



Illinois Extension

JULY 2022

Connections Newsletter

The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

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Mon-Fri 8am - 4 pm
(closed 12 -12:30 pm)

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(309) 932-3447
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Choose joy for life.

When was the last time you laughed really hard – a hearty sidesplitting belly laugh? Humor can be good for you. Bringing humor into your life can provide both physical and psychological benefits. Do you look for humor in your everyday life? You don't have to be a comedian to have a sense of humor. Read these [Illinois Extension Family Life tips for adding humor to your life.](#)

Looking at the Funny Side of Life

Laughter keeps us young at heart. Its benefits are shown in our face, our attitude, and the spring in our step. Some laughter milestones include:

- As babies we start to laugh around 10 weeks old.
- At 16 weeks, we are laughing about once every hour.
- By 4 years old, we laugh on an average of every 4 minutes.
- As adults, we laugh only about 15 times a day.

Physical benefits include:

- Exercises muscles and reduces tension
- Increases the respiratory system
- Decreases blood pressure and heart rate
- Enhancing alertness, memory, learning and creativity
- Improves the immune system
- Improves digestion
- Relieves pain and tension
- Stimulates cardiovascular system
- Triggers endorphins
- Improves mental functioning

Robust laughter is called internal jogging, leaving your muscles, heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing with the effects of a good workout. In fact, a good laugh can also burn as many calories as brisk walking for an hour.

Psychological Benefits include:

- Acts as coping mechanism that can relieve hostility and anger and can distance us from the burden of illness and disability
- Relieves anxiety, distress, anger and depression
- Changes our perspective
- Provides an acceptable way of enjoying usually forbidden topics
- Creates feelings of well-being, sense of empowerment and control
- Assists in creating and maintaining a positive attitude, hope, energy and self-esteem
- Creates change in behavior – reduces whining and complaining

Laugh At Yourself

Ask yourself “Just how serious is this” when you find yourself taking things too seriously. Step back and view the situation from others point of view. How would they react to see the clash with the boss or the broken dishwasher that spilled all over. Allow yourself to relax and laugh at your own mistakes and accept yourself as you are.

Look For Humor In Everyday Life

Humor is a healthy way of creating a distance between one's self and a problem, a way of standing off and looking at one's problem objectively. Whether it's a changing life event or a little hassle, humor helps us detach ourselves and get a fresh look. We can then find a solution – to either change the situation or to accept it.

Spend Time With People Who Make You Laugh

Try to spend time with the people who make you feel good about yourself and are pleasant to be with – who amuse, inspire, relax and loosen you up. Choose friends who lighten the atmosphere and boost your mood. Avoid spending time with chronic complainers and whiners who make you feel depressed. Try to avoid becoming a part of negative conversations and seek out others who have a positive attitude.



Smile

Research has shown that just changing your facial muscles can trigger different thoughts and affect moods. So when we put on a happy face during adversity or say, “have a nice day” when we don't feel like it, blood flow to the brain increases. We are actually changing our hormone levels, which change our moods. So if you can't laugh, smile. If you can't smile, try faking it.

Summer salads to help you cool down with tasty flavors from the garden

Summer goes hand-in-hand with picnics, potlucks and family outings. These cold summer salad recipes will certainly taste great and help beat the heat. Salads (and recipes like salsa with a mix of different fruits and veggies) have multiple different nutrients in one bite. Each recipe has an ingredient that is growing in Illinois during summer months, from fruits to veggies to herbs. So gather produce from your garden or check out your local farmers markets, roadside stands, community supported agriculture subscriptions to shop local to make and enjoy one of these recipes this summer.



Jicama Summer Salad

(serves 6 (1-cup servings))

If you are new to jicama, peel it like a potato and dice. It is sweet and crunchy raw, like an apple.

Ingredients

Half of 1 jicama. peeled and diced
3 cups Strawberries, sliced
6 oz. container blueberries
15 oz. can mandarin oranges, drained
1 Tbsp lime juice
2 1/2 Tbsp honey
1/2 tsp cinnamon

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Wash produce under cool water before peeling and cutting.
3. In a large bowl. combine jicama, strawberries, blueberries, and mandarin oranges.
4. Mix together lime juice, honey, and cinnamon in a small bowl until well combined. Drizzle over jicama mixture.
5. Serve immediately or store in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

Nutrition Facts per serving: 120 calories, 0g fat, 10mg sodium, 31 g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 1g protein.



