Each player must accept the cards life deals him. But once they are in hand, he alone must decide how to play the cards in order to win the game.

Voltaire, 1694-1778 French Philosopher and author
As the weather warms, activities move outdoors. There are garages to clean, fences to paint, gardens to weed and sports to be rediscovered. A whole new group of stains seems to appear!

When these stains come out of hibernation, here’s how to send them packing.

- **Bicycle grease**: Pretreat using a prewash stain remover, then launder using the hottest water that’s safe for the fabric. If the stain remains, apply a concentrated heavy-duty cleaner (one that’s labeled for use on grease stains) directly on the grease spot. Scrub gently, using a small brush or old toothbrush, and then launder again.

- **Grass**: Pretreat using a prewash stain remover. Launder, using the hottest water that’s safe for the fabric. If any stain remains, launder again with detergent and chlorine bleach, if safe for the fabric, or oxygen bleach.

- **Mud**: Let the mud dry, then brush off any excess. Pretreat using a prewash stain remover. Launder, using the hottest water that’s safe for the fabric. If any stain remains, launder again with detergent and chlorine bleach, if safe for the fabric, or oxygen bleach.

- **Perspiration**: Check to see if the stain has changed the color of the fabric. If so, apply ammonia to fresh stains and white vinegar to old ones. Then, treat with a prewash stain remover or rub the stain with a bar of soap. Launder using the hottest water that’s safe for the fabric. If the stain remains, launder again with detergent and oxygen bleach.

- **Rust**: Use a commercial rust remover, which is available in most supermarkets and hardware stores. These products contain toxic acids, so be sure to read and follow the label directions carefully. Never use a product containing bleach on a rust stain, as it will permanently set the stain.

- **Water-based paint**: Scrape off the excess paint. Working from the back of the fabric, flush the stain with warm running water. Mix a solution of one part liquid hand-dishwashing detergent to one part warm water and sponge the solution onto the stain. Using a brush with equal-length bristles, gently pound the stain with an up-and-down motion (called “tamping”) to break up the paint residue. Rinse. Repeat sponging, tamping and rinsing the stain until the paint is gone. Launder, using the hottest water that’s safe for the fabric.

Source: “Cleaning Matters” from Soap & Detergent Association, March/April 2010
Travel Mishaps

How to Remove Stains as You Go

With graduations, weddings, Memorial Day celebrations, family reunions and more, there's a lot of traveling going on in May and June. And just as you want to look your best, stains happen!

Short of packing twice as many clothes as you need, there are some precautions you can take. Here are some take-along suggestions to keep stains from tagging along on your travels.

On-the-spot stain removal:

✔ Stain removal wipes. These work great on washable fabrics, and are designed to remove the stain on the spot, before it sets into the fabric.

✔ Stain removal pen. This handy item is about the size of a felt-tip pen so it fits conveniently in a purse, a briefcase or a backpack. Generally, you just press the tip of the pen into the center of the stain to release the remover and then rub the tip of the pen across the stain to remove it. If the area is going to be exposed to sunlight, wipe excess solution off of the stained area.

Clean-hand helpers:

✔ Hand wipes. Dirty hands are the fastest way to transfer soil to your clothes. Hand wipes are great for cleaning up sticky fingers and sticky surfaces.

✔ Hand sanitizer. This will do the job anyplace soap and water isn't easily available, and there is nothing to dispose of after each use.

Launder later:

✔ Stain stick. If it's a big stubborn stain, pretreating it with a stain stick will help put the mishap on hold until the item can be laundered.

Source: Soap and Detergent Association, Cleaning Matters newsletter, May/June 2010

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

Summer hours for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer County:

June 1st through September 7th, 2010

8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Monday through Friday

Herkimer County Living
Put color on your plate with everyday ingredients for delicious meals that can energize you and your family.

Salad can make a delicious meal. Eating colorful vegetables and greens can be a delicious way to pack in antioxidants. But we have to remember that some toppings and dressings can add a lot of calories and fat, if we don’t watch out. The choices of lettuce and other greens can affect the “good for you.” Choose wisely and include many different colored vegetables, and even fruit.

The darker the better

Lettuce and greens have a variety of nutrients levels. The paler lettuce, such as iceberg, has a lower nutrient level. Yes, it can be cheaper, but it is better to choose the deeper and brighter colored ones like romaine. Avoid wilted, yellowing or spotted leaves. Mixing and matching varieties will give you a variety of textures, color, and taste. Romaine is crunchy but adding it with baby spinach leaves which are softer makes a great nutrient dense salad.

