

Living Well

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER FOR NORTHEAST COLORADO



May-June, 2022

Eating Healthier this Spring



As we get farther away from winter, many of our produce options are changing. Here are a few tips to get you thinking about how to eat healthier this spring.

Try new Veggies – When it comes to vegetables, it is important to incorporate a variety in your diet. That is the biggest health boost because they all supply different nutrients.

- Artichokes are very filling. They are rich in satiating fiber and a medium artichoke only has 60 calories! You can make a dipping sauce with Greek yogurt and garlic or mint and chives.
- Asparagus supplies many nutrients like fiber and folate and provides antioxidants like vitamin E, lutein, and beta-carotene.
- Radishes are a member of the cruciferous family of vegetables which contain glucosinolates (compounds that may help protect against certain cancers.)

Make One Change a Day – Even a small tweak like an extra serving of fruits or vegetables can significantly boost your health. Other ideas for healthy tweaks are swapping white rice or pasta for a grain like farro, keeping a bowl of fruit on your counter so it is the first thing you see when looking for a snack, and use olive oil instead of butter.

Hydrate When you are Hungry – A strategy to prevent overeating is to drink a glass of water before you eat. Sometimes the difference between hunger and thirst can be subtle and this is a great way to make sure you are getting enough overall liquid.

Adapted from: <https://www.consumerreports.org/diet-nutrition/eat-healthier-this-spring/>

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Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Kit Carson, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma Counties cooperating.

Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

Gardening as a Family Task

Gardening is a fantastic family project! Do your kids enjoy playing in the sun and water on a hot afternoon or eating fresh fruits and vegetables? Then maybe planting a family garden is a good project for you! Creating a garden plan as a family allows each member of the family to take part in selecting their favorite vegetable or fruit to plant. Throughout the gardening process whether it's daily watering, weeding, or harvesting, it becomes a family task and is vital that each member of the family helps do their part. It can become an enjoyable afternoon in the garden if it's made into a "fun" event rather than a chore. Making name plates for each vegetable is a fun project the kids can create and design on their own to identify rows of vegetables they planted themselves. A little fun in the sun and splashing in the water after weeding and watering the garden can also be a fun time for both kids and parents as a reward for the hard work they just did. The meal then created with the harvested produce seems much more desirable and tastier if it is their idea from the beginning and they helped take part in the process. The connection of teaching the whole family about healthy bodies and healthy gardens becomes a lifelong skill for all.



As spring has arrived and warmer temperatures tease us from time to time, it is easy to catch a bit of spring fever and dream of warmer summer days. We also begin to be tempted as consumers with potting soil or flowers at store entrances. Now is the time to start your gardening plans but try not to get overly anxious and end up with poor weather conditions after you've planted. It is still Colorado weather; frost and cold temperatures are still very possible later in the month. Starting seeds indoors may be a good option as well as a learning tool for the whole family to enjoy the process inside before temperatures allow. While there are some plants that can withstand the cooler temperatures and can be planted early, Mother's Day weekend seems safe for our area's hardiness zone for the optimal planting time.. Visit [The National Gardening Association](#) to use the planting calendar tool and enter your zip code for optimal planting times for your specific area and desired crops.

Planting a garden can be multipurpose. Not only can it provide a great source of food and nourishment for your family, but it can also be relaxing and a stress relief too. Whether the whole family is involved or it is one's individual quiet time, there can be many health benefits to gardening. The mood-boosting benefits, exposure to vitamin D, along with exercise are all great reasons to plant a garden. Your family garden can be as big or as small as your time and space allows. Whether it's a raised bed garden, individual pots, or large traditional space, each serves the purpose of working together as a family for a common goal.

Adapted from:

[When to Plant Veggies | Nebraska Extension: Community Environment | Nebraska \(unl.edu\)](#)

[The National Gardening Association](#)

[5 Health Benefits of Gardening and Planting \(aarp.org\)](#)

Cleaning for your Health

Temperatures are finally warming up, you feel it all around you – birds are chirping, days are longer, and Spring is in full swing which means it's time to get into spring cleaning mode. Decluttering isn't just good for our homes – it can lift our moods as well. In fact, for some people the simple sight of a clean and organized home can help them unwind and distress even after an overwhelming day. Here is a closer look at the health benefits cleaning provides on your mental and physical health as well as tips to get going.



