

The Home Extension Line

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Beachgoer's Guide

There are several things that you can do to improve the quality of water at the beach. For example, you can learn more about the quality of the water at your local beach, you can become involved as a responsible citizen to reduce pollutants that can wash into the water, and you can find out what state or local agencies or departments are responsible for protecting the quality of the water at your beach. Even if you don't live at or near the beach, you can still protect the water quality by learning how pollution in your local stream or watershed affects water quality at downstream beaches.

Learn

- **Check Last Year's Local Beach Water Quality Conditions.** Planning a trip? Use last year's reports to find out whether a specific beach is being monitored, who is responsible for the monitoring, the pollutants that are being monitored, and if advisories or closures have been issued.
- **Download the EPA Brochure "Before You Go to the Beach."** Since many factors affect the water quality at the beach, it is important for you to know about the environmental conditions that affect water quality. This brochure tells you what you need to know about beach water pollution, the health risks associated with swimming in polluted water, and who to contact if you think the water at the beach is contaminated. The brochure can be found at www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/30cwabeach.pdf.
- **Protect Coastal Watersheds and Ocean Resources.** Discover the programs that EPA and other agencies are using to protect coastal watersheds and ocean resources. Learn how you can get involved in protecting your watershed.



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- **Get Involved in Beach Protection and Clean Up Programs.** There are many ways to get involved in protecting the nation's beaches from water pollution. Getting involved in a local clean-up effort or other beach protection program is a great way to assist federal, state, and local officials in protecting your health while swimming at the beach.
- **Protect Coastal Waters from Nonpoint Source Pollution.** When rain falls or snow melts, the seemingly negligible amounts of chemicals and other pollutants around your home and lawn get picked up and carried through storm drains to the local waterway. This site lists specific "dos" and "don'ts" that will help you reduce nonpoint source pollution and become part of the solution to keeping beach water clean.
- **Participate in EPA's Citizen's Voluntary Monitoring Program.** Across the country, people are learning about water quality issues and helping protect the nation's water resources by becoming volunteer water quality monitors. Volunteers analyze water samples for dissolved oxygen, nutrients, pH and temperature; evaluate the health of stream habitats and aquatic biological communities; inventory stream bank conditions and land uses that may affect water quality; catalog and collect beach debris; and restore degraded habitats. This site explains how you can get involved in monitoring beach water quality.
- **Surf Your Watershed.** Most beach water is polluted from pollution-generating activities upstream. Therefore, it is important for you to know about pollutants entering the water from other communities. Surf Your Watershed will help you learn about pollutants and sources that affect the water quality in your local watershed.
- **Adopt-Your-Watershed.** Watershed groups are very effective in identifying and stopping pollution problems by working through a local watershed group. Join the EPA's national catalog of organizations involved in protecting local water bodies, including formal watershed alliances, local groups, and schools that conduct activities such as volunteer monitoring, cleanups, and restoration projects.

Source: EPA, Washington, DC, www.epa.gov

A Glass Act

Recycled glass uses only two-thirds the energy needed to manufacture glass from scratch. That means for every soft drink bottle you recycle, you save enough energy to run a television set for an hour and a half. Only 27% of the glass used in the U.S. is recycled. But there's no reason it can't be higher.

Florida Tropical Fruits Add Flavor to Summer

Lychee and mango now in season; ancient delicacies growing in popularity

While the general public may just now be discovering many of Florida's tropical fruits, these delicacies have been staples in ethnic markets for many years. America, the most diverse nation in the world, is made up of numerous cultures that have used tropical fruits in their cooking for generations. As in other culinary developments, ethnic groups have pioneered many of America's dietary trends in recent years.

Lychees (mid-May to early July)

Lychees, also spelled litchi, are native to Asia, but Florida is the only state in the contiguous United States that produces lychees commercially. Although lychees currently have a solid purchase base within the Asian community through Asian grocery markets, they are emerging as an exotic, tasty alternative to traditional fruits in mainstream markets. Lychees grow on trees in clusters and ripen in late spring. They are available mid-May through the first of July with the peak being mid-June.

Lychees, which are one to two inches in diameter, have uniquely textured red skins and offer a delicious burst of tropical flavor. The fruit has a consistency similar to a peeled grape that can be enjoyed fresh, frozen, canned or dried, and in both sweet and savory dishes. Lychees may also be added to stir-fry dishes or placed on ham or steaks during cooking.

One cup of fresh lychees has only 125 calories, is a source of vitamin C, dietary fiber, and is loaded with potassium. This fruit can be stored whole in plastic bags and frozen to enjoy year round.

Mango (May through September)

Consumer awareness of the Florida mango is on the rise due to its adaptability to a variety of cuisines. Florida's mangoes are available from May to September, with their peak in June.

The outside color of this fruit ranges from pale yellow to deep orange. The flavor is often described as an exotic mix of pineapple and peach. A ripe mango is soft to the touch, with a tropical-fruity aroma; the unripe mango will have no aroma. If your mangoes are not quite ripe, store them in a paper bag for a few days to help ripen.