Very clean vegetables

Thoroughly wash all greens and vegetables, even prepackaged. Fresh greens can be soaked and rinsed several times in clean water to remove dirt and grit. Pat dry or use a salad spinner. Root crops like carrots should be rinsed and cleaned with a vegetable brush, then rinsed again. Scrub gently.

Store

Place washed and dried lettuce in a plastic bag in your refrigerator for 3 to 5 days – depending on the variety.

Keep your dressing light

You may prefer to use light or reduced-fat dressings. Check labels for calorie content and ingredients. If you want your bottled dressing to be creamier, add some non-fat plain yogurt to thicken which will also give you an extra dose of calcium. Also, serve your dressing on the side.

Come up with some of your own combinations. Choose mono-unsaturated oils, such as olive or nut oils when making dressings.

Tasty Toppings

Grate carrots to sprinkle over top of salad to add extra vitamin A which promotes good vision.

Nuts and seeds not only add flavor and crunch but also add protein and fiber. Just keep amounts small, since calories can add up quickly. A small handful can make your meal more filling, helping to reduce hunger pains and over eating. Choose almonds, pecans, sunflower seeds, walnuts or flax seeds.

Adding edamame (green soybeans) is another idea to try. They can be found in your freezer section. They are also available fully cooked and ready to eat.

Submitted by Mary Ann Walrath, Nutrition Program Educator, retired
As seasons change and spring rains bring budding trees, green lawns, and fields of flowers, millions of Americans are plagued with spring allergies. More than 35 million people in the United States suffer from allergic rhinitis, and it is estimated that the work missed due to allergies amounts to $250 million annually. So, what’s an allergy sufferer to do?

Seasonal allergies often come in three forms: eye allergies (conjunctivitis), skin reactions (dermatitis), and the most common – allergic rhinitis.

Pollen triggers
The first pollen triggers tend to come from tree pollen, especially in the northern parts of the country. Grass pollen tends to fill the air in late spring. Mold allergens emerge after the first thaw through the first frost, and peak in the late-summer throughout much of the United States.

If you are unsure of your allergy triggers, you can visit your primary care doctor or an allergist to have a skin test. An allergy skin test is the quickest, cheapest, and most accurate way to determine what allergies you have.

Once you know your triggers, it is important to check the local pollen counts and to stay ahead of the triggers. If you decide to treat your allergies with medication, you should ideally start your over-the-counter allergy regimen 1-2 weeks before the pollen season begins.

Allergy treatment: avoid pollen
• There are many ways to treat allergies. One of the best ways is to avoid the pollen.
• Keep windows and doors shut at home and in the car – pollen makes its way through screens and open spaces and into your carpeting, seats, and bedding.

• Avoid peak pollen periods – try to avoid early-to-mid-morning outdoor activity when pollen counts are highest.
• Minimize pollen contact – if spending a lot of time outside, remove and wash clothes upon returning inside, try to rinse the pollen off your body with a shower, and even consider wearing a dust mask if spending a lot of time in a pollen-rich environment.
• Be careful with pets who go outside – don’t let pets who play outside spend time on your couches or beds, as they will bring pollen with them.
• Don’t hang laundry outside to dry – pollen will stick to clothes that have been hanging outside.

Hot, dry or windy days result in higher pollen counts and often spread the pollen beyond the source; rain helps lower pollen counts by washing it away.

Allergy treatment: medications
Seasonal allergies can also be treated with medications, usually over-the-counter medications. The first step in treating allergic rhinitis is to use over-the-counter, non-sedating antihistamines each morning. If you are still congested, try using a saline nasal rinse or an oral decongestant (talk to your doctor if you have high blood pressure). Saline nasal rinses, when used 1-3 times daily, help reduce congestion and sinus drainage.

If you are unable to find relief through these treatments, talk to your doctor about other options, including corticosteroid nose spray.

You can also treat many allergy-related problems with simple over-the-counter remedies such as lozenges for sore throats and antihistamine drops for itchy, watery eyes.

Talk to your doctor
If you continue to feel badly, are unsure of your symptoms, or have questions about seasonal allergies, talk with your doctor or care team.

