

## Winter 2011- 2012

### 2012 A Healthier Weigh

Start on the road to "*A Healthier Weigh*" in 2012 and take part in a 12-week health and fitness challenge that will be available in all Northeast Colorado counties. For most counties, the challenge begins the second week of January with team weigh-in.

This challenge involves weighing as a team, measuring waist circumference, recording activity with a pedometer, and weekly online newsletter updates on health and fitness. Teams only weigh at the beginning and the end of the challenge.

The focus is on increasing activity and making wise food choices which should result in a weight loss of approximately 4% of a team's beginning weight. There will also be optional special topic programs at the end of 4 weeks and end of 8 weeks.

The registration for 2012 A Healthier Weigh has been reduced to \$40/person or \$160/team, because we know you are still interested in health and fitness even though money is tight. Rather than have incentives for everyone at weigh-in, we'll have team incentives for progress after 4 and 8 weeks.

At the end of the challenge, teams earn *CASH prizes* for weight loss (percentage of original team weight), percentage loss of waist inches, and miles of activity recorded. For those who have been in previous challenges, graduate students at Colorado State University have developed website newsletters for our lessons. Contact your county for more information or a registration form.

*Logan County Weigh In - Monday, January 9, 7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.*

*Morgan County Weigh In - Wednesday, January 11, 4 - 7 p.m.*

*Phillips/Sedgwick County Weigh In - Thursday, January 12, TBA*

*Washington County Weigh In - Thursday, January 12, 3 - 6 p.m.*

*Yuma/Kit Carson County Weigh In - TBA*



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### EXTENSION ONLINE

[www.goldenplains.colostate.edu](http://www.goldenplains.colostate.edu)

[www.logancountyco.gov](http://www.logancountyco.gov)

[www.extension.colostate.edu/morgan](http://www.extension.colostate.edu/morgan)

Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Colorado State University Extension is implied.

## Holiday Travel with Children

Traveling during holidays is never easy, and it can be even more challenging when traveling with small children. However, holidays are a great time to visit relatives, reconnect with old friends, or even take a long-awaited family vacation. With careful planning, and staying flexible and calm, the trip can be smooth sailing.

- **Make it a family affair** by involving kids in the planning so they're psyched and invested in the trip. Tell them what to expect on the trip, especially if it's a first time experience like a plane ride. Give them tasks to do like looking up events on the web for where you're going.

- **Plan your travel** so you have allowed extra time for uncontrollable situations like bad weather, illness, or airline delays. If traveling by car, check websites to find the best route and avoid road closures. Keep an eye and ear on the weather forecasts. Avoid traveling through large cities during rush hour.

- **Take breaks** when driving. Stop every 2 hours for at least 15 minutes to stretch legs. A Frisbee or inflatable ball can provide some quick family recreation before the next stretch of riding.

- **Plan before packing** to avoid missing items or having more than you need. Some families pack a bag a day for the entire family rather than a bag per person for the entire trip. Be sure to pack 1 or 2 special toys or games for each child.

- **Bring snacks** of healthy, but easy to carry, items which don't need special containers or refrigeration. Water is the best on-the-go beverage.



## Carbon Monoxide



You can't see or smell it - but it can kill a person in just minutes. In the U.S., carbon monoxide (CO) is the leading cause of deaths from poisoning with over 500 victims each year.

Carbon monoxide is produced whenever a fuel such as gas, oil, wood, kerosene, or charcoal is burned. The amount of CO produced is dependent on the efficiency of combustion. If everything works right, little CO is produced. If appliances or furnaces are not maintained, dangerous levels can accumulate in your home.

Symptoms of CO poisoning begin much like the flu, but lead to unconsciousness when the CO bonds to red blood cells and prevents oxygen from being carried throughout the body. Sometimes small amounts of CO exist in homes causing residents to have chronic flu symptoms. The key to prevention of CO poisoning is to have all fuel consumptive appliances/equipment working properly.

Clues to a possible CO problem include:

- loose chimney connections or vents.
- debris or soot accumulation.
- rusting or water streaking on vents.
- moisture inside windows.

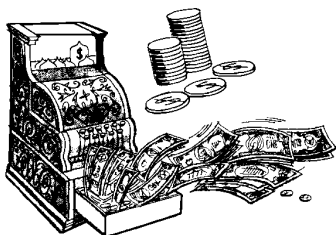
Since July 1, 2009 homeowners as well as owners of rental property in Colorado are required to install CO alarms near sleeping areas in homes which are heated with fossil fuel, have a fuel-fired appliance, a fireplace, or an attached garage. Alarms can be wired directly to the electrical system, plugged into an electrical outlet, or be battery powered.

