

# Cent\$ible Nutrition News

Helping Families Eat Better for Less

February 2004 ❖ Cooperative Extension Service ❖ Family and Consumer Sciences ❖ Vol. 7 No. 2



## Cost Cutter

Microwaves can save you time and money. They cook using less power and cut cooking time in half. If you're in the market for a new microwave oven, here are some things to consider.

☞ The size of the microwave and how much room you have in your kitchen.

☞ The wattage or power of the unit. The higher the wattage, the faster it cooks.

☞ Check the interior capacity, is it large enough for the dishes you use?

Prices of new microwaves vary greatly; you might even check second-hand stores and garage sales.

*If you want to eat better for less, contact us for more information.*

**1-877-219-4646**

## Microwaves and Crock Pots

After working all day, isn't it nice to come home to an already cooked meal or to be able to have a meal cooked in a few minutes. Feeding ourselves and our families can be quick, simple, and nutritious with a little planning and the right tools.

Slow cookers or crock pots are very handy especially during the colder month. Soups and stews are healthy hearty meals that can be prepared the night before and cooked during the day while the family is at school or work.

Here are a few tips:

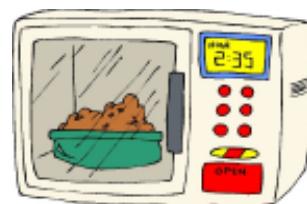
- Vegetables cook slower than meat so place them at the bottom and around the sides of the cooker.
- Place the *defrosted* meat in the center.
- Cover all the food with a hot liquid like water or broth to get it out of the "danger zone" more quickly.
- Do not use crock pots to reheat foods.



Microwaves are another kitchen tool that can help you prepare quick nutritious meals. Frozen or canned vegetables can be easily cooked in a matter of a few minutes. The microwave is very useful when preparing planned-overs.

Here are a few things to remember:

- Foods need to be reheated to 165°F.
- Rotating foods as they cook will help them cook evenly.
- Stirring periodically will help eliminate hot-spots.



## SENIOR SENSE

Sometimes it's just easier and more convenient to let someone else do the cooking. You can purchase convenience foods, deli meals, have meals delivered by Meals-On-Wheels, or eat out at a restaurant or Senior Center. However, you need to be aware of several food safety issues.

- **Throw away any perishable foods left at room temperature longer than 2 hours.**
- When you're served a hot meal, be sure food is piping hot and thoroughly cooked. If it's not hot, send it back.
- Keep the 2 hour rule in mind when taking food home in a doggy bag. Remember that the inside of a car can be very warm, causing bacteria in food to grow rapidly. Refrigerate the food immediately upon arriving home.
- Some senior centers do not allow food to be taken away from the site because they know how easy it is for bacteria to multiply to dangerous levels when food is left unrefrigerated too long. Check with your center for its policy on taking leftovers home.
- If you're reheating leftovers here are some guidelines.
  - Be sure to heat the food thoroughly to 165 degrees F. until hot and steaming.
  - Bring gravy to a rolling boil.
  - With microwaves, cover food and rotate the dish so the food heats evenly and doesn't leave "cold spots" that could harbor bacteria.

Source: FDA Center of Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

## Food of the Month

### Tomatoes: An American Original

The tomato is native to the Americas. It was first cultivated by the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru as early as 700 A.D. In England in the 16th century, tomatoes were called "mad apples" due to their resemblance to the very poisonous berries of the nightshade plant. However, the French called them "apples of love" and considered them strong aphrodisiacs.

Today tomatoes are considered a staple of the American diet. Not only are they versatile, but tomatoes are full of phytochemicals that help fight infection, protect against disease, and help prevent cancer. They are also cholesterol free, low in calories, and a good source of fiber. Take advantage of this wonder food and eat some everyday!

Source: North Carolina Department of Agriculture



## sloppy joes

1 lb. Lean ground beef  
1 can (10 ½ oz.) tomato soup  
1 Tbsp. prepared mustard  
½ tsp. salt  
6 hamburger buns  
Margarine

1. Preheat oven to 325° F.
2. Brown beef in skillet then drain fat.
3. Stir in tomato soup, mustard, and salt. Simmer over low heat 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Butter bun halves lightly and place on cookie sheet. Place in oven and heat 10 to 15 minutes.
5. Spoon meat onto warm buns and serve. Makes 6 servings.

Source: CNP Cookbook

## Food Safety

Can using plastic wrap in the microwave cause cancer? No, according to an Alabama Cooperative Extension food scientist.

