

HCE Newsletter

March — 2024

- 5 HCE Board Meeting, 9 a.m. in the Extension office
- 5 “Let’s Amp Up the Vegetables” program by MaryLiz Wright, 10:30 a.m. in the Extension office
- 10 Daylight Saving Time, 2 a.m. set your clocks an hour ahead!
- 17 Happy St. Patrick’s Day, be sure to wear green!
- 19 First Day of Spring!
- 21 Sunbeams Unit will be assembling the April newsletter at 10 a.m. in the Extension Office.
** Please call 546-1549, if that time doesn’t work for you!
- 29 Good Friday!
- 31 Happy Easter Sunday!

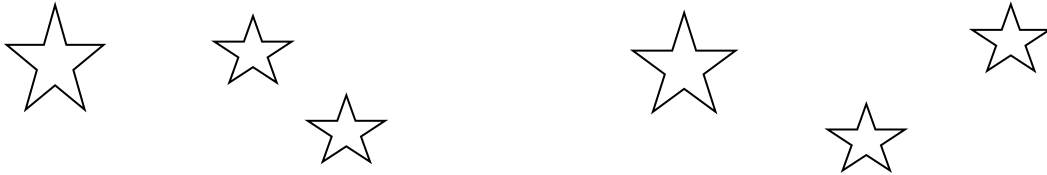


**We strive to be an organization
that honors and values our
community and it’s residents.**

If you need a reasonable accommodation
to attend any of the events listed in this
newsletter, please call 618/546-1549.



Monthly HCE Board meeting will be Tuesday,
March 5 at 9 a.m. in the U of I Extension office.
Everyone is invited to attend!



RECIPE FOR A GOOD UNIT

- 1 intelligent Chairman
- 1 handful of efficient officers
- 1 smart secretary
- 1 smooth executive committee
- A smattering of “mixed nuts” commonly called members
- Several dozen good eggs, not hard boiled

Mix with fun and plenty of common sense. Add a generous amount of diligence, service, foresightedness. An unlimited supply of tact. Lastly, add equal amounts of push, pull and pep. Use a light but firm hand and stir with enthusiasm. Sweeten the Chairman occasionally with honeyed words. Use a soap on members and rub it in. (There is nothing like lubrication to prevent frustration.) Introduce new ideas and allow to simmer. Season with a yearly project. Mix all together with one big booster meeting. Cover with glory and honor. Serve with hospitality and music.

Thank you, Norma Thompson,
for sending this in.



March Program with MaryLiz Wright!

MaryLiz Wright, Nutrition & Wellness educator, will give a program on veggies! She is always a lot of fun and very informative.

Mark your calendars to be at the U of I Extension office on **Tuesday, March 5** at 10:30 a.m. to hear

Let's Amp Up the Veggies!

Tired of droopy broccoli? Do you serve canned corn as your go-to side? Did you know that we are supposed to eat 2-3 cups of vegetables per day?

Learn how to make veggies interesting and delicious!

Congratulations to Cindy Parrott!

She had the super quick mind to catch the similarities in last month's brain twister!

Way to go, Cindy!
YOU are awesome!



Looking Ahead

April 8 — The Nightengales HCE unit is planning a fun activity to help celebrate the “eclipse” from 12 noon - 2:30 p.m. More details next month, but mark your calendars NOW!

April 14-19 — Illinois Extension will once again be collecting soil samples. Collection bags are available for pickup. Each sample tested is \$20. Results and recommendations will be sent to you.

HCE Board Meeting — January 3, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. Board members present were Loretta Mikeworth, Donna Newbold, Eva Enlow, Hope Dennis and Martha Holt. Martha led the meeting in President Susan Allison's absence. This is the first meeting with newcomers: Donna Newbold, secretary and Eva Enlow, Cultural Enrichment officers.

