Enthusiasm

You can do anything if you have enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm is the yeast that makes your hopes rise to the stars.

Enthusiasm is the spark in your eye, the swing in your gait,
the grip of your hand, the irresistible surge of your will
and energy to execute your ideas...

Enthusiasm is at the bottom of all progress!

Author: Henry Ford, 1863-1947 American Car Manufacturer
Answer Corner

Who knew! And you can buy coffee filters at a low cost in a variety of stores.

- Cover bowls or dishes when cooking in the microwave.
- Clean windows, mirrors, and chrome. Coffee filters are lint-free so they’ll leave windows sparkling.
- Protect good china by separating your dishes with a coffee filter between each dish.
- Protect a cast-iron skillet by putting a coffee filter in the skillet to absorb moisture and prevent rust.
- Weigh chopped foods by placing chopped ingredients in a coffee filter on a kitchen scale.
- Hold tacos. Coffee filters make convenient wrappers for messy foods.
- Line a plant pot with a coffee filter to prevent the soil from going through the drainage holes.
- Prevent a popsicle from dripping by poking a hole in a coffee filter when you hold a popsicle.
- Put baking soda into a coffee filter and insert into shoes or a closet to absorb or prevent odors.
- Use coffee filters as a spoon rest while cooking and clean up small counter spills.
- Use coffee filters to strain soup stock; and to tie fresh herbs in to put in soups and stews.
- Use them to wrap Christmas ornaments for storage.

Better Than Paper Towels: Coffee

- Use to hold dry ingredients when baking or when cutting a piece of fruit or vegetables. Saves on having extra bowls to wash.
- Use them to sprout seeds. Simply dampen the coffee filter; place seeds inside; fold and place in a zip-lock plastic bag until they sprout.
- Use as a disposable "snack bowl" for popcorn, etc.
- Use coffee filters as blotting paper for pressed flowers. Place the flowers between two coffee filters and put the coffee filters in a book.
- If you break the cork when opening a wine bottle, filter the wine through a coffee filter.
- Great in the tool room when separating nails and screws. Then use in bottom of containers to remove moisture and prevent rust.

Oh, and they are great to use in your coffee makers, too!
**UPCOMING PROGRAMS**

Planning and Establishing Vineyards and Wineries in North Central New York  
A Northern Grapes Project Enterprise Workshop

When: May 4, 2012  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Where: Knights Inn, Little Falls  
Cost: $50 (includes lunch and handouts)

Sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer County

Interest in establishing vineyards and wineries in non-traditional areas of New York and New England continues to be great, made possible by cold-tolerant grape varieties from Minnesota, Cornell University, and private breeders that survive lower winter temperatures. Please join us for this one-day workshop, designed for newcomers with interest in establishing new vineyards and wineries. We will focus on the basic information you need to make decisions about starting a vineyard and equipping a startup winery:

- Vineyard site selection
- Cool and Cold-climate varieties and wines made from them
- Vineyard site preparation
- Planting training and trellising options
- Planning a pest management program
- Equipping a startup winery
- Basic economics and business models for grape and wine production

For more information, please call (315) 866-7920. Space is limited, so register early. Registration deadline is April 30. Registration will be confirmed upon receipt of the fee. Make checks payable to Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer County and mail to CCE, 5657 State Route 5, Herkimer, NY 13350

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**HERKIMER COUNTY LOCAL FOODS MAP**

The “Herkimer County Local Foods Map” is intended to serve as a guide for those who want to enjoy fresh local foods. It is available at the Cornell Cooperative Extension office in East Herkimer. You can also view a pdf of this map at our website www.cce.cornell.edu/herkimer. Just click on the link for the map at either our home page or on the Farmers’ Market page. For an interactive map, click on the Community Walk link.

We will be updating this map for 2012. If you have a farm that grows or produces local foods in Herkimer County and would like to be included in this year’s edition, please call Jill at (315) 866-7920 extension 228.

Funding for this map was provided by the NY State Department of Health Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work, and Play initiative (CHP) through Herkimer County HealthNet.
“ITALIAN-STYLE GREENS”

Greens and Beans

1 pound bag dried beans (cannellini or northern)*
2 large heads escarole (washed well)
2 Tablespoons oil
5 large cloves garlic
1/2 cup parmesan cheese (optional)

Soak and cook beans ahead of time, drain and set aside. Pull apart and wash escarole very well in cold water to remove any soil; drain. Chop first and place in a large kettle.** Place 1 inch water in pan and cook about 10 – 15 minutes. As greens cook down, add enough water to keep greens from sticking. When greens are done, drain. In a saucepan, simmer oil and cloves of garlic (crushed or chopped). Combine escarole, garlic, 1/2 of cooked beans and parmesan cheese. Simmer about 5 minutes and serve.