It gets you up and moving - Cleaning is a physical act, so depending on how vigorously you're cleaning, you might get your heart rate up and a workout in. Cleaning the windows, vacuuming, reorganizing areas of the home can get those endorphins pumping. Endorphins are hormones that reduce pain and boost pleasure, creating a general feeling of well-being and positivity. It also helps you hit your daily step count goal. One tip would be to wear a pedometer and work towards a certain step count while you clean.

It reduces stress and anxiety - It is no secret a cluttered home can be a major source of stress. According to a study from Penn Medicine's Chester County Hospital, around 54% of people reported feeling overwhelmed by a messy living space. Cleaning can also be a way to work out stress. A 2015 study from the University of Connecticut theorized people gravitate towards repetitive behaviors such as cleaning during times of stress. The reason? Control. Cleaning your home puts you in greater control of the space around you.

It improves mental focus - When we clear the clutter, it has the potential to clear our mental space and attention span. A 2011 study from Princeton University Neuroscience Institute compared the impact of living in a cluttered vs. organized space and found too many visual stimuli (think: a sink full of dishes, papers everywhere, clothes on the floor) makes it hard for the brain to focus and process information.

In fact, researchers have discovered people are less irritable, less distracted, more productive, and better able to process information with an uncluttered and organized work area. If you're having trouble focusing on a project, you may want to try decluttering your workspace first. Devoting just a few minutes to organize your things may make it easier for you to concentrate and get your work done.

It boosts mental health - Have you ever noticed your mood significantly improves after you clean and reorganize areas of your home? Decluttering your physical space can have a positive effect on your mental health by reducing overwhelming feelings of stress and anxiety while creating positive feelings of accomplishment in your mind. That feeling gives a boost to our confidence in our abilities, which can carry over into other areas of our lives.

It prevents illness and improves your immune system - Disinfecting your home helps support a healthy immune system by minimizing the spread of viruses and bacteria, especially in high-traffic areas such as your kitchen and bathrooms. Cleaning surfaces, sinks, and cutting boards can improve food safety and reduce the number of foodborne bacteria that can lead to illness. Irritants like dust, mold, mildew, and pet dander can build up over time and can be immune system triggers for those prone to allergies or asthma. Disinfecting surfaces, washing sheets, curtains, and pillows clears your home of these irritants. Start by cleaning areas you tend to use the most or items that encounter your mouth, eyes, or nose.

How to incorporate cleaning into your life



Create a Checklist - Go room by room and create a checklist of your cleaning tasks. This way when you are ready to tackle a room, you will know exactly what you want to accomplish. Creating a checklist will help you stay organized and remind you of areas that need extra attention. Focus on parts of your home that are often neglected.

Get Rid of the Clutter - Use an approach that helps identify problem areas, analyze reasons for the clutter, determine a solution, and implement them. Sort your belonging into four categories – trash, donate, seasonal, and put away. Move the clutter out as soon as possible.

Muscle Memory

Pectoralis

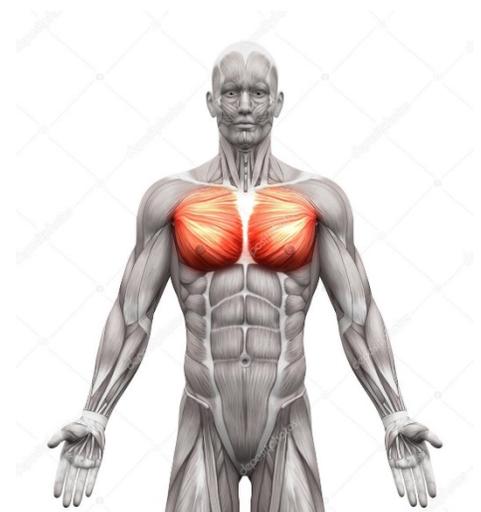
The pectoralis major muscles are housed in your upper chest below your clavicle or collar bone. This muscle covers the front surface of the first six ribs. We activate our pectoral muscles through many daily activities. Although this muscle is housed in the chest, it is primarily activated through arm movement! As we adduct our arms, or bring them together, our pectoralis major muscle is activated and used to accomplish that specific movement. If you hold your arms perpendicularly out in front of you and fan them out to the side and back in front of you, you will notice the pectoralis major muscle being used. Another example is holding your arms out to your side and raising them up and down. Please note, several other muscles are being activated and used to complete these motions as well, but the pectoralis muscle is the primary muscle. The body is a working system so in any movement several muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones, nerves, and etc.. are working together to complete the desired function!