The minutes of the November meeting were read by Secretary, Donna Newbold. Hope made a motion to approve the minutes and Loretta seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Hope read the Treasurer's report in the absence of Treasurer, Sandy Bryans. Donna made a motion to approve and Martha seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Bills to be allowed:

\$250 to "A Taste of Country Catering" for the lunch served at the November Annual Meeting and Luncheon. (25 lunches at \$10)

\$220 to LTC for the Christmas Luncheon. (22 lunches at \$10)

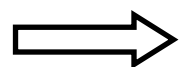
Loretta made a motion to pay the bills and Donna seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- Discussed the donated items to the veterans. Martha reported her and Susan delivered all the boxes on November 15 and it took two cars! Several men came out to help unload and everyone was so appreciative of the items.
- The group thought the Christmas Luncheon was a success, and the meal was delicious. Everyone gave praise to Martha for her playing the autoharp.
- The \$7.00 ad was for the Conference Program (not state newsletter).

New Business:

- o Martha suggested one volunteer activity for members to help with is the NOW Program in Robinson. They bag "food items" and deliver to the schools to be sent home on the bus with children who have said or have shown, they don't get enough to eat on the weekends. They also give out free used clothing and other items.



- o The year’s State HCE Conference will be held in Effingham, March 12-14. This will be the 100th Annual Conference and the theme for this year is “Diamonds Are Forever and So Is IAHCE”. Anyone wanting to go, please contact Susan Allison.
- o “Diamonds are Forever” will also be our Crawford County theme for the November Annual Meeting. Be thinking of ideas.
- o Hope said she will file Crawford County’s “year-end” membership report (due 1-5-24) and the Crawford County’s HCE 2024 Officer report (also due 1-5-24)

The next meeting is **Tuesday, February 6**, at 9:00 a.m.

Hope made the motion to adjourn, and Donna seconded the motion. Motion passed.

“Beautiful young people are accidents of nature,
but beautiful old people are works of art.”
Eleanor Roosevelt

Brain Twister

Fun with money slang! Engage your brain!

Activate critical thinking skills to complete the word challenges below.

1. A word for one thousand dollars: _ R _ _ _
2. Used in baking bread and cookies: D _ _ _ _
3. Slang for a ten-dollar bill: S _ _ B _ _ _
4. Word for a one-hundred-dollar bill: _ _ N _ _ M _ _
5. Slang for one million dollars: _ _ _ K
6. Twenty-dollar bill; also refers to a U.S. President’s name. J _ _ K _ _ _
7. Used currently in slang as “making ____.” B _ _ _

Call the Extension office at 618/546-1549 if you figure them out BEFORE you look at the answers! You have to look for the answers. **5**

Morning Glories

A HUGE thank you goes out to the Morning Glories' HCE Unit for making these adorable "bee" table favors! Four ladies met Wednesday, January 31 to make valentine table favors for Ridgeview Care Center. The project was planned by Morning Glories President, Martha Holt. Members Dale Davis, Carolyn Coleman and Susan Allison helped with the craft.



Attention Sunbeam Unit

Sunbeam members will be assembling the April newsletter on **Thursday, March 21**, at 10 a.m.

Newsletter



Sterling Members and Golden Volunteers

Thank you all who have made this organization, "Crawford County Home, Community Education" ladies' group what it is today.

Every year, we see a decline in membership, in participation, and in community service, but what we still have is **phenomenal!**

Decades upon decades ago, information was spread to ladies who attended monthly meetings at various members' homes throughout the county where a Home Advisor came to help them learn ways to make life better for them and their families. Whether it was teaching to cut leather to make gloves, how to weave a basket, the art of preserving fruits and vegetables, canning meat, or embroidering pillowcases, these groups of ladies enjoyed their time together and hearing about their neighbors' escapades, all while their children played together!

The home extension ladies' group has changed a lot over the years, but it still retains its solid foundation to spread knowledge, strengthen the family, help the community, and enhance friendships. We are aware the younger generations find their information on the internet, but they are missing the fellowship and camaraderie to be with...and to learn from others.

Please pay your dues! And consider attending meetings and events. Not every one of them, but maybe the summer picnic, the annual meeting, or maybe the Christmas luncheon. Just to be with others.

