Dear Friends,

Welcome to Summer! I hope this newsletter finds everyone well! Enjoy this beautiful weather, but remember to drink plenty of water, wear sunscreen and don’t get overheated!

In this newsletter, you will find articles about the importance of breakfast, good balance, information on MyPlate, stress, and canning.

Please don’t hesitate to call with any questions...stay cool, my friends!
**De-Stress and Feel Your Best!**

1. **Just breathe.** Take 10 slow, deep breaths and let out a sigh as you breathe out.

2. **Get active.** Physical activity can give you a surge of endorphins and relieve tension.

3. **Phone a friend or family member.** You can talk it out, ask for help or good advice from others and get encouragement.

4. **Make a daily priorities list.** Break large tasks into small ones. Be clear about what you have to do, keep moving forward and be pleased with progress toward the goal.

5. **Eat right and get enough sleep each day** (at least 7 hours). Commit to a bed-time routine.

6. **Avoiding or putting things off doesn’t work.** Dealing with issues right away saves time and energy. Be conscious of time wasters, like Internet and TV.

7. **Work within the boundaries of authority and rules.**

8. **Take responsibility for yourself and the situation.**

9. **Find something relaxing to do.**

10. **Be willing to make changes.**

11. **Don’t get upset with small setbacks.**

12. **Have a sense of humor; look for the good.**

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**How much do you know about stress? Test your “stress smarts” and take this online quiz at http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-smarts.aspx**
Benefits of Good Balance

Do you seem to be losing your balance and coordination? Maybe you feel a bit wobbly getting in and out of the bathtub, or need to walk down the stairs more slowly. It happens as we age, but your balance may be “off” for other reasons— injury, illness, poor posture, poor vision, obesity or weak core muscles. Balance is your body’s equilibrium, or physical stability. It’s at the core of nearly every physical action you perform. In fact, building your “core” muscles—those that surround your trunk—is the key to staying strong and upright as you age. Without a strong core, you’re more likely to suffer back pain, lose your balance and fall, or be more prone to injury during exercise.

Test your balance: Stand on one foot with your eyes closed. If you can’t hold still for at least 10 seconds without becoming wobbly, it’s time for some easy balance training.

Eyes-Closed Balance Routine

1. On one leg, arms out to each side, eyes closed, balance for 30 to 60 seconds. Switch legs and repeat.
2. On one leg, arms hugging your chest, eyes closed, balance for 30 to 60 seconds. Switch legs and repeat.

Eyes-Open Balance Hop

1. On one leg, hop forward and back 10 times; stabilize between hops. Switch legs and repeat.
2. Same as above, but hop side to side.

Balance improvement may take practice, starting with the exercises above. Additionally, do a few simple core strengthening activities 2 or 3 times a week. Get your health care provider’s OK first—these activities may not be suitable for everyone.
So, you want to can your own food…

Now is a great time to learn how to preserve your food at home because canning is making a comeback, says Dr. Janie Burney, a professor and food preservation specialist with the University of Tennessee Extension Department of Family and Consumer Sciences.

“If you need some way to preserve food that you have grown yourself or purchased at a grocery or farmers market, canning may be the thing to do,” said Burney. She adds that home canning equipment has never been safer or easier to use.

“The best way to start is by using the right equipment, proper techniques and up-to-date home canning recipes from your local University of Tennessee/Tennessee State University Extension Office,” Burney recommended. The food preservation expert explained that extension agents trained in the field of family and consumer sciences, formerly called home economics, offer a variety of educational programs in home food preservation in counties across the state.

“Don’t hesitate to call your local county extension office for detailed information,” she said. “Extension agents have a long history of providing advice on how to preserve foods safely at home. Extension agents are part of the national Co-operative Extension System, which is a partnership between the USDA, the University of Tennessee or Tennessee State University, and your county. USDA published instructions for canning as early as 1909 in pamphlets known as farmer’s bulletins.”

As the spring and summer canning season approaches, Burney is often asked to review some of the basics of canning. Here’s a set of answers to many questions that beginners and those experienced in food preservation often ask.