During a study looking at chemicals released when using plastic wrap in the microwave it was discovered that some chemicals are released by the plastic. But these chemicals are released in such small amounts that they do not pose any risk. Also, one of the chemicals released is not a cancer causing agent at all.

If you are concerned with using plastics in the microwave, here are a few tips:

- Use only cookware that is labeled for use in the microwave.
- Avoid using plastic storage containers such as margarine tubs and other one time use containers. They are not designed for microwave use and may melt, causing a definite chemical release.
- Never use thin plastic storage bags, grocery bags, brown paper, or newspaper in the microwave.

Source: Dr. Jean Weese, Alabama CES Food Scientist

## Why Should I Add Physical Activity?

Given the many health benefits of physical activity, the hazards of inactivity are clear. Physical inactivity is a serious nationwide epidemic. Its scope poses a public health challenge to prevent a national burden of premature death and unnecessary illness.

### The Benefits of Regular Physical Activity

- Reduces the risk of dying prematurely.
- Promotes psychological well-being.
- Reduces the risk of dying from heart disease.
- Helps control weight.
- Reduces the risk of developing diabetes.
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.
- Reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure.
- Helps reduce blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure.
- Reduces the risk of developing colon cancer.

Helps older adults become stronger and better able to move without falling.

Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.



Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

## Kid's Corner

### Toddler Tips

Always watch children during meals and snacks. Young children, ages 2-3 especially, are at risk of choking on food and remain at risk until they can chew and swallow better by about age 4.

Using the Food Guide Pyramid, offer 2-3 year olds the same variety of foods as the rest of the family, but smaller amounts prepared in forms that are easy for them to chew and swallow.

### Creative Cutting

Using a cookie cutter, cut whole grain bread, cheese slices and meat slices into shapes. Stack them up to build a sandwich.

Try using small cookie cutters with different vegetables to see what shapes can be made and then eaten.

A *Cent\$ible Nutrition* educator can show you how to:

- Invest food dollars in the best nutrition choices
- save time and money
- prepare tasty meals
- keep food safe

Participants receive a free *Cent\$ible Nutrition Cookbook* plus many other items including:

- computerized diet analysis
- grocery list pad
- menu planner
- calendar
- cutting board
- refrigerator thermometer

Best of all, meet new friends, share ideas, and have fun! Classes are free to those who qualify.

I am able to feed my family and myself more nutritiously because I am buying more of a variety of food because I am planning my menus. I have also been able to improve my cooking skills and safety of my kitchen-using the CNP bleach water. I have also challenged myself to drink milk at meals to improve the amount of calcium I consume.

*Big Horn County Participant*

To receive more information, contact a *Cent\$ible Nutrition* Educator in your county:

|          |          |                 |              |            |          |                 |                |
|----------|----------|-----------------|--------------|------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|
| Albany   | 721-2571 | Goshen          | 532-2436     | Niobrara   | 334-3534 | Uinta           | 783-0579       |
| Big Horn | 568-2278 | Hot Springs     | 864-3421     | Park       | 527-8560 | Washakie        | 347-4567       |
| Campbell | 682-7281 | Johnson         | 684-7522     | Platte     | 322-3667 | Weston          | 746-3531       |
| Carbon   | 328-2642 | Laramie         | 633-4383     | Sheridan   | 674-2980 | Wind River Res. | 332-2681       |
| Converse | 358-2417 | Lincoln (Afton) | 886-3132     | Sublette   | 367-4380 | En Español      | 1-877-356-6675 |
| Crook    | 283-1192 | Kemmerer        | 877-9056x410 | Sweetwater | 352-6775 | State Office    | 1-877-219-4646 |
| Fremont  | 332-1030 | Natrona         | 235-9400     | Teton      | 733-3087 |                 |                |

For information on how to apply for food stamps call 1-800-457-3659

This material was funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your county social services office.

*Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Glen Whipple, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071. Persons seeking admission, employment, or access to programs of the University of Wyoming shall be considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, political belief, veteran status, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact their local UW CES Office. To file a complaint, write the UW Employment Practices/Affirmative Action Office, University of Wyoming, P.O. Box 3434, Laramie, Wyoming 82071-3434.*

## Cooperative Extension Service

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## Family & Consumer Sciences

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### *Cent\$ible Nutrition*

Sundays at 1:30 on Wyoming PBS

Feb 1 - "Eggs"

Feb 8- "Cent\$ible Kitchen"

Feb 15- "Breakfast"

Feb 22 - "Food Preservation"

Feb 29- "Herbs"