vitamin E, found in almonds, sunflower and safflower oil, sunflower seeds, peanut butter and spinach

EXERCISE REGULARLY

Physical activity isn't just for building muscles and helping you de-stress—it's also an important part of supporting a healthy immune system. One way exercise may improve immune function is by boosting your overall circulation.

HYDRATE, Hydrate, Hydrate

Water plays many important roles in your body, including supporting your immune system.

GET PLENTY OF SLEEP

Sleep certainly doesn't feel like an active process, but there are plenty of important things happening in our body when you are not awake.

No Magic Pills: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Recommends Nutrient-Rich Foods for Vitamins, Minerals

Source: <https://www.eatright.org>

"There is no magic immune-boosting pill or food, but a well-balanced eating plan that includes a variety of nutritious foods from all of the food groups will help give your body the nutrients it needs to support your immune system," said registered dietitian nutritionist Wesley McWhorter, a national spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in Houston, Texas.

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REGROW YOUR VEGETABLES

Adapted from Farmer's Almanac—Don't Toss it, Plant It! Vegetables You Can Regrow

Farmers' Almanac Staff Updated: November 1, 2021

Kitchen scrap gardening saves you money on the grocery bills and reduces waste. Regrow your kitchen waste into edible veggies and greens! It's environmentally friendly, can save on grocery bills, and it's a fun, hands on science lesson for young children.

A few things to keep in mind:

- ◇ *Not everything will sprout. Check on our plants and if after a week you don't see anything happening, compost the scraps and try again.*
- ◇ *Start with organic produce since some non-organic produce may be treated to prevent sprouting.*
- ◇ *Keep in mind the climate you live in will determine if and when plant started from scraps can be transferred to an outdoor garden.*

Here are a few a of the vegetable scraps from Farmer's Almanac website. For more, visit their site at <https://www.farmersalmanac.com>

Green Onions

If you cut off and toss the end of the onion with the little roots growing out of it, try growing a new onion with it instead. Plant the root end down in some quality potting soil, place it in a sunny window, keep it watered and watch it grow. This is a great first kitchen scrap gardening project because the green part of the onion will grow back quickly. In less than two weeks it will be tall enough to snip off the top to eat.

Celery

Cut stalks off about two inches from the bottom of the celery bunch and place that white base in a shallow bowl of water. Do not submerge. After several days roots will begin growing from the base and leaves will grow from the top. After about a week, you can plant in soil with only the leaves above the surface. The plant will continue to grow until you've got a new head of celery to harvest. Keep in mind that celery is a cool weather crop, so plant outside in early spring rather than waiting until the hot summer months.

Romain Lettuce

Growing romaine lettuce from scraps is similar to growing green onions and celery. Cut off the lettuce you plan to eat and leave a couple of inches at the base. Place this romaine heart in water and new leaves will start to grow from the center. Remove outer leaves as they start to die. You can eventually plant your romaine in soil when the time is right.



FAMILY MEALTIME

Conversation, togetherness, relationship building, and healthful eating are just a few of the benefits family mealtimes provide. In today's hectic lifestyle, it can be challenging to bring the family together for a shared meal; however, the benefits may be worth the extra effort.

Benefits of Family Meals—Nutrition and Beyond

Family mealtimes are a great opportunity to improve the physical, social, and developmental health of children. Studies show that children who share three or more family meals per week are more likely to have a healthy weight and a healthier diet than those who share fewer than three family meals. These healthier habits include eating more fruits and vegetables, as well as having breakfast more often. Involving children in food preparation for family meals can increase dietary quality and improve eating patterns among children.

In addition, children who take part in family meals also decrease their risk for tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use, low grade point average, depressive symptoms, teen pregnancy, and eating disorders. Overall, family meals lead to higher self-esteem and a greater sense of resilience—or ability to bounce back from hardships—in children. At the family level, these shared meals create a sense of togetherness and generally improve family relationships.

Family meals are best shared at the dinner table, without electronics, and with the television off, but the dinner table is not limited to a traditional table in the kitchen. It can be around a kitchen island, outside on a patio, or even on a blanket in the yard.

The key is to eat together without distractions such as television, phones, or videogames, in an environment where positive reinforcement can be achieved for your family.

Adapted from **The Benefits of Family Meals**
Allison Labyk, Dietetic Intern
Carolyn Gunther, Assoc. Professor and Ohio State
University Extension State Specialist



Ingredients:

◇ 4 cup	broccoli florets
◇ 3/4 cup	real bacon bits
◇ 1	large apple diced
◇ 1/2 cup	slivered almonds
◇ 1/2 cup	shredded lowfat cheddar cheese
◇ 2/3 cup	fresh or frozen cranberries sliced in half
◇ 1/2 cup	raisins
◇ 1/4 cup	water
◇ 1 cup	plain nonfat, Greek yogurt
◇ 1/8 teaspoon	salt and pepper each

Broccoli Salad

Source: <https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipe/broccoli-salad/>

Directions:

1. Clear your area for preparation and wash your hands
2. Whisk water, Greek yogurt, salt and pepper to ether, set aside
3. In a large bowl, combine broccoli florets, bacon bits, apple, almonds, cheese, cranberries and raisins
4. Add Greek yogurt mixture to broccoli mixture and toss together
5. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve

Nutrients Per Serving: 210 calories, 9 g total fat, 2 g saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 370 mg sodium, 22 g carbohydrates, 4 g fiber, 14 g total sugar, 0 g added sugar, and 16 g protein

Tom Green EEA News

Veribest Club Meeting:

March 8, 2022

@ Extension Office

9:30 a.m.

Program:

“Spring Forward”

By: Allison Watkins, CEA-Hort

Hostess: Janie Pritz

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

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