The **Serendipity EHC Club was formed in February 2014.** I taught them cooking classes from my SNAP-Ed grant, Cook Smart—Eating Smart earlier in the year. A special welcome to this new club!

They have also helped me in getting ready for my programs as well. Two of these ladies have helped El Dorado Connections stuff and sort goody bags for Farm Fair and Chop Chop Magazine by teachers/schools in El Dorado and the county schools that participate in my grant.

**Johnette Jinks from Designing Women EHC Club** taught a class on raised-bed and container gardening on Thursday, March 27th. If you’re concerned about the foods you eat, grow them in a raised bed garden or containers. She taught how to build a raised bed frame, select the right soil mixture and seeds to plant. She also showed many different kinds of containers that can be used to grow tomatoes, lettuces, herbs, and other salad ingredients.

**AEHC trip to Hot Springs, June 3—5.** Request registration forms at 864—1916 or pick up at Extension office. Registration cost is $70 and forms are due to Extension office by Monday, April 28th.

The Extension Homemakers Council will be conducting two educational trips this year for both the day members and night members. The council will pay for one of these trips even though you may attend both. For the day members, a trip to Murry's Dinner Theater matinee on Wednesday, June 25th. I have reserved 20 spaces. Cost is approximately $33 for non EHC.

The night EHC members will cruise on the Mark Twain Riverboat in Little Rock from 2—3 p.m. For non-EHC, the cost is $15. This group will also enjoy lunch in the River Market district. Possibility is Saturday, June 28th. Is this a good date for you?

Cars providing transportation for EHC members will be reimbursed for gas expenses. Please call the Extension office at 864-1916 to reserve your place.
An estimated one out of five adults in their 60s— and nearly half of those 70 or older—have chronic kidney disease. Many of them don’t know it. Your risk is greater if you have diabetes or high blood pressure, though obesity and smoking also play a role.

While most cases never progress to kidney failure, the condition raises the risk of heart attack, stroke, osteoporosis and anemia.

And kidney stones, which can cause excruciating pain, may also raise the risk of kidney and heart disease. Yet many doctors may not know that kidney stones can be prevented.

Here’s how to protect your kidneys:

Water: Ensures that there’s not too much or too little water in the body.

Blood Pressure: Makes sure pressure isn’t too high or too low.

Wastes: Gets rid of urea, uric acid, toxins, and other wastes via urine.

Bones: Activates vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium.

Acid-Base Balance: Makes sure that the body isn’t too acidic or too alkaline.

Heart: Maintains a balance of electrolytes (like potassium, sodium and calcium), which is critical for heart rhythm.

Blood: Releases erythropoietin, which tells bone marrow to make red blood cells.

Many of the conditions that affect the kidney are preventable. The message is quite similar to what you would do to protect your heart. Lowering your cardio-vascular risk goes a long way toward protecting your kidneys.

Excessive, long-term use of over-the-counter analgesics like acetaminophen and ibuprofen can also increase the risk of chronic kidney disease, possibly by raising blood pressure and/or by damaging the kidney directly. Studies about aspirin have been inconsistent.

If you take those analgesics on a regular basis, ask your healthcare provider about alternatives. Just because these drugs are available over-the-counter doesn’t mean they’re safe.

Obesity raises blood pressure and the risk of diabetes. As people gain weight, the kidneys have to work harder. More food creates more waste that needs to be removed and that causes an additional demand on the kidneys.

Drink plenty of water to raise a higher volume of urine. Both decaf and caffeinated coffee and tea are associated with a lower risk of developing kidney stones and not dehydration!

The EHC cookbook recipes have been shipped to Morris Cookbook. They should be back for proofreading in about two weeks. The cover designed by Julia Murray’s grandson is beautiful.

“Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Liz McKay
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