

HUMPHREYS CO. FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES EXTENSION NEWSLETTER

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Wishing you a Happy Holidays!

December's newsletter provides information on creating healthier holiday food options; maneuvering online shopping; managing and coping with holiday stress; and upcoming extension programming.

Potato Cakes

Ingredients

- 2 cups potatoes (cold, mashed, made from instant potato flakes)
- 1/2 cup flour (all-purpose, unsifted)
- 2 tablespoons onion (finely chopped)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Put mashed potatoes into a bowl.
3. Add flour and onion. Mix well.
4. Pat potato mixture on a lightly floured board until 1/2 inch thick.
5. Cut with a 3-inch round cutter.
6. Place on a baking sheet, cover and refrigerate until just before cooking.
7. Heat oil in a frying pan or griddle.
8. Fry cakes over medium heat, turning to brown on both sides. Serve immediately.

Servings: 4 | Cook Time: 30 Minutes | Total Calories): 114

The latest on this month's issue:

Recipe of the Month

Tips for making your holiday meals healthier

Online Shopping

Managing and Coping with Holiday Stress

Skill Up Tennessee

Dates To Remember

Tips for making your holiday meals healthier

Keep holiday meals healthy by cutting unnecessary sugars, fats, and calories.

It's the holiday season, and planning is underway for good times filled with friends, family and foods. It seems that every advertisement in stores, in magazines and on social media all refer to some form of holiday eating. We often give in to the festivities and overindulge in good-tasting food, but these foods may not be the healthiest for us. As we prepare food for family and friends, there are ways to make favorite holiday recipes healthier and still taste great.

Reduce the amount of fat and sugar when baking without losing the flavor.

Cutting the fat and sugars in half in a recipe is an easy way to cut added calories.

- Use half the butter and replace it with unsweetened applesauce, mashed bananas or even prune purée.
- Reduce the amount of sugar by one-third to one-half. Add rich-tasting spices to bolster flavor, such as cinnamon, cloves or allspice. You can even use extracts such as almond, vanilla or wintergreen.
- Cut the amount of cheese in a recipe by half. If your recipe calls for one cup of cheese, ½ cup would be sufficient, and you will be able to better taste the flavors of the other ingredients.

Make healthy substitutions that will boost the fiber content.

- Use whole wheat pasta instead of white pasta.
- Use brown rice instead of white rice.
- Use whole-grain bread and rolls.

Leave out ingredients.

- Leave out mayonnaise, butter or jelly in a recipe.
- Leave out excessive amounts of frosting, nuts and chips when baking.

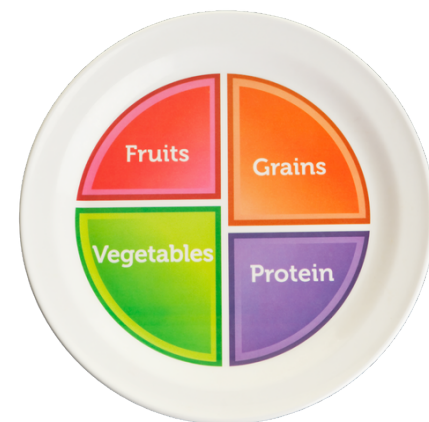
Choose a different technique of preparation, such as broiling, grilling or steaming.

- These methods can capture the flavor of your delicious foods without adding calories:
 - Instead of frying, try broiling fish, meat and even vegetables.
 - Try a fruit juice or vinegar if a recipe says to baste with oil.
 - Use non-stick pans to eliminate oil when cooking.

Pay attention to your portion size.

- If the recipe is still very high in fat and sugars, reduce the portion size you eat.
- When reducing portion size, add healthy choices to help fill you up. Filling half of your plate with fruits or vegetables is a great place to start.

Eating well can be difficult over the holiday season, but finding ways to enjoy your favorite family meals is possible by making mindful choices. No matter how much you indulge over the holidays, remember it is never too late to get back on track with your healthy habits.



Greek Yogurt Chocolate Mousse with Raspberries

Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 6 mini Hershey's special dark chocolate bars (sugar-free), chopped
- 2 cups nonfat Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons honey (or 4 packets artificial sweetener)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup skim milk
- 6 tablespoons nonfat whipped topping
- 2 cups fresh raspberries



Directions:

1. Put chopped chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl.
2. Microwave chocolate on high for 1 minute, then stir.
3. Optional: If not completely melted, microwave for 30 more seconds, then stir until all chunks are melted. If still not melted, microwave another 30 seconds and continue to stir, just until the chunks in the chocolate are melted. Do NOT overcook.
4. In a medium mixing bowl, beat the Greek yogurt with an electric mixer until fluffy.
5. Add honey (or artificial sweetener), vanilla and milk, and beat some more.
6. Add chocolate, a small amount at a time, beating in between additions.
7. When all the chocolate is mixed into the yogurt, divide the mousse into 6 bowls or tall glasses.
8. Top each portion with 1/3 cup raspberries and 1 tablespoon whipped topping.