To learn more about carbon monoxide and how to keep your home safe, fact sheet 9.939 is available from your Extension office or on the Extension website at [www.ext.colostate.edu](http://www.ext.colostate.edu) and click online publications button.

## Year End Tax Tips

You may not be thinking about managing your tax liabilities during the holiday season, but you should be. A few simple steps at the end of the year can help your 2012 tax bill.

1. **Prepay bills.** Prepaying a mortgage payment can increase the interest you have available to deduct. By making your January 1 payment on December 31, you'll have another 30 days of mortgage interest for deductions.
2. If you are self-employed, you can prepay business supplies. Or you may consider purchasing large pieces of equipment which are on a depreciation schedule to lower taxes due.
3. If you itemize deductions, giving to qualified charities should be considered. Get a receipt and make sure the funds are in the hands of the charity by December 31. For non-cash donations, keep good records on "fair market value".
4. If you have stock investments, consider donating stocks which have appreciated considerably instead of cash. You'll get credit for the value of the stock at the time of donation and won't be liable for capital gains taxes.
5. Contribute to a retirement account. IRA contribution limit is \$5000 for those under 50 years and \$6000 for those older, and contributions are tax deductible.
6. Contribute to the 529 college savings plans for children's education. Colorado allows deductions for contributions.



## Energy Costs Cuts Begins at Home

This time next year, wouldn't it be nice to have an extra \$400 in the bank for holiday shopping? That much money may be slipping under the door or down the drain in energy costs.

Try these painless steps and see how quickly you can add extra money to your bank account.

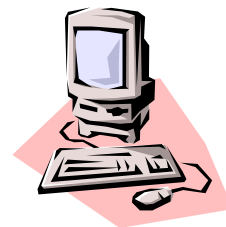
### ✓ **Replace Light Bulbs with CFLs.**

Compact fluorescent light bulbs use about 75% less energy than incandescent and last 7-10 times longer. Switch just 10 of your most used bulbs to CFLs and you'll save around \$60 a year.

✓ **Get a Programmable Thermostat.** Set the thermostat to lower the temperature about 8 degrees when you're not there or when asleep. That will save about \$100 a year for an average-sized home.

### ✓ **Give Computers a Break.**

You'll save \$75 or more a year if you set the computer to standby or hibernating when not used. Video-game consoles draw power even when they're off or in standby mode. Unplug the console when not used and save \$125/year.



✓ **Use Water Efficiently.** You'll save about \$60 a year in hot water costs by washing clothes in cold water without sacrificing clean duds. Stop rinsing dishes before loading the dishwasher and save \$75 a year in water-heating and reduce water use by as much as 6,500 gallons.

Source: Adapted from Consumer Reports Money Advisor, December 2011

## Clean Out Your Wallet

Wallets and purses can be a collection point for credit cards, gift cards, ID cards, or anything else that fits. Unfortunately, if you lose the purse or wallet, all that's in there is gone also.

Credit cards can be cancelled and bank accounts can be frozen as soon as you discover the loss. But you can't so easily stop the use of ID cards. Since these usually have name, date of birth and may have your Social Security number, there is a great chance of being used for fraudulent activity - possibility identity theft.

Make a New Year's resolution to clean out the wallet or purse and remove the excess items you only need occasionally.

## What's a QR Code?

Have you noticed those odd looking black and white squares in the newspaper, magazines, advertisements, even mail inserts? It's a QR (Quick Response) Code.



The QR Code is a two-dimensional barcode image which can imbed a URL which is a website address. It can also encode text or other information. It can be read by "smart" phones if there is a QR code reader app.

QR codes link print products to online content so you can access more information than can be provided in a small ad or even a paper or magazine article.

Besides QR Code, there are other products that do the same thing including Snap Tag and Microsoft Tags. SnapTag is a disc shape with the product logo for a company in the center and the 2D barcode circles near the outer edge of the tag.

## Small Business Health Insurance

Just in time for 2012, a new web-based tool from Dept. of Health and Human Services allows small business owners to compare the benefits and costs of health plans and make the best choice for their employees. This tool lets small businesses research locally available products.

In addition to the market being difficult to analyze, small businesses do not fare as well as large employers when negotiating health care prices. On average, small businesses spend 18 percent more for the same health insurance coverage. This new tool will help ensure insurance companies will compete for business on the basis of price and quality.