Question: How do I need to prepare for the canning season?
Burney: It’s never too early to start thinking about what supplies and materials you will need. Don’t wait until the food is ready to be harvested. Start by checking your equipment and supplies. Proper equipment in good condition is required for safe, high-quality, home-canned food.

A pressure canner is a must for canning low-acid vegetables, meats, fish and poultry. Two basic types are available. One has a dial gauge to indicate the pressure inside the canner; the other has a metal weighted gauge. Dial gauges must be tested for accuracy before each canning season. For information on testing a dial gauge, call your county extension agent. Check the rubber gasket if your canner has one. It should be flexible and soft, not brittle, sticky or cracked. Also make sure any small pipes or vent ports with openings are clean and open all the way through.

A boiling water canner is needed for canning fruits, pickles, jellies and jams. The canner should be deep enough to allow at least one to two inches of water to boil over the tops of the jars. Both pressure and boiling water canners should have a rack in the bottom to keep jars off the bottom of the canner.

If you have canned before, inspect old jars for nicks, cracks or chips, especially around the top sealing edge. Nicks can prevent lids from sealing. Very old jars can weaken with age and repeated use. They break under pressure and heat. Consider investing in new jars and watch for specials in stores. New jars are a better investment over time than buying used jars at yard sales or flea markets.

Mason-type jars specifically designed for home canning are best. Jars that use two-piece self-sealing metal lids are recommended by USDA. These have been tested in many canning processes and form good seals. Used lids should be thrown away. The screw bands are reusable if they are not bent, dented or rusted.
Question: Where can I find instructions for canning specific foods?
Burney: Your local Extension Office is one source for instructions. You also can find safe recipes from USDA and from other Extension offices across the country. If you use the Internet, bookmark the site for the National Center for Home Food Preservation (http://nchfp.uga.edu/). Look for instructions on web sites that end in “edu” or “gov.” Recipes on web sites that end in “com” may not be safe. One exception is the national extension website: http://www.extension.org. Just search the term “canning.”

Question: Why can’t I use my grandmother’s old canning recipes? I can’t recall anyone getting sick.
Burney: Through the years, home canning methods and techniques are constantly tested and improved to assure the safest, most effective way of processing food due to the changes in variety of foods, soil conditions and bacteria living in soil and water. The food you grow today may be very different from the food your grandmother grew. Tomatoes are a good example. Your tomatoes may be less acidic than those in your grandmother’s garden, which makes a difference in how they are canned.

Question: How can I determine how much food to preserve for my family?
Burney: Preserve enough for your family for about a year. It may be tempting to can all those green beans you grow. However, the longer they are stored, the more quality they will lose. There may also be changes in texture, changes in color and loss of flavor. Call the Extension office for information on yields for canned or frozen fruits and vegetables.

Burney’s bottom line is that even if you have never tried home canning, you can be successful with proper equipment and proper instructions, and the best source for those instructions is your local extension office. Telephone directories list the phone numbers for county extension offices under government lists. You may also look for county office numbers online at https://utextension.tennessee.edu.

“No matter what reason you have for preserving food at home, do it safely,” she advises. “Successful home canning requires only that you observe simple guidelines.”

UT Extension provides a gateway to the University of Tennessee as the outreach unit of the Institute of Agriculture. With an office in every Tennessee county, UT Extension delivers educational programs and research-based information to citizens throughout the state. In cooperation with Tennessee State University, UT Extension works with farmers, families, youth and communities to improve lives by addressing problems and issues at the local, state and national levels.

Your Knox & Blount County Extension offices are offering three Canning College classes this summer:

1. Principles of Home Canning — July 8
2. Low Acid Canning—July 15
3. Understanding Jellied Products—July 22

These classes begin at 6:00 p.m. and will be held at the U.T. Culinary Institute at the corner of Neyland Drive and Kingston Pike. The cost is $49.

You may register at:
https://aceweb.outreach.utk.edu/ShowSchedule.awp&Mode=GROUP&Group=PERFW&Title=Food+and+Wine&SubGroup=PER
Breakfast Outside the Box

As a source of whole grains and fiber, some cereals can’t be beat. And when paired with milk, you get an additional 16 essential nutrients including protein, calcium and vitamin D.