* Canned beans can be used instead of dry. To reduce sodium consumption by 50% rinse thoroughly.

** Greens can be microwaved instead.

Yield: 10 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (130 calories, 5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 5 gram fiber, 120 mg sodium)

“Ideas from Nutrition Staff”

“Italian-Style Greens” are a regional favorite, that originated with Italian immigrants. Although there are many variations, the most common ingredients are escarole (chard or other greens also work), prosciutto (adding the smokiness and salt), garlic, chicken broth and hot peppers. They are served as an appetizer in old-fashioned Italian restaurants; and you might also find them on a buffet at neighborhood parties or other celebrations. The dish is so popular in the city of Utica that the annual Utica Arts and Music Festival held in September includes a “Greens Fest” with a tent serving versions from area restaurants.

Here are two versions to try:

**Italian-Style Greens**

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup leftover cooked ham (optional)
1 10-ounce package frozen spinach, thawed & drained*
1/4 cup parmesan cheese
hot peppers, chopped, to taste (optional)

Heat olive oil in a large skillet. Add onion, garlic, and ham (if desired). Reduce heat to low and sauté until onion is translucent. Add spinach and heat through. Add cheese and cherry peppers (if desired).

Italian style breadcrumbs may be added to absorb liquid, if needed.

*Substitute fresh greens for spinach (escarole, kale, etc.). Be sure to wash fresh greens in plenty of water to remove grit.

Yield: 4 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (90 calories, 5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 3 gram fiber, 130 mg sodium)
TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and local health departments continue to investigate the spread of Lyme disease throughout New York State. Lyme disease is a bacterial infection caused by the bite of an infected deer tick. Untreated, the disease can cause a number of health problems. Patients treated with antibiotics in the early stage of the infection usually recover rapidly and completely. Since Lyme disease first became reportable in 1986, over 95,000 cases have now been confirmed in New York State.

The NYSDOH and local health departments also investigate several other tick-borne diseases, including babesiosis, ehrlichiosis (both human granulocytic anaplasmosis and human monocytic ehrlichiosis) and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. These tick-borne diseases are most frequently found on Long Island and in the lower Hudson Valley region. The number of cases of these diseases is much smaller in comparison to the cases of Lyme disease but their numbers are also increasing.


Personal Protection
There are many different products on the market, with different ingredients, concentrations and effectiveness. The most effective contain DEET, permethrin (only to be applied on clothing), picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. If you decide to use one, be sure to follow label directions and apply repellent carefully.

For more information go to:
✓ http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2749/
✓ http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2737/
✓ http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/pests/dress_to_repel.htm

Tick Identification Service
Tick identification services are no longer available through the NYS Department of Health or Herkimer County Public Health.

Source: http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/lyme/

LYME DISEASE ALERT
DO A THOROUUGH BODY CHECK FOR TICKS AFTER BEING OUTDOORS.

How To Remove A Tick

• Using tweezers, grasp tick near the mouth parts, as close to skin as possible.
• Pull tick in a steady, upward motion away from skin.
• DO NOT use kerosene, matches, or petroleum jelly to remove tick.
• Disinfect site with soap and water, rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
• Record date and location of tick bite. If rash or flu-like symptoms appear contact your health care provider immediately.

DISEASE RISK IS REDUCED IF TICK IS REMOVED WITHIN 36 HOURS.
New York State Department of Health
**How Should You Spend Your Calorie Salary?**

USDA’s MyPlate symbolizes a simple, personalized approach to remind consumers to make healthy food choices and be active every day.

Think of MyPlate as a “calorie salary” guide that helps you get the most health and enjoyment from what you eat. Plan calories the same as major expenses — such as a car, house, or vacation.

Four “budgeting” steps follow:

**$tep 1 — Stay Within Your Calorie Budget**

Knowing your daily calorie needs based on your age, gender, height, weight, and physical activity level may be a helpful reference point in deciding whether calories consumed are appropriate in relation to the amount needed daily. However, monitoring whether you maintain your weight over time by adjusting calories and physical activity is the most helpful.

Be aware that 100 extra calories per day can add up to a 10 pound weight gain in one year!