Recipe from <https://www.uff.ufl.edu/gatornation/healthy-yummy-holiday-recipe-swaps/>



Online Shopping

Before you buy something online, shop around and check out sellers and products. Also, keep records of purchases, like receipts and emails, to make sure you're able to hold a seller to its promises.

Learn About Sellers and Products

1. Read reviews with a critical eye

- Expert reviews from trusted websites are a good place to get information about what to buy and who to hire. Focus on sites you trust that offer impartial reviews from real experts.
- Read customer reviews about a company or product from a wide variety of review and retailer sites, search engines, app stores, and social media platforms. Check several sources and consider where a review is posted, who wrote the review, and the reviewer's history. And don't rely on star ratings alone because some reviews and ratings are fake or misleading. Fake reviews can be positive or negative. Not all fake positive reviews are five stars. Some dishonest competitors place fake negative reviews. Also, it's not always clear if a reviewer got something, like a free product, in exchange for writing a review. Some — but not all — websites will place a label or badge next to the review when they know that the reviewer got an incentive.
- Find out other people's experiences
- Search online for the product or company name, plus the words "complaint" or "scam." See what other people are saying about their experience.

Comparison Shopping

To comparison shop for a product, make notes of the item's manufacturer or model number, plus details like size, color, or shipping fees. Use the information to check comparison shopping sites that list retail stores and online sellers that have the item. Some sites let you sign up to get price alerts when prices change.

Not all comparison shopping sites are the same. Sometimes manufacturers set up sites to promote their own products. Or some companies run sites that only list or rank products if sellers pay them. Focus on comparison shopping sites that are well known and trustworthy.

How to comparison shop

- Learn the total cost of the product, including shipping, handling, delivery, taxes, or other fees.
- Read the terms of the advertised "deal." For example, will you have to buy unwanted products to get the advertised "low price"?
- Read the entire product description, including the fine print. Words like "refurbished," "vintage," or "close-out" could mean a product is in less-than-perfect condition. If expensive brand-name items are offered for bargain prices, they could be counterfeit or stolen.
- See if a seller has a price-matching policy that guarantees it will match competitors' prices and match its own in-store price to its online prices. Contact a seller if you want to request a match. Some sellers match or even go lower than their own online prices or a competitor's prices.

Find out if you'll be able to get a credit or refund if the item you buy today goes on sale next week. What records or receipts will you need?

Delivery, Return, and Refund Policies

1. Read the seller's information about shipping and delivery

- An FTC rule requires sellers to ship items as they promised in their ads. If a seller doesn't promise a time, it has to ship your order within 30 days after it gets your name, address, and payment, or permission to charge your account. Many sites offer tracking options that let you see exactly where your purchase is and estimate when you'll get it. If you pay by credit card but don't get the item, dispute the charge.

2. Check the seller's refund policies

- The site must say whether you're able to return the item for a full refund. Before you return an item, find out:
 - who pays the shipping costs for returns?
 - how many days do you have to return the item?
 - will you have to pay restocking fees?
- **Check refund policies for sale items**
 - If you buy things on sale, doublecheck the return policies. Sellers often have different refund and return policies for sale items, especially clearance merchandise.

Pay by Credit Card When Possible

Paying by credit card best protects you and your money in case of a scam, or if something else goes wrong. Make sure the websites where you enter payment information use encryption to protect your information during your transaction. Look for https at the beginning of the URL. The 's' after http means the site is encrypted — but it doesn't mean it's a legitimate site. Scammers know how to encrypt sites, too.

If you pay by credit card and are charged twice for the same item, are billed for merchandise you never got, or get the wrong item or a defective item, you'll be able to dispute the charge. In those situations, ask your credit card company to temporarily withhold payment while it investigates. To take advantage of this right, call immediately and send a letter to your credit card company that reaches the company within 60 days of the day the company mailed you the first bill showing the error.

Never buy anything from online sellers that insist you can only pay with gift cards, by wire transfers through companies like Western Union or MoneyGram, with a payment app, or with cryptocurrency. Scammers will often ask you to pay in a way that makes it hard for you to get your money back. Find out what to do if you sent money to a scammer.