What will eventually happen is this lovely organization, of incredibly beautiful ladies, will become extinct, like everything else. It just cannot be helped. All things have its season, and right now, it's looking like winter. But do not be disheartened! Those that pay their dues are helping HCE to survive! Although. . . we are down to the double digits. We need to stay strong for a few more years.

Think about who Y-O-U could pay \$10 to join. Signing them up, will let them know what our organization is about.

Think about your friend, your neighbor, or your pastor's wife.

Balancing Exercises for Older Adults

Last month, we talked about “strengthening exercises. Balance exercises help prevent falls, a common problem in older adults that can have serious consequences. Many lower-body strength exercises also will improve your balance. Balance exercises involves shifting the body slowly, gently, and precisely, while breathing deeply.

Below are a few examples of balancing exercises:

Standing on one foot.

The heel-to-toe walk.

The balance walk.

Standing from a seated position.

Safety tips

- Have a sturdy chair or a person nearby to hold on to if you feel unsteady.
- Talk with your doctor if you are unsure about a particular exercise.

What causes falls in older adults?

- Your eyesight, hearing, and reflexes might not be as sharp as they were when you were younger.
- Certain conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, or problems with your thyroid, nerves, feet, or blood vessels can affect your balance.
- Conditions that cause rushed movement to the bathroom, such as incontinence, may also increase the chance of falling.
- Age-related loss of muscle mass, problems with balance and gait, and blood pressure that drops too much when you get up from lying down or sitting are all risk factors for falling.
- Foot problems that cause pain, and unsafe footwear such as backless shoes or high heels, can also increase your risk of falling.
- Some medications can increase a person’s risk of falling because they cause side effects such as dizziness or confusion. The more medications you take, the more likely you are to fall.

Gardening Seminar — April in Paris

Thursday, April 11 You will get breakfast, gardening education, & vendors offering horticulture-related items. Registration at 8 a.m.

It will be at a new location: Lake Ridge Christian Church, 122 E. Steidl Road, in Paris. Cost is \$30 per person.

Speakers & topics for the day include:

Jan Phipps, Garden writer and Edgar County Master Gardener - Of Naked Ladies and Forget-Me-Knots, the stories behind the common names of some of our favorite plants as gleaned from the book by Allan M. Armitage. Do you ever wonder about the stories behind the interesting common names of plants? Find out about their histories and how they came to have their names.

Nathan & Lisa Campbell, Danville Gardens - New Varieties of Plants for 2024 Owners of Danville Gardens, Nathan & Lisa will have the latest information on new varieties of shrubs and flowers to put you in the mood for spring gardening.

Chris Enroth, University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator - Trees for Your Home Landscape or Not What trees work well in your home landscape? What trees are a big mistake to plant in your yard? When do I call an expert for problems with your tree? Mr. Enroth use his many years of experience and knowledge to answer these questions and more.

A New HCE Unit Geared to Widows

HCE widows helping other widows! Losing a husband changes everything in your world – house maintenance, monthly bills, getting to appointments, attending church, family functions and even relationships with your friends...everything feels different. This will not be a “support group” but an actual HCE unit who will pay annual \$10 dues.
Stay tuned for more details.

Show A Friend YOU Care!

Since it is still cold outside, we may be leery of touching others — even just a simple handshake could spread bacteria, germs, or viruses. And hugs, have people given up on hugging others?

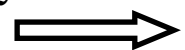
Experts say: “The skin is the largest organ of the body and has millions of nerve endings. People thrive on stimulation through touch; without it, humans often feel a longing or aching. Touching doesn’t have to involve hugging. Just a simple pat on the shoulder or arm can communicate that someone cares. Those caring for older adults can communicate love through the sense of touch by giving a gentle back rub, rubbing lotions to dry skin or brushing the hair. Offering your arm to help someone who may be a bit unsteady walking helps to satisfy the need for touch. Even a pet that might sit on the lap or rub around the legs can fulfill the need for touch. The sense of touch may be the most important of the senses, yet the most neglected. We can survive without sight, hearing, taste, or smell, but without touch, we are at great risk of mental breakdown.”