Source: National Consumer League, Health/Allergies category, April 1, 2010
Wake Up to the Benefits of Breakfast

Breakfast can have a positive impact on nutrient intake, food group consumption, and may contribute to cognitive and academic performance, weight control, and overall health.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans identify whole grains, fat-free and low-fat milk and milk products, fruits, and vegetables as "food groups to encourage" to meet nutrient recommendations and help reduce the risk of certain chronic diseases. Although many Americans fall far short of consuming the recommended amounts of these food groups, research shows that breakfast eaters are more likely to have higher quality diets than breakfast "skippers"; and breakfast helps people meet the recommendations. Those who skip breakfast are also less likely to make up for missed nutrients at other meals during the day. In general, regular breakfast eaters consume higher intakes of fiber, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C, riboflavin, zinc and iron as well as fewer calories, and less dietary fat and cholesterol.

Studies have suggested that eating a breakfast that includes foods like ready-to-eat cereals, calcium, and low-fat milk products is linked to measures of a healthier body weight, although more research is needed to establish a causal link. According to findings from the National Weight Control Registry, almost eight in 10 adults who maintain a 30-plus pound weight loss for at least a year eat breakfast every day. Other studies have indicated that breakfasts that are high protein, higher in fiber, higher fat, and lower in energy density may have a greater satiating effect (state of feeling full) and may improve the healthfulness of your overall diet by reducing the amount of food eaten over the rest of the day.

In addition to weight management benefits, emerging evidence suggests that eating breakfast may provide other potential health effects including: promoting heart, digestive, and bone health; reducing risk of metabolic syndrome; increasing physical energy; helping children do better in school by improving memory, alertness, concentration, problem-solving ability, test scores, school attendance, and mood.

Invest a little planning time to gain the big benefits of breakfast. Sit down with the family to plan nutritious breakfasts for the week. Post the plan in plain sight in the kitchen. Getting kids involved encourages them to eat the morning meal. Add breakfast items to your shopping list so your kitchen is well-stocked.

Each evening, set the table for breakfast and put out non-perishables such as cereal boxes, oatmeal containers, and fruit. Store milk, yogurt, 100 percent fruit juice and other perishable breakfast foods in the front of the fridge so they're quick to grab. If the family is brown-bagging breakfast, pack and label each person's bag the night before and store them in the fridge. Better yet, get everyone to assemble their own breakfast bag. On weekends, take time for a fun and healthful family breakfast to share the details of your busy week.

For more information on breakfast, visit the International Food Information Council Foundation Web site for the special new consumer breakfast and health resource page at http://www.foodinsight.org/for-consumers/breakfast-resources.aspx

Source: International Food Information Council Foundation Food Insight Newsletter 3/10
Shop Wiser and Bring Home Less Sodium!

Many foods in the grocery store are laden with a lot of added sodium. Here are the danger foods along with ideas of how to make better substitutions to lower the amount of sodium you eat:

- **Canned foods** - most canned foods are very high in sodium. Soups, canned tomatoes, pasta sauce, canned veggies and pasta dishes are included in this mix. Choose canned foods that have no salt added or use fresh items instead.
- **Deli meat and cheese** is high in sodium - use fresh chicken or fish, canned tuna, nut butter without added salt.
- **Frozen dinners** are very high in sodium. Choose frozen veggies and make your own meals with fresh poultry/fish and plain rice or pasta.
- **Boxed pasta and rice mixes** are very high in salt - use plain rice or pasta with seasonings instead.
- **Grain** items like bread, crackers, and packaged cereals are high in salt - choose lower salt versions instead.
- **Pickled foods**, dressings and condiments are high in sodium; choose fresh veggies and vinegar.

**Cook Without Salt:**

Choose salt-free herbs and seasonings to flavor your food instead of using salt:

- Dried or fresh herbs
- Garlic or ginger
- Flavored vinegars and salt-free condiments

**Choose Better When Eating Out:**

Most restaurant foods are laden with sodium. Here is how to make better choices:

- **Know before you go** - most of your favorite places are likely to have nutrition information online - be aware of what you are ordering and make better choices.
- **Order plain items without salt** - like baked fish or chicken, baked potatoes, pasta with diced fresh tomatoes, steamed veggies, a plain burger without condiments.
- **Avoid:** deli meat, breaded items, cheese, bread, olives, mustard, pickles, pretzels, sauces, soups, dressing.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Compare:</th>
<th>mg sodium:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fresh potato</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instant potatoes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fresh chicken</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deli chicken/turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salt-free tomato sauce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tomato sauce with salt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice, no salt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice mix</td>
<td>900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soup, no salt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soup, regular</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt free tuna</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuna, regular</td>
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Researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control found that people take in 3,436 milligrams a day of sodium. 69 percent of these people, who are at risk for high blood pressure, should consume no more than 1,500 mg daily, according to the report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compare:</th>
<th>mg sodium:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Plain burger</td>
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<td>Grilled Chicken Sandwich</td>
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<td>Big Mac</td>
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<td>Plain salad</td>
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<td>Salad with chicken, dressing</td>
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<td>Cinnamon Melts (McDonald’s)</td>
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<td>Plain baked potato</td>
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<tr>
<td>French fries, medium</td>
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<td>Oatmeal, regular</td>
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<td>Sausage Muffin</td>
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<td>Bagel</td>
<td>420</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced fat turkey sandwich</td>
<td>910</td>
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</table>

Source: Communicating Food for Health, April 2009
Farmers’ Market - A Taste of Spring

Spring showers bring the taste of fresh, delicious spring fruits and vegetables to neighborhoods and communities through local farmers' markets.

Most fruits and vegetables have a special peak time of year when they taste their best and are most abundant. In general, the more recently they've been picked, the better the fruits and vegetables taste.

Here are some fresh produce often available at farmers' markets in the spring:
- asparagus
- spinach
- rhubarb
- peas: snap peas, snow peas, all kinds of peas
- green onions
- lettuce
- artichoke
- fennel
- radishes
- cherries (late spring)

Eat Local

Enjoy fresh local produce and support area farmers too.

Check out the following resources on our webpage: www.cce.cornell.edu/herkimer
- “Herkimer County Farm Produce & Tourism Map”
  “Community Walk” link to locations on produce map
- Also, check out the dates and times for local “Farmers' Markets”

- For information on storing, freezing and canning see the pages for “Food Preservation Resources”

For information on home gardening, go to Cornell University’s website at www.hort.cornell.edu/gardening

“From Farm to Table” PBS Series

“From Farm to Table” is a cooking series featured on PBS stations that demonstrates delicious yet simple recipes and offers valuable cooking ideas and tips on how to stretch food dollars and make the most out of locally-grown fresh foods. Sessions also introduce viewers to local farmers and experts with culinary and agricultural knowledge to share.

Each program is 26 minutes long and is a collaborative production of WMHT in Albany and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The series explores local farms and highlights New York State products.

You can watch recent programs on-line; check out recipes; or order a DVD of past programs at:

Out of the travail of our nation's birth, in the midst of a bitter war for independence, there emerged on June 14, 1777, our National Emblem, a beautiful flag combining the blue of vigilance, perseverance and justice, with the white of purity, and the red of hardiness and valor, in a symbol of freedom that has lifted the hearts of Americans down through the years.

It has been said that our Stars and Stripes is a "living" Flag. It breathes vitality as it ripples in the breeze. It has exemplified vigor and endurance in proclaiming freedom and the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness through two centuries. It grew as our nation grew, adding a star for each new state that was taken into our Union.

History tells us that the Stars and Stripes is a development of an earlier flag, authorized by the Congress in the fall of 1775, sometime in November, and known as the Congress Colors, the Grand Union Flag. The Congress Colors included the same red and white stripes, signifying the separation from the mother country, but had the Union Jack of Britain instead of the blue field and white stars.

Since 1898 Flag Day has been observed in New York State as a day of celebration of the Star Spangled Banner and the principles of liberty, freedom and justices that it represents at home and around the world. Flag Day has been observed off and on since 1861 with New York the first State to formally recognize it as a holiday. It wasn't until 1949, however, that President Harry Truman signed a bill authorizing Flag Day as a national day of celebration.

Article contributed by Mary Erin Blair, State Veteran Counselor, NYS Division of Veterans' Affair.

Did you ever wonder why our flag is folded in a triangle?

1st fold - To the symbol of life

2nd fold - The belief in Eternal Life

3rd fold - In honor of the Veteran being commemorated

4th fold - For Divine Goodness

5th fold - In tribute of Our Country

6th fold - Our Pledge to the Flag

7th fold - Tribute to our Armed Forces

8th fold - To honor the Mothers of Veterans

9th fold - Tribute to Womanhood

10th fold - Tribute to the Fathers

11th fold - The seals of Kings David and Solomon

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding of our national motto, "In God We Trust."