More than 350 insurers with more than 2,700 plans across the nation have provided information for the website. To access the information, go to [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) and click on the blue box tab at the top - Find Insurance Options.

Source: US Dept Health and Human Services, Nov, 2011

## Energy Efficiency Tax Credits

You could qualify for Federal Energy Tax Credits, but if so, you'll need to act fast as some of the credits expire December 31, 2011. For energy efficiency updates to an existing home which is your principal residence, you can get a credit of 10% of the cost up to \$500.



Items qualifying include insulation, windows, doors, water heaters, air conditioners, certain furnaces and other heat sources including biomass stoves. Go to [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) and search for tax credits for complete details.

## Gluten Free, Stress Free Holidays

If you have family or friends who follow a gluten-free lifestyle, you may feel challenged to prepare a meal they can enjoy. Gluten is the protein in many cereal grains which helps give baked products structure. For a person who is gluten sensitive, eating it can cause unpleasant, serious side effects. Here are tips to help you plan and prepare foods.

- Check ingredient lists. Sometimes the most unexpected foods contain gluten, such as seasoning mixes, ketchup, and even the turkey.
- Serve buffet style. Put gluten-free foods on a separate table rather than co-mingling all dishes. Dipping a wheat cracker in the hummus instantly contaminates it for the gluten-free guest.
- Keep gluten-free foods separate from other foods during preparation. For some people, even very small amounts of gluten can trigger digestive problems.
- Provide gluten-free foods such as fruits, veggies, beans, low-fat dairy products, seafood, poultry and lean meats, nuts and seeds. Rice, potatoes, corn, oatmeal and quinoa are gluten-free.
- Use gluten-free alternatives as substitutions in many recipes. Examples might be rice noodles rather than wheat noodles in pasta dishes, using cornstarch to thicken sauces, or using gluten-free bread or corn bread to make stuffing.

Source: Adapted from "Gluten Free Holiday Strategies Minimize Stress," Shirley Perryman, CSU Extension Specialist, November 28, 2011



## Refrigerate That Pie

Even though you will see pumpkin pie displayed without refrigeration, you should NOT leave your home baked pie on the counter or table. Any pie baked with eggs, and/or milk and which has high moisture content will attract bacteria growth if left at room temperature.

The formulas for commercial pies aren't the same as home baked. They use shelf-stable ingredients and preservatives to discourage bacterial growth. You can check the product label for the letters "RT" which indicates the pie can be kept at room temperature. Also check the "sell by" and "use by" dates on these products, because even those can't be left out forever.

## "Diet" Out - "Zero" In

In the constant marketing of weight management foods, what's "IN" changes about every 5 years. The terms diet, low-fat, and low-calorie are out of favor, and new words like ZERO are now being seen in lots of products. The 100-calorie portion controlled packaging has peaked and companies will be looking for new ways to market.

The market research firm Datamonitor reports consumers are now seeking out products for what they contain instead of what they don't contain. Their research reports 55% of Americans are actively trying to lose weight with another 22% fighting weight gain.

Source: Tufts Health and Nutrition Letter, November 18, 2011

## Keep Bananas Fresh

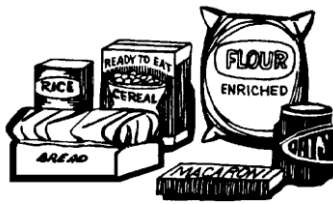
Are you tired of having bananas turn black in just a few days? Try this. Rather than leaving the bananas attached to each other in a bunch, pull the bunch apart when you unpack your groceries. They will stay firm longer and will not darken as rapidly as if left bunched.

## Too Much Fiber??

In the United States, the problem for most of us is not too much fiber - but too little. The recommended intake is 25 to 38 grams a day, depending on one's calorie intake. It's important to meet those levels. Eating foods high in fiber, including fruit, vegetables, and whole grains, can reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers. It can also improve digestion and help maintain a healthy weight by making you feel full longer.

While there's no upper limit for fiber from food sources, too much may cause stomach discomfort, bloating, gas, nausea, and diarrhea. This may also occur if you rapidly increase the amount of fiber in the diet. Spreading fiber intake over the course of a day might help with these problems. Also, drink plenty of fluids when eating food high in fiber to prevent constipation.

Source: Consumer Reports On Health – Dec 2011



## Eat More Whole Grains

Speaking of fiber, in a British study people who ate an extra 3 servings daily of whole grains were 17% less likely to develop colorectal cancer. And, overall they found a high intake of dietary fiber was associated with a 12% lower risk of colorectal cancer compared to participants with the lowest intake. For each 10-gram increase in total daily fiber consumption, cancer occurrence dropped 10%, with the primary difference seen in the incidence of colon cancer.

