

Family and Consumer Newsletter

Yadkin County Center

April 2008

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Eat More Carrots for Your Heart

Yes, carrots are not only good for your eyes but also may cut the risk of death from heart disease. Results in the Journal of Nutrition, concludes that beta-carotene as well as alpha-carotene was associated with a 20% lower likelihood of dying from cardiovascular disease. For participants in this study, the primary source of carotenes was carrots. Simply eating more carrots produced a 17% reduced risk of death from heart disease.



Other foods with plenty of alpha and beta-carotene include: peppers, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, collard greens, beet greens and Swiss chard. A variety in your diet is the best method for carotenes rather than diet supplements. Previous research indicates that high levels of beta-carotene supplements may have health drawbacks, including an increased risk of lung cancer for smokers.

Four Simple Habits to Lengthen Life

Researchers with the University of Cambridge Institute of Public Health studied over 20,000 men and women for 11 years and concluded that the following simple health habits were very powerful in increasing life expectancy by 14 years.

1. Not Smoking
2. Drinking moderately (1 drink per day, defined as a glass of wine, a half-pint of beer or one shot of liquor)
3. Keeping physically active, either at work or leisure
4. Eating 5 servings or more of fruits and vegetables daily

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Empowering People • Providing Solutions

April is National Autism Awareness Month

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that approximately 1 in 150 children born today have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). "Autism is more common than we believed," said Catherine Rice, lead author of the report. It is estimated that N.C. has over 50,000 persons affected by ASD.

ASD was first identified in 1943 but research is uncertain to the cause of the disability. Autism Spectrum Disorder refers to a group of developmental disabilities that affect a person's ability to understand what they see, hear, and otherwise sense. It is a brain disorder that impacts communication, social interaction and behavior. At this time, there is no cure for ASD. Studies show that early intervention with a structured, specialized education program provides the most positive outcomes for children. The Autism Society of N.C. is a source to help seek services, support and information. The Yadkin Support Group has recently been developed and meets the last Tuesday of each month at the Yadkin Senior Center. For more information contact: Trish Rupard at (336) 426-9783.

Tax Time is Here!

Congress passed an economic stimulus package that includes a one-time tax rebate check to be mailed to tens of millions of Americans. This package includes \$300 rebates for 20 million low-income older Americans. Individuals who might not otherwise be required to file a 2007 tax return will need to file a return this year to receive the stimulus payment. Their 2007 tax return must show at least \$3000 in qualifying income. Social security recipients, and veterans who might not need to file a tax return must do so to receive a payment.



In most cases, the economic stimulus payment will equal the amount of tax liability on the tax return, with a maximum amount of \$600 for individuals (\$1,200 for married couples who file a joint return). The IRS will begin sending taxpayers their economic stimulus payments in early May after the tax season concludes. The IRS reminds taxpayers when they file their 2007 tax return to use direct deposit, which is the fastest way to get both regular refunds and stimulus payments.

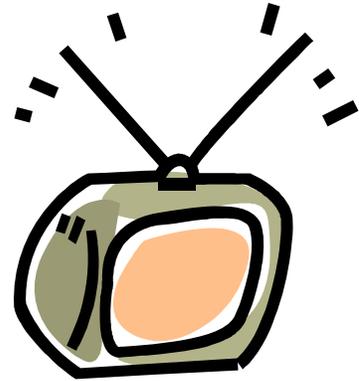
Improve Your Heritage Skills

Join us Tuesday, April 22 at 5:30 p.m. for a fun and relaxing evening of basket weaving. An easy 12" x 12" Market Basket will be taught. Call 679-2061 for details.



