



ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge. To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact Christa Albice, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4541, e-mail albice@wsu.edu.

To access past issues, go to
<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/take5/index.html>.

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This Month's Focus- *Preserving Food at Home*

Summer's peak produce season is upon us and many consumers are eager to preserve our delicious local fruits and vegetables to enjoy later in the year. As nutrition educators, we want to provide good guidance so that they can do this successfully and safely. Canning and pickling are increasingly trendy, and people can easily find a wide variety of resources on the web and in social media, accurate or not. Because preserving certain foods incorrectly can lead to serious health consequences, it's important to provide reputable, current methods for the foods that people want to "put up." Whether the produce comes from a farmer's market, a gleaned field, a generous neighbor, a backyard garden, or a food bank, nutrition educators can help consumers preserve the delicious flavors of the Pacific Northwest's summer. In this issue of the *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators*, we will look at some of the local and national resources to help people preserve food beautifully and safely.



Photo courtesy of Martha Marino

Preserving the Words of a Pro – For this issue of the *Energize Newsletter*, we conducted an extended interview with Margaret Viebrock, WSU Extension Douglas County, who has been teaching consumers for many years about home food preservation. Here are some of her observations and tips for nutrition educators.

Current Canning Trends. Young people are increasingly interested in canning, but the foods they want to can are a bit different from previous generations. Pie fillings, salsas, and lower sugar jams hold appeal, not just for their own consumption but to give as gifts. Pickling cucumbers is ever-popular, and other vegetables of current interest include beets, carrots, asparagus, dilled beans, and sauerkraut. Preservation isn't limited to fruits and vegetables: people who hunt and fish want to can these protein foods. Budget-conscious consumers are gleaned more than before, and they are canning and freezing the foods that they bring home. Although adult women continue to be interested in learning to can or enhancing their practiced skills, millennials and men are newer audiences.

Freezing. Margaret says more people freeze foods to preserve them because it is so easy. Food safety isn't a concern as it may be with canning, but food quality is. Freezer burn occurs when ice crystals form on the food. This can be prevented by squishing out the air in the zippered, sealable bags in which the food is stored. A good first step is to lay foods such as green beans or strawberries flat on a cookie sheet (some foods need to be blanched first), freeze them until solid, then scoop them into freezer bags. For some foods, just fill the bags, lay them flat on a cookie sheet to freeze in stackable blocks.

Resources. Margaret recommends the recently updated handouts on Washington State University's website which cover a range of food preservation topics including freezing, drying, and pickling at <https://pubs.wsu.edu/ListItems.aspx?Keyword=preservation> and at

<https://pubs.wsu.edu/ListItems.aspx?CategoryID=234>. She also recommends the National Center for Home Food Preservation at www.uga.edu/nchfp and other state extension offices. Consumers should be cautious of canning recommendations on the internet that appear to be science-based. She says that just because canning information is posted on the internet, it doesn't mean it is anything more than personal opinion and experiences being shared.

Curious Questions: When asked what was the oddest thing that a consumer wanted to can, she had three. She has received calls asking how to can bacon, milk, and butter! Who would have ever guessed?! It's important to know that there are no tested recipes for any of these products, regardless of what appears on the internet.

(Contact: Margaret Viebrock, Director, WSU Extension Douglas County, 509-745-8531, viebrock@wsu.edu)

New Online Food Preservation Lessons – Whether consumers want to know about canning, freezing, pickling or other aspects of home food preservation, they can find the information in a new online series of lessons offered by WSU called *Preserve the Taste of Summer*. Useful for beginners as well as those with decades of experience, the eight lessons cover the most current USDA-approved recommendations. There's no schedule or sequence, so it's perfect for people to do independently and also for use as a class. Cost for the series is \$25.00; total time to take all lessons is about four hours. For information and registration, see <http://preservesummer.cahnrs.wsu.edu>. (Contact: Margaret Viebrock, Director, WSU Extension Douglas County, 509-745-8531, viebrock@wsu.edu.)