Here are some ideas on how to reach out to our friends:

- Gift certificate for a manicure & hand massage is a great way to add a human touch, and a little pampering, to an older adult’s life!
- Offer to wash and blow dry their hair, maybe add some curls.
- Gift certificate to a man for a barber shop shave.
- Give a high five, fist or elbow bump to offer encouragement.
- Place your arm around someone, with their permission, to offer comfort or empathy.
- Watch a movie and share a bowl of popcorn, which is sometimes just close enough to feel the benefits of the human touch.
- If you have friends, family, and loved ones who are hand holders a good walk while handholding is excellent medicine so to speak and will keep you a little warmer this winter.

Although as we get older - love may look different - but it is still in the air! Spring is right around the corner and THAT should make you smile and want to hug someone! Try some creative sensory touch

10 today!



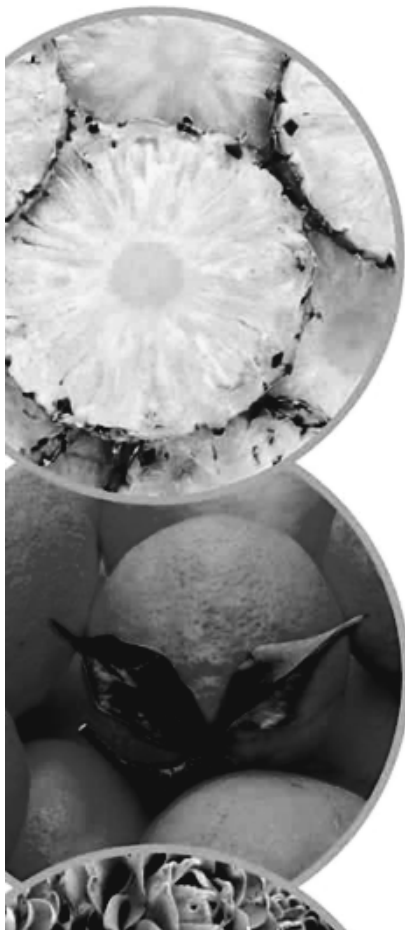
“Hugs, holding hands and other physical gestures of affection have the potential to ease our minds, make us feel less isolated, and reduce stress and anxiety. The need for constant touches may fade as we grow older but the feelings certain touches invoke do not.”

- Unknown

* This is not about “romantic” physical affection, it’s about showing love and support to our friends and acquaintances.

It’s Hard to Know. . . What Fruits and Vegetables to Buy in the Winter Months

whats in season *march*



Apples	Leeks
Artichokes	Lemons & Limes
Avocados	Mango
Asparagus	Mushrooms
Bananas	Oranges &
Beets	Tangerines
Bok Choy	Parsnips
Broccoli	Pears
Brussels Sprouts	Pineapples
Cabbage	Potatoes
Carrots	Rutabagas
Cauliflower	Strawberries (FL)
Celery	Sweet Onions
Greens	Turnips
Kiwi	

Learning to Love The Body You're In

In a constant stream of social media images from friends, celebrities, and brands, it's all too easy to compare ourselves to an ideal of perfection and beauty. Example: Martha Stewart (age 81) laid out in a swimsuit in Sports Illustrated!! Our minds don't instantly register the "photo editing", we go straight to comparing our aged bodies.

That can make it challenging to have a healthy body image, whether we're big or small. If you find yourself with a poor self-image, it's time to change the negative self-talk and be thankful for everything that's right with your body.

Body positive – learning what healthy means for you

Body positive is a movement that promotes acceptance of all bodies, regardless of size, shape, skin tone, gender, and physical abilities. It encourages a positive body image that's based on treating yourself and your body with respect and appreciation. Building body acceptance is vital because having a negative body image can lead to eating disorders, mental health conditions, performance-enhancing substance use, and depression or suicide.

How to build a positive body image

Most people don't love all of their body all of the time, but it is possible to like and appreciate your body more.