Examples of 100 calories include:
• 2 tablespoons of sugar, jelly, jam, or syrup
• 1 tablespoon of butter or margarine
• 2/3 can of a regular soft drink

David Bach, author of *The Automatic Millionaire*, popularized the term Latte Factor® to demonstrate the power of saving a few dollars daily by forgoing unnecessary purchases. Over several years, you can save thousands of dollars! The same can apply to calories — by saving a few calories daily, you can save thousands of calories over several years!

Balance food calories with activity level. Recommended minimum levels of physical activity include:

• **Adults**: 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity weekly (i.e. 30 minutes, 5 times/week) OR 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity weekly (i.e. 15 minutes, 5 times/week)
• **6–17 years**: 60 minutes daily of moderate and vigorous activity
• **2–5 years**: No specific recommendation other than to play actively several times each day

Moderate aerobic activity increases breathing and heart rate somewhat while vigorous aerobic activity greatly increases heart rate and breathing. If you are short on time, get active 10 minutes 3 times a day.

*continued on page 7*
$\textbf{Step 2 — Choose the Most Value for Calorie Salary}$

Get the most for your “calorie salary” by eating more “nutrient-dense” foods.

**Nutrient-dense foods and beverages** provide vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial substances and relatively few calories without solid fats in the food or added to it and without added sugars, refined starches, and sodium.

All vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy, and lean meats and poultry are nutrient dense when prepared without solid fats or sugars.

Reducing or eliminating some less nutrient-dense foods saves calories and MONEY!

### Nutrient-Dense vs. Not Nutrient-Dense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Calories in nutrient-dense form</th>
<th>Calories in not nutrient-dense form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breaded, fried chicken strips</td>
<td>246 calories</td>
<td>236 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked chicken breast</td>
<td>138 calories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsweetened applesauce</td>
<td>105 calories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetened applesauce</td>
<td>173 calories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% lean ground beef patty</td>
<td>184 calories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from the USDA Agricultural Research Service, Food and Nutrients Database for Dietary Studies 4.1. http://www.ars.usda.gov/services/doc

$\textbf{Step 3 — Consider the “True Cost” of Poor Nutrition}$

Foods that do little to meet nutrient needs — even if they’re within our calorie salary — can put our HEALTH and MONEY at risk.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommend a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat dairy products for persons aged 2 years and older.

Healthy diets may help reduce or eliminate the need for, and cost of, medications for some people. Also, foods may contain additional substances and provide benefits not available from fortified foods, nutrient supplements, and vitamin/mineral pills. Many interactions occur among food constituents (such as fiber, nutrients, and phytochemicals) that affect disease risk. The “Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension” (DASH Eating Plan) clinical study showed:

- fruit and vegetable consumption lowers blood pressure,
- adding low-fat, high-calcium foods to a diet high in fruits and vegetables further lowers blood pressure, and
- even greater reductions occur when sodium intake is restricted.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Healthy eating is associated with reduced risk for many diseases, including several of the leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.”

$\textbf{Step 4 — Plan a Budget for YOU}$

Fine-tune what you’re already eating to meet MyPlate guidelines. As you “budget,” choose foods that taste good as well as are good for you! Spend your “calorie salary” wisely!

Source: Alice Henneman, MS, RD, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension
CELEBRATING EARTH DAY IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

From cars to schools, today's world is all about going green. Even the products and appliances we use in the laundry room have become more environmentally friendly. Though you may have bought an energy-efficient washing machine, are using a concentrated laundry detergent, and are recycling your empty laundry-product packages, there still might be more you can do while cleaning your clothes to lessen your environmental impact.

How can you make laundry day (every laundry day) Earth Day? It's easy. And even the slightest change in routine can have a positive impact on the environment, not to mention your family's finances.

✓ Wash with the Coldest Water Possible. You'll save energy by not heating up the water. Fortunately, many detergents are now formulated to perform well in cold water. Read and follow product package and garment label directions for the most effective water temperature to use. Switching your temperature setting from hot to warm can cut energy use in half, and using the cold cycle reduces energy use even more, according to www.EnergyStar.gov.

✓ Select the Right Amount of Water for Each Load. Avoid overfilling your washing machine, and save water and energy.

✓ Spin Your Clothes at the Highest Recommended Speed. The spin cycle "shakes" (removes) the water from your clothes. The faster it spins, the more water gets removed. The less time your clothes have to spend in the dryer, the more energy you save.

✓ Use the Right Amount of Detergent for the Washer and the Load. Read the instructions for your washer and on the detergent package.

