

VISIONS

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES

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Enjoy the taste of Jersey Fresh produce. Visit a farmer's market, roadside market, or pick your own farm. For listings of markets and farms, go to the NJ Department of Agriculture's web site: <http://www.state.nj.us/jerseyfresh> or call your county RCE office.

Take Time for Tea!

Kathleen Shimomura, M.Ed, DTR
FCHS Educator,
RCE of Hunterdon County

Whether you are having 'High Tea' at the Ritz or drinking your morning cup of tea at the kitchen table, there are many health benefits in that cup of tea. The age-old *Camellia sinensis* (tea) plant is the source of all nonherbal teas. *C. sinensis* leaves are processed to produce the major classes of teas known as green, black, and oolong. The processing that the leaves undergo is what makes each tea different. The leaves for black tea are withered then fully fermented. Oolong tea is withered and partially fermented to give it the delicate flavor of green tea and add the richer flavor of black tea. The leaves for green tea are withered then lightly steamed. Today about 75% of the tea produced worldwide is black, about 23% is green, and about 2% is oolong.

White tea accounts for only a very small amount of the tea produced. It is a rare form of tea that is made with the very smallest, youngest buds of *C. sinensis*. The buds are plucked only once a year before they open in the early spring. The best quality of white tea is made entirely from buds covered with downy, white hairs. This tea is minimally processed, usually just steamed and air-dried.

C. sinensis leaves contain beneficial compounds called flavonoids, which also provide many fruits and vegetables with an antioxidant boost. All teas contain similar types of

flavonoids, however they differ in the amount of each type they contain. Black and oolong teas contain more complex flavonoids called theaflavins and thearubigins. Green and white teas contain more of the simple flavonoids called catechins.

Health Benefits of Drinking Tea

Heart Disease and Stroke. Flavonoids from green tea may decrease the risk of heart disease. Drinking black tea along with a diet moderately low in fat and cholesterol reduces total and LDL cholesterol by significant amounts and may reduce the risk of heart disease.

Cancer. Tea has long been tied to a lower risk of stomach, colon and breast cancer. Rutgers University researchers have shown that a compound in black tea called TF-2 caused colon cancer cells to "commit suicide" and normal cells were unaffected.

Osteoporosis. Researchers in Taiwan have found that people who drank an average of 2 cups of black, green, or oolong tea daily for at least 6 years had stronger bones.

Body's Defense Against Disease. A chemical in tea appears to boost the body's defense against disease up to 5 times. Dr. Butkowski from Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston encourages people to drink 5 cups of tea a day to sharpen the body's defenses against disease.

For the best health benefits from tea, drink a variety of teas, black, green, oolong, and white.

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Is Your Asthma Under Control ...Or Does It Control You?

Fast Fact:

According to the Centers for Disease Control, strength training reduces symptoms of arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, back pain, and depression. Seek your physician's advice before beginning a strength-training program.

Joe Ponessa, PhD, Extension Specialist in Housing and Energy

Since the 1970's, asthma rates have steadily increased. Health officials are concerned that this disease is approaching epidemic levels. Asthma is especially prevalent in inner city areas, affecting 25 to 50% of children.

Asthma is responsible for more missed school days than any other disease. This often means that a parent must stay home from work to care for the child. While more and better medicines become available each year, serious asthma attacks continue. In 1999, there were some 14,654 visits to New Jersey emergency rooms for asthma attacks.

Asthma can't be cured, but it can be controlled. Nearly everyone who has asthma can lead a normal life. So if you have asthma or know someone who does, first decide if it is under control. According to medical specialists, not all patients answer this question correctly. Many think their asthma is under control, when it is not.

So what does "control" mean for asthma patients? According to the latest guidelines, asthma is under control if patients:

- Need "rescue" medication no more than 2 times per week.
- Are awakened by breathing problems no more than 2 times per month.
- Need no more than 2 canisters of "rescue" medicine in a year.

If patients exceed these standards, their asthma is **not** under control. Some patients believe their asthma is under control because they get relief through daily use of rescue medicines. If this is the case, they need to speak with their doctor.



Nearly all asthma patients can achieve this level of control by using asthma "trigger" control and "controller" medication.