- ✓ Practice gratitude. Be thankful for all your body does for you every day.
- ✓ Scrub your social media feed. If certain apps or people make you feel bad, remove or unfollow them.
- ✓ Surround yourself with positive people. They'll support and love you for who you are, not how you look.
- ✓ Give yourself encouragement. Post inspiring quotes on your mirror or repeat a positive saying each morning.
- ✓ Focus on yourself as a whole person. Make a list of all you do for family, friends, and your community.
- ✓ Shift your energy when you're feeling bad. Go for a walk, write in a journal, or meditate.



Tips for grandparents -

Kids pick up a lot of cues from their parents and grandparents, but advertising and social media also play a role in poor body image.

To help your children, or anyone's children:

DO:

- Love and accept them for who they are.
- Keep an eye on their social media feed and talk with them about what they see.
- Be aware of changes in eating or exercise habits.
- Listen for negative comments about themselves.

DON'T:

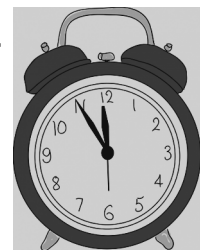
- Comment or focus on their (or your own) weight.
- Shame your child for eating certain foods.
- Over-control their eating.

How to respond if children talk negatively about their body

- ◆ Ask the child why they feel this way about their body; be sure to listen closely so they feel heard and understood.
- ◆ Explain that everyone can feel negatively about how they look sometimes, but it helps to think about the positive things.
- ◆ Encourage the child to identify their best, non-physical qualities. You might even write some down and stick them in their pocket as a reminder of how great they are!

Daylight Saving Time Begins!

Get ready to turn your clocks up ONE hour on Sunday, **March 10** at 2 a.m., we will "spring forward" and lose an hour of sleep.



Brain Twister answers — 1. Grand 2. Dough 3. Sawbuck
4. Benjamin 5. Rock 6. Jackson 7. Bank

Crawford County HCE

We purchased a \$7 ad to be put in the program book for the Illinois State HCE conference in March.
Here is what it looks like!

Diamonds are Forever
And so is IAHCE

DISTRICT 4

BOND CLAY CLINTON CRAWFORD
EFFINGHAM FAYETTE JASPER JERSEY LAWRENCE
MACOUPIN MADISON MARION RICHLAND WAYNE

1924 - 2024

CONGRATULATIONS IAHCE FOR
100 years
OF ENHANCING THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.

HCE Member Survey

We need Y-O-U-R input!

What would you like to see our organization OFFER to it's members?

What would you like to learn to do?

craft, hobby, crochet, make something, paint a picture or _____

Where would you like to go?

restaurant, movies, museum, musical, play, historical location, art show, Fort LaMotte, Hudson Cabins, Casino or _____

What would you like to do as a group?

play games, play cards, book club, swimming, weekly walks, train ride, tea party, sight-seeing, shopping, or _____

Do you want to participate in a community event?

write out greeting cards? Make Valentine or Easter cards? Color pictures for resident's rooms/doors? Make tray favors? Sing songs to shut-ins? Hold a bake sale?

What is something we can do to help others in or around our community? Please give us your thoughts or suggestions.

Call us (618/546-1549) or send in your ideas.

Thank you!!!

Vegetable Recipes (March lesson)

Hamburger Fry Pan Supper

6 servings

1 lb. ground beef
2 cups shredded cabbage
1 medium onion, chopped
3/4 cup thinly sliced celery
2 medium unpeeled red potatoes, diced
1/2 cup water
Salt & pepper to taste

In a large skillet, brown beef and onion; drain off fat. Add remaining ingredients. Cover skillet with lid; simmer 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender, stirring occasionally.

