

Did you know...

In Washington State, fewer households experienced hunger or food insecurity than in the past eight years, according to the most current USDA data. After eight years as a top-five state for hunger and food insecurity, Washington State has dropped to a tie for 10th in the nation. Nevertheless, 275,000 Washington households are financially stretched to the point where they cannot be certain that all household members will not go hungry – that's almost 12% of our population.

Source: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr42/>

Family Dinners and Washington Teens —

Among Washington teens, it appears that those who eat more often with their families have more positive health behaviors. In Washington's Healthy Youth Survey, teens are asked all sorts of questions about their health behaviors, and some of those questions have to do with their food habits and how often they eat with their families. Jonathan Siekmann of the Washington State Department of Health, and who is affiliated with Centers for Disease Control, used 2002 data to explore the impact of family meals. He found that the teens who ate dinner with their families more often were also more likely to have increased amounts of fruits and vegetables in their diet. This was the case regardless of the family's income. He also found that kids who ate dinner more frequently were generally less likely to be involved in fights, drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes. Jonathan showcased his findings about teen family dinner and fruits and vegetables intake at a recent CDC symposium in Atlanta.

Source: Jonathan Siekmann, Washington State Department of Health Non-Infectious Conditions Epidemiology

Beware

The obesity epidemic could shorten US life expectancies by up to five years, reversing a 150-year trend. The prevalence and severity of obesity will continue to increase, and people in ever-younger age groups will experience the risk of being overweight—heart disease, stroke, cancer, kidney failure, diabetes, etc. An estimated 30% of American children are overweight.

Source: S. Jay Olshansky, PhD, professor of epidemiology and biostatistics, University of Illinois at Chicago

Nonfat yogurt can help you lose weight. In a recent study from the University of Tennessee, obese people on a low-calorie diet who included three 6-ounce servings of nonfat yogurt daily for 12 weeks lost 22% more weight than dieters who ate little or no dairy (14 vs. 11 pounds, on average). Even more important, they lost 60% more body fat and maintained more lean muscle mass. Yogurt isn't magic, however. Evidence has been mounting that calcium-rich foods in general help control or reduce weight. Calcium supplements may also help.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, June 2005

Why Not Wash Meat and Poultry Before Cooking?



WE'VE RECEIVED many questions from readers puzzled by the new federal dietary guidelines' recommendation that "meat and poultry should not be washed or rinsed." Doesn't washing food make it safer to eat?

Not necessarily. In the case of meat and poultry, the risk of cross-contamination from handling the food as it's washed outweighs any benefits. According to the US Department of Agriculture's [FoodSafety.gov Web site](http://www.foodsafety.gov), "Bacteria in raw meat and poultry juices can be spread to other foods, utensils and surfaces."

Your own hands, where they grasped the meat while washing it, could become just as bacteria-laden as the surface of the food. So could any surfaces where you set the meat or poultry as you prepare to wash it. The best bet is to leave meat or poultry untouched until you start cooking it, then immediately dispose of its supermarket packaging, which can also cause cross-contamination.

What about bacteria on the surface of the food? It's destroyed by cooking to a temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit, according to the USDA.

Source: Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter, June 2005

If you're going to keep fresh spinach for more than a few days, you're better off buying frozen. That's because spinach loses nutrients rapidly after picking, even when refrigerated, according to a Penn State University study. And the spinach you buy has probably already taken a few days just to reach the store. In the study, packaged fresh spinach at refrigerator temperature lost about half its folate (a B vitamin) and carotenoids (including beta carotene and lutein) eight days after picking. It lost nutrients even faster when kept at warmer temperatures. Frozen spinach, on the other hand, retains more nutrients because it's frozen soon after picking.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, June 2005

Unless you're exercising strenuously for more than an hour, you don't need a sports drink, such as Gatorade. You certainly don't need the sodium—275 milligrams in a 20-ounce bottle. Yet sports drinks are sold alongside bottled water and other beverages in markets, cafeterias, and roadside pit stops, where they're often bought simply as a refreshment. Gatorade even has a new Endurance Formula with almost twice as much sodium—500 milligrams in 20 ounces (one-fifth to one-third the recommended daily limit).

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, June 2005

A case for nuts

Nuts, including peanuts (technically a legume, not a nut), supply heart-healthy fats, protein, fiber and a range of vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin E, folate and magnesium. Nuts are also a good source of arginine, which helps keep blood vessels healthy, and disease-fighting phytochemicals, including flavonoids, sterols and resveratrol (also in red wine).

But because nuts are high in calories, they can bust your diet if you go overboard. A one-ounce serving—roughly the size of a golf or ping-pong ball—has 160 to 200 calories. If you can't eyeball that, or don't have a scale handy, you can count them out using this chart.

TYPE (UNSHELLED)	NUMBER PER OUNCE*
Almonds	22
Brazil nuts, dried	6-8
Cashew nuts	18
Hazelnuts or filberts	21
Macadamia nuts	10-12
Peanuts	32
Pecans	20 halves
Pistachio nuts	50
Walnuts, English	14 halves

* Average values. The number depends on the size of the nuts and how they're processed. Raw or dry-roasted nuts weigh less than oil-roasted, so you get more per ounce.

Nut case: A small tin from mints (such as Altoids) conveniently holds about an ounce of almonds or other nuts of similar size, when loosely packed. Refill the tin and carry it with you for a healthful on-the-go snack

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, June 2005

Know the Symptoms...