Asthma "triggers" are things that set off an asthma attack. They are different for different people. Some common triggers are dust mites, roaches, pets, tobacco and wood smoke, and strong odors (perfumes, cleaning agents). Sometimes, exercise, cold air, or even strong emotions can set off attacks. Asthma patients need to learn which triggers affect them and take steps to avoid or control their triggers. For example, those who experience asthma attacks when exercising should take "controller" medicine before exercising.

"Controller" medicines reduce sensitivity to triggers. These medicines are usually taken regularly, even when the patient feels fine. They prevent attacks or reduce their severity. There are many kinds of controller medicines, so patients need to work with their doctor to find which one is best for them.

New medicines are available to treat asthma, and medical guidelines for treatment have recently been revised. So if asthma patients are seeing a doctor and taking their medicines as prescribed, and still not getting control, they may need to get a second opinion.

The most important thing to know is that in nearly all cases, asthma can be controlled. Most asthma patients can lead normal lives.

VISIONS

is published three times yearly and sent upon request, without charge.

Published by
Rutgers Cooperative Extension
Dept. of Family & Community Health
Sciences

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Pumpkin – Not Just for Pie

Daryl Minch, M.Ed., CFCS
FCHS Educator,
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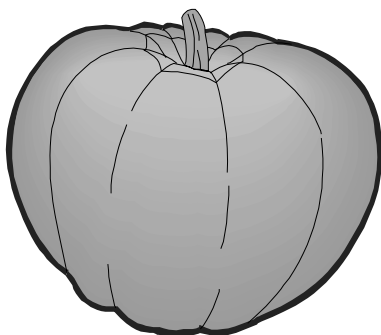
Pumpkins have been used for centuries. Native Americans roasted pumpkin on an open fire before eating. The colonists made the first pumpkin “pie” by cutting off the top of a pumpkin, removing the seeds and filling it with milk, spices and honey, then baking it in hot ashes. Yum!

Selection

New Jersey farmers harvest about 2,500 acres of Jersey Fresh™ pumpkins each year for the fresh market. Look for a pumpkin that’s heavy for its size without any soft spots. Shape and color do not matter. The stem should be on the pumpkin. A family in Oregon grew a world record, 1,385-pound pumpkin, in 2003!

Nutrition

Bright orange pumpkin is an excellent source of the antioxidant beta-carotene. Research shows that beta-carotene may reduce the risk of developing certain cancers and protect against heart disease. One cup of cooked pumpkin has 49 calories, 3 grams fiber, 12 grams carbohydrate, 0 grams of fat, 26% Daily Value (DV) Vitamin A, 19% DV Vitamin C, 16% DV potassium, 11% DV riboflavin and 6% DV folate.



Puree Preparation

One pound of pumpkin will yield about one cup of puree.

1. Scrub pumpkin under running water.
2. Remove the stem and cut the pumpkin in half.
3. Save the seeds for roasting, if desired, or discard. Scrape away the stringy interior.
4. Cook the raw pumpkin one of these ways:
 - Boiling: Cut pumpkin into chunks. Place in pot with one or two cups of water. It does not have to cover the pumpkin. Cover and boil until tender. Drain. Liquid may be saved for soup.
 - Oven: Place pumpkin halves or large chunks face down on pan. Bake at 350° F for an hour or until tender.
 - Microwave: Place pumpkin halves or chunks face down on dish. Microwave on high for 15 minutes. Check doneness. If needed, continue to microwave in 1 to 2 minutes intervals until tender.
5. Cool pumpkin. When cool enough to handle, use a knife to remove the peel.
6. Puree pumpkin in batches in a food processor or use a potato masher.
7. Use, refrigerate (use within 3 days) or freeze in 1-cup portions (keeps 1 year in freezer).

Menu ideas:

- Add cubed fresh pumpkin to stew
- Roast the seeds for a snack
- Add to pancake batter
- Make pumpkin bread, muffins, or snack bars
- Bake a pie or custard
- Stir in cinnamon and brown sugar and serve instead of mashed potatoes
- Use a hollowed-out pumpkin as a container for soup or flowers



Pumpkin Soup

Serves 8

2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 large apple, peeled, cored & chopped
5 cups vegetable or chicken stock
1-cup apple juice or cider
¼ cup maple syrup
1 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp coriander, optional
½ tsp nutmeg
2 cups prepared pumpkin puree (16 ounce can)
1–12 ounce can evaporated skim milk
Half & Half, for garnish, optional

1. In 6-quart saucepan, sauté onion and apple in oil until soft.
2. Add broth, apple juice, maple syrup, spices, and pumpkin. Stir well. Heat to boil, then simmer uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. If desired, puree the soup. [May make ahead to here and refrigerate or freeze. Reheat before next step.]
4. Add evaporated milk and heat for 5 minutes. Do not boil or soup will curdle.
5. Serve immediately. Garnish each bowl with one teaspoon of half and half, if desired.