12th fold - The Emblem of Eternity

Source: Sharing the Spirit, Spring 2009
Graduation Parties and Food Safety

Graduation time is here and parties are part of the celebration. Family and friends gather to honor graduates as they complete one phase of their life.

Some parties will be elaborate affairs with a served, sit-down dinner while others will offer a buffet of homemade foods that their family enjoys. If the party features a buffet, caution is needed to prevent foodborne illness. Bacteria are uninvited guests we want to avoid.

While bacteria are everywhere, there are a few types that especially like to crash parties. According to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) with the United States Department of Agriculture, *Staphylococcus aureus, Clostridium perfringens* and *Listeria monocytogenes* tend to be common problems as they frequent people’s hands and steam tables.

FSIS offers a few tips to have a happy and healthy party that incorporates food safety. The first tip—always wash hands before and after handling food, and keep the food area, dishes and utensils clean.

If cooking food ahead be sure to cook foods thoroughly to safe temperatures, and use a food thermometer to be sure proper temperatures are reached. After cooking ahead chill food quickly, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

On the buffet table, arrange and serve food in several small platters or bowls rather than putting all of one food in one large container. This way one smaller dish is on the table while the rest of the food can be held at proper temperatures until needed. Replace empty dishes or platters rather than adding fresh food to the container.

FSIS stresses perishable foods should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours. Keep track of how long perishable foods have been on the buffet table, and discard anything that has been out two hours or more.

Remember; keep hot foods hot, at 140ºF or warmer by using chafing dishes, slow cookers and warming trays. Keep cold foods cold, 40ºF or colder, by nesting dishes in bowls of ice and pre-chilling the food. Otherwise, use small serving trays and replace as needed for safe food handling.

For your graduation party, be sure to include a delicious punch. Ingredient amounts can be adjusted to your taste. If lower sugar is desired, use a low calorie cranberry juice cocktail and sugar-free soda.

**Cranberry Celebration Punch**

2 quarts cranberry juice  
1 quart orange juice  
1 liter lemon lime soda

Chill ingredients ahead. Combine cranberry juice and orange juice in pitcher or punch bowl. Just before serving, stir in soda.

Yield: 32 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (60 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 0 gram fiber, 10 mg sodium)

Source: Jananne Finck, Extension Educator, Nutrition and Wellness, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Flexibility is the range of motion possible at any joint. Flexibility is specific to each joint and depends on many factors, including the tightness of ligaments and tendons. Flexibility can be improved at any age with fun activities - done at least 1 to 2 times per week. Flexibility helps prevent injuries - and puts a younger bounce in your step.

1. YOGA
This 5,000 year old practice offers very modern benefits, especially for flexibility and stress reduction, to bodies of any age. It's best to start with a few classes from a certified yoga instructor, available through yoga centers, fitness clubs, and hospitals. Many DVDs are also available for beginners and those with special needs, such as arthritis and back problems.

2. PILATES
Created by a German gymnast about 100 years ago, Pilates is similar to yoga with a focus on breathing, core strength, and flexibility. Depending on the teacher, Pilates can be a bit more intense and faster paced than yoga. However, many classes today combine aspects of both yoga and Pilates. Always look for a certified instructor for in-person classes or on DVDs.

3. TAI CHI
This centuries old practice from China is beneficial for anyone, whether you are athletic, sedentary, elderly, or have a disability since it can be modified to individual goals. Tai chi improves balance, posture, strength, flexibility, coordination, and concentration. While DVDs and online instructions are available, tai chi is best learned from a certified instructor.

4. DANCE
All types of dance can enhance flexibility. Anything that offers safe, appropriate stretching for joint muscles, tendons, and ligaments is great for gradual improvements in flexibility. Choose the type of dance that fits your rhythm and style. Just make sure that you know the steps or learn from a certified instructor. Injuries are no fun and not good for your flexibility.

5. SWIMMING
If you've already had some significant injuries, especially to your joints, the safest and most effective way to improve flexibility is probably in the water. Pool activities, such as water exercise or water aerobics, provide support for injured, tender, or older joints. However, a certified and experienced instructor is still important to prevent further problems.