As much as half of all Americans can't name a single stroke symptom. Many victims don't seek emergency care because they don't take their symptoms seriously.

Warning: Some people who suffer a stroke experience brain damage that makes it impossible for them to recognize symptoms. It's critical for family members, friends or coworkers to recognize the first signs of stroke.

Sudden numbness, weakness and/or paralysis in the face, an arm or a leg. The symptoms usually affect one side of the body.

Difficulty talking or understanding words...confusion.

Sudden changes in vision, such as blurring or double vision.

Dizziness or a loss of balance.

Severe headache that occurs without warning, possibly accompanied by vomiting.

Source: David Chiu, MD, The Methodist Hospital

Why does my stomach growl?

A Bowel sounds—not just in the stomach, but also in the intestines—are normal. They indicate that things are moving in the digestive tract as they should be. The name for them when they're audible is borborygmi, derived from the Greek word meaning gurgling or rumbling.

The digestive tract is lined with muscles that cause continual contractions. Food, liquids and trapped gases are propelled along by these contractions, which produce vibrations, clicks and gurgles. Between meals, contractions continue to sweep mucus, secretions and any remaining food particles through the intestines.

If you haven't eaten in a long time, the sounds can be particularly loud. The intestines are hollow, and if there's no food present, there's nothing to muffle the rumbles. The more gas relative to food and liquids in the tube, the more likely you are to hear the sounds. Any condition, such as lactose intolerance and irritable bowel syndrome, that increases gas or causes diarrhea can also make bowel sounds louder. If besides hearing growling you experience pain, see your doctor.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, July 2005

The myth: Exercise makes arthritis worse

The fact: just the opposite is true. Recently a study at Northwestern University found the sedentary older people with osteoarthritis were twice as likely to lose their ability to perform daily activities (walking or shopping, for instance) as those who exercised. And this is just one piece of evidence showing that the right kind of low-impact exercise, such as walking, cycling and swimming, is beneficial. Since osteoarthritis is caused by wear and tear on the cartilage (the cushioning material of the joints), it may seem logical that vigorous movement would cause even more thinning, but that's not how it works. It's not just wear and tear, but also a slowdown in the normal process of repair and renewal of the cartilage that leads to osteoarthritis. Exercise stimulates cartilage to take up more nutrients and repair itself. Do choose the right exercises and gradually make them a daily routine. Other good activities include tai chi, water aerobics, rowing and ballroom dancing.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, July 2005

New View of Smoking Risks to Eyes



"Smoke gets in your eyes" may not be just an old song lyric. Scientists can now see clearly that, in addition to smoking's known toll on your health, lighting up is also bad for your vision. A study of more than 4,000 Britons ages 75 and older, published in the *British Journal of*

Ophthalmology, found that older smokers were twice as likely to suffer age-related macular degeneration (AMD) as non-smokers. AMD, which blurs the central vision by affecting the macula, the part of the eye that discerns details, is the leading cause of blindness in the elderly. Risk of AMD increases with age, and now researchers say that risk doubles if you smoke.

It may not be too late to quit, however: Former smokers who'd kicked the habit more than 20 years earlier showed no increased risk for AMD.

Source: Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter, May 1, 2005

GARDEN TIPS

We have had several questions on why tomatoes and peppers, cukes, etc. are not setting their fruit. Cool nights and not enough heat to suit warm season vegetables in most areas. Again, it's the ground temperature that activates plants to grow. Bees also like warm days and won't venture out when it's cool, cloudy or rainy. Tomatoes and peppers will abort their blooms without pollination. Now that summer is here, expect everything to take off and grow.

Keep your roses and other perennials dead headed to keep them from producing seed and staying vigorous. Roses are the easiest to see where to prune if they are hybrid teas. Floribunda and shrub roses don't need to be pruned as much as teas. A shearing of the bloom clusters is sufficient. It's always time consuming to dead head, but necessary to keep roses blooming vigorously all summer.

If growing asparagus, it's time to quit cutting and let ferns form. Add a light application of 5-10-10 fertilizer and keep watered through summer.

Fertilize strawberries after harvest and keep watered. New plants need to establish good deep roots, so keep flowers and runners cut off the first year.

After raspberries have produced their crop (single crop), cut old canes out when they finish bearing.
Source: Colleen Irwin, WSU Extension Master Gardener Coordinator

Painting a room? Before buying the paint, ask at the store about mistints—cans of paint that customers never picked up or refused. You often can get them for 50% or more off the standard price.
Source: Mary Hunt, editor, The Cheapskate Monthly



Did you know that...

...dividend-paying stocks have better returns and less risk? In the past 15 years, large-cap dividend-paying stocks had an average annual return of 13.4%, compared with 11.7% for stocks of large-cap companies that didn't pay dividends. Stocks paying dividends also were 40% less volatile.

Source: John Buckingham, president, AI Frank Asset Management

Beware

Renters may need to get liability insurance. Building owners and managers increasingly are requiring tenants to get their own insurance protection. The average cost is \$144/year for a policy with a \$250 deductible, about \$30,000 of property coverage and \$100,000 of liability coverage.

Source: Richard J. Roll, president, American Homeowners Association

Extended warranties seldom make sense—even for big-ticket items. Appliance warranties are the least worthwhile because most appliances are extremely reliable. Extended warranties make sense for just four products—plasma TVs, laptop PCs and treadmills and elliptical trainers that have standard warranties of less than one year.

Source: Consumer Reports

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