Pop Quiz: What Time Is It?

Dial Gauge Testing Time! As the temperatures warm (or not so much) let that be a reminder it’s the time of year again to get your pressure canner dial gauge tested. Dial gauges need to be tested for accuracy before each canning season or after dropping or banging it.

The manufacturer of your pressure canner is best able to provide you with instruction for inspection/gauge testing. Some companies require that you mail it in to them. You may also ask at a local hardware store or contact your local Extension office, as some of them will do gauge testing for some brands of dial gauge pressure canners if they have an agent at that location who is trained to do so. UT Extension-Fayette County provides free pressure gauge testing, call your local Extension office to find out if they provide free pressure gauge testing as well.

Also as part of an annual “check-up”, make sure all parts of your pressure canner are in good condition. If your canner has a rubber gasket, make sure it is flexible and soft, not brittle, sticky or cracked. Check the openings on any small pipes or vent ports to be sure they are clean and clear of any debris.

If you don’t have a pressure canner and are thinking about getting one, then make sure you select a pressure canner that is capable of holding at least 4 quart-size jars upright, on the rack, with a lid that secures airtight. If it is smaller than that, we do not recommend it for home canning using USDA canning procedures.

Whether your pressure canner has not yet been used this season or is new out of the box, it is a good idea to make sure it is working properly before preparing a canner load of jars. Put several inches of water in your pressure canner, and pressurize it as if canning. Make sure it gets to the pressure needed and can be maintained there without leaking. This is a good time to practice de-pressurizing the canner as if it had jars in it and then go through the steps for opening your canner as desired. Call your local Extension office for additional information on pressure canning.

Contributed by: Sherri Morris
Fayette County Family & Consumer Science Agent

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation
Pack Up, Gear Up, and Climb Up!

Summer is just around the corner, the sun is shining and the itch to travel is growing! Finances for many families are tight and technology is pulling everyone away from some very important things – relationship and nature. Seeking entertainment during the summer can be costly and is often used to distract from daily life and help us escape reality. Many of us know the pains of “vacation weight gain”…and here we thought we were gearing up for swim suit season! What if there were some great ways to get that vacation, save some money, spend time together (without the phones and Wi-Fi) and keep our bodies happy and healthy?

The good news is we live in one of the most beautiful states (as all Tennesseans believe) that provides many opportunities for us to escape the stress of life and connect with family, friends and take a fresh breath of air. There are many breathtaking views in TN just waiting to be explored. The National Park services offers a long list of hikes to waterfalls, grandiose views and rock formations.

The Tennessee State Parks website has a long list as well. Historical sights are scattered all across the state, some are free for the looking and others have a small admissions fee. Check out these websites for information on places to explore:

- www.tnstateparks.com/activities/hiking
- www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/things2do.htm
- www.onlyinyourstate.com/tennessee

Before you take off on these adventures – be sure you’re ready to stay healthy while making memories of a lifetime!

1. **Stay hydrated** – always pack water! Water bottles are great for transportation and easily refillable (to help same money!)
2. **Pack snacks** – bring along some homemade trail mix, granola bars or fruit to keep your body fueled with energy.
3. **Slather The Sun Screen** – being in the sunlight can cause serious sunburns, severe dehydration and many other challenges. Be sure to put on lots of sunscreen before leaving the house and bring it along to reapply every few hours!
4. **Camera** – this is essential! You’ll catch some great views, good memories and capture some laughs if you be sure to bring it along.
5. **Bring Lunch** – if you’re going to be out over the lunch period, pack a sandwich with your gear and enjoy the picnic in the great outdoors.
6. **Proper Attire** – be sure to wear supportive footwear, comfortable clothing, a hat to protect from sun and a pair of sunglasses to protect your eyes.

Contributed by: Sarah Ransom
Johnson County Family & Consumer Science Agent
How to Make Your Own Homemade Trail Mix

- **Nuts & Seeds** – almonds, pistachios, peanuts, cashews, walnuts, brazil nuts, pecans, macadamia nuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, etc.
- **Dried Fruits** – apples, pineapples, bananas, raisins, mango, etc.
- **Grain** – Chex, cheerios, granola, oats (toasted), sesame sticks, popcorn, etc.
- **Sweet Treats** – M&Ms, chocolate chips, butterscotch chips, and yogurt covered raisins, mini marshmallows, etc.
- **Extra Flavors** – salt, garlic powder, cinnamon, cayenne pepper, ground ginger, coconut flakes, coffee beans, wasabi peas, etc.

1. Choose what ingredients you like.
2. Mix all ingredients in a big bowl.
3. Divide mixture into bags for easy transportation.
4. Enjoy!

Contributed by: Sarah Ransom
Johnson County Family & Consumer Science Agent
Get Active this Summer!

Summertime is a happy season for everyone. It’s warm and sunny, school is out, and the family gets to spend more time together! This makes getting physical activity both easier and more fun when the whole family is included. Parents, kids, teens, even the family pets can join in activities together! The CDC recommends 1 hour or more of physical activity every day. There are countless benefits to physical activity, including: strengthening muscles and bones, reducing risk of many diseases such as cancer and heart disease, and improving mood.

Families can enjoy time together by easily incorporating physical activity into their days. Take “dance breaks” during TV commercial time or try taking longer family walks with the increased daylight hours. Instead of playing games that involve being sedentary, try games outside that include movement! Some games include tag, Simon Says, or relay races. Involving everyone in household chores is both productive and inclusive. If available, bicycling, roller blading, or swimming are enjoyable for the whole family. It’s important to stay cool during the summer as well, so remember to hydrate with water often and have it readily available!

When choosing summer camps or programs for kids, look for ones that have a good amount of physical activity mixed into the whole program. Sports camps, horseback riding camps, dance camps, or programs with swimming pools are great choices. Camps can be educational, healthful, AND fun!

Family vacations are a great time to stay active and fit. When planning, try to choose a place that has easy and safe access to areas like walking or hiking trails, or recreational activities such as pools, volleyball or basketball courts. It’s also smart to pack portable devices that encourage physical activity, such as a jump rope or a resistance band, which are both small enough to squeeze into luggage!

The summer is an exceptional time to stay physically active. With a little bit of planning and involvement, the whole family will benefit!

Contributed by: Emily Hayes
Haywood County / Community Coalitions for Change
Wouldn’t it be nice to have everything in order to enjoy life? Retirement can be a wonderful time to do all of the things you want to do on your own time. It’s important to realize that before we can retire, we need our financial business in order. Don’t go into retirement without planning. One of the best things to do is create a retirement budget. This budget needs to include how much money will be coming in and how much debt you have going out. It would be best before retirement to track your daily expenses. Find out ways to decrease expenses, such as reducing your cable bill by having less channels and cooking at home rather than eating out. Preferences of how you would like to live needs to be established before retiring. Financial checkups are very essential to know how much money you have in stocks, investments and in saving accounts. It is best to always be prepared for the unexpected expenses to happen. How will you pay for expensive repairs for the car or house? These questions are good ways to plan alternative options when things do not go as planned.

If you are in need of assistance please contact your local extension office we have publications for retirement and money management.

Contributed by: April Glover
Cheatham County Agent