



Information to Improve the Selection and use of Foods In Your Home

Back to School with Healthy Lunches

School has started back up...hello busy schedules! It is important to remember that good home-prepared meals should not take a backseat when schedules get tight. Eating healthy food should always be a priority and meal planning deserves a spot on your agenda. Packing a lunch is one way to maintain a healthy diet. Lunch packing does take time and planning.



Planning Stage

First you must plan how many meals each week you can pack. The more meals you can pack, the better. It will be healthier and cheaper for you in the long run. Next decide what types of meals you would like to have each day. Once you know what you would like to eat, you can search your cupboards for the ingredients you already have. Make a grocery list of food items you need to complete your lunches. Shop for your food!

To plan well-balanced lunches, think about the food pyramid. Great lunches will have at least one food from each food group (for example, two grains, one vegetable, one fruit, one meat/bean and one dairy product.) Whole fruit is easy to pack and takes no preparation. If you plan on having raw veggies all week, take Saturday or Sunday to cut up your food. You can even prepackage everything to make daily lunch preparation go faster.



Packing the Lunch

Packing up your meal can be as quick or as time-consuming as you like. Some people prefer to make their lunch the night before, others make it the morning of. Find which time works best for you and work it into your schedule.



Involve your Family

Not only should you be packing a lunch for yourself, but also for your kids. If your children are old enough, they could make their own lunch. Your younger kids may need extra help. Kids lunches can have the same items as your adult lunch. Young children may need smaller portions and more creative versions of your meal. Some kids like purchasing school lunch. Ask for a school lunch menu to choose the best days for hot lunch.

Words

Foodborne Illness: This is a sickness caused by bacteria in food. This illness can be caused by food that wasn't cooked through properly or cooled properly. Also food kept in the refrigerator for too long can grow bacteria that can cause foodborne illness. Symptoms for foodborne illness will arise 1-5 days after consuming the contaminated food. The symptoms can last for up to 10 days. Symptoms include vomiting, headache, body aches, and stomach discomfort. To avoid foodborne illness, cook meats to the proper temperature and keep leftovers for one week or less. Avoid cross contamination by using only clean utensils during cooking. Do not use the same cutting board for vegetables as raw meat. Use clean serving bowls and plates for cooked food.

What is a Lentil?

Lentils fall under the meat and beans group on the food pyramid. They are considered a legume along with beans and peas. They are inexpensive and easy to cook.

Lentils are common in traditional Middle Eastern dishes. They are commonly combined with rice and onions for a hearty meal or side dish.

Health Benefits:

Lentils are a high protein legume. They are also high in nutrients like folate, iron and thiamin. Lentils are high in fiber. Many nutrition professionals consider lentils to be one of the healthiest foods.

Try lentils today!

Recipe Corner

Rice and Lentil Pilaf

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup chopped carrot
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 3/4 cup low sodium vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup dried lentils, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup uncooked brown rice
- 2 medium Italian plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Directions

1. Heat oil in skillet. Add carrots, celery, onion and garlic and cook until tender.
2. Add broth, lentils and rice. Heat to a boil. Cover and cook over low heat for 20 minutes (or until rice and lentils are cooked through.)
3. Stir in tomatoes and parsley.
4. Serve and enjoy!



Source: www.AllRecipes.com

Check out MSU Extension's blog! We will provide you and your family with the latest information on money management, nutrition, health, and parenting education.

Check us out!

<http://www.mifamilyliving.wordpress.com>

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This newsletter has been partially 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 the Center for Civil Justice, 1-800-481-4989

Safe Leftovers for Sack Lunches

Sometimes there isn't enough time in a day to pack a lunch. Leftovers are a great alternative to eating lunch at a fast food or sit down restaurant. There are a few quick things to remember about bringing leftovers to work or school.

- Make sure your place of work has a functioning microwave and refrigerator.
- Leftovers should only be eaten seven days or less from cooking date.
- Place labels on storage containers to be sure of cooked date.
- Heat food hot enough to kill bacteria (the food should be too hot to eat for at least a minute after cooking.)
- Stir food halfway through cooking time when possible
- When possible, reheat your food in non-plastic containers. The plastic can seep into your food when temperatures are hot enough. Your food will also seep into the plastic.



Interested in becoming ServSafe Certified?

Macomb County MSU Extension conducts ServSafe Certification classes.

One (two-part) fall session scheduled:

October 28 & November 1

For further information
<http://web2.canr.msu.edu/servsafe/>
Call 586-469-6432



Cook Food Thoroughly and Safely

When preparing food, for the first time or as leftovers, it is important to heat it to the correct temperature. You will kill harmful bacteria and prevent food borne illness. Use a thermometer to test the temperature. It is best to put the thermometer in the middle of the food you are testing. It takes the longest for the center to heat up.

Ground Beef: 160° F

Beef (Steaks, Roasts): 145° F

Poultry: 165° F

Pork: 160° F

Ham: 160° F

Egg Dishes: 160° F

Leftovers: 165° F

Casseroles: 165° F



Nutrition Classes: Learn how to stretch your food dollars, shopping basics, label reading and more. Qualified clients can sign up for free nutrition education classes with the Expanded Food Nutrition Education program (EFNEP) offered through MSUE in Macomb County.

For more information call: 586-469-6432.

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