Keep Records

When you buy something online, be sure to keep information about

- the company name and website
- what you ordered, the date you ordered it, and what you paid
- the seller's return policy
- the company's promise to ship, and the date it made the promise
- all email, text, and other communication you have with the company
- your credit card or bank account statements that show how you paid

Know What Personal Information the Site or App Collects

Websites and shopping apps often ask for personal information like your name, mailing address, phone number, and email. They also may collect information about the things you buy, including how much you paid, along with when, where, and how you paid. They may sell the information to other companies, like data brokers, who may combine it with other personal data to develop a detailed profile about you and sell it to other businesses.

Many shopping apps rely on location data. For example, some apps collect information about your location to tell you whether an item is available at a store near you. If you don't want the app to track your location, use your phone's privacy settings to control whether the app collects your location.

Before you use an app or website, also make sure you're okay with how your information is used, shared, and protected. If you're not, consider going to a different website or look for another app. To find out what personal information a website or an app collects, look at the privacy policy, User Agreement, or Terms of Service. Look for information about what the app developer will do with your data and how it will keep it secure.



Managing and Coping with Holiday Stress

The holidays are a fun and joyous time but also a very busy one, and holiday stress and anxiety in children can and does happen. There are lots of activities and events going on during the holidays. While that can be a good thing, the reality is that all the hustle and bustle means schedules are often changing, bedtimes get pushed back and routines are disrupted. As a result, it's inevitable that kids may feel some degree of holiday stress.

Set a calm example

The most important way parents can help ease anxiety in children during the holidays is by trying to keep things relaxed as much as possible. As with so many situations, the way parents handle an issue can set the tone for how their kids will behave. To minimize anxiety in children during the holidays, take steps to handle your own stress and anxiety.

Set up the right conditions for good behavior

Avoid taking your child to places such as the mall or holiday gatherings when they are hungry or tired. It's hard, even for adults, to deal with noise and lots of stimulation when they're not feeling their best. Kids get hungry more often and become tired more easily, and may understandably have a tough time being on their best behavior and are more likely to experience holiday stress when they're exhausted or hungry.

Routines are Important

The holidays can throw a big wrench into household routines, and that can play a role in anxiety in children. To minimize holiday stress in your kids, try to get routines back on track once an event or party is over. For instance, if a school holiday concert or a church gathering goes past your child's bedtime, try to stick to quiet, calm activities the next day and get your child to bed on time the next night.

You are what you eat

Another habit that can fall by the wayside amidst the holiday hubbub is healthy eating. Between all the extra sugary holiday snacks and the lack of time to sit down to regular meals, it can be all too easy for kids to eat less healthy foods, which can contribute to holiday stress and anxiety in children. Try packing healthy snacks when you have to go shopping or run other holiday errands and try to minimize the number of sweet treats at home.

Keep your kids moving

Fresh air and exercise are essential for boosting mood and re-setting the spirit, which can alleviate holiday stress and anxiety in children. Make sure you schedule some time to get your child outside to run around and play.

Avoid overscheduling

As tempting as it may be to accept every invitation from friends and family, try to limit your holiday parties and activities so that you and your child are not overwhelmed. A couple of events a week may be fine, but having an obligation every day can lead to holiday stress and anxiety in children.

Managing and Coping with Holiday Stress

Quiet time is good

Having some peace and quiet with your child is more important than ever during the busy holiday season. Find a quiet corner and read a book with your child or create holiday pictures for grandma and grandpa. Take a walk outside in nature, away from noise and crowds and obligations.

Remember what the holidays are all about

A great antidote for holiday stress and the bloated commercialism of the season is helping others, whether it's by shoveling an elderly neighbor's sidewalk or by wrapping presents for needy kids at your local church. Helping your grade-schooler become a charitable child will help alleviate their holiday stress and anxiety.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

One universal contributing factor to holiday stress could be a condition known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). This condition is prevalent during the winter months due to the cold temperatures, dreary days and dwindling daylight hours. Health experts recommend increased sunlight exposure, artificial light therapy, temporary use of antidepressant medications or professional counseling and therapy to combat SAD.

If you find yourself, your kids or a loved one feeling a bit too stressed this holiday season seek help by calling the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Helpline at (800) 560-5767 during business hours (M-F 8:00-4:30) or the 24/7 Toll-Free Statewide Crisis Line at 1-855-274-7414 (855-CRISIS-1).

Money, money, money...money!