✓ Speaking of Detergent ... If you haven't already switched to a concentrated detergent, you might want to consider doing so. A concentrated product comes in a much smaller package. You'll get the same number of laundry loads out of a smaller bottle, but use much less plastic. And these smaller bottles take up less space on a delivery truck, which reduces the energy costs to transport them from the manufacturer to the store.

✓ Twofers, Anyone? Instead of buying a separate bottle of bleach or fabric softener, consider looking for a two-in-one product – such as a detergent with a built-in stain remover. Again, less packaging (which takes energy to produce) and lower shipping costs.

✓ The Best Time for Laundry. As we head into warmer weather, deciding when to do your laundry can determine the amount of energy you use. Running appliances creates heat, so use the washing machine and dryer at night when it's cooler outside. This way, you won't have to use more energy to cool your house during the day.

✓ Don't Forget to Recycle! Nothing like squeezing out the last drop of detergent to make it go farther (store nearly empty jugs upside down and you may find enough for a whole other load!). But when you've really gotten to the end of a bottle, please recycle.

Source: American Cleaning Institute, Cleaning Matters newsletter, March/April 2012
**Simplify Your Laundry Routine**

The Less Steps, The Better

We know laundry can be a big task, but it just got easier with new liquid-unit-dose laundry detergent. Just put one pac of pre-measured detergent into your machine to simplify your laundry routine.

**How do I use this new product?**

- Add the pac to the bottom – also known as the drum – of the washing machine, both for top-loader and high-efficiency front-loader machines, before adding clothes, for best results. Do not add the pac to your machine’s dispenser drawer.
- Do not cut or tear the pouch. It is designed to dissolve completely in the machine, even in cold water.
- Use one pac for most loads, but for heavily soiled loads you can use two.
- Do not use for hand washing or pretreating.

- If pacs stick together, do not pull hard, as the pouches may tear. If two pacs stick together, place them together in the machine.
- Handle the pacs with dry hands only, and remember to close the bag or tub completely after each use to keep out moisture. The pacs’ film is designed to dissolve quickly, even in small amounts of water, so it is important to store pacs away from water.
- Keep liquid-unit-dose out of the reach of children and pets between every load to prevent unintended exposure.
- Always ensure reclosable bag or tub is tightly sealed during storage.
- As with other laundry products, keep product in its original container with intact labels.
- Store products away from food, as you would with other laundry products.

*Source: American Cleaning Institute, Cleaning Matters newsletter, March/April 2012*

**A Parent’s Guide to Facebook**

The website “Connect Safely” recently released an excellent resource to help parents understand what Facebook is and how to help their teens use it safely.

Connect Safely has other helpful information about talking to teens about cell phone safety, online gaming and safe texting. See www.connectsafely.org for more information.

You can find “A Parent’s Guide to Facebook” at www.connectsafely.org/fbparents.pdf

*Source: Child Care Chatterbox, newsletter of the Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Winter 2012*
**Frequently Asked Questions about Google's Privacy Settings**

Beginning in March 2012, Google started operating under a streamlined privacy policy that enables the Internet’s most powerful company to dig even deeper into the lives of its more than 1 billion users.

Google says the changes will make it easier for consumers to understand how it collects personal information, and allow the company to create more helpful and compelling services. Critics, including most of the country's state attorneys general and a top regulator in Europe, argue that Google is tramplng on people's privacy rights in its relentless drive to sell more ads.

Here's a look at some of the frequently asked questions about Google's new privacy settings.

**Q: How will Google's privacy changes affect users?**

**A:** Google is combining more than 60 different privacy policies so it will be able to throw all the data it gathers about each of its logged-in users into personal dossiers. The information Google learns about you while you enter requests into its search engine can be culled to suggest videos to watch when you visit the company’s YouTube site.

Users who write a memo on Google's online word processing program, Docs, might be alerted to the misspelling of the name of a friend or co-worker a user has communicated with on Google's Gmail. The new policy pools information from all Google-operated services, empowering the company to connect the dots from one service to the next.

**Q: Can I change my web history settings today even though Google's new privacy policy has already gone into effect?**

**A:** Yes. Go to https://www.google.com/history/, log in with your gmail password, and click "remove all web history." You can do the same in your YouTube account by disabling Viewing and Search History, but note that this will not prevent Google from gathering and storing this information and using it for internal purposes.

