**Department of Extension Home Economics**

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter**

**September/October, 2007 Volume 1 Issue 1**



**Introduction**

This is the first issue of the first ever Department of Extension Home Economics newsletter that includes articles from all of our subject matter specialists. The idea grew out of discussion of the Extension Home Economics Advisory Team which includes all of the subject matter specialists and two representatives from each Extension District. (County representatives include Shannon Wooten, Connie Moyers, Karim Martinez, Kelly Knight and Desiree Jimenez. Imelda Garcia served on the team until she retired and now Paula Sanchez is joining us.)

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide updates to county agents in the home economics areas and also to supply agents with articles they can use in the newsletters that they produce. The plan is to have the newsletter released bi-monthly. We decided to keep the format simple and in a Word document so it will be easy for people to “cut-and-paste” articles they would like to use in other documents.

Please give us feedback regarding what is most useful in the newsletter and anything you would like to see added or changed.

Happy reading!

Martha

Martha Archuleta, Department Head

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**Vitamin D- In the News**

*Martha Archuleta, Ph.D.*

*Department Head*

*Extension Home Economics*

You may have noticed that vitamin D has made frequent appearances in health news in recent months. Historically, the major importance of vitamin D has been attributed to strong, healthy bones and closely connected with calcium in maintaining bone health. Receptors for vitamin D have been found in other organs in the body which has caused scientists to wonder what other functions vitamin D might have. Recent research has linked vitamin D to prevention of diseases such as cancer, type 1 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, autoimmune diseases, depression and controlling weight gain after menopause.

What should one make of the latest excitement about vitamin D? First a little review of the basics: Vitamin D is unique in that it can be made by the body when skin is exposed to the sun or other sources of UV light. It is present in some foods, but fatty fish (salmon, mackerel) and to a lesser degree in tuna and sardines are the only foods where vitamin D is present in significant amounts. Vitamin D is also in eggs, liver and milk products, but only occurs naturally in small amounts.

In the 1930’s, rickets was a major health problem in the United States. (Rickets is the disease caused by vitamin D deficiency and causes soft, misshapen bones.) This resulted in the beginning of fortification of milk with vitamin D. Milk fortification largely eliminated rickets. However, in recent years, cases have begun to re-emerge in children. This is attributed to prolonged breastfeeding (breast milk is low in vitamin D) and decreased sun exposure through extensive use of sunscreens and less playtime outdoors. There is widespread concern today that levels of vitamin D in other population groups may be below optimal as well. This may be particularly true in the elderly and dark-skinned people where vitamin D synthesis from sun exposure is less efficient.

Currently, adequate intake levels for vitamin D are set at 200 IU from birth to age 50, 400 IU from age 51-70 and 600 IU for people over 70. The safe upper limit is set at 1000 IU for infants and 2,000 for other age groups. Vitamin D fortified milk contains about 100 IU per cup, fatty fish about 300 IU for 3 ounces and tuna about 200 IU for 3 ounces. Breakfast cereals are also often fortified with vitamin D, typically at about 10-15% of the Daily Value. Without sun exposure, it may be difficult to get adequate vitamin D from foods and in these cases, a supplement containing vitamin D could be beneficial. People should check with their health care provider to discuss the type and amount of supplement that could be beneficial for them.

As mentioned previously, sun exposure is also an avenue for increasing vitamin D levels in the body. This can be accomplished by exposure of face and arms to sunlight three times a week for about 15 minutes during the middle of the day. Sun exposure at this level should provide a balance of increasing vitamin D levels without being excessive and resulting in increased skin cancer risk.

Getting back to the recent news headlines; it is very likely that vitamin D has roles unimagined a decade or so ago. More research is needed to

better define which diseases vitamin D truly has a role in preventing and which results are preliminary but may not hold up with further testing. In the meantime, it makes good sense to pay attention to getting adequate vitamin D through a combination of diet, supplements and sun exposure that is adequate but not over-done.

**Sources:**

Can Vitamin D Prevent Cancer: American Cancer Society [http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS\_1\_1x\_Can\_Vitamin\_DPrevent\_Cancer.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_1_1x_Can_Vitamin_D_Prevent_Cancer.asp)

Vitamin D, Sun Exposure, and Cancer Prevention: Harvard Center for Cancer Prevention <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/cancer/risk/sunexposure/basics/vitamin_d.htm>

Dietary Supplement Fact Sheet, Vitamin D: Office of Dietary Supplements, NIH Clinical Center <http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD_pf.asp>

Vitamin D Slows Weight Gain: WebMD <http://www.webmd.com/diet/news/20070514/calcium-vitamin-d-slows-weight-gain>

Are You Getting Enough Vitamin D:Web MD

<http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/features/are-you-getting-enough-vitamin-d>

Vitamin D May Ease Depression: WebMD <http://www.webmd.com/depression/news/200420040803/vitamin-d-ease-depression>

**Helping Children Cope with Failure**

*Diana DelCampo, Ph.D.*

*Extension Child Development*

*& Family Life Specialist*

No matter how hard adults try to protect children from negative situations, at some point children will experience failure. Given the inevitability of failure, how en overcome failure and move on to achieve success? By providing encouragement, teaching children how to handle negative emotions, and teaching children how to evaluate situations, adults can provide a valuable life lesson on coping with failure.

