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KEYS TO EMBRACING AGING:
Eating Smart and Healthy

Don’t skip breakfast.

Many people don’t make time, think they don’t need breakfast or may not even feel hungry enough in the morning to eat. But breakfast is the most important meal of the day.
A small nutritious breakfast, such as a piece of fruit and a cup of green tea, is better than no breakfast. Research demonstrates that children who eat breakfast perform better and have fewer behavior problems in school (Affenito, 2007). In addition, a well-balanced breakfast:

• provides you with energy and increases physical activity during the day.
• gets your metabolism started for the day and keeps it active throughout the morning.
• reduces hunger later in the day and prevents you from overeating.
• positively affects mood, patience and cognitive performance.

Control your portions.

The amount you eat is just as important as what you eat. Too many calories, fat and bad cholesterol are often a result of people putting too much food on their plate, taking seconds or eating until they feel full (Clover Way, 2013). A **portion** is the amount of food you put on your plate; whereas, a **serving** is a specific amount of food defined by a common measurement, such as a cup or a tablespoon. For example, one serving size of cooked pasta is a half cup. But the typical portion we are likely to eat is at least double this – especially in a restaurant. To help with portion control, pay close attention to appropriate serving sizes and the number of servings you eat (Clover Way, 2013).

Everything in moderation.

You may decide you are going to give up bad fat or sugar completely. Most of us will eventually break down and binge. Instead, reward yourself. If you go all week without eating a sugar-laden dessert, treat yourself at the end of the week with a few bites of a hot fudge sundae. This gives you something to look forward to and provides you with strength to power through the week. It’s important that you eat healthy foods most of the time.
According to the CDC (2014) and USDA (2010), drinking alcohol in moderation is defined as having up to 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks per day for men. This definition is referring to the amount consumed on any single day and is not intended as an average over several days.

**Drink more water.**

Every system in your body needs water. Water flushes out toxins, carries nutrients to cells, provides a moist environment for ear, nose and throat tissues and aids in digestion (Mayo Clinic, 2011; USDA 2011). The water lost from everyday tasks such as breathing, perspiration and digestion must be replenished or else you will become dehydrated. Dehydration can leave you feeling sluggish or tired. Severe dehydration can even lead to confusion and changes in heart rate. Fluid intake varies from person to person depending on environment, activity level and health. On average, you should drink enough fluid, primarily water, so that you rarely feel thirsty and produce about 6.3 or more cups of colorless or light yellow urine (Mayo Clinic, 2011). If you are concerned about your water intake, your health care provider can help you determine an amount that is right for you.

Water also helps you feel full. If you feel like snacking, drink a full glass of water first. Sometimes we confuse hunger for thirst. If after 15 minutes you are still hungry, then grab a healthy snack. Water is also a good substitute for juices or sodas high in sugar or artificial sweeteners.

**Give it a Try! Shop the Perimeter.**

Next time you’re at the supermarket, make it your goal to fill up three-fourths of your cart with foods from the perimeter of the store. Oftentimes, the perimeter is where you will find nutrient-dense foods such as fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, fresh meats and seafood, dairy, whole-wheat bread products and other healthy options (Mayo Clinic, 2014). Down the aisles is usually where you will find the processed, sugary, salty and high-calorie foods.

**Keys to Embracing Aging:**

**Engage Your Brain**

**Catch Your Zzzzzzs**

Sleeping well is essential to good health and brain functioning (AARP/Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, 2009). For better sleep:

- Exercise, but not within a few hours of bedtime
- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Set regular bedtime and waking hours
- Get up and do something until you are tired and ready to sleep if you cannot fall asleep within the first 20 minutes of getting into bed
- Avoid reading or watching television while in bed
- Keep a sleep journal to keep track of the activities, diet and other things that might affect how you’re sleeping
- Consult a health care provider if you’re consistently having trouble sleeping
Storing Produce Properly

Why is it you can purchase the most beautiful produce, bring it home, then days later it is wilted and looks nothing like what you bought? Proper storage can be the issue.

Our refrigerators come with crisper drawers that should be used for optimal storage of most fruits and vegetables. Different fruits and vegetables require different temperature and humidity levels for proper storage. Most fresh fruits and vegetables keep best stored in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40° F or below.

Fruits should be stored in a separate refrigerator crisper drawer from vegetables. Fruits give off ethylene gas which can shorten the storage life of vegetables. Plus, some vegetables give off odors that can be absorbed by fruits and affect their quality.

Refrigerate fruits and vegetables in perforated plastic bags to help maintain moisture yet provide air flow. These bags are available in most supermarkets and discount stores and have a slightly rough texture. Unperforated plastic bags can lead to the growth of mold or bacteria. If you don’t have access to food-grade, perforated bags, use a sharp object to make several small holes in a food-grade plastic bag (about 20 holes per medium-size bag).

There are some foods that taste best when stored at room temperature. These include onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and winter squashes. They should be stored in a clean, dry, well-ventilated place, away from direct sunlight and away from areas where meat, fish, and poultry are prepared. Avoid placing produce in a sealed plastic bag on your countertop. This slows ripening and may increase off-odors and decay from the accumulation of carbon dioxide and depletion of oxygen inside the bag.

To prevent cross contamination, store meats on pans or plates below the produce to prevent meat juices, which may contain harmful bacteria, from dripping on them.

Probably one of the hardest rules to follow is wash produce before you use it, NOT when you bring it home! Fresh produce has a natural protective coating that helps keep in moisture and freshness. Washing produce before storage causes it to spoil faster.

When you are ready to use the produce, remove and discard outer leaves. Rinse under clean, running water. Don’t use soap or detergent. Rub briskly, scrubbing with a clean brush or hands, to clean the surface. Dry with a clean cloth or paper towel. Moisture left on fruits and vegetables helps bacteria grow. Cut away bruised and damaged areas.

Bacteria on the outside of produce can be transferred to the inside when they are cut or peeled. Rinse produce, even when the peel is going to be removed, such as for melons and citrus fruits! Once you have cut through the protective skin of fruits & vegetables, bacteria can enter. At this point all fruits and vegetables should be refrigerated, including melons. And don’t forget to refrigerate cut or peeled fruits and vegetables within TWO hours! No exceptions!

Fun and Learning Day

Join us for a day of learning and fun on July 10th beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the JPH Center (Northark South Campus). We will have guest speakers on Recycling, Food Preservation, and Dance for Your Health. We will have a picnic theme so be ready for an indoor picnic. Beverages and watermelon will be provided and each person may bring their own picnic lunch. This workshop is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by the Extension Homemakers. To pre-register, please contact the Extension office at 741-6168.
Mediterranean Cooking School

The Mediterranean diet is a lifestyle approach to good health that includes a balanced variety of foods and daily exercise. The diet is based on the foods and beverages traditionally consumed by people living in countries along the Mediterranean Sea.

A Mediterranean Cooking School will be offered on July 8th and 15th at the Boone County Senior Center from 1:00-4:00 p.m. each day. Eastern Mediterranean food will be covered on one day and western will be the topic of the other day. The cost is $25 per class and class size is limited. Pre-registration is required by signing up at the Senior Center or contacting the Extension office, 870-741-6168, by July 6.

Sincerely,

Trudy G. McManus
County Extension Agent – Family and Consumer Science

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