Mocktato Salad

(serves 6 (1-cup servings))

No, this isn't the same as potato salad. But it is a fun way to make cauliflower.

Ingredients

1 medium head of fresh cauliflower
2 medium stalks of celery, diced
1/2 small onion, diced
1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped or
7 teaspoon dried parsley
2 large eggs, hard boiled, shelled and diced
2 tablespoon light mayonnaise
1 tablespoon mustard
1/4 teaspoon salt

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Gently rub produce under cool running water.
3. Chop head of cauliflower into small florets and rinse under water.
4. Add chopped cauliflower to a steamer basket. Insert steamer basket into a pot with 1" of water in the bottom. Cover pot with lid and steam cauliflower over medium-high heat until slightly tender, about 10 minutes.
5. Move cauliflower with tongs to an ice-bath for 1 minute. Drain water and move cauliflower to a large bowl.
6. Add celery, onion, parsley, and egg to bowl of steamed and cooled cauliflower.
7. In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, mustard, and salt. Add to cauliflower mixture and stir to coat.
8. Serve immediately or store in refrigerator. Refrigerate leftovers for up to 4 days.

Nutrition Facts per serving: 70 calories, 3g fat, 230 mg sodium, 7g carbohydrate, 2g fiber, 4g protein.



Tabbouleh

(serves 6 (1-cup servings))

This lemony side salad is a light recipe for summer. Mix in cooked white beans, such as cannellini or garbanzo (chickpea) for extra fiber and protein.

Ingredients

1 cup dry bulgur wheat, 1 cup water or broth
2 scallions (or green onions), chopped
1 small cucumber. chopped
1 tomato, chopped
1 cup chopped herbs such as parsley, cilantro, and/or mint
1/4 cup olive oil
Juice and zest of 1 lemon
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 tsp salt, optional
1/4 tsp ground black pepper

Directions

1. Rinse the bulgur and set in a medium bowl.
2. Bring the water or broth to a boil and pour over bulgur. Let bulgur sit for half an hour at room temperature. Or follow package directions. If excess water remains, drain water. Set aside.
3. Wash hands with soap and water.
4. Gently rub produce under cool running water.
5. Add the scallions, cucumber, tomato, and herbs to a large bowl. Stir in cooked bulgur.
6. Mix oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, garlic, salt, and pepper in a separate bowl. Add lemon mixture into bulgur and stir to combine. Excess dressing will be absorbed with time.
7. Cover and refrigerate. Eat within 4 days.

Nutrition Facts per serving: 170 calories, 9g fat, 705mg sodium, 21g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 4g protein.

This story is adapted from a Live Well, Eat Well blog post by Posted by IL Extension nutrition and wellness educator, Caitlin Mellendorf. The original post features more recipes. Get them all @ extension.illinois.edu/blogs/live-well-eat-well



Finding Your Get Up and Go July 12 @ 2 PM

Most people find that there are some days when it's hard to find the motivation to accomplish what needs to be done, even those things that are important. Learning what accounts for the ebb and flow of levels of motivation in life and how to respond can help individuals be more productive.

Join us for a webinar that will help you during those times when it just seems hard to "get going". It will help you learn how to give your enthusiasm a boost.

Register at go.illinois.edu/GetUpAndGo



Identifying Common Lawn & Garden Weeds Four Seasons Webinar July 12 | 1:30 pm

All too often, homeowners struggle with invading weeds. They believe they are trying to control one species when, in fact, they have another species entirely, resulting in poor weed control. Don't let this happen to you! Join Michelle Wiesbrook, Extension Pesticide Safety Education Program specialist, to learn about proper weed identification. Knowing what to look for and where to look makes weed identification considerably easier.

Register at go.illinois.edu/CommonWeeds



Container Gardening 101 | July 13, 10 am

Explore the why, how, and what of container gardening with Emily Swihart, horticulture educator.

This virtual program will explore container requirements, growing conditions, flowers, fruits and so much more. From beginner to experienced gardener, container gardening is a fun way to exercise your green thumb.