Source: Tufts Health and Nutrition Letter, November 18, 2011

## Reheating in Microwave

Reheating food is the main use of microwave ovens, but most people do not do it correctly and don't get food hot enough to kill bacteria.

To kill bacteria, the internal temperature of all parts of the food must be 165 degrees. The only way to know if the food is hot enough is to use a food thermometer. The food will look much hotter to the eye than it is. It may even release steam before it reaches 165 degrees.

As food is heating, rotate the dish several times if the oven does not have a rotating turntable. If the food can be stirred during heating, stop the heating several times and stir food, moving cooler food from the outside edge to the center and hot food to the outside.

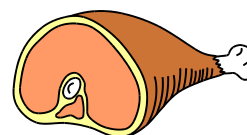
## Food Storage - Safety & Quality

How long will food kept in the refrigerator or freezer be safe to eat? It depends.

Uncooked shell eggs can be kept 3 weeks in the refrigerator, but once cooked, need to be eaten within 1 week. Raw chicken should be used within 1 to 2 days. Fried chicken can be kept for 3 to 4 days in the refrigerator.

Frozen foods can be kept indefinitely, BUT they may not taste very good. And, freezing does not kill bacteria. When thawing frozen food, do it in the refrigerator and handle it the same as you would have before it was frozen.

CSU Extension has a fact sheet (9.310) on food storage available at your county Extension office or you can print it from the CSU Extension website at [www.ext.colostate.edu](http://www.ext.colostate.edu) and select online publications.



## Healthy Holiday Eating

Holidays are a busy time filled with the 3 "Fs" -Family, Friends, and Food. Healthy eating during holidays is challenging, especially for those who have diabetes. However, you don't need to give up favorite foods. Use the following tips at your holiday table.

**Don't skip meals.** Start the day with a wholesome breakfast, and lunch before going to holiday celebrations. Eating regular meals throughout the day keeps blood sugar in a normal range and you're less likely to overeat.

**Control portion sizes.** Remember there are no bad foods - you can enjoy every dish if you eat appropriate portions and be frugal on adding lots of extras such as gravy, butter, sauces, etc. Eat slowly and focus on friends and family rather than the food.

**Try new seasonings** in place of lots of butter, salt, cheese or soup mix sauces. Use fresh or dried herbs like thyme, sage, basil, garlic, etc.

**Drink water** rather than special holiday drinks like eggnog which are high in fat and sugar. Alcoholic beverages can add lots of calories from the soda or other high sugar mixes used with them. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.

**Enjoy dessert** rather than deny yourself. Have a small sliver of pie or cake rather than a large slice. Go easy on the whipped cream or other dessert toppings. Offer to provide a fresh fruit compote as a dessert for the dinner.

**Include physical activity** as the normal routine for each day of the holiday madness. Activity combined with wise food choices will help you stay in shape for 2012.

Source: Adapted from Extension Corner, CSU Extension, T. Trumper, Phillips County and Rutgers Cooperative Extension, K. Ensle & B. Press, Union County

## Have Dairy !!

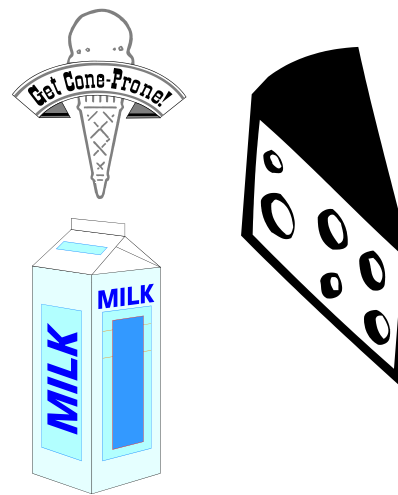
The dairy food group of milk, cheese, yogurt, and other foods is a substantial contributor of many nutrients in the U.S. diet which are important for good health. These nutrients include more than just calcium which everyone associates with strong bones and teeth.

Other important nutrients in dairy foods include potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, zinc, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin B 12, and riboflavin. These nutrients help with heart function as well as muscle and nerve function.

Americans aged 2 years and older consume only about 2 dairy servings a day, on average. This means they are getting around 600 milligrams of calcium, not the recommended amount of between 800 and 1200 milligrams. By adding just one more dairy serving a day, a person can meet the minimum recommendation from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.

