
Family & Community Health “Connections” in Taylor County

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Spring into Wellness: Revitalize Your Health this Season

Spring is a time of renewal and rejuvenation, making it the perfect season to focus on your health and wellness. As the days grow longer and the weather warms up, it's an ideal opportunity to embrace new habits and refresh your routine. Here are some tips to help you revitalize your health this spring:

1. Get Moving Outdoors

With the arrival of spring, take advantage of the pleasant weather by engaging in outdoor activities. Whether it's a brisk walk, a bike ride, or a hike, spending time in nature can boost your mood and improve your physical health.

2. Eat Seasonal and Fresh

Spring brings a bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Incorporate seasonal produce like strawberries, asparagus, and spinach into your meals. Eating a variety of colorful, nutrient-rich foods can enhance your energy levels and overall well-being.

3. Hydrate and Refresh

As temperatures rise, it's important to stay hydrated. Drinking plenty of water helps maintain your body's functions and keeps your skin looking healthy. Consider infusing your water with slices of lemon, cucumber, or mint for a refreshing twist.

4. Prioritize Mental Health

Spring is a great time to focus on mental wellness. Practice mindfulness and meditation to reduce stress and improve your mental clarity. Spending time outdoors, connecting with loved ones, and engaging in hobbies can also contribute to a positive mindset.

5. Spring Cleaning for Your Health

Spring cleaning isn't just for your home—it's for your health too! Declutter your living space to create a more organized and peaceful environment. This can reduce stress and make it easier to focus on healthy habits.

6. Set New Goals

Use the energy of spring to set new health and wellness goals. Whether it's starting a new exercise routine, trying out a healthy recipe, or committing to better sleep habits, setting achievable goals can keep you motivated and on track.

7. Connect with Your Community

Participate in events or groups to stay connected. Whether it's a local cooking workshop, joining a book club, or getting involved in AAFCS, engaging with others can provide support and inspiration.

Spring is a season of growth and renewal. By embracing these tips, you can maximize the vibrant energy that spring brings. Here's to a healthy and happy season!

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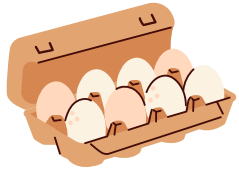
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<https://www.aafcs.org/blogs/aafcs-team/2025/03/25/spring-into-wellness>



What You Need to Know About Egg Safety



Fresh eggs, even those with clean, uncracked shells, may contain bacteria called Salmonella that can cause foodborne illness, often called “food poisoning.” FDA has put regulations in place to help prevent contamination of eggs on the farm and during shipping and storage, but consumers also play a key role in preventing illness linked to eggs. Protect yourself and your family by following these safe handling tips when buying, storing, preparing, and serving eggs—or foods that contain them.

Buying

- Buy eggs only if sold from a refrigerator or refrigerated case.
- Open the carton and make sure that the eggs are clean and the shells are not cracked.

Storing

- Store promptly in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40° F or below. Use a refrigerator thermometer to check.
- Store eggs in their original carton and use them within 3 weeks for best quality.
- Use or eat hard-cooked eggs (in the shell or peeled) within 1 week after cooking.
- Use frozen eggs within 1 year. Eggs should not be frozen in their shells. To freeze whole eggs, beat yolks and whites together. Egg whites can also be frozen by themselves.
- Refrigerate leftover cooked egg dishes and use within 3 to 4 days. When refrigerating a large amount of a hot egg-containing leftover, divide it into several shallow containers so it will cool quickly.

Preparing

- Wash hands, utensils, equipment, and work surfaces with hot, soapy water before and after they come in contact with raw eggs and raw egg-containing foods.
- Cook eggs until both the yolk and the white are firm. Scrambled eggs should not be runny.
- Casseroles and other dishes containing eggs should be cooked to 160° F. Use a food thermometer to be sure.
- For recipes that call for eggs that are raw or undercooked when the dish is served — like Caesar salad dressing and homemade ice cream — use either shell eggs that have been treated to destroy Salmonella, by pasteurization or another approved method, or pasteurized egg products.

Serving

- Serve cooked eggs (such as hard-boiled eggs and fried eggs) and egg-containing foods (such as quiches and soufflés) immediately after cooking. Cooked eggs and egg dishes may be refrigerated for serving later but should be thoroughly reheated to 165° F before serving.
- Never leave cooked eggs or egg dishes out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours or for more than 1 hour when temperatures are above 90° F. Bacteria that can cause illness grow quickly at warm temperatures (between 40° F and 140° F).
- For party planning, keep hot egg dishes hot and cold egg dishes cold:
 - Keep egg dishes refrigerated until time to serve.
 - Serve small platters of reheated egg dishes at a time to ensure the food stays at the proper temperature. Replenish as needed, or at least every 2 hours.
 - Keep cold egg dishes on ice if they are going to stay out longer than 2 hours.



<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/what-you-need-know-about-egg-safety>



Fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season offer an array of benefits that go beyond satisfying your palate. Eating seasonally offers various perks, including fresher produce, better flavor, and higher nutritional value. Eating seasonally also reduces your food’s environmental impact by requiring less transportation and by supporting local farmers and economies.

Reduce Environmental Impact

Buying local and seasonal food can have several positive impacts on the environment. Local food doesn’t have to go a long distance to get to your table, which reduces the emissions associated with transporting it. Buying local also reduces waste by using less packaging, since the food isn’t shipped. Seasonal food is typically produced in conditions where it can grow naturally, requiring less energy for artificial heating, lighting, and irrigation compared to out-of-season produce grown in greenhouses or shipped from elsewhere.