**Encouragement**

Have you ever watched babies learning to walk? This is a good illustration of providing encouragement as children cope with failure. The process of learning to stand and walk requires that babies learn from failure. Babies do not just get up and walk. They try to stand, but fall down. They try to stand, but fall down again. This process goes on and on until one day they stand and take one step. Success is eventually obtained when they stand and walk on their own.

Repeated failure at trying to stand and walk does not stop babies from trying over and over again. They just keep trying harder. They usually have a parent or other adult encouraging them by holding out their arms for the baby to reach, and clapping when they do achieve some little bit of success. Adults in this situation would never think of stopping babies from trying to achieve this task and usually provide

continued encouragement, even though babies are not successful the first or second time they try to walk.

This same principal can hold true in helping children learn to cope with failure as they continue to grow and develop. Adults can encourage children to try a task and praise them when they try verses only praising them when they succeed. Adults need to say out loud, “I am proud of you for trying.” What really helps children learn to deal with failure and move on to succeed is their belief that they can do what they set out to do, and aduls can play a vital role in encouraging them to develop this belief in themselves.

**Learn to Handle Negative Emotions**

One of the side effects of failing is the negative emotions that accompany the process. When children do not or cannot accomplish certain goals, it is vital that they learn to handle the negative emotions such as guilt, shame, anger, or sadness that are part of the failure process. Children need to learn that it’s OK to cry, to talk about what happened, and to feel bad, but it’s not OK to be mean to others, throw things, or hurt themselves as a result of the failure. Children need to learn to seek social support from friends or adults in their life. They need someone to talk to when sad things happen. For example, a child may try out for the basketball team and really want to play basketball, but may not have the skills to achieve this goal. If this child gets cut from the squad, how can she deal with the hurt and disappointment?

In this case, adults can help the child talk through the situation as a way of dealing with the hurt she probably feels. They can help her acknowledge that perhaps her skills, such as the ability to jump, may not be as strong as others on the team. Adults can help her realize that she is a valuable and good person with all kinds of other skills and abilities. Making a list of these skills and strengths is a concrete way for her to see how valuable she is.

Once the list of strengths or skills is written, encourage activities that play up these strengths or skills. If this child has a good singing voice, encourage her to join the church choir or singing group at school. When children experience success based on their strengths, self esteem improves and they can handle failure or disappointment better. Create situations that balance positive and negative experiences. The child in the basketball scenario, who has been cut from the basketball squad, might help fix a leaky pipe or bake a cake for the homeless shelter. The child will feel a sense of accomplishment for doing something positive to balance out the feeling of failure in not making the basketball team.

Another way to help children handle the negative emotions associated with failure is to point out how people in popular culture are experiencing failure and coping with it. One example is political candidates, who lose an election. Talk about how they lost, but still are valuable individuals who will go on to do another job or maybe even run for office again. Another example could be a favorite actor who makes a movie that is panned by the critics, but goes on to make a better movie that everyone loves.

**Learn to Evaluate the Situation**

On the other hand, in the previous example of the child who did not make the basketball team, achieving success may be possible. Perhaps

all that is needed to achieve in this situation is more practice. Maybe she can make the team if she spends more time practicing jumping. Children need to learn to evaluate the situation to decide if they can succeed and what the costs of succeeding or failing will be. Adults can help children learn how to evaluate situations. In the basketball example children can decide if it’s reasonable to practice more or if it’s not worth the time and effort. When children learn to evaluate the costs of success verses the costs of failure, it can be a valuable lesson that they can use throughout their lives.

Adults can talk about successes and failures so that children understand that this is a part of everyone’s life. For example, if you applied for a promotion at work but didn’t get it, talk about what happened in realistic terms. Maybe the company was not making enough money to give anyone a raise or promotion this year or maybe there were some personality clashes that kept you from achieving success in your job.

Learning how to cope with failure depends on adults encouraging children to try new things and not being afraid to fail, as well as children dealing with negative emotions and weighing the pros and cons of failing. It is through these experiences that children can learn to have control over their accomplishments and learn from their failures.