Nutrition information per serving: 180 calories, 5 grams fat, 140% DV Vitamin A, 11% DV for Vitamin C, 18% DV for calcium

Did you know that you may substitute a winter squash (Butternut, Acorn, Calabaza, Hubbard, etc.) for pumpkin in most recipes? Their nutritional value is similar.

Take Time for Tea!

Continued from front page

Buy tea in bags or leaves and keep it sealed in airtight containers. Keep in mind that bottled tea and instant tea have fewer antioxidants than brewed tea. Also, herbal teas do not have the same health properties as real tea (*C. sinensis*). Tea with caffeine has slightly more antioxidants than decaffeinated tea.

What About Caffeine?

Some people are concerned about the caffeine they consume in various forms. Caffeine is a naturally occurring substance found in coffee, cocoa beans, cola nuts, and tea leaves. An 8-ounce cup of tea contains about 50 mg. of caffeine, one third less than an 8-ounce cup of instant coffee (75 mg). Up to 300 mg of caffeine (6 cups of tea) is considered moderate with no evidence of harmful effects in the most adults.

A Perfect Cup... For that perfect cup of tea, steep tea leaves or bags in hot water for 3 to 5 minutes to thoroughly release antioxidants. Adding milk to tea does not block absorption of antioxidants. So for your health's sake, turn on the kettle, choose your favorite tea-cup, and reap the health benefits that tea may offer!

For more information, visit: <http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/phytochemicals.teaflav/>

Prevent Weight Gain After You Stop Smoking

Karen M. Ensle, Ed.D., R.D., FADA, CFCS, FCHS Educator RCE of Union County

"You've Come A Long Way, Baby" is a cigarette slogan that portrays a slim, lithe lady who is liberated and independent. What this image does not illustrate is why some individuals choose to smoke. For many, smoking is a coping mechanism that is used to reduce stress and boredom. Some also smoke to maintain an appropriate body weight—but, smoking is not safe for any reason, including weight control.

Will individuals gain weight when they decide to stop smoking? The answer may be "yes" for some individuals. Smokers usually weigh less than nonsmokers and gain 5 to 30 pounds within 6 months after quitting. Heavy smokers (1 pack or more a day) tend to gain more weight when they stop smoking than light smokers. There are two main reasons why smokers who quit gain weight.

1. Their Metabolic Rate Decreases

Nicotine in cigarettes increases the metabolic rate of many smokers. Ex-smokers burn 100 to 200 fewer calories each day than they did when they were smokers. These 100 to 200 calories per day multiply into 700 to 1400 additional calories NOT burned each week. Not a desirable situation! Some researchers believe that nicotine causes the metabolic rate to rise by increasing the level of insulin in the blood which decreases the body's ability to store fat. When nicotine is cut off, hunger is triggered and fat storage is increased. Thus, the ex-smoker is faced with a change in metabolism that causes fewer calories to be burned, body fat to increase, and weight gain.

2. Their Food Intake Increases

It's a fact that when smokers quit, they tend to eat greater quantities of food be-

cause they feel hungrier. The increased hunger they feel is probably due to the decreasing levels of nicotine. Nicotine is an appetite suppressant. That is why some forms of nicotine replacement, such as chewing gums and patches, seem to help heavy smokers keep weight gain under control. Picking the best nicotine product may help smokers quit according to a team of researchers at University of Pennsylvania Tobacco Use Research Center in Philadelphia. Nicotine patches and nasal sprays were equally effective at helping smokers quit. The effectiveness varied depending on personal characteristics and obesity. Those who were obese and highly addicted to smoking were able to quit easier when they used the nasal spray rather than the long-term patch. Positive reinforcement of the spray seemed to work better for this group.

Smokers also may eat more because they have an improved sense of smell and taste. Their enhanced ability to taste foods often triggers and increased intake of foods, especially sweets, that leads to weight gain.

Successful Weight Management for Former Smokers

For good health, it is important to stop smoking *and* to keep weight under control after quitting. The key to successful weight management is a commitment to following instructions and making lifestyle changes related to eating, exercise, and self-confidence that you have the power to control your own behavior. Here are some tips to help ex-smokers prevent weight gain or lose weight *and* stay off tobacco.