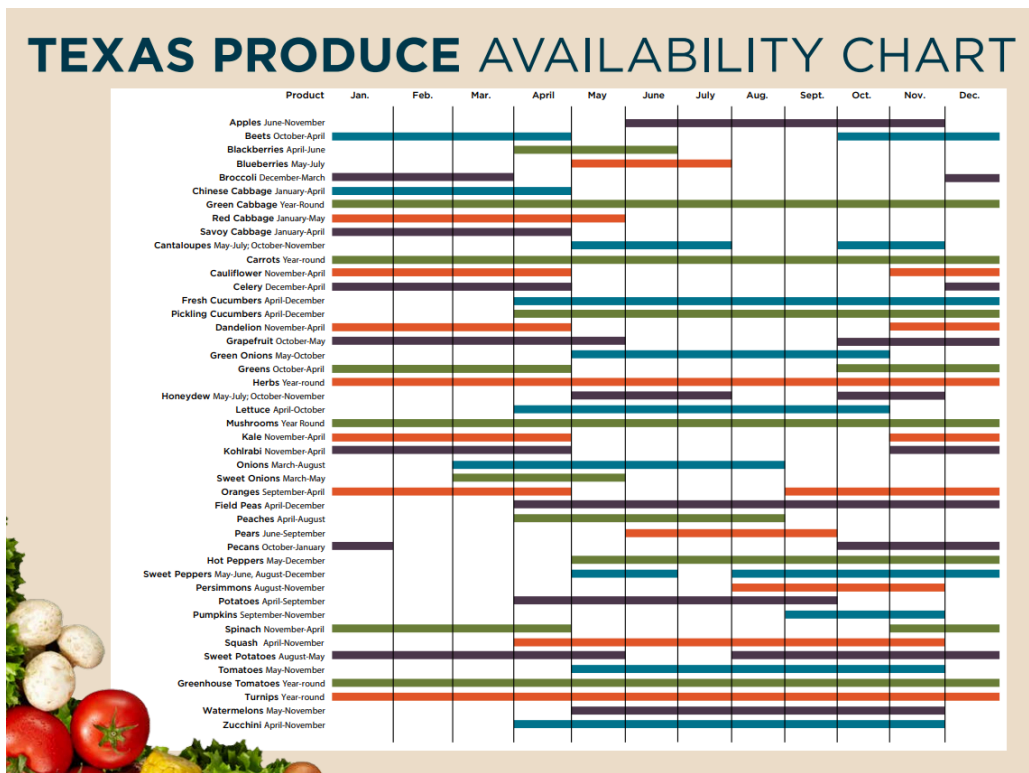
Locally Grown is Higher in Nutrients

Locally grown food often retains more nutrients since it’s typically harvested at peak ripeness and doesn’t need to travel long distances, reducing nutrient loss. Additionally, seasonal foods often align with our body’s nutritional needs for different times of the year. Plus, it tastes better! When crops are picked at their peak ripeness, you get the fullest flavor. Remember, once you bring your fresh fruits and veggies home, be sure to wash and store them properly to reduce food waste.

Support Your Local Community

Farmers markets make fun outings where you can find fresh farm produce while supporting local businesses. They provide an opportunity to socialize, find new ingredients, and stay within your budget. There is also less waste, as much of the produce offered isn’t packaged. Plus, your money will remain in the local economy, supporting the farmers who worked to grow the food.

<https://takecareoftexas.org/about-us/blog/seasonal-eats>



Lightened Up Carrot Cake Bars



Instructions

Bars

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a 9x9x2-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over the edges of the pan. Lightly coat foil with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, combine all-purpose flour, whole wheat flour, sugar, pumpkin pie spice, baking powder, and salt.
3. Add shredded carrot, 1/2 cup of the nuts, the eggs, oil, and milk
4. Stir just until combined. Spread mixture evenly in the prepared pan.
5. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool bars in pan on a wire rack.
6. Using the edges of the foil, lift the uncut bars out of the pan.
7. Spread top evenly with Fluffy Cream Cheese Frosting. Sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 cup nuts. Cut into 20 bars.

Fluffy Cream Cheese Frosting

1. In a medium bowl, beat cream cheese with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth.
2. Beat in yogurt until smooth. Fold thawed whipped topping into cream cheese mixture.

<https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipe/carrot-cake-bars/>

Family & Community Health “Connections” is provided by the following Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

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Ingredients

Carrot Cake Bars

- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup carrot shredded
- 3/4 cup walnuts chopped
- 1/3 cup refrigerated egg product (or 3 egg whites)
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1/4 cup fat-free milk
- 1 recipe Fluffy Cream Cheese See below

Fluffy Cream Cheese Frosting

- 1/2 cup frozen light whipped topping thawed
- 4 oz reduced-fat cream cheese softened
- 1/2 cup low fat vanilla yogurt

Taylor County News

April

21 - Honeybees Extension Education Club Meeting

22 - Sunshine Extension Education Club Meeting

23 - AgriLife Extension booth at Day Nursery Resource Fair

30 - AgriLife Extension booth at TXDOT Employee Health Fair

May

13 - Taylor Extension Education Association Meeting

18-19 - Certified Food Manager Training & Testing -
for more information & registration information, please call the Extension office

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