**Using Market Bounty Safely**

*Nancy Flores, Ph.D.*

*Extension Food Technology Specialist*

Preserving fruit and vegetables from your own garden or taking advantage of grocery market surplus can extend your family’s pantry through the winter months. Many consumers would like to return to using foods that they have preserved themselves for their families. Canning food can be time consuming and costly while using dehydrators to dry foods or freezing can take some time but can be done efficiently if you are well organized and have a little help from friends, family or neighbors.

Regardless of the methods used for food preservation, consumer must follow directions for the equipment used and follow recipes obtained from reliable sources, such as the [National Center for Home Preservation](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html) , New Mexico State University Extension [“how-to” publications](http://cahe.nmsu.edu/pubs/_e/) or private commercially available source such as [Homecanning.com](http://www.freshpreserving.com/pages/home/1.php). Consumers must also prepare and hold preserved foods according to the instruction of recipes used.

**Canning food**

Foods such as green chile are naturally low in acid, canning them requires special precautions that differ from those followed when canning high-acid fruits. Growth of microorganisms particularly must be avoided. Some bacteria cause food spoilage, while others produce toxins that cause illness or death. For example, *Clostridium botulinum* is a harmless bacteria in air. In little or no acid, an air-free canning jar, and temperatures between 40°F and 120°F, this bacteria grows and produces a deadly toxin that can cause serious damage to the central nervous system or death when eaten in even minute amounts.

Follow a USDA approved recipe or reliable source for preparation and processing of fruits and vegetables. All communities in New Mexico are

above sea level, varying from 3,000 to 10,000 feet, with differences even within a county. Determine the elevation of your community and follow processing steps appropriate for that elevation. Only use Mason jars that are in good condition with self sealing lids held in place by screw-on metal bands. Mason jars are made from tempered glass to resist high temperatures. Jars must be washed and rinse thoroughly or in the dishwasher and kept hot until filled. Use only new lids and follow manufacturer’s directions for preparing lids for canning. Once thermal processed, jars can be tested for vacuum seals by pressing the lid center with finger. If the lid springs up when released, it is not sealed. Unsealed jars can be re-processed with a new lid for the same amount of time within 24 hours. Unsealed jars can also be kept in the refrigerator and the food can be eaten within 3–4 days, or remove about an inch of the contents and freeze. Before storing jarred product, clean the outsides of sealed, cooled jars. Label with date and contents and store in a cool (50–70°F), dark, dry place away from sun, light, or dampness. Canned foods are best if eaten within one year.

**IF CANNED FOOD SPOILS**

Check lids for a vacuum seal. **NEVER** taste food from an unsealed jar. Signs of food spoilage are streaks and dried food at the top of the jar, swollen lids, broken jar seals, rising air bubbles, and any unnatural color. Other indicators include bad or unnatural odor; spurting liquid; white, blue, green, or black mold; and foaming. Dispose of any food you suspect of being spoiled. To dispose of cans of spoiled food wear gloves (if can is damaged, swollen or leaking) and double bag cans, then place product in outdoor trash containers that have lids. Put out for collection only on garbage pick up day. Keep out of reach of children and pets.

**Drying foods**

Drying is one of the oldest methods of preserving food it is a great alternative to canning & freezing that is simple, safe and easy to learn. Drying can be done year round and does not require refrigeration once dried. Dried product is easy to store and takes little space. The process of drying removes moisture from food to control the growth of bacteria, yeasts and molds. Drying will slow down action of enzymes but doesn’t inactivate them. Optimum temperature for drying food is 140°F. If higher temps are used, food cooks instead of drying. Furthermore low temperature drying avoid “case hardening” – dried outside and moisture is trapped inside which can result in mold. Low humidity and Increased air current speeds up drying, removes air around food. Foods can be dried in the sun, but often need several days of high temperature and low humidity.

Fruit and vegetables must be prepared and treated before drying. There are several treatment options available to help protect color from browning reactions. Treatments range from sulfuring agents such as sulfite dip to ascorbic acid and fruit juice dip and honey dip syrup. Blanching sets color in vegetables and stops enzymatic reactions. Prepared fruit and vegetables are exposed to heat for prescribed amount of time and quickly dipped briefly in cold water only long enough to stop cooking. Vegetables and fruits are patted dry with paper towels then place in dehydrator.