Sample Activities that Activate the Pectoralis Major Muscle

- Swinging a baseball bat/ golf club
- Swimming
- Pushing yourself up from a chair
- Placing an item on a tall shelf above your head

Exercises to Strengthen the Pectoralis Major

- Chest Flys
- Pushups
- Bench Press
- Around the worlds
- Lateral Raises (side and front)



Creating and Living on your Budget

As prices continue to rise, the cost of day-to-day living is becoming more expensive. It can be difficult to demine if, how much, and where you should cut back on spending. Below are some tips and tricks to help you create a budget, be consumer savvy, and track your expenses.

So what is the first thing you should do when you notice prices rising? Record your income and track your expenses. If you do not frequently track your expenses, try doing so for a month or two. That will help you get a better idea of your monthly expenses. Then split your expenses into fixed expenses and variable expenditures. **Fixed expenses** are the expenses that do not change from month to month such as a mortgage payment or life insurance payments. **Variable Expenses** are the expenses that are flexible such as food or gasoline.



Once you have the expenses listed in these two categories, start discussing which categories could be cut down or eliminated to help save money. This can be a great opportunity to teach kids about finances too! Include them in the conversations around saving money, looking through the expenses, and decide together how to save money. Use those decisions to create a budget your family can follow. Starting to live off a budget can be difficult. Here are some methods that could be used to help track your expenses:

- Envelope method – This is a cash only method. It is a little less secure than other methods, but is the easiest. Create separate envelopes for each category on your budget, and then put the allotted amount of cash in that envelope.
- Receipt/account book method – As you make purchases throughout the month, keep the receipts and enter them into a spreadsheet under the correct category.
- Software/online methods – There are many applications that can be used to help you track your spending through the month. Some banks offer tracking methods of their own, but you can also find other resources online. Some of these applications do cost money, so evaluate your needs and determine whether the application would truly help you stick to your budget before purchasing one.

Here are some other tips that may help you stick to your budget:

- Discuss larger purchases with other family members before buying.
- Make a shopping list and sort them in order of importance.
- Practice effective consumer skills such as comparison shopping, finding specials, using coupons, shopping at price-competitive stores, and look for cash discounts. Buying in bulk can help save money, but only if you will use the entire product.
- Postpose the purchases of noncritical items like furniture or remodeling supplies. Items may be cheaper in an end-of-season sale, but make sure you have all of the current necessities before purchasing other items.
- Do not drop insurance coverage. The need for insurance is magnified during stressful situations so while it might be tempting to drop coverage, there are other ways to save money.
- Do not cancel essential medical and dental appointments. Cancelling may turn out to be more costly long term.

Adapted from SDSU Extension:

https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1141&context=extension_fact

Don't Invite Food Poisoning to Your Summer Grilling

One of the many great things about the summer season is relishing the delicious aromas and flavors of foods on the grill. Unfortunately, summer also means a peak in foodborne illnesses with one of the causes linked to grilling.

Almost any type of food can be grilled, from chicken, beef and fish to vegetables and fruits. No matter what type of food being cooked, they all need to be handled correctly to avoid food poisoning. Practice the following steps to help ensure safe summer grilling.



- **Keep it Clean.** Always start off with clean hands, equipment (including the grill) and surfaces. Be especially aware of washing hands before and after handling raw meat, poultry, and fish and seafood items.

It's also important to wash fruits and vegetables under clean running water and gently rub or scrub to remove debris. Never wash or rinse meat, poultry or fish.

Check your grill as well. Use a moist cloth or paper towel to clean the surface before cooking. If you scrape your grill with a wire bristle brush, check for loose wire bristles that may stick into food.