1. Curb Hunger and Food Cravings

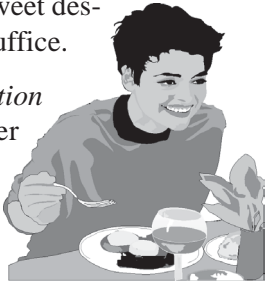
The absence of cigarettes often creates a craving for something to fill that void. Many crave sweets and find themselves

Prevent Weight Gain After You Stop Smoking

Continued from previous page

indulging in more dessert and snack foods. Whether the craving is due to hunger or boredom, former smokers need to remember to:

- *Delay eating extra foods.* The craving will pass whether you eat or not.
- *Choose calories wisely.* A small portion of food, especially those high in calories like a sweet dessert often will suffice.
- *Be aware of portion sizes.* Remember the words: small portion! Restaurant dishes are sometimes double and triple the amount that should be eaten at one meal. Ask for a doggie bag and enjoy the left-overs the next day.
- *Increase fluids.* Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water daily. It helps to flush nicotine from the body and keeps the body hydrated. Also, water helps to stabilize blood pressure and electrolyte levels.
- *Write it down.* Former smokers should keep a “diary” of all foods being consumed and also state their feelings. This could help them individualize the ways they control their hunger and cravings.

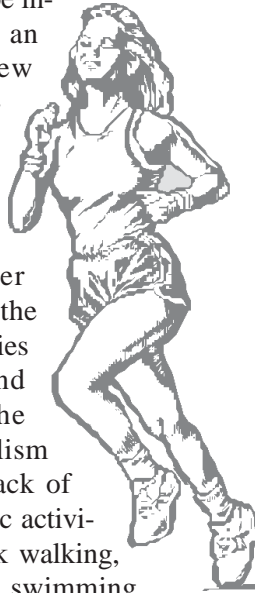


2. Learn New Ways to Cope with Stress and Boredom

- Breathe deeply. Sit, relax, slowly inhale, and exhale deeply. Listen to soothing music and concentrate on other daily activities.
- Become involved in other activities. Many people tend to smoke more during times of boredom and stress. New activities can help you stay busy and not eat. Remember, you must motivate yourself to quit and stay off cigarettes. You also must be committed to following a plan that includes more physical activity and less calorie consumption.

3. Exercise Often

- Frequent exercise increases metabolic rate and should be incorporated into an ex-smoker’s new lifestyle. Walking or engaging in other forms of aerobic exercise for 30 minutes at least 5 days per week increases the number of calories burned daily and helps offset the drop in metabolism caused by the lack of nicotine. Aerobic activities include brisk walking, running, hiking, swimming, biking, and rowing. All exercise needs to be consistent, continuous, and frequent. Before starting any exercise program, smokers and former smokers need to get a complete medical examination.



By following these suggestions, weight gain probably will not occur. You are in charge and it’s up to you. With creative planning of everyday activities and assuming responsibility for a new image, you can stop smoking without gaining weight!



Home Safety Checklist

- Install smoke detectors and replace batteries at least once a year.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries at least once a year.
- Inspect and maintain your home heating equipment annually.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.
- Inspect fireplace and woodstove chimneys annually.
- Follow directions for using space heaters. Keep them away from combustible items – such as curtains, bedding, or newspaper.
- Test your home for radon. Remediate if necessary.
- Do not leave items on steps. These are tripping hazards.

Did You Know?

Fruits and vegetables cost too much? Think again. A USDA study reported that almost 2/3 of all fresh fruit consumed costs 25 cents or less per serving. Sixty-nine types of fresh fruit cost less than \$1 per serving. A salad containing one cup Romaine leaves, ¼ cup onions, 1/2 cup cucumber and ¼ cup carrots costs 43 cents and provides 3 Food Guide Pyramid servings.

Will Your Dinner Make Someone Sick?

Ten Common Food Handling “Mistakes”

**Daryl Minch, M.Ed., CFCS,
FCHS Educator,
RCE of Somerset County**

People always say they prepare food safely. However studies show that we say one thing and do another. We don't associate an upset stomach or diarrhea with foodborne illness. It's a “virus” or the “flu.” The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that foodborne diseases cause approximately 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 5,000 deaths in the United States each year. While the majority of that is from food served outside the home, some happens as a result of home cooking. Could your dinner cause illness in your family?