Source: "Treasure Your Family’s Health: Back-to-Basics 2010" May issue from Eat Right Montana

For more information on being more physically active check out www.healthfinder.gov/getactive.
**Stress and Your Health**

**Q: What is stress?**
**A:** Stress is a feeling you get when faced with a challenge. In small doses, stress can be good for you because it makes you more alert and gives you a burst of energy. For instance, if you start to cross the street and see a car about to run you over, that jolt you feel helps you to jump out of the way before you get hit. But feeling stressed for a long time can take a toll on your mental and physical health. Even though it may seem hard to find ways to de-stress with all the things you have to do, it’s important to find those ways. Your health depends on it.

**Q: What are the most common causes of stress?**
**A:** Stress happens when people feel like they don’t have the tools to manage all of the demands in their lives. Stress can be short-term or long-term. Missing the bus or arguing with your spouse or partner can cause short-term stress. Money problems or trouble at work can cause long-term stress. Even happy events, like having a baby or getting married can cause stress. Some of the most common stressful life events include: death of a spouse, death of a close family member, divorce, losing your job, major personal illness or injury, marital separation, marriage, pregnancy, retirement, spending time in jail.

**Q: What are some common signs of stress?**
**A:** Everyone responds to stress a little differently. Your symptoms may be different from someone else’s. Here are some of the signs to look for: not eating or eating too much, feeling like you have no control, needing to have too much control, forgetfulness, headaches, lack of energy, lack of focus, trouble getting things done, poor self-esteem, short temper, trouble sleeping, upset stomach, back pain, general aches and pains.

These symptoms may also be signs of depression or anxiety, which can be caused by long-term stress.

**Q: Can stress affect my health?**
**A:** The body responds to stress by releasing stress hormones. These hormones make blood pressure, heart rate, and blood sugar levels go up. Long-term stress can help cause a variety of health problems, including: mental health disorders, like depression and anxiety, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, abnormal heart beats, menstrual problems, acne and other skin problems.

**Q: How can I help handle my stress?**
Everyone has to deal with stress. There are steps you can take to help you handle stress in a positive way and keep it from making you sick. Try these tips to keep stress in check:

**Develop a new attitude**

- **Become a problem solver.** Make a list of the things that cause you stress. From your list, figure out which problems you can solve now and which are beyond your control for the moment. From your list of problems that you can solve now, start with the little ones. Learn how to calmly look at a problem, think of possible solutions, and take action to solve the problem. Being able to solve small problems will give you confidence to tackle the big ones. And feeling confident that you can solve problems will go a long way to helping you feel less stressed.

- **Be flexible.** Sometimes, it’s not worth the stress to argue. Give in once in awhile or meet people halfway.

(continued on page 13)
Stress and Your Health continued

- **Get organized.** Think ahead about how you’re going to spend your time. Write a to-do list. Figure out what’s most important to do and do those things first.
- **Set limits.** When it comes to things like work and family, figure out what you can really do. There are only so many hours in the day. Set limits for yourself and others. Don’t be afraid to say NO to requests for your time and energy.

Relax

- **Take deep breaths.** If you’re feeling stressed, taking a few deep breaths makes you breathe slower and helps your muscles relax.
- **Stretch.** Stretching can also help relax your muscles and make you feel less tense.
- **Massage tense muscles.** Having someone massage the muscles in the back of your neck and upper back can help you feel less tense.
- **Take time to do something you want to do.** We all have lots of things that we have to do. But often we don’t take the time to do the things that we really want to do. It could be listening to music, reading a good book, or going to a movie. Think of this as an order from your doctor, so you won’t feel guilty!

Take care of your body

- **Get enough sleep.** Getting enough sleep helps you recover from the stresses of the day. Also, being well-rested helps you think better so that you are prepared to handle problems as they come up. Most adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night to feel rested.
- **Eat right.** Try to fuel up with fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains. Don’t be fooled by the jolt you get from caffeine or high-sugar snack foods. Your energy will wear off, and you could wind up feeling more tired than you did before.
- **Get moving.** Getting physical activity can not only help relax your tense muscles but improve your mood. Research shows that physical activity can help relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Don’t deal with stress in unhealthy ways.** This includes drinking too much alcohol, using drugs, smoking, or overeating.

Connect with others

- **Share your stress.** Talking about your problems with friends or family members can sometimes help you feel better. They might also help you see your problems in a new way and suggest solutions that you hadn’t thought of.
- **Get help from a professional if you need it.** If you feel that you can no longer cope, talk to your doctor. She or he may suggest counseling to help you learn better ways to deal with stress. Your doctor may also prescribe medicines, such as antidepressants or sleep aids.
- **Help others.** Volunteering in your community can help you make new friends and feel better about yourself.