- **Separate.** Be sure to keep all types of raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods, such as salads, dips, buns and even the fruits or vegetables you are planning on grilling. NEVER use the same plate or container you had the raw foods on before grilling to put them back on after cooking. Use a clean plate or serving dish. The same is true for the utensils you are using. For example, tongs used to place raw burgers on the grill could spread harmful bacteria to the fully cooked burgers being taken off the grill if it hasn't been properly washed in between.
- **Thaw and Marinate.** Bacteria multiply rapidly at room temperature so be sure to thaw food in the refrigerator, in a leak proof package or plastic bag under cool running water, or in the microwave (if cooking immediately after thawing). Never leave food out at room temperature to thaw or use hot water. This increases the surface temperatures and heightens the risk for the growth of pathogens.

Be sure to refrigerate items being marinated.. Never use leftover marinade to baste food being grilled. Set aside some marinade that hasn't been in contact with the raw food at the beginning to use for basting.

- **Cook.** Use a food thermometer to make sure food is cooked to the proper temperature to kill harmful pathogens. Visual appearance is not a guarantee. When smoking meats, keep the internal temperature of the smoker between 225° - 300° F to keep the food inside at a safe temperature.

Poultry (including ground) &

Precooked Meats (i.e.hot dogs) = 165° F

Ground Beef = 160° F

Steaks, Chops, Roasts, Fresh

Pork & Fish = 145° F

- **Refrigerate.** Divide leftovers into smaller sizes, place in shallow containers and refrigerate or freeze within 2 hours of cooking or 1 hour if temperatures are above 90°F outside.

Program Highlights

Colorado State University Extension, Family and Consumer Science Agents of northeast Colorado have historically partnered with local entities to join in the fight against Diabetes. Now, with the help of technology these educational opportunities are not just limited to the northeast area of Colorado, but across the whole state and nationally with the implementation of a Diabetes Webinar Series. Doctors, professors, Diabetes educators and other healthcare professionals are able to share their expertise about diagnosis of, treatment of and management of Diabetes. All webinars are recorded, archived and links posted for viewing anytime. If you are interested in attending these webinars, please contact your local Extension Office for more information. We have previous webinars posted on our website (<https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/nutrition-food-safety-health/diabetes-coalition-webinars/>). Since they do not all have subtitles yet, they are password protected. The password is *diabetesinfo*

Upcoming Events!

- **ServSafe Managers Training** – Wednesday, June 15th from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Logan County Extension Office. For more information or to register, contact Joy Akey at (970) 332-4151 or joy.akey@colostate.edu.
- Phillips County Fair – July 25th-30th at County Fairgrounds in Holyoke: Open Class entries Wednesday, July 27th 1:00-6:00 p.m.
- **Kit Carson County** Fair – July 26th-31st at County Fairgrounds in Burlington: Sedgwick County Fair – July 24th - August 1st at County Fairgrounds in Julesburg: Quilts entries Saturday, July 24th 9:00-10:00 a.m., Open Class entries Monday, July 26th 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Floral entries Wed. July 28th 8:00-10:00 a.m., Garden entries Thursday, July 29th 8:00-9:30 am
- Eastern Colorado Roundup (Washington County) – July 25th-30th at County Fairgrounds in Akron: Open Class and Horticulture entries Tues. July 26th 1:00-6:00 p.m.
- Logan County Fair – July 28th – August 7th: Open Class entries must be pre-entered by July 22nd online at <http://bit.ly/LoganCountyFairEntry> For more info: <http://www.lcfair.org/>
- Morgan County Fair – July 29th – August 4th at Morgan County Fairgrounds in Brush: Entries for Open Class Home Economics are accepted Thursday, July 28th from 6:00-8:00 p.m. and again on Friday, July 29th from 8:00-11:00 a.m.
- Yuma County Fair – August 3rd – 8th at County Fairgrounds in Yuma: Open Class entries Wednesday, August 3rd 3:00-6:00 p.m. and Thursday, August 4th 7:30-9:00 a.m.
- Be sure to check our Facebook page listed below to stay up to date on all of our upcoming events.



CSU Extension – NE Colorado FCS: <https://www.facebook.com/CSUExtensionNortheastFCS>

CSU Extension – Phillips County: <https://www.facebook.com/PhillipsCountyExtension/>

CSU Extension – Logan County:
https://www.facebook.com/csuentensionlogancounty/?_tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARCS5-NbtiQryVnN5X5I3c5--hwVu-1ZfnhynwZsPotP7AZIVStJaoCEoaVYzZjBFhCH0tHJLHaJxQuQ

CSU Extension – Morgan County: <https://www.facebook.com/extensionmorgancounty/>