**Q: Why is Google making these changes?**

**A:** The company, based in Mountain View, Calif., says it is striving for a "beautifully simple, intuitive user experience across Google." What Google hasn't spent much time talking about is how being able to draw more revealing profiles about its users will help sell advertising — the main source of its $38 billion in annual revenue.

One reason Google has become such a big advertising network: Its search engine analyzes requests to figure out which people are more likely to be interested in marketing pitches about specific products and services. Targeting the ads to the right audience is crucial because in many cases, Google only gets paid when someone clicks on an ad link. And, of course, advertisers tend to spend more money if Google is bringing them more customers.

**Q: Is there a way to prevent Google from combining the personal data it collects from all its services?**

**A:** No, not if you're a registered user of Gmail, Google Plus, YouTube, or other Google products. But you can minimize the data Google gathers. For starters, make sure you aren't logged into one of Google's services when you're using Google's search engine, watching a YouTube video or perusing pictures on Picasa. You can get a broad overview of what Google knows about you at http://www.google.com/dashboard, where a Google account login is required. Google also offers the option to delete users' history of search activity.

(continued on page 13)
Frequently Asked Questions About Google’s Privacy Settings...continued from page 12

It's important to keep in mind that Google can still track you even when you're not logged in to one of its services. But the information isn't quite as revealing because Google doesn't track you by name, only through a numeric Internet address attached to your computer or an alphanumeric string attached to your Web browser.

Q: Are all Google services covered by the privacy policy?
A: No, a few products, such as Google's Chrome Web browser and mobile payment processor Wallet, will still be governed by separate privacy policies.

Q: Is Google's new privacy policy legal?
A: The company has no doubt about it. That's why it's repeatedly rebuffed pleas to delay the changes since announcing the planned revisions. But privacy activists and even some legal authorities have several concerns.

The Electronic Privacy Information Center, a privacy rights group, sued the FTC in a federal court in an effort to force the FTC to exercise its powers and block Google's privacy changes. A federal judge ruled the courts didn't have the authority to tell the FTC how to regulate Google. The FTC says it is always looking for evidence that one of its consent orders has been violated.

The French regulatory agency CNIL warned Google CEO Larry Page that the new policy appears to violate the European Union's strict data-protection rules. Last week, 36 attorneys general in the U.S. and its territories derided the new policy as an "invasion of privacy" in a letter to Page.

One of the major gripes is that registered Google users aren't being given an option to consent to, or reject, the changes, given that they developed their dependence on the services under different rules. In particular, people who bought smartphones running on Google's Android software, and signed two-year contracts to use the devices, may have a tough time avoiding the new privacy policy. They could switch to non-Google services, but those typically don't work as well on Android software. Or they could buy a different smartphone and pay an early-termination penalty.

Google met with the FTC before announcing the privacy changes. Neither the company nor the FTC has disclosed whether Google satisfied regulators that the revisions comply with the consent order.

Q: How do I clear my Google search history?
A: To get started, first, go to: Google.com/history. There, you will log in, using your Google sign-in.

Once you're logged in, you may be surprised by what you see -- in many cases it will go back years. To wipe out all of that, click "Remove all Web history." You'll be asked, "Are you sure you want to clear your entire web history?" If you do, click the "OK" box. And with that -- you are done.

Q: How do I clear my YouTube search history?
A: The following steps will delete your viewing and search history on YouTube. If you have multiple YouTube accounts, you will have to complete these steps for each account.

Log in to your Google account. Go to https://www.youtube.com. Click on your icon. Click "Video Manager." Click "History." Click "Clear all viewing history." Click "Pause viewing history." Click "Search History." Click "Clear all search history." Click "Pause search history."

Source: MSNBC Nightly News and the
ACTIVITIES TO HELP FOSTER PLAY

Here are some activities for your favorite little one:

Birth to 12 Months:
Shadow Sharing. Babies have limited early vision skills, but they are tuned in to contrasts between light and dark. At bedtime, slowly move a flashlight beam across the wall of your baby’s room or ceiling. See if she can follow it with her eyes. As she grows, she will get better and better at following the moving beam - this skill is called “visual tracking.”

12 to 24 Months:
Shadow Play. In a darkened room, shine a flashlight at your hand so that the shadow is reflected on the wall. Wave to your child and make silly shadow shapes with your hand. Does your child want to try to wave with his shadow hand too? He may also enjoy shining the flashlight on the wall by himself. Young toddlers thrive on feeling capable and competent at using the “real” objects that they see familiar adults using. This is due to their growing sense that they are independent people with their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences - a major cognitive milestone achieved during the second year of life.