Following are 10 common mistakes and their easy prevention. Do you do any of these?

- 1. Not washing hands properly.** Research shows that while people wash their hands, they don't do it properly. To wash hands correctly: wet hands with warm water, rub hands together with soap for 20 seconds or more, rinse with warm water, then dry with a paper towel or clean cloth towel.
- 2. Reusing a sponge or cloth to wash surfaces.** Research shows that reusing sponges or cloths without cleaning them can spread dirt and germs. Better practices are:
 - Use paper towels to clean-up raw meat and poultry juices, then wash the surface with hot soapy water and rinse.
 - Launder kitchen cloths every-day.

- Soak sponges in a bleach solution or run them through the dishwasher each day. Replace sponges often.
 - Follow label directions on cleaning products.
- 3. Not using a food thermometer for poultry or meat.** Research has shown that 1 out of every 4 hamburgers may turn brown in the middle BEFORE they reached a safe internal temperature. The best way to ensure a safe product is to use a food thermometer every time you cook meat, poultry, or foods containing these ingredients.
 - 4. Thawing food on the counter.** Bacteria grow best at warm temperatures. When you thaw poultry or meat on the counter, surface bacteria will grow as the food thaws. It can take hours for a food to thaw completely and by that time bacteria could multiply to dangerous levels. Instead thaw these foods:
 - In the refrigerator.
 - In the microwave oven, immediately before cooking.
 - In cold water before cooking. (Usually used for poultry.)

You may safely thaw most baked goods (bread, cookies) at room temperature.

- 5. Not washing fruits & vegetables.** We often eat these raw, so safe handling is important. It's easy, just rinse well under cool tap water before cutting or eating. Scrub firm or thick-skinned produce thoroughly with a clean produce brush and water. Do not use soap or detergents. One exception to this rule is if the produce has a thick, ined-

ible rind, such as melon. Experts recommend cleaning melons with water and a mild detergent on the outside surface ONLY to prevent dirt or bacteria on the rind from transferring to the inside of the melon when it's cut.

- 6. Eating raw or undercooked eggs.** The risk of getting a foodborne illness from eggs is very low. Still, scientists have found harmful *Salmonella* bacteria inside a small percentage (only 1 of every 20,000) eggs. Cooking will kill any *Salmonella*. So to be safe, cook eggs until the whites and yolk are firm or cooked mixtures reach 160° F. Use a pasteurized egg product in recipes calling for raw or lightly cooked eggs.
- 7. Leaving food out to cool, so the refrigerator doesn't work hard.** In the old days, iceboxes contained ice that melted. Today's refrigerators are efficient. It is best to promptly place hot foods in the refrigerator. To ensure rapid cooling, make sure the food is no more than 2 inches deep and leave the cover off until cool.
- 8. Leaving perishable food at room temperature for too long.** Remember bacteria multiply rapidly at room temperature. Follow this rule: leave food at room temperature no more than 2 hours or if the room (or yard) is hot, no more than 1 hour.
- 9. Transporting perishable food without keeping it cold or hot.** These tips ensure a safe product:
 - Cold foods: Place foods from the refrigerator into insulated coolers with ice packs.

continued on page 8.

Portion Distortion: Why Waistlines are Expanding and What To Do About It

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Research Assistant,
FCHS Department

America is fat and getting fatter. An estimated 97 million adults are now overweight or obese. Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure of body fatness. Someone with a BMI greater than 25 is overweight. Nearly 55% of U.S. adults have a BMI over 25, an increase from 32% in 1960. Expanding waistlines increase the risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, high blood lipid levels, osteoarthritis, and cardiovascular disease. Being overweight also raises the risk of gallbladder disease, sleep apnea, respiratory problems, and endometrial, breast, prostate, and colon cancers. The more excess weight a person carries, the more likely he or she will develop one of these diseases.

The effects of obesity also are costly. Each year Americans spend \$30 to 50 billion on weight loss products and services. The cost of health care treatments for the chronic conditions caused by obesity in the United States is \$75 billion a year.

Medical researchers are creating new treatments for obesity. But the most cost effective prevention measure may lie in balancing 'energy in' (calories consumed) with 'energy out' (calories expended) so that there is no 'energy stored' — or excess weight gained. More than 60% of U.S. adults do not engage in the recommended amount 30 to 60 minutes of daily physical activity. The main reason is that TV, electronic games, and personal computers, as well cars and mass transportation have reduced the need for physical activity, promoting a sedentary lifestyle.