Garden Veggies Italian Style

6 servings

1 onion, chopped
1 zucchini/yellow squash, diced
1 tomato, diced
1 green pepper, chopped
8-ounce can tomato sauce
1/8 tsp. oregano
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Combine all the vegetables in a baking dish; sprinkle with oregano. Pour tomato sauce on top. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F for 25-30 minutes. Top with cheese and bake another 4-5 minutes until melted

Crunchy Green & White Salad

4 servings

1 1/2 cups fresh broccoli florets	1 Tbsp. sugar
3/4 cup fresh cauliflorets	1/8 tsp. salt
1/4 cup raisins	3/4 cup shredded Cheddar
1/2 cup mayonnaise	cheese
1 Tbsp. vinegar	

In large bowl, combine the broccoli, cauliflower, and raisins. Whisk together mayonnaise, vinegar, sugar, and salt. Pour over veggies; mix well. Cover and refrigerate, stirring in the cheese just before serving.

Scalloped Ham and Cabbage

6 servings

2 cups cubed ham
2/3 cup uncooked long grain rice
1/4 cup chopped onion
1 can mushroom soup
1 tsp. prepared horseradish
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 cup margarine
4 cups chopped cabbage
1-1/2 cups milk

In a large skillet, heat ham, rice, and onion in margarine until rice is golden brown and onion is tender. Stir in milk, soup, horseradish, and salt; mix well. Add cabbage; cover and cook over low heat for about 35-45 minutes or until cabbage is tender, stirring occasionally.



Lemon Whippersnaps

Makes 4 dozen

1 package lemon cake mix
1 egg
2 cups frozen whipped topping, thawed
1/2 cup powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine cake mix, whipped topping and egg in large bowl. Stir until well mixed. The dough will be wet and sticky. Drop by teaspoons into powdered sugar, roll to coat and roll into a ball. Place on cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes until light golden brown. Removed from cookie sheet and cool.

Nutrition information: 59 calories; 1.8g fat; 77mg salt; 10.1g carbohydrates; 0.7g protein

Easy Cookies

1 box cake mix (any flavor)
8 oz. cream cheese
4 oz. butter

Mix together, then make balls. Bake at 350°F for 10 minutes.

12 Best Egg Substitutes For Baking

Here are the 15 best egg substitutes for baking & cooking.

Replace eggs in pancakes, cornbread, brownies, cake, cookies & more! Perfect vegan substitutes, and you save money by using what you already have on hand.

APPLESAUCE

Use 1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce to replace one egg. Works best in cakes, muffins, and fruity desserts.

APRICOT PUREE

Use 1/4 cup apricot puree to replace one egg. Works best in dense, fudgy chocolate desserts.

ARROWROOT POWDER

Use 2 tablespoons of arrowroot powder + 3 tablespoons of water to replace one egg. Works best in cookies, many types of quick bread, and richly flavored baked goods.

AQUAFABA

The liquid from canned chickpeas is called aquafaba. Use 3 tablespoons of liquid, whisked until frothy, to replace one egg. Best for light, fluffy baked goods.

BANANA

Use 1/4 cup mashed banana to replace one egg. Works best in cakes, muffins, and fruity desserts.

One 1/4 cup of banana is about half of a small banana. Use that extra half in a smoothie, on top of your favorite oatmeal, in a parfait, or freeze for later.

BUTTERMILK

Use 1/4 cup buttermilk to replace one egg. Works best in muffins, cakes, and cupcakes.

PUMPKIN

Use 1/4 cup pumpkin puree to replace one egg. Works best in muffins, scones, and spiced bread.

PRUNE PUREE

Use 1/4 cup prune puree to replace one egg. Works best for dense, fudgy chocolate desserts.

TOFU

Use 1/4 cup silken tofu, whisked until smooth, to replace one egg.
18 Works best in scrambles, custards, and light-colored cakes.

VINEGAR + BAKING SODA

Use 1 teaspoon baking soda + 1 tablespoon vinegar to replace one egg. Works best in cakes, cupcakes, and quick bread.

WINTER SQUASH

Use 1/4 cup butternut squash, acorn squash, or other winter squash to replace one egg. Works best in muffins, scones, and spiced bread.

YOGURT

Use 1/4 cup plain, unflavored yogurt to replace one egg. Works best in muffins, cakes, and cupcakes.

Which Egg Replacement Will Work Best?