Once dried, product must be cooled before packaging. Don’t pack product too soon or moisture buildup could occur and don’t wait too long or could pick up moisture from the environment. Conditioning is a process that allows the moisture to equalize within the dried fruit. Pack cooled fruit in plastic or glass jars, seal and let stand for 7-10 days shake jars daily to separate pieces and check for moisture condensation. If condensation occurs, return to dehydrator for more drying, unless the product has started to mold, then dispose of moldy product. Vegetables are dried until brittle or “crisp”. Some vegetables shatter if hit with hammer have final moisture of 10% therefore vegetables don’t need conditioning like fruits.

**Sun Drying food**

Fruits are high in sugar and acid, are safe to dry in the sun. It is not safe to dry vegetables or jerky/meat outdoors. To dry fruit outdoors the conditions must be hot, dry, breezy with a temperature of 85ºF or higher and for several days with humidity below 60%. Drying products must be covered to control for insects and pests. Beans, lentils and soybeans can be dried on the vine until beans inside rattle and can be completely dried in oven or dehydrator. Pests can be controlled by freezing at 0ºF for at least 48 hours or by placing dried product in an oven preheated to 160ºF for 30 minutes.

**Freezing food**

Many foods can be preserved by freezing while retaining natural color, flavor and nutritive value. The texture of frozen foods is usually better than for other methods of food preservation. Foods can be frozen in

less time than they can be dried or canned while the kitchen remains somewhat cool and comfortable. Freezing is a simple procedure and adds convenience to food preparation. Initial investment and cost of maintaining a freezer can be high and is limited by how much the freezer will hold.

Flavor changes during freezer storage are controlled by keeping as much air out of the package as possible. Textural changes occur in frozen food because as water in food freezes and expands ice crystals form causing the cell walls of fruits and vegetables to rupture, making them softer when thawed. Packaging used to freeze food should be moisture-vapor resistant which prevents the transfer of moisture and air in and out of the package and protects foods from absorption of “off” flavors or odors during frozen storage.

If power is know to be off beforehand, set freezer controls on -10°F to -20°F immediately. Do NOT open the door. Foods stay frozen longer if freezer is full, well-insulated and in cool area. A full freezer will keep food 2 to 4 days, but a half-full freezer will only hold food for 24 hours. Texture will not be as good. General Rule: Refreeze if freezer temperature is still 40°F or below OR if ice crystals are still present in the food.

**References:**

Cooperative Extension Service, The University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Cooperative Extension Service, New Mexico State University, Extension Home Economics.

**Healthy Feet for People with Diabetes**

*Karen Halderson, MPH, RD, LD CDE Extension Diabetes Coordinator*

Every person with diabetes should have a complete foot exam at least once a year. The exam should include:

* Checking the pulses of your feet to see if there is a circulation problem.
* Checking the nerve functions of your feet using a filament.
* Evaluating any problems such as bunions, corns, athlete’s feet, fungal nails, ingrown toenails.
* A discussion of of foot care.

Take care of your feet every day:

* Check your feet every day for sores, calluses, red spots, cuts, swelling, and blisters. If you cannot see the bottom of your feet, use a mirror or ask someone to check your feet for you.
* Call your health care provider, no matter how small your wound. A small cut can quickly become large and infected.
* Do not cut calluses or corns yourself. See your health care provider if cutting is needed.
* Wash your feet every day. Dry them carefully, especially between your toes.
* Use skin cream (but not between your toes) if your feet are dry.
* Cut toenails straight across. File the edges so they are smooth. If you have trouble reaching your feet, ask a family member to cut your nails.
* Don’t walk barefoot.
* Don’t smoke! Smoking cuts off blood flow.

Choose comfortable shoes that fit well:

* Choose shoes with a low heel and plenty of room for your toes.
* Choose leather dress shoes; for everyday wear, walking or running shoes are a good choice.
* Break in new shoes slowly.
* Check inside your shoes for stones or other objects before putting them on.
* Wear clean padded socks to protect your feet.

Keep your diabetes under control. High blood sugar levels are behind most foot problems of people with diabetes.

*Adapted from materials from the American Diabetes Associaton*

**Bullying: Information for Parents**

*Bruce Jacobs, Ph. D.*

*Extension Health Specialist*

For our children, school should be a positive experience of learning, socialization, being with their friends, fun, and growth. Unfortunately, some children face being bullied at

School. These days, bullying can also occur in the technology arena, that is, electronically via web pages, Internet web blogs and chat rooms, email, instant messaging, and text messaging.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, written, emotional, and psychological, including the following:

* physically hurting someone
* ganging up on someone (or getting others to gang up on them)
* spreading bad rumors about someone.
* teasing someone in a mean way
* verbally threatening someone
* keeping others out of your "group"
* making someone feel uncomfortable or scared
* taking another person's possessions or demanding money from them
* unwanted sexual advances or abusive comments

Bullying can cause psychological, emotional, and physical injury to those being bullied. Schools need to play their part in addressing bullying by implementing prevention programs, fostering a climate of respect, teaching kids positive social behavior, and having a protocol to deal with bullying occurrences. Adults need to encourage students to seek help when they are bullied or see others being bullied.

