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Back to School!



The summer season is almost over and school classrooms will soon be buzzing with teachers and kids to get the new school year started.



To help kids have a healthier school day, parents can play an active role in trying new foods at school and home. Here are some tips to help this happen:

- Make time to join your child for lunch in the school cafeteria.
- When your child gets home from school, ask what s/he ate for lunch.
- Eat meals with your child as much as you can and let your child see you eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Grocery shop with your child. Talk about where vegetables, fruits, grains, milk and meat come from.
- Try new foods and describe how they smell, feel and taste. Offer one new food at a time and serve something your child likes with that new food.

Learn more at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday>.

Preserving Sweet Corn

Sweet corn can be canned, frozen or dried. For best quality and flavor, preserve corn within 2 to 6 hours after harvest. Sweet varieties with high sugar content may brown when canned.

When freezing and drying corn, blanching is important to maintain quality and sweet flavor. Blanching helps stop enzymes that can change flavor, color and texture.

For more information:

Preserving Sweet Corn—
www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MF1183.PDF

http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga_uga_dry_fruit.pdf



Kids with Food Allergies: It's No Joke

On top of the pressures of school expectations, kids with food allergies may also experience bullying from classmates.

A study conducted in 2011 with 251 families showed that more than one-third of the kids aged 8-17 were bullied mainly because they had a food allergy. In a recent follow-up study,

these same families were asked the same questions as in the first study.

Bullying continued at a similar rate as in the first study. Any improvement was due to parental intervention. This included working with school personnel. In some cases, talking to the parents of the child doing the bully-

ing helped ease the situation.

Parents must be proactive with their medical physician and with school personnel to help resolve bullying problems.

Learn more at <http://blog.foodallergy.org/2014/07/14/a-new-look-at-food-allergy-bullying/>.



Peanuts are one of the top eight foods that cause food allergies.



Plums are related to peaches. The most common plums grown in Kansas are European or Japanese varieties.

Plum Perfect!

Plums have a split personality. They are tart near the skin surface, yet sweet in the middle. Those flavors aid in their versatility.

Plums can be found in

many recipes from a zesty main dish to fruity dessert. Look for plums free of blemishes or damage. They should be heavy for their size, have smooth skin and give a little when squeezed.

Store ripe plums in the refrigerator. If unripe, place in a paper bag a couple days at room temperature, then chill.

What is Cleaning Vinegar?

Vinegar is a great product for cleaning many items around the house. Commercially made products called "cleaning vinegars" are used just for that, cleaning.

Many brands of cleaning vinegars state on the label they are not food grade. Therefore, they should not be used for any cooking or in food preservation.

Always read the labels to learn the intended use of the product. For more tips on using vinegar, see www.versatilevinegar.org/index.html.

For pickling foods, use food grade vinegar that has 5 percent acidity stated on the label. Common types used include apple cider vinegar and distilled white vinegar.



For more on pickling, see Preserving Cucumbers at www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/mf1184.pdf

Home Canning Mistakes

Many resources show home canning methods that are not safe. Here are a few:



Learn more about food preservation at www.rrc.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=18

Be smart and use safe recipes and methods for canning.



- **Canning in the oven**—Canning jars may not withstand the thermal shock and can break. Also, oven heating is slow and can encourage potential bacteria growth.
- **Open kettle canning**—This is filling jars and closing them but not doing any further heat processing. This also includes inverting jars or setting the jars in the sun. Without water bath canning or pressure canning, spoilage will likely occur and food will be lost.
- **Steam canning**— Steam canners are available, but no USDA guidelines are available to verify their safety. Steam canners do not use pressure.
- **The jar sealed, it has to be safe!** - What happened prior to putting a lid on the jar is critical to canned food safety. Just because a jar seals does not guarantee safety.

The Power of Persuasion

We all make decisions every day. Choosing what food to eat is high on that long list.

At school or other activities, students must also make decisions about

foods to eat. What are the “decision triggers” in a school setting that affect those choices?

A 30-minutes webinar is scheduled for July 23 at 11:00AM CST to learn

about persuasion principles including Cialdini’s Six Persuasion Principles. The webinar will be taught by Zena Edwards, Washington State University.

To view the webinar, go to <https://connect.extension.iastate.edu/healthyschools>.

Select the “Enter as a Guest” option. It will be recorded for later viewing.

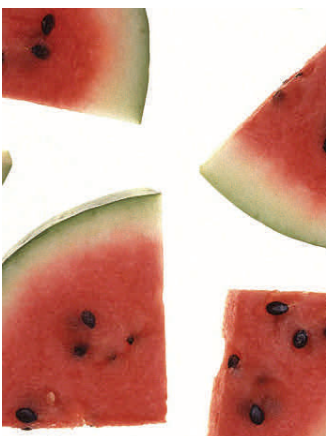


Photo: USDA/ARS

Fun Watermelon Stats

In celebration of Watermelon Month, did you know these statistics?

- 77.1% of consumers like seedless watermelon.
- 76.2% prefer watermelon chilled.
- It looks like fun to do, but 72.4% of us have never smashed a watermelon.
- 55.4% prefer eating watermelon off the rind, not in precut chunks.
- 53.8% enjoy spitting out the seeds, everyone else picks them out before eating.

Source: <http://bit.ly/W7F38B>

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Using Green Tomatoes



Say the words green tomato and one of the first recipes that comes to mind is fried green tomatoes. But green tomatoes can be used in many other ways.

Green tomatoes can be canned just like red tomatoes. They can also be pickled as dilled or sweet varieties. A popular use is in pickle relish such as Piccalilli.

If fried green tomatoes really are your favorite, but you've had enough for now, then here's how to freeze green tomatoes for frying later: wash, core and slice green tomatoes to ¼-inch thick. Pack the slices into containers with freezer wrap between slices. Remember to leave ½-inch headspace between the slices and the lid, then seal container and place it in your freezer.

Look for more recipes using green tomatoes at:

http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/veg_pick.html

<http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MF1185.PDF>



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On the Web at
www.rrc.ksu.edu



The Science Behind Produce Safety

Half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables. Here are six steps for smart produce handling and a safe half plate.



1. Check for bruising and damage as this can increase bacterial growth.
2. Wash hands and surfaces. This can help prevent cross-contamination.
3. Wash produce with plain running water. Scrub firm produce to remove hidden dirt. Plain water is just as effective as other washes to reduce microbial loads.
4. Separate produce when shopping, during storage, and in preparing produce. Clean hands and utensils will prevent cross-contamination.
5. Chill cut produce in the refrigerator at below 40°F. Temperatures between 40-140°F increase bacterial growth.
6. When in doubt, throw it out.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1ktCun0>