Obviously, not every option will work for every baking scenario.

Here are a few examples, when making:

Chocolate chip peanut butter muffins OR banana bread muffins, you might use flaxseed. Banana muffins already have bananas, and both of recipes are dense. Adding applesauce or squash will only make them denser.

Oatmeal cake, pancakes or whole grain pancakes – applesauce, banana, flaxseed, chia seed, or tofu.

Donuts, try flaxseed or aquafaba, since you want the donuts to be light and fluffy.

Oatmeal or molasses or pumpkin cookies with cream cheese frosting, try applesauce, banana, flaxseed, chia seed, or tofu.

NOTES:

It's best to mix/match your egg substitute if you need to substitute for more than one egg. In the same chocolate cake, you could substitute one egg for 1/4 cup applesauce and replace the second egg with 3 tablespoons aquafaba. The applesauce will help with the binding and moisture, while the aquafaba will help keep the texture light.

It might be necessary to add a lifting agent, i.e. baking soda or baking powder. Generally speaking, you need 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda for every 1 cup of acidic baking ingredient (honey, chocolate, buttermilk, yogurt, vinegar, etc.). You can also use baking powder if your recipe doesn't contain enough acidic ingredients – add 1 teaspoon baking powder for every 1/4 teaspoon baking soda.

Let's Amp Up the Veggies! — March Lesson

Vegetable Preparation

Fresh Is Best

Consider a vegetable's appearance and texture when you select fresh produce. High-quality, fresh vegetables are young, crisp, and brightly colored. As vegetables ripen, they gradually lose flavor and nutrients and become limp, losing their crispness. When chopping up your vegetables, be sure to save the vegetable "odds and ends" to put in soups or stocks.

Storage

Store fresh vegetables for as short a time as possible to prevent loss of nutrients, flavor, and texture. Vegetables lose quality rapidly. Peas and corn begin to lose their sweetness as soon as they are picked.

Store potatoes, onions, and winter squash unwashed in a cool, dry, dark place. Refrigerate other vegetables in a covered container to prevent drying. Tightly cover vegetables that have been peeled and cut to prevent drying and discoloration.

Nutritional Value of Vegetables

We should eat three to five servings of vegetables every day. A serving size usually is 1/2 cup of cooked vegetable or 1 cup of raw vegetable. Vegetables provide important vitamins and minerals such as vitamin A, vitamin C, riboflavin, folic acid, iron, and magnesium. Most vegetables are also good sources of fiber. They are naturally cholesterol-free and low in fat.

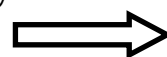
But don't turn your naturally low-fat vegetables into high-calorie foods – try to limit the butter, cheese and sauces you add to your vegetables.

Controlling Nutrient Loss

Most minerals and some vitamins dissolve in water.

Soaking vegetables in water before cooking or cooking vegetables in large amounts of water causes leaching of important vitamins and minerals.

20 Some nutrient loss is inevitable, but most can be avoided by understanding how these six factors affect vegetables.



Controlling Texture Changes

You should stop cooking vegetables when they become tender.

Winter squash, eggplant, and similar vegetables are properly cooked when they turn soft, but most vegetables are best when cooked very briefly or until they are crisp-tender.

A longer cooking time means softer vegetables. **Alkali**, such as baking soda, should not be added to vegetables because it destroys vitamins and softens vegetables to mush. **Acids** such as lemon juice, vinegar, tomato products, and sugar make vegetable fibers firmer. If you add any of these, you will need to allow more cooking time.

Controlling Flavor Changes

The longer a vegetable is cooked, the more flavor is lost, so cook them as quickly as possible. Start with boiling water to reduce cooking time. Use as little water as possible to minimize leaching of vitamins and minerals. Steam vegetables when possible because less nutrients and flavor are lost during the reduced cooking time.

Strong-flavored vegetables such as onions, cabbage, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli, and turnips are much more appealing if some of their flavor is lost. Cook these vegetables uncovered and in larger amounts of water allows off-flavors to escape.