The colder months can be a time of stress for parents due to the pressure to buy gifts while continuing to pay the bills, some of which are much higher in the winter months. For example, energy bills can double or even triple when the temperature drops. The Tennessee Housing Development Agency oversees a program to help residents pay their energy bills, click [here](#) to learn more.





In Humphreys County, TN, the current unemployment rate is 7.4%. Based on the US Census Bureau, the state of Tennessee unemployment rate is 9.9%. About 315,000 Tennesseans are unemployed.

WHAT IS SKILL UP TENNESSEE?

Skill Up Tennessee provides SNAP Employment and Training. We help SNAP participants gain the training and skills needed to get a good job. Our goal is to help you prepare for employment.

If you're ready to move forward on your career path, we're here to help. To be eligible, participants must:

- Receive SNAP benefits
- Not receive TANF (Families First) cash assistance
- Be willing and able to work upon completion

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Things like training, testing, and uniforms cost money, and we can help. We focus on short-term training leading to credentials that are in demand. We will pair you with a Career Navigator who will work with you on your journey to help you meet your goals.

Supportive Services

Depending on need, participants may receive financial supports such as these for approved program activities:

- Gas Cards for Transportation
- Uniforms
- Testing Fees
- Textbooks

AVAILABLE AT NO COST TO PARTICIPANTS:

Take the NEXT step today.

- Help to find the training that's right for you and the support you need
- Access to adult education and vocational training
- Work Readiness Training to help you gain professional skills valuable for employment
- Support to help you get started in your new job

Sign Up Today!

Follow this link to see if you are eligible and preregister:



tiny.utk.edu/SkillUpTN

To learn more about Tennessee Association for Family and Community Education

TAFCE Webpage:
<https://www.tafce.org>

Central Region Webpage:
<https://tafcecr.wixsite.com/2020crfce>

Eastern Region Webpage:
<https://eastern.tennessee.edu/eastern-region-fce/>

Western Region Webpage:
<https://western.tennessee.edu/family-and-community-education/>

Facebook Groups:

Tennessee Association for Family and Community Education (TAFCE)

TAFCE Masks of Love Volunteers

TAFCE, Central Region

Eastern Region FCE

Western Region Family & Community Education

Typically TAFCE designates an "issue or cause" to educate the members and to support at the local, county, region and/or state level. Most recently, members have become more knowledgeable about human trafficking awareness, the opioid epidemic, and suicide awareness and prevention.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in your community, learn new skills and make new friends.... check out FCE!

Tennessee Association for Family and Community Education is in partnership with the University of Tennessee Extension.



For information regarding local FCE Clubs, please contact:

Tennessee Association for Family and Community Education



What is TAFCE?

The Tennessee Association for Family and Community Education (TAFCE) is an organization of volunteers who work together to build strong families and communities. Local FCE clubs throughout the state of Tennessee are divided into three regions: western, central and eastern. Educational materials are created and utilized to strengthen knowledge and expertise. Resources are provided to develop leadership skills, enabling people to make a difference. Ultimately, FCE strives to make our homes and communities a better place in which to live!



Strengthening Families

TAFCE Mission: To strengthen the home and community by improving the quality of life of individuals and families through continuing education, leadership development, and community service.

To Learn

During hands-on workshops and monthly meetings, educational programs are presented. Topics are varied and relate to current issues, changes in technology, health, safety, nutrition, family economics, and more.

To Lead

Members have the opportunity to lead by serving as officers or on committees. Family and Community Leadership (FCL) training is offered to prepare members to contribute to public policy and decision making.



To Serve

Each year FCE offers projects designed to make a difference in the lives of families in the local or broader communities in which we live. FCE members have the opportunity to share and serve, working closely with other local organizations.

To Have Fun!

Fun, laughter, and friendship abound at every FCE gathering. Meetings, work sessions, camp or retreat, trips, conferences...all are occasions for fellowship and exploration of new places, activities, and new ideas!

State Projects

TAFCE encourages participation in state projects in the areas of education, community action and leadership. A long-time emphasis in education has been the support of literacy, libraries, and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. There are countless opportunities for community service, often determined by specific, local community need. The leadership area has recently been added to encourage teaching, mentoring, and assisting with 4-H programs and the Family and Community Leadership (FCL) program.

A recent statewide community service project was Masks of Love. In response to covid-19, members from across the state of Tennessee made facemasks in their homes for Emergency Management Departments, hospitals, health and rehab centers, first responders, community workers, school students, family and friends.



TAFCE member, sewing facemasks.



DECEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

Homemade

Holidays and Observances: 24: Christmas Eve, 25: Christmas Day, 31: New Year's Eve

Dates to Remember

HAPPY
HOLIDAYS