Mangoes are deliciously juicy and can be enjoyed in many ways. From mango chutneys and salsas to mango chicken and mango smoothies, this fruit is another great example of a product that can be eaten fresh or cooked. It provides a unique and tasty addition to entrees, beverages and desserts. Mangoes may be peeled and sliced into wedges. They can be diced or cubed and used in salsas, fruit salads, pies, cobblers, cakes, or simply mixed with yogurt for a healthy snack.

Source: www.florida-agriculture.com/tropical

Avoiding the Frailty Trap

Losing muscle mass increases with age. But the good news is that simple, regular exercises to rebuild strength can help at any age and prevent frailty. Staying active also reduces your cancer risk.

As we age, there is a tendency to relax and avoid exertion. Sometimes it's because declining muscle strength makes physical activity more difficult. Many people also believe that nothing can be done about frailty. However, research has shown otherwise: Our muscles repair themselves and perform best with regular exercise and healthy eating, even among the frail elderly.

Muscle strength naturally declines by 15 percent every decade after age 50. After age 70, the loss of strength is 30 percent per decade. This loss of muscle mass with normal aging is called "sarcopenia."

Scientists think several factors contribute to sarcopenia:

- Nerve cells decrease in number with age, stimulating muscle tissues less. The result is decreased muscle size and functioning.
- Levels of growth hormones, like estrogen and testosterone, diminish with time. These hormones may affect the size, strength and vitality of muscles.
- A poor diet without enough protein, vitamins, minerals or calories from healthy foods can adversely impact muscle tissues.
- Lower activity levels over time result in less muscle mass, especially when there is a decrease in weight-bearing exercise.

Why Muscles Matter

If our strength declines, it becomes more difficult to lift objects. Even a bag of groceries may be too much. In one study, 40 percent of women aged 55-64 could not lift 10 pounds. The same weight proved too much for 65 percent of the women aged 75-84.

Muscle mass serves health in other ways, too. Without adequate muscle mass, our sense of balance declines. It becomes difficult to walk, climb stairs or even stand up. Falling and serious injuries like broken or fractured bones become more of a hazard. That's when muscle strength can make the difference between living independently or ending up in a nursing home. At the very least, good muscle tone can improve posture. Another important bonus is that even at rest, muscles burn calories - and the more muscle one has, the more calories are used. On the other hand, if muscle mass decreases, our bodies use energy at a slower

rate. With a slower metabolism, there's a tendency for body fat and weight to grow. In turn, overweight increases risk of diabetes and some cancers. The risk of osteoporosis also rises because losing muscle gives less structural support to your bones, which become thinner.

Resist Frailty with Strength Training

It's never too late to slow and possibly reverse muscle loss with strength training, also called "resistance" training. In one study of nursing home residents, 10 weeks of progressive strength training improved the strength of the thigh and lower leg muscles by an average of 113 percent.

Before you begin a resistance training regimen, check with your doctor. Although it's important not to overdo it at first, challenge yourself after a week or so to make progress. Note that gaining muscle shows up on the scale, so if you see a slight weight gain after you begin resistance training, it may be due to muscle instead of fat.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends buying "free" weights that you can grip or strap onto your ankles easily, starting at a few pounds for each leg or arm. As they grow easier to lift, add a pound or two every few weeks, making sure the new level tests your capacity to lift and lower them eight times in a row without badly stressing your muscles. When picking weights up from the floor or putting them down, bend your knees and use your legs to support your weight; don't bend at the waist only, because you might strain your back.

Last but not least, give your muscles a day off between weight-lifting sessions. Resistance training every other day lets muscles have important time to recover and build up for the next time you work them out.

Source: AICR Newsletter, Winter 2004

The Dirt on Soap

It is hard to avoid antibacterial soaps, which now account for 75% of liquid and 30% of bar soaps. Researchers at Columbia University found no difference in the number of infections among people who used antibacterial hand soap and cleaning products and people who used soaps that didn't contain antibacterial agents. Why? The majority of infections are caused not by bacteria but by viruses.

Handwashing with any soap is the No. 1 infection fighter — not because it kills germs, but because it removes them and they go down the drain. It's the vigorous rubbing with hot, soapy water that scrapes off the germs.

More Than Just Heat and Humidity

American Lung Association Offers Outdoor Safety Tips During Ozone Smog Season

Many people are headed outdoors for more exercise or simply to enjoy the summer weather. The American Lung Association warns, however, that as temperatures rise, so may the level of ozone smog, which can affect even healthy adults.

“Because it takes heat to produce smog, levels will be increasing throughout the summer months. During this season, we want you to be aware of the outdoor air you’re breathing, and take necessary precautions to protect yourself from any breathing problems high smog levels can cause,” said John L. Kirkwood, American Lung Association president and CEO.