But too many people start their days with a bowl of cereal made from refined flour and packed with a whole lot of sugar. It tastes good, but it probably won’t sustain you all morning. Begin your days instead with a good combination of foods that contain fiber and protein. These 2 nutrients help fill you up and keep you going all morning. Include vegetables and fruit, whole grains and a high—protein food such as milk, yogurt, nuts or eggs. For cereal, pick one with fewer than 6 grams of sugar and at least 4 grams of fiber per 30-gram serving.

Here are some winning ideas:

- Oatmeal made with skim or low-fat milk, instead of water, and fruit
- Nut butter and banana wrapped in a whole-grain tortilla
- Yogurt parfait: whole-grain cereal, yogurt and fruit
- Corn tortillas rolled with black beans, tomato and reduced-fat cheddar cheese
- Scrambled eggs on whole-grain toast with raw vegetables
- Whole-grain rye crackers with hummus

Eat Breakfast!

Did you know that overweight people tend to skip breakfast and that people who skip breakfast eat about 100 calories more each day than those who do eat breakfast?

Your mother was right, breakfast is the most important meal of the day because it breaks a night of fasting (going without food.) It replenishes your supply of energy and other essential nutrients to keep your energy level up throughout the day. Breakfast helps provide folate, iron, B vitamins, protein, calcium and other important nutrients needed for good health.

If you are trying to lose weight, avoid skipping breakfast. You will not lose weight any faster by going without breakfast. Eat something in the morning even if you are not hungry.

People who eat breakfast have advantages over those who skip breakfast. A healthy breakfast helps you

- Stay healthier
- Stabilize blood sugar and reduce your risk for diabetes
- Reduce your risk for heart attacks
- Children learn better in school
- Reduce appetite the rest of the day
- Reduce irritability and improve disposition

Allow children some choices for breakfast. Provide a variety of healthy foods and let them choose what they want to eat.
Let’s Eat for the Health of It

**Build a Healthy Plate**

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
  - Eat red, orange, and dark-green vegetables, such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, in main and side dishes.
  - Eat fruit, vegetables, or unsalted nuts as snacks—they are nature’s original fast foods.
- Switch to skim or 1% milk.
  - They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories.
  - Try calcium-fortified soy products as an alternative to dairy foods.
- Make at least half your grains whole.
  - Choose 100% whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice and pasta.
  - Check the ingredients list on food packages to find whole-grain foods.
- Vary your protein food choices.
  - Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate.
  - Eat beans, which are a natural source of fiber and protein.
  - Keep meat and poultry portions small and lean.

**Cut Back on Foods High in Solid Fats, Added Sugars and Salt**

- Choose foods and drinks with little or no added sugars.
  - Drink water instead of sugary drinks. There are about 10 packets of sugar in a 12-ounce can of soda.
  - Select fruit for dessert. Eat sugary desserts less often.
  - Choose 100% fruit juice instead of fruit-flavored drinks.
- Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you buy—it all adds up.
  - Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals—and choose the foods with lower numbers.
  - Add spices or herbs to season food without adding salt.
- Eat fewer foods that are high in solid fats.
  - Make major sources of saturated fats—such as cakes, cookies, ice cream, pizza, cheese, sausages, and hot dogs—occasional choices, not everyday foods.
  - Select lean cuts of meats or poultry and fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese.
  - Switch from solid fats to oils when preparing food.

**Eat the Right Amount of Calories for You**

- Enjoy your food, but eat less.
  - Get your personal daily calorie limit at [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) and keep that number in mind when deciding what to eat.
  - Think before you eat...is it worth the calories?
  - Avoid oversized portions.
  - Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass.
  - Stop eating when you are satisfied, not full.
- Cook more often at home, where you are in control of what’s in your food.
- When eating out, choose lower calorie menu options.
  - Check posted calorie amounts.
  - Choose dishes that include vegetables, fruits, and/or whole grains.
  - Order a smaller portion or share when eating out.
- Write down what you eat to keep track of how much you eat.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so sensibly-limit to 1 drink a day for women or to 2 drinks a day for men.

**Be Physically Active Your Way**—Pick activities that you like and start by doing what you can, at least 10 minutes at a time. Every bit adds ups, and the health benefits increase as you spend more time being active.