Digital Television Transition

At midnight on February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations in the United States will switch from analog to digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting will provide a clearer picture and more programming options as well as free up airwaves for use by emergency responders. For those households that choose to continue their analog televisions, Congress created the TV Converter Box Coupon Program. The program allows U.S. households to receive up to 2 coupons, each worth \$40, that can be applied toward the cost of converter boxes. Converter boxes are expected to cost between \$50-\$70 and can be purchased at locations with consumer electronics products. Apply before March 31, 2009 by calling 1-888-388-2009 or going online at www.dtv2009.gov. TELEVISIONS CONNECTED TO CABLE OR SATELLITE DO NOT REQUIRE A TV CONVERTER BOX . If you use an antenna you must request a TV Converter Box Coupon or you will not have programming on February 17, 2009.



Earth Day—April 22, 2008

April 22 is the day to focus on how we can work to better the beautiful world we live in. The little things we do to improve our environment from eliminating toxins in cleaning products to conserving water will produce a cleaner, safer more sustainable planet, and a safer environment. What will you do for Earth Day 2008?



April is National Humor Month

Laughter improves mood, reduces stress, and burns calories. Studies show the average person can lose 4 pounds a year if they laugh 15 minutes each day.

Tips and Tidbits

- Tears from cutting an onion come from squashing the onion cells and admitting air which allows an enzyme to react with sulfur compounds in the onion, therefore releasing the substance that irritates eyes. Try peeling chilled onions under running water and using a very sharp knife or the food processor for chopping.
- Leaving grass clippings on the lawn returns useful nutrients, cutting the need for fertilizer by up to 30%.
- Walking is now the most popular fitness activity in the U.S. Remember it only takes 30 minutes per day!
- To keep cleaning tools separated, choose one color sponge for bathrooms and one for kitchen. Label rubber gloves with B for bathroom to keep separate from kitchen.
- As a general rule, it is best to start cleaning at the top and work downward.

Recycling the Composting Way

Composting is another way to reduce the amount of waste that goes to the landfill. Many household items can be turned into natural soil additives for use on lawns and gardens, and used as potting soil for house plants. A compost pile can be set up in a corner of the yard with few supplies. Choose a level spot about 3 to 5 ft. square near a water source and preferably out of direct sunlight. Clear the spot of grass and use chicken wire, scrap wood or cinder blocks to build sides leaving enough space for air to reach the pile. Leaving a removable side makes it easier to tend the pile.



Start with 4 inches of leaves, loose soil, or yard trimmings. When composting food scraps, mix them with yard trimmings. Sprinkle water on the pile without getting it soggy and turn the pile with a pitchfork every few weeks to circulate air and circulate moisture. To control any smell, alfalfa meal or clean cat litter can be added. The compost is generally done in 3 to 6 months or when it becomes a dark, crumbly material, uniform in texture.

Foods that can be recycled for compost are vegetable trimmings, egg shells, coffee grounds with filters, and tea bags. DO NOT compost meats, dairy foods, or any fats, oil, or grease because they can attract pests. Other around the house items to compost are leaves, grass, yard clippings, vacuum cleaner or dryer lint, wool and cotton rags, sawdust, shredded newspaper, and fireplace ashes. When compost is dark and crumbly, spread it in the garden, yard, under shrubbery or use as potting soil.

ECA Dates to Remember

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| April 10 | ECA Area Meeting, 10:00 a.m. Extension Kitchen |
| April 11 | Executive Board Meeting 11 a.m. |
| April 22 | NWECA Spring District Day, 9:00 a.m. N.Wilkesboro,
Depart- 8 a.m. from county parking lot. |
| May 20 | DATE HAS CHANGED-ECA Area Leader Training,
10:00 a.m. Surry Community College, Dobson |
| May 27 | Yadkin County Council, 10:00 a.m. Location-TBA,
Hostesses- Baltimore & Forbush-Enon Clubs |

For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact Marilyn Wells at least one week in advance at 336-679-2061.