Some signs a child is being bullied include:[[1]](#footnote-1)

* Coming home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books or other belongings.
* The child has unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches.
* The child seems afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus or taking part in organized activities with peers.
* The child appears sad, moody, teary of depressed when he or she comes home.
* The child frequently appears anxious and/or suffers from low self-esteem.

**What Can a Parent Do?**

The *Stop Bullying Now*2web site offers some great resources and information for kids, parents, and providers. Included among some of the recommendations for parents are:[[2]](#footnote-2)

* If your child is being bullied or you suspect he or she is being bullied, be supportive and obtain information about the bullying. Let him or her know that you’re concerned.
* Immediately contact the school and ask to meet with your child’s teacher to discuss the problem (do so non-confrontationally): ask

the teacher what he or she plans to do to stop the bullying.

* School staff should meet with your child to learn about what your child experienced or is experiencing, assure your child that they will help resolve the problem, and develop a plan of action to keep your child safe.
* School staff should not meet with your child together with the child who is allegedly doing the bullying; these should be separate meetings. Bullying is not an issue for mediation but rather an issue of victimization, power, and control.
* After your initial meeting with your child’s teacher, schedule a follow-up meeting to find out what progress has been made. If there’s no improvement, meet with the school’s principal.
* It’s good to keep notes about what your child originally tells you about being bullied, and about what you discuss with school personnel.
* If you are concerned with your child’s emotional state due to the bullying, ask to speak with a school-based mental health counselor.
* Consider involving the police if your child has been physically assaulted or threatened with bodily injury.
* If the school is unable to stop the bullying, you may want to consult an attorney.

**Sources**

KidsHealth

<http://www.kidshealth.org>

The National PTA

<http://www.pta.org>

U.S. Department of Health & Human

Services <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov>

**Allowance or Work or Both?**

*Connie Kratzer Ph.D.*

*Extension Family Resource Specialist*

Parents and children alike often raise the questions of allowances. While it is a personal decision, the concept of giving an allowance and having work income seems to work best.

Parental goals, when paying an allowance, should be to:

* Shift some spending decisions from parents to the child
* Eliminate or dramatically reduce the need for the child to have to ask for money; and
* Provide a method, under proper supervision, for learning about accumulating money and wise spending techniques.

Establish a base allowance for each child. Determine what expenses the child is expected to cover from this allowance. This will depend on the age of the child. Decide when and how an allowance will be paid, and then pay it regularly. Do not withhold an allowance as punishment. adapted to the child’s age. Also resist the temptation to bail children

out if they fall short of their goals or run out of cash. Knowing when and how much to save is a key lesson in learning to manage money.

If the child wants more money, then create a list of jobs and other duties that the child can perform, at will, if they want to earn additional money. For each item on the list there should be a set amount of compensation and a complete description of the work to be done, so there is no question about when a task is properly completed.

The jobs on the list are in addition to the chores the child is expected to do as a member of the family. Children will form good work habits and job skills by keeping their own weekly and monthly records. List the date jobs are assigned and completed, extra jobs available to increase earnings, savings, etc. Also, children can learn to keep track of progress toward reaching each of their savings goals.

**Hot Topics**

1. The Just in Time Parenting resources on e-Xtension are just about ready to be launched onto the e-Xtension site. Check it out at  <http://www.extension.org/parenting>

2. CYFERnet has hot topics listed every month such as Home Safety Month and Healthy Eating Habits for Children. Check out past topics at <http://www.cyfernet.org/hottopic/index.html>  For August, 2007, the topic is Workforce Preparation <http://www.cyfernet.org/hottopic/august07.html>

**Food Allergies- what you need to know** <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/ffalrgn.html>

**FDA’s What’s New** <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~news/whatsnew.html>

**Calendar of Events**

September 24-28th, 2007

Taos Food Sector Training

Taos, NM

October 15-17th, 2007

New Mexico Environmental Health Conference

Albuquerque, NM

October 21-25, 2007

National Association of Extension

4-H Agents

Atlanta, GA

October 24-26, 2007

Extension Association of New Mexico

Portales, NM

November 2-4th 2007

Small Farm Conference

Moriarty, NM

December 6-8th, 2007

Artisan Mexican Cheese making workshop

Las Cruces, NM

1. From the *Stop Bullying Now* web site at <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For more information, see the *Stop Bullying Now* web site. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)