Artwork courtesy of Washington State University Extension



Artwork courtesy of University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Botulism Prevention – Although botulism poisoning from home-canned vegetables is rare, even a small taste of contaminated food may cause nerve damage, paralysis, and death. Home canners who have worked so hard to preserve their veggies to share with their families and friends certainly wouldn't want to cause harm. The challenge is preventing the growth of a toxin made by the germ *Clostridium botulinum*. It is found in soil and it can survive, grow, and produce toxin even in a properly sealed jar. The key is following up-to-date, scientifically tested guidelines. Although it's tempting to follow a recipe handed down from a trusted friend, it's best to use current methods. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers a list of websites that have sound, step-by-step instructions on its page, "Home Canning and Botulism," at <http://www.cdc.gov/features/homecanning/>. It also lists things to look for if a home-canned vegetable might be at risk, as well as symptoms of poisoning from botulism.

Boosting Your Canning Expertise – University of Georgia Cooperative Extension offers a free online canning course and a recorded webinar on food preservation, including the science behind canning methods and storage guidance. See the National Center for Home Food Preservation's web site at <http://nchfp.uga.edu/> for more information.

Pinterest Board with How-To's – For canning, freezing, and pickling information with great photos, see University of Nebraska's collection at www.pinterest.com/nebraskacarol/UNL-canning-and-freezing.

Mason Jars – The popping sound of a mason jar can bring a sigh of satisfaction to a home canner or a fond memory of grandma's kitchen. The mason jar isn't a brand but rather a type of jar made from tempered glass that can be used both at high temperatures for canning and cold temperatures for freezing. The jars, often made by the Ball and Kerr companies, are stamped with the word "mason" to indicate the type of glass jar. It's named after its inventor, John Landis Mason, who patented the jar in 1858.

WASHINGTON GROWN

Fresh This Month – Washington is in high season for a bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Farmers' markets are full to overflowing with produce from both sides of our state. Just a sample of vegetables are broccoli, broccoli rabe, carrots in various hues, celery, kohlrabi, lettuce of many varieties, mushrooms, onions, potatoes, summer squash in greens and yellows, tomatoes, and zucchini blossoms. Cherries are nearing the end of season, and other stone fruits are beginning to show including donut peaches, nectarines, and apricots. It's a terrific time to "Eat Your Colors" with the rainbow of produce that's fresh and local. For a black-and-white master listing fruits and vegetables by color, see <http://www.nwgapublichealth.org/wellness/archsept/C5-FVbyColorGroupList.pdf>.



Photo courtesy of Washington State University, College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences

OUR MISSION: *The Nutrition Education Network* coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. *Energize* is one way that *the Network* shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Washington State University's ice cream called Apple Cup Crisp was named the grand champion in a national competition earlier this month. In a contest among 12 university-made ice cream flavors, it came in tops followed by Cornell University's Bavarian Raspberry Fudge. Apple Cup Crisp is made from vanilla ice cream with green and spiced apple flavors, caramel, and chunks of oatmeal cookies. As many Washingtonians know, the name Apple Cup refers to the annual football game between the Washington State University (WSU) Cougars and the University of Washington (UW) Huskies.



EAT TOGETHER EAT BETTER – Family Meals Focus

Because our readers have told us that Family Meals is a hot topic, in the May 2011 issue we began a small section on recent news relating to this topic and our long-standing signature program, Eat Together, Eat Better.

August is Kids Eat Right Month. Next month, nutrition educators can join an effort to help kids eat right and get plenty of activity. the “Kids Eat Right” campaign by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics will target parents and caregivers since they can teach kids about healthful foods and serve as positive role models. One of campaign’s key points focuses on family meals: “Sit down together as a family to enjoy a wonderful meal and the opportunity to share the day’s experiences with one another. Research indicates that those families who eat together have a stronger bond, and children have higher self-confidence and perform better in school.” For resources, see the Kids Eat Right website at www.eatright.org/kids/article.aspx?id=6442481602. For resources promoting family meals produced locally through a partnership between WSU Extension Food \$ense, USDA FNS SNAP-Ed, and the Washington State Dairy Council, go to <http://nutrition.wsu.edu/eteb/index.html> and www.eatsmart.org, enter “eat together” in the search box.

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