Controlling Color Changes

It is important to preserve as much of a vegetable's natural color as you can during cooking.

Green Vegetables — Chlorophyll is the pigment in asparagus, green beans, broccoli, peas, and spinach. Chlorophyll is destroyed by acids, such as lemon juice and vinegar, and by baking soda. Prolonged cooking or overcooking the color to turn a drab olive green. Steaming is the most preferred method for cooking because steam cooks food rapidly, lessens the Loss of nutrients and flavor, and does not break up delicate vegetables.

Yellow and Orange Vegetables — Carotenoids are the pigments found in carrots, corn, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and winter squash. These pigments are very stable to acids and heat, but loss of color, nutrients, and flavor occurs with overcooking.

Red Vegetables — Anthocyanins are the pigments found in a few vegetables, such as beets and red cabbage. These red pigments react very strongly to acids and alkalis. Acids make anthocyanins brighter red, and alkalis turn them a blue or blue-green color. So a small amount of acid gives red beets and red cabbage a bright red color. This is why red cabbage is often cooked with tart apples. Because acids toughen vegetables and prolong cooking time, in recipes that call for lemon juice, tomatoes, or other acids, add only a small amount at the beginning of cooking and the remaining toward the end after the vegetables have become tender. Because anthocyanins dissolve easily in water, cook these vegetables quickly in as little water as needed.

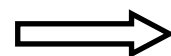
White Vegetables — Flavones are pigments found in potatoes, onions, cauliflower, and the white parts of celery, cucumbers, and zucchini. Cook vegetables for a short time to avoid loss of flavor, nutrients, and color. Overcooking and hard water turn vegetables a dull yellow/gray.

To microwave vegetables:

- Place evenly cut vegetables in a ceramic dish. Add 2 tablespoons of water to fresh vegetables. Frozen vegetables require no extra water.
- Cover the vegetables and cook on high until fork tender.
- Halfway through the cooking cycle, stir the vegetables.

Steaming — This method can be used for both pressurized steam cookers and range-top steamers which contain a perforated basket over a pot of boiling water. Pressurized steamers are not recommended because it is too easy to overcook the vegetables.

- If you use a pressurized steam cooker, follow the manufacturer's instructions. For range-top cooking, bring 1 to 2 inches of water to a boil in a saucepan.
- Arrange vegetables in shallow, even layers in a perforated pan or basket for cooking.
- Insert pan or basket into steamer or saucepan and cook until fork tender for most vegetables. Follow guidelines for preserving color, texture, and nutrients.



Baking — Potatoes, sweet potatoes, and winter squash, as well as tomatoes, can be baked. Starchy vegetables are baked because the dry heat of the oven and long baking time produce a desirable texture.

Boiling — Boiling is easy and economical. Actually, simmering is the proper term. It is best because the agitation and high temperature of boiling break up delicate vegetables and destroy nutrients.

To boil fresh vegetables:

- Bring water to a boil in saucepan. Leafy green vegetables require only the water that clings to the leaves. Cover other vegetables with water.
- Place vegetables in pan and return the water to a boil.
- Reduce heat to a simmer and cook the vegetables until tender.

To boil frozen vegetables:

- In a saucepan, bring to a boil the amount of water suggested on the package. Frozen vegetables have been blanched or precooked so they require less water and less cooking time.
- Add frozen vegetables. Never defrost frozen vegetables before cooking. You may need to break up large blocks with a fork as the vegetables cook.

To boil canned vegetables:

- Place vegetables and liquid in a saucepan and bring to a boil.
- Reduce to a simmer and cook until tender.
- Drain liquid before serving.

To boil dried peas and beans:

- Wash dried peas and beans well & throw out rocks.
- Allow to soak overnight. A quicker method is to add the dried vegetables to boiling water and boil 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and let sit for 1 hour before cooking.
- Bring the water and dried vegetables and seasonings to a boil.
- Reduce to a simmer and cook until tender, about 1½ to 2½ hours. Add more water if needed.

**Pick up the whole lesson, complete with recipes,
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