In addition, Americans are eating more. The total daily caloric intake of Ameri-

cans has risen from 2,450 kcalories to 2,618 kcalories for men and from 1,542 kcalories to 1,877 kcalories for women over the last 30 years. Eating an additional 168 and 335 kcalories per day could result in an 18 and 35 pound increase in weight in a year's time for men and women, respectively.

A primary factor contributing to the increased calorie intake and increased obesity is larger food portions. Today, marketplace food portions are larger than in the past and now greatly exceed standard portion sizes set by the USDA and FDA. For example, in the mid-1980s, typical bagels weighed 2 to 3 ounces. Today, bagels range in weight from 3.9 to 6.6 ounces. The standard weight of a bagel defined by the Food Guide Pyramid is just 2.0 ounces. It is not only the portion sizes of individually packaged and ready-to-eat prepared foods that have grown, but also the portion sizes served at fast food, chain, and even privately owned restaurants.

Large portion sizes are so common that some consumers view them as being a typical portion size and thus, experience "portion distortion." That is, their perception of the quantity of food they consider to be a typical portion often exceeds federal guidelines and surpasses what consumers thought was a typical serving decades ago.

Body weights have grown in parallel with these increasing portion sizes. So, "portion distortion" may be a primary contributor to America's expanding waistline. In fact, data have shown that there is a relationship between portion size and the amount of food eaten at a meal—the larger the portion sizes, the more food and calories that are eaten.

Although measuring cups, measuring spoons, and food scales are the most accurate way to determine portion size, it would be unrealistic to carry these around everyday. Luckily, simple vi-

suals can make it easy to bring portions down to size (and cut calories, too). Research shows that using familiar objects as a reference, such as a baseball equaling 1 cup, a tennis ball equaling 2/3 cup, or a golf ball, equaling a 1/4 cup; can help with portion control. Using these objects may help reduce "portion distortion." Here are examples of standard portion:

Grains

2 decks of cards = 2 oz bagel
 2 golf balls = 1/2 cup rice

Protein Foods

1 deck of cards = 3 oz of meat
 1 golf ball = 2 Tbsp of peanut butter

Dairy

1/2 golf ball = 1 1/2 oz of cheese

Fruits & Vegetables

1 tennis ball = medium piece of fruit
 1 golf ball = 1/4 cup of dried fruit
 1 baseball = 1 cup salad greens

Another way to become more aware of portion sizes of foods is to read the Nutrition Facts Label on the food's package. Just because the package contains a certain amount of food does not mean that the entire package is one portion—it could be more than one portion. The Nutrition Facts Label identifies how many portions are in the package. To learn more about the label and how to use it, go to the website: <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>

Or, contact:

U. S. Food and Drug Administration
 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville MD
 20857-0001. 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332)

Using familiar objects to "measure" portion size and reading the Nutrition Facts Label are great ways to become more aware of how much you eat and get portion sizes under control. Increasing awareness will hopefully reduce "portion distortion" and help us reach and maintain a healthy weight.



Will Your Dinner Make Someone Sick? Ten Common Food Handling “Mistakes”

Continued from front page.

- Hot foods: If the trip is short, under 1 hour, keep food hot by wrapping in towels and placing in insulated containers. Some containers have “hot packs” you heat and place with the food. If the trip is longer than 1 hour, bring the food cold & reheat at your destination.

10. Tasting to see if food’s still good.

It never fails. A person calls to ask if a food is safe to eat and when I say “no,” they reply: “But it tastes fine.” Here’s what I tell them. You cannot always smell, taste, or see signs of bacterial or other spoilage. The food may look and taste fine and still make you sick. Another

problem is that as we age, we lose some of our ability to smell, taste, and see (glasses anyone?). All the more reason to use time and temperature guidelines as safety indicators. The golden rule is: “When in doubt, throw it out.” Do not taste it. Do not feed to pets or wildlife. Just dispose of it.

If you never make these mistakes, great! If you’ve made a few mistakes, then take action. The Family and Community Health Sciences Department wants you to stay healthy. For more information visit our website at www.rce.rutgers.edu or call your local RCE office.

Living Well

- Staying Healthy
- Raising Healthy Kids
- Eating Right
- Creating Healthy Environments

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