If you're concerned about dairy products being high in fat, there is now a wide variety of low-fat or fat-free foods. If you don't normally use these products, start by using half of a higher fat product and half low-fat. Gradually increase the proportion of low-fat.

Source: Dairy Council Digest, National Dairy Council, September/October 2011



## AgrAbility Workshops

For a person with rheumatoid arthritis, getting out of bed can be difficult. For a rancher or farmer, the same diagnosis can make running an agricultural operation nearly impossible.

To help agricultural producers facing physical challenges, AgrAbility can provide hope and tools. Colorado AgrAbility is a nationally funded program from Colorado State University Extension and Goodwill Industries of Denver.

Workshops presented across Colorado in 2012 will teach ranchers and farmers about changes they can make to help them be successful in their agricultural business. Professionals who work with these clients will also learn about the resources and other programs available for disabled agricultural producers.

Workshops in Northeast Colorado will be:

- ▶ Tuesday, February 7  
Phillips County Extension Office
  
- ▶ Wednesday, February 8  
Morgan County Extension Center.

Each workshop is provided without charge and meets from 9 to noon. Lunch will be provided for those registered at least 1 week prior to the program.

For workshop brochure contact the Phillips or Morgan County Extension offices or email Robert Fetsch at [robert.fetsch@colostate.edu](mailto:robert.fetsch@colostate.edu).



## Small Steps to Health and Wealth

What if, this year, you could improve your health *and* your wealth at the same time? This new program offered by Extension will address how financial problems can affect your health *and* how poor health can affect your finances.

Programs are hands-on, packed full of health and finance tips, and provided in a supportive setting. You'll learn why starting with small chunks of physical activity can add up to huge health benefits; and how you can make small savings of a few dollars each day add up to thousands by the end of the year.

Programs will be offered in all the Northeast Colorado counties in the spring. Contact the Extension office in your county to be notified when programs are scheduled.

More details in the next newsletter.



## Retired - Be a Volunteer

For those retired, volunteering can be a great way to stay connected and also make new friends. You might even learn a new skill and most important, it keeps your mind active and gives you a reason to get up and get going every day.

Before just jumping in at the first thing you find, consider evaluating what is the best role for you. Think about goals, interests and the passions you have. You may want to select an area which ties in with a hobby or interest.

Once you find the place to volunteer, be sure to ask what is expected of you such as time, hours, and training. Is it a "lifetime" role or is it short term? Many individuals enjoy doing a specific volunteer "job" and then move on to another role.

## Mark Your Calendars

For details on any event listed, contact the Extension Office in the county where the event will occur. Contact information for each office is listed on the first page of this newsletter.

### December - -

- 9 Morgan County Diabetes Success - *No December Meeting*
- 26 Extension Offices Closed, Christmas Holiday



### January - -

Strong People Stay Healthy programs will meet January through March at:

- Pioneer Haven, Akron - Monday and Friday, 9 a.m.
- Extension Meeting Room, Akron - Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 4:30 p.m.
- Senior Center, Akron - Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m.
- Perry Bros., Otis - Tuesday and Thursday, 4:30 p.m.
- First Baptist Church, Yuma - Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m.

- 2 Extension Offices Closed, New Year's Holiday
- 13 Morgan County Diabetes Success, 12 Noon, Colorado Plains Medical Center, Fort Morgan

### February - -

- 2 A Matter of Balance class begins, Tuesday & Thursdays, 8 weeks through March 29, 10- 11 a.m., Ft. Morgan Senior Center
- 7 AgrAbility Workshop, 9 am - Noon, Phillips County Events Center
- 8 AgrAbility Workshop, 9 am - Noon, Morgan County Extension meeting room
- 8 Partners in Parenting classes begin, Wednesdays through March 21, 6 - 8 p.m., Sherman Early Childhood Center, Fort Morgan
- 10 Morgan County Diabetes Success, 12 Noon, Colorado Plains Medical Center, Fort Morgan
- 15 Cooking Matters begin, Wednesdays, 6 sessions through March 21, 10:30 am - 1 pm, Morgan County Extension Center
- 19 Registration Due for November ServSafe Food Handler Training



### March --

- 10 Morgan County Diabetes Success, 12 Noon, Colorado Plains Medical Center, Fort Morgan
- 21 ServSafe Food Handlers' Training, 9 am - 3 pm, Brush

**If you received this newsletter in the mail, BUT would like to receive future issues by email or access it on the Extension website, contact the Extension Office in your county with your email address (see page 1 to contact each office).**