Register at go.illinois.edu/ContainerGardening101

"I Made That!" Back to School Edition



August is back-to-school month and a great time to start those healthy habits! This month, help youth learn how to make healthy choices with school lunches and after-school snacks. Whether they eat at school or bring their own, lunches and snacks are an important part of the day. With the August "I Made That!" educational packet, they will learn all about brain-healthy foods and snacks that are low in sodium and added sugar so they can perform their best all year long. They will also become a "diet detective" and investigate the lunchroom offerings in their school or lunchbox.

Each kit is \$5 and includes:

- August "I Made That!" booklet
- Healthy back-to-school recipes
- Reusable snack bags for school lunches
- Select ingredients for recipes
- Activities and food critic activity



Register by July 31 for this August program offered by University of Illinois Extension and 4-H. Kits are \$5 and will be available for pick-up beginning August 8 at our Extension offices in Milan, Viola, and Galva, IL. Order your kit at go.illinois.edu/IMadeThatAugust

Have gardening questions?

Fill out an Ask the Master Gardener form online to get your gardening questions answered @

go.illinois.edu/AsktheMasterGardener

Or call the IL Extension Master Gardeners



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Learn by doing!



It's 4-H fair season! That means youth around Illinois are busy presenting projects on everything from robotics to public speaking, with one of the most popular topics being livestock. 4-H members spend months preparing pigs, cattle, goats, sheep, rabbits to show them in front of the judges. They learn what it takes to raise an animal and take care of daily chores such as grooming, feeding, and training. Good luck to all of our 4-H members who are putting their showmanship skills to the test at their county shows and fairs!

Here's where you can see them in action

4-H Shows at the Mercer County Fair, Aledo, IL

Monday, July 11

General Projects Judging, (8:30 - 11 am)
Projects will be on view in Floral Hall

Tuesday, July 12

Poultry Show, (Virtual)
10 am, Rabbit Show, Show Ring
4 pm, Sheep Show, Sheep Barn

Wednesday, July 13

8 am, Dog Obedience & Showmanship,
Pavilion east of Secretary's office
9 am, Beef Show, Show Ring



Thursday, July 14

9 am, Goat Show, Goat Barn
9 am, Swine Show, Swine Barn
4 pm, Jr. and Sr. Master Showmanship Contest

Friday, July 15

9 am, Dairy Show
6 pm, Mercer County Youth Livestock Auction

Sun, July 17

9 am, Mercer County 4-H Horse Show at the 4K Arena, Viola IL

4-H Shows at the Rock Island County Fair, East Moline, IL

Saturday, July 16

General Projects Judging, 9 am - noon
Projects will be on view in the Copeland Building
Dog Obedience & Show, 4 pm

Monday, July 18

6 pm, Dog Fun Show



Tuesday, July 19

Poultry Show, (Virtual)
10 am, Horse Fun Show
10 am, Dairy Show

Wednesday, July 20

9 am, Horse & Pony Show
3 pm, Sheep Show



Thursday, July 21

8 am, Swine Show
9 am, Bucket Calf/Breeding Beef/Steer Show
9 am, Horse & Pony Show
12:30 pm, Master Showmanship Contest
3 pm, Championship Games (open to all 4-H members)

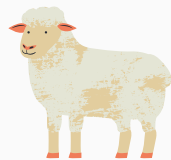
Friday, July 22

9 am, Goat Show
2 pm, Rabbit Show
6 pm, Livestock Auction for 4-H members

4-H Shows at the Stark County Fair, Wyoming, IL

Fri July 29

7 am, Swine Weigh-in
9 am, Jr. Fair Swine, 4-H after Jr. Fair
1:30 pm, Rabbits/Small Pets
Poultry is virtual



Sat. July 30

8 am, Non-Livestock Judging
11 am, 4-H Projects released
11 am, Jr. Fair Non-Livestock Judging
1 pm, Goats & Sheep

Sun July 31

8-9 am, Weigh all Beef Cattle
10 am, Bucket Calf & Dairy Classes
11 am, Beef Breeding Classes, Beef Steer Classes, Ideal Beef



Mon Aug 1

9 am, Horse Show
6:30 pm, Non-livestock awards program and state fair announcements
7 pm, Queen's Pie and Stark County Sale of Champions for Stark County 4-H members