For more information on stress and your health, please call at 1-800-994-9662 or go to www.womenshealth.gov

*Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health, Women's Health Today newsletter 5/3/10*
Get More Fiber in Your Diet

Americans get far too little fiber - about half of what’s recommended. We need about 14 grams of fiber per 1,000 calories. So, if you consume a 2500 calorie diet, you should eat approximately 35 grams of fiber per day. Also, fiber intake may vary depending on age and gender.

You’re making the best choices if you eat food containing naturally-occurring fiber more often. Fiber is not naturally present in animal foods such as dairy products and meat. Eating fiber-fortified foods is not the same as eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Though it’s quick and easy to grab a high-fiber breakfast bar and a fiber-fortified yogurt, you’re not getting the same benefits as you would from a bowl of old-fashioned oatmeal with berries and milk. Eating a variety of foods ensures the most health benefits.

Don’t depend on the label claims on the front of the package to make the best choices. Instead check the list of ingredients. Avoid being tricked by buying a food with a misleading claim on the front and only a small amount of whole grain at the end of the ingredient list. A claim that a product is “made with five grams of whole grain per serving” on the front of the package is not the same as containing five grams of fiber if the grain is mostly refined white flour. Refined white flour is often accompanied by too much sugar and sodium.

Load your grocery cart with fiber-rich foods for the best health benefits. Some good choices include dried beans and quick-cooking legumes such as lentils, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains such as brown rice and rolled oats, 100 percent whole wheat bread, 100 percent whole-grain pasta, and nuts and seeds.

If you opt for fiber-fortified foods, such as some yogurt and even some bottled water, it’s important to be educated about food labels, which can be confusing. Added fiber does not necessarily equal fiber that is naturally present. The best health recommendation is to get most of your fiber naturally from whole foods and consider the packaged foods with added fiber something extra.

Isolated fiber, or fiber that is added to processed foods, include inulin (also called chicory root extract), maltodextrin, polydextrose, oat, soy and corn fiber, corn and wheat starch, and gums (arabic, guar, acacia).

Package labels may claim added fiber is equal to the fiber naturally present in whole foods. The Food and Drug Administration doesn’t currently require food manufacturers to specify on the nutrition facts label what percent of a food’s grain is added or natural. Research has confirmed the benefits of real fiber-rich plant foods - whole grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and legumes. Plus you get the added health benefits of other vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients naturally present. Some scientists are uncertain if the added-fiber foods have the same benefits of foods that are naturally rich in fiber.

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One of the better options for adding fiber to your diet is whole-grain pasta. Be cautious when you see the words “whole grain” or “multi grain” on pasta labels.

✔ Check for the “100 percent Whole Grain” stamp from the Whole Grains Council. This stamp certifies that all the grain is whole and the contents contain at least 16 grams of whole grains per serving. Participation by a company in the stamp program is voluntary.

✔ Look for the phrase “100 percent whole wheat” or “100 percent whole grain.” Including the words “whole grain” or “wheat” on the label may be misleading because the product may contain mostly refined grain with a little whole grain.

✔ Check the ingredients label for “whole wheat flour” or “whole durum wheat flour.” “Semolina” or “durum wheat flour” minus the word whole makes it a refined grain.

✔ Pasta made with tomatoes or spinach may contain only a small amount of vegetables for coloring and don’t make a significant contribution toward the fiber content.

For more information on fiber see http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09333.html

Source: Nutrition News 4/22/10, by Shirley Perryman, Extension specialist, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Colorado State University

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Information from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) can help people explore how advertising affects them; understand credit, credit reports, and credit scores; get tips on how to protect their personal information and minimize the risk of identity theft; shop for a home loan; learn their rights when dealing with a debt collector; explore how advertising affects them; and much more.

$ www.ftc.gov/freereports offers details about a consumer’s right to a free copy of his or her credit report from each of the three national credit reporting agencies, upon request, once every 12 months. Reviewing one’s credit report regularly is an effective way to deter and detect identity theft.

$ www.ftc.gov/youarehere is a virtual mall where kids experience the FTC’s mission by learning about advertising, competition, and how to protect their privacy.

The Federal Trade Commission works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices and to provide information to help spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint in English or Spanish, visit the FTC’s online Complaint Assistant or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1 877-382-4357).

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