

Family & Consumer Focus

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Inside this Issue

10 Ways to \$tretch Your Food Dollar

Start Thinking Turkey
Living Well

Recognize Your Limits
When Caregiving

Want Kids to Do Better
in School? Eat Together!

Give Weights a Try



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10 Ways to \$tretch Your Food Dollar

1. Plan meals and snacks for a week ahead. Plan around foods you have on hand.
2. Shop from a list based on your planned menus. Check the food advertisements for good buys. Coupons may save money if they are for nutritious items you need.
3. Go shopping as few times as possible. Frequent trips can add up because it is easy to buy extra items each time. Also, don't go shopping when you are hungry. Everything looks good when you are hungry, so it's hard to stick to a list.
4. Shop alone, if possible. It is hard to say "no" to your children's favorite foods when they are along.
5. Use low-cost protein foods such as dry beans, eggs, peanut butter, turkey, and chicken. Ground beef is usually a good buy. Large roasts can be cut up and used in different ways for more than one meal. Stretch meats by using them in sauces or casseroles.
6. Use nonfat dry milk for cooking instead of whole milk. Dry milk is equally nutritious, and it's often less expensive.
7. Turn leftovers into "planned overs." For example, leftover sloppy joe meat from Monday could be used in spaghetti sauce on Wednesday.
8. Store cooked foods properly to make them last longer. Freeze them if you have the space.
9. Take advantage of free or reduced-price school lunch programs.
10. Use fish and wild game if available. Your local U of I Extension office has a wild game recipe booklet that contains 42 recipes, a section on marinades, and safety information. Cost is just \$5.



Start Thinking Turkey!

Shirley Camp, Extension educator, nutrition and wellness

Even though the Thanksgiving cooking is a few weeks away, you can start planning your meal and even buy some of the supplies.

Start by planning your guest list and menu. Knowing what you will be serving can help with your food budget because you can take advantage of any specials that are offered over the next few weeks. You can also spread your spending over time and not end up with a huge grocery bill that breaks your budget!

If turkey is going to be the main dish, do you want a fresh or frozen bird? If you buy frozen, do you have freezer space to store it?

If fresh turkey is your choice, buy it one or two days ahead of time. For food safety, fresh turkeys should not be pre-stuffed.

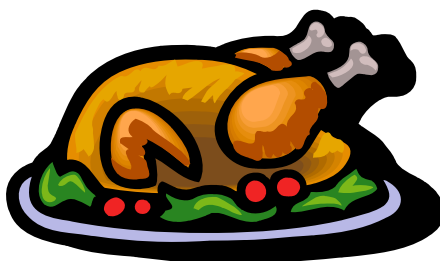
How much turkey should you buy? If you want a whole bird, purchase 1 pound per person. For a boneless breast of turkey, you will need 1/2 pound per person, and for a breast with bone, you will need 3/4 pound of turkey per person. If you buy a pre-stuffed frozen turkey, buy 1-1/4 pounds per person and keep it frozen until you are ready to cook it. In other words, do NOT thaw it before cooking.

For a turkey that is frozen, use a safe thawing method. If you plan to thaw a turkey in the refrigerator, place the frozen bird in the original wrapping in the refrigerator at 40 degrees F or below. Allow about 24 hours per 4 to 5 pounds of turkey. So if you have a small bird of 4 to 12 pounds, it will take one to three days to thaw; a 16- to 20-pound bird will take four to five days to thaw. After thawing, the bird can be kept refrigerated for one to two days.

If you forget to thaw the turkey in the refrigerator or do not have enough refrigerator space, you can submerge the bird in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes. Allow about 30 minutes per pound to defrost a turkey in cold water. A 4- to 12-pound turkey will take two to six hours using this method; a 16- to 20-pound bird will take eight to 10 hours.

If you have a small turkey, you could thaw it in the microwave oven. Check your microwave instruction book to see whether thawing a turkey in the microwave is recommended and how large a bird can be thawed. Turkey thawed in the microwave should be cooked immediately after the thawing process.

If you have questions about holiday food cooking, contact your local University of Illinois Extension office, or log on to www.extension.uiuc.edu.