Editors Note: Hence, parents hearing “No, me do” as child tries to do something his or herself.

24 to 36 Months:
Shadow Shapes. On a sunny day, take your toddler outside and show her shadow to her. Show her how she can make her shadow dance, jump, wave, crouch, run, and more. This is great practice for your toddler’s listening skills and also gets her moving outside! For a final bit of fun, trace your toddler’s shadow with chalk and together the two of you can color in your child’s “shadow shape.”

Visit www.zerotothree.org for more activities!

Get Moving!
Are you getting enough exercise? Children and teens should be physically active for at least 60 minutes most days of the week.

Source: Child Care Chatterbox, newsletter of the Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Winter 2012

11 WAYS TO GET PHYSICALLY ACTIVE WITHOUT GOING TO THE GYM

1. Walk up and down the soccer or softball field sidelines while watching the kids play.
2. Replace a coffee break with a brisk walk. Use a rest room further away from your office.
3. Take a brisk walk around the mall BEFORE you shop.
4. Use the stairs as much as possible - even if you don’t need anything upstairs or downstairs!
5. Stand while you’re on the phone.
6. Walk while waiting for your plane.
7. Get off the bus or out of your car a distance from your destination.
8. Use your exercise bicycle or treadmill while watching TV.
9. Speed clean your house!
10. Take the dog for a walk - don’t watch the dog walk!
11. Dance!

Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Herkimer County Living
The Number of Foods in a Meal Determines How Much You Will Eat

The wider the variety of foods served at a meal, the more a person will eat, new Cornell research shows. Conversely, having a "one-pot" dish, such as a soup, pasta, stew or stir-fry, will cut down on the amount of food and calories consumed.

The study, which is the first to show these links, provides additional evidence in a growing body of research that indicates the environment plays a powerful role in determining how much we eat.

"It's the only explanation of why we're getting fatter. Our biology has not been changing over the past 40 or 50 years, but our weight certainly has," said David Levitsky, professor of nutritional sciences and of psychology at Cornell, whose study was published online January 24, 2012 in the journal Eating Behaviors.

The authors conducted two experiments. First, they served 20 college students buffet-style meals three times a week for two weeks. The students were randomly served an entrée and two side dishes (chicken, a vegetable and a carbohydrate such as rice or potatoes), a low-carbohydrate meal (chicken and a vegetable) or a vegetarian meal (a vegetable and a carbohydrate) in a buffet and told to take as much or as little as they wished.

The participants ate more in terms of quantity and calories of the entrée-and-two-sides meal, less of the low-carb meal and the least of the vegetarian meal.

"If you pulled away the protein, you increase the amount you eat of the other foods, but not enough to make up for the caloric deficit. The same thing occurs if you pull the starches away," Levitsky said.

Then the researchers conducted a second experiment, to see what would happen if participants were served the same foods prepared either individually or in a stir-fry (onions, corn, carrots, peas and broccoli) or a pasta dish (onions, celery, tomatoes, penne pasta and cauliflower).

They found the participants ate significantly more when the foods were served separately versus as a composite meal. "Again, it's the same idea. You see more components, you tend to want to eat more," Levitsky said.

The findings have several implications, the authors say. First, they help explain why "low-carb" diets work -- because the diets restrict the number of foods one eats. Similarly, one reason vegetarians are typically thinner than non-vegetarians is that they, too, restrict the number of foods they eat. "We wanted to see if people are prevented from eating one of the foods, will they compensate by eating more of the others?" Levitsky said. "We found that people do increase the amount they consume of the other types of foods, but never enough to make up for the deficit."

Second, the findings add to our understanding of the causes of obesity, Levitsky said. "One idea is that we have evolved from creatures for whom the sight of food is the stimulus to eat, because they couldn't store the food. I think that's what these findings are representing, this mechanism that tells us 'the more food is available, the more you have to eat it, because you never know when it's not going to be there.'

"Unfortunately, evolution occurred before we invented the refrigerator. So now we have the refrigerator, the freezer, the vending machine, and this is in part why we're getting fatter. Evolution requires hundreds of thousands of years. Vending machines, overnight," Levitsky said.

Source: Chronicle Online, March 12, 2012
Cornell University College of Human Ecology
“LIVING”  
April / May 2012

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Looking for back issues of Living? See: 
www.cce.cornell.edu/herkimer/2009/04/02/ 
herkimer-county-living-newsletter/

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