Volunteer Opportunities

- Yadkin Christian Ministries are in need of peanut butter and mayonnaise to restock their empty shelves and recycled paper grocery bags to fill with food for client needs. If you would like to help out with time or food donation, call to 677-3080, M-F 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Farm Animal Day will be held on May 9 for all 2nd graders in Yadkin County to build awareness of farm life. If you would like to volunteer, please call to 679-2061.
- Chef and the Child is a 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. mini-camp for youth 8-12 to teach awareness of nutrition and kitchen safety. It is a joint effort between the local Chef's Association and Cooperative Extension. The dates this year are July 7-11. If you know a child that would like to participate or if you want to volunteer, call 679-2061.
- Putting Your Best Food Forward is a 3-day morning, mini-camp for youth 9-14 to raise awareness of good nutrition, cooking skills, physical fitness, manners, etc. August 12-14 are the dates for this event. If you know of a child that would benefit, call 679-2061 to



Spring Delights

One of the treats of spring are fresh asparagus spears. Asparagus is a good food for the health conscious because it is low in calories and sodium. It is also a good source of potassium and dietary fiber. Try this recipe for a new twist on a quiche.

Asparagus Ham Quiche

20 ounces asparagus spears
1 lb. ham, cooked, chopped
2 cups Swiss cheese, shredded
½ cup chopped onion
6 eggs
2 cups milk
1 ½ cup buttermilk baking mix
2 T. dried vegetable flakes
¼ t. pepper



In 2 greased 9 inch pie plates, layer the asparagus, ham, cheese, and onion. In a bowl, beat eggs. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Divide in half and pour over asparagus mixture in each pie plate. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Serves 6-8. Recipe can be divided easily.

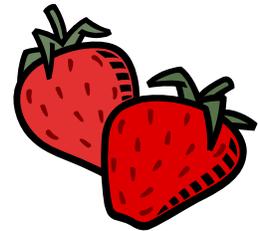
Strawberry Time is Here!

N.C. ranks high in the nation for strawberry production each year. Strawberries are not only a luscious snack but are also high in Vitamin C and A and supply 8% of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) for iron. There are only 60 calories in a cup of fresh berries and 0 grams of fat.

When picking strawberries look for the firm, yet fully ripe ones. Do not remove the caps or wash berries until you are ready to use them. When you remove the caps, the berries lose some of their moisture and washing before use tends to bruise them. The following recipes provide some unique uses for those nutritious fresh berries:

Fruit Salsa

1 apple, peeled, cored and diced	1 T. fresh lime juice
1 cup sliced fresh strawberries	2 T. white sugar
2 kiwis, peeled and sliced	1/2 t. ground cinnamon
2 bananas, peeled and sliced	1/2 t. ground nutmeg



In a medium bowl, mix together apple, strawberries, kiwis, bananas, lime juice, sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon. Cover and chill in the refrigerator 20 minutes. Serve with bagels, muffins or oatmeal for breakfast. Can be served as a snack with Cinnamon Tortilla Chips. To make chips, slice flour tortillas into pieces and spray with cooking spray. Place on a cookie sheet and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Bake 5 to 10 minutes in a 350 degree oven, watching closely so they won't burn.

Strawberry Brownie Delight

1 (19.8 oz.) packaged brownie mix	10 fresh strawberries, sliced
1 c. strawberry preserves	1/2 cup chocolate syrup
1 (12 oz.) frozen whipped topping, thawed	

Prepare the brownie mix according to package directions, and pour batter into two 8 inch round cake pans. Bake as directed. Cool completely. Place 1 round onto a serving plate. Spread half of the strawberry preserved over the top. Place the second brownie round on top, and spread the remaining strawberry jam on it. Frost the top and sides of the cake with whipped topping. Arrange the sliced strawberries on top. Drizzle with chocolate syrup, and serve.

Strawberry Vinaigrette

1 cup olive oil	1/4 t. ground black pepper
1/2 pint fresh strawberries, halved	1/4 t. dried tarragon
2 T. balsamic vinegar	1/4 t. sugar
Pinch of Salt	

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MCW/gm

In a blender or food processor, mix olive oil, strawberries, balsamic vinegar, salt, pepper, tarragon and sugar. Blend until smooth. Serve over your favorite salad greens.