Living Well

- Want to keep your brain young? Go for a brisk walk every day. Studies have shown that aerobic exercise can improve thinking skills in older people. Some researchers have even seen modest improvements when those at risk for Alzheimer's are put in an exercise program for six months.
- Be sure to drink water while you are exercising. Water keeps joints lubricated, regulates body temperature, helps flush out body toxins, and keeps you hydrated. All that with zero calories!
- Want to add fiber and protein to your diet without adding a lot of fat? Add beans—kidney, garbanzo, or pinto—to your green salad. Beans are also great for keeping blood sugar levels more stable, which is an advantage for people who have diabetes.
- Have you checked your furnace filter lately? Air filters capture many of the substances that aggravate allergy and asthma symptoms. Pollen, molds, and dust are common in any home and can be reduced by using a furnace filter. Download our Furnace Filter Fact Sheet at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/sifamily>
- Venison is usually leaner than beef, but the fat has a stronger flavor. To prevent a gamy flavor, trim all visible fat from the meat before cooking.

Recognize Your Limits When It Comes to Caregiving

Milly Kaiser, Extension educator, family life

Can you relate to this statement: “I have been taking care of my aging mother for the last three years. I didn’t realize how intense and lonely it would be. I’m in way over my head, but I can’t bear to take her to a nursing home.”



Caring for someone can be a challenging and lonely undertaking. Many caregivers experience frustration, anger, impatience, and loneliness. These feelings are quite normal and may indicate that something needs to change.

Recognizing how much you can do is the first step toward managing the situation. And, having a plan of action for seeking help will assist you in providing continuous care.

Acknowledging your limits helps to define how much care you can provide before additional or full-time help is needed. Your limit might be when the care-receiver starts to require lifting or when caregiving interferes with your own health.

Setting and honoring your limits will help guide and balance your role as caregiver. And after acknowledging your limits, it is important to make a plan.

If appropriate, ask the care-receiver and others involved in the caregiving process to give input into the plan. Be specific about the tasks that are beyond your limitations. Consider the limits and “what ifs” you may experience in the future. And then think about the family members, friends, or local services that can help with these tasks. Your local Area Agency on Aging can provide information about services.

Knowing your limits and having a plan for seeking help can reduce some of the challenges you may face as a caregiver.

Want Your Kids to Do Better in School? Eat Together!

Martha Winter

Extension educator, nutrition and wellness

The school year can get extremely hectic for families. But, even when time is short, it’s a good idea to make family meals a priority.

Research shows that kids who eat five or more meals per week with family do better in school and have fewer behavior problems.

And there are plenty more good reasons to eat together:

- Teens are less likely to use drugs or alcohol.
- Family communication improves.
- Family traditions are created around meals.
- Kids understand their family’s values.
- Meals are more healthful.
- Food dollars are better spent.

To help families “strive for five” meals together, U of I Extension has several quick and easy recipes on this website: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/regions/challenge>. You’ll find ideas for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Easy “skillet” dinners are even included.

If you don’t have internet access, call your local U of I Extension office for a print copy of the recipe booklet.

Don't Wait: Give Weights a Try!

Annette Campbell, Extension educator, communications and marketing

As we age, we start to lose muscle. Loss of muscle means the grocery bags are harder to lift; it also makes weight control more difficult because muscle loss slows down your metabolic rate.

But, some experts say that just two months of strength exercises can reverse 20 years of muscle loss in a typical person. And, the benefits don't end there. Strength training can give you more self confidence, help you sleep better, and help ward off depression. Strength training also makes aerobic exercise more enjoyable because you are fitter.

Are you convinced? Ready to give weights a try? Here are some tips to help you get started:

- Check with your physician before you try strength training.
- Exercise with a partner for both motivation and safety.
- If possible, learn the basics from a trainer or knowledgeable friend. If this is not possible, many books and videos that illustrate proper weight lifting technique are available.
- Use weights that are heavy enough to challenge your muscles. You should only be able to do 8 to 12 repetitions before needing a rest.
- Your own body weight can provide significant strength building. Good old-fashioned exercises like push-ups, on the floor or against a wall, help build arm, back, and chest strength.
- Some strength exercises such as the back extension and abdominal curl are done without weights.
- Do strength-training exercises two or three times a week, but not on consecutive days. Your body needs a rest day between workouts.
- Gently stretch your muscles after your strength workout.



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