Ozone, or smog, is a highly reactive gas that is a form of oxygen. It results from the action of sunlight on hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides emitted in fuel combustion. Ozone reacts chemically with internal body tissues that it comes in contact with, such as those in the lung. Smog can cause both short-term and long-term health effects, even in healthy adults, including shortness of breath, chest pain when inhaling deeply, and wheezing and coughing. In the long term, repeated exposure to ozone may lead to large reductions in lung function, inflammation of the lung lining, and increased respiratory discomfort.

“Taking a few extra precautions during smog season is critical,” said Kirkwood. Information about our smog level is available every day through the air quality index, or AQI, which uses a color-coded system and specific health advisories based on smog levels. Pay special attention when we hit an Orange, a Red or especially a Purple Day on the AQI; this is when a large part of the population is at risk from ozone.”

Daily AQI information is available from local agencies as well as the EPA’s web site, www.epa.gov/airnow. To protect yourself from ozone and to help keep ozone levels down, the American Lung Association suggests the following:

- Keep track of daily ozone levels. Check AQI information every day during ozone smog season.
- If you or family members are in sensitive populations (i.e., the young, old and those with chronic lung disease (such as asthma or emphysema), take extra steps during ozone season to protect yourselves.
- On Orange, Red and Purple Days according to the AQI, change your plans to protect yourself. Do not exercise outdoors on Red or Purple Days. People with lung disease should not exercise outdoors on Orange, Red or Purple Days.
- Do not use your lawnmower or outdoor grille when smog levels are high.
- Fill up your gas tank after sundown.
- Limit trips in your car; carpool and combine trips whenever possible.
- Limit use of outdoor power equipment when smog levels are high.
- Support strong pollution control laws—both state-wide and national.

Source: www.lungusa.org.

Homemade Ice Cream: A Safe Summertime Treat?

Eating ice cream to beat the summer heat is one of America's favorite pastimes. The rich, creamy flavor of homemade ice cream--whether it's made with an old hand-cranked ice cream maker or a modern electric one--is especially tasty.

But the gastronomical delight of homemade ice cream can give some people gastric distress — or even worse — a serious illness.

"Homemade ice cream is a special treat for many, but every year it causes several outbreaks of salmonella infection with up to several hundred victims at church picnics, family reunions, or other large gatherings," says John Sheehan, director of the Food and Drug Administration's Division of Dairy and Egg Safety.

The ice cream ingredient responsible for the outbreaks: raw or undercooked eggs.

Between 1996 and 2000, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 17 outbreaks in the United States, resulting in illness in more than 500 people, that were traced to salmonella bacteria in homemade ice cream.

A person infected with *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE), the strain of salmonella found most frequently in raw eggs, usually has fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps beginning 12 to 72 hours after eating or drinking a contaminated food or beverage. The infection generally lasts four to seven days, and most people recover without any treatment. But for those at high risk — infants, older people, pregnant women, and people with a weakened immune system — it can be life-threatening.

You can still enjoy homemade ice cream made with eggs without the side effects of salmonella infection by preparing it safely, says Nancy Bufano, an FDA consumer safety officer. "Just make sure you use egg products, egg substitutes, or shell eggs that are pasteurized," she says, "or use a cooked egg base."

"Egg products" are eggs that have been removed from their shells and pasteurized. Pasteurization is a heat process that destroys salmonella in eggs without cooking them. Egg products may be liquid, frozen, or dried whole eggs, whites, yolks, or blends of egg and other ingredients. Egg products are not widely available in retail stores; they are predominantly used in institutional food service. "Egg substitutes," which are also pasteurized, may be liquid or frozen and contain only the white of the egg, the part that doesn't have fat and cholesterol. "Egg substitutes are readily available and can be used in just about any recipe that calls for eggs, including ice cream," says Bufano.

Shell eggs can also be pasteurized. "These eggs are not as widely available as egg products and egg substitutes," says Bufano, "but they are easily recognizable in the refrigerated dairy case at some stores." The FDA requires pasteurized shell eggs to be individually marked or specially

packaged. Each egg must be marked to indicate that it has been pasteurized, or the carton must be shrink-wrapped or otherwise packaged so it's easy to tell if it has been opened before purchase, allowing for possible intermingling of pasteurized and unpasteurized eggs.

Commercially manufactured ice cream is typically made with pasteurized eggs or egg products.

Unpasteurized shell eggs, the kind regularly found in grocery stores, also can be used to make ice cream as long as they are cooked properly. To prepare homemade ice cream this way, mix the eggs and milk to make a custard base and then cook to an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit, which will destroy salmonella, if present. Use a food thermometer to make sure the mixture reaches the correct temperature, and resist the temptation to taste-test it during preparation when the custard isn't fully cooked. After cooking, chill the custard thoroughly before freezing.

Even when using pasteurized products, the FDA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) advise consumers to start with a cooked base for optimal safety, especially if serving people at high risk. Additionally, make sure that the dairy ingredients you use to prepare homemade ice cream, such as milk and cream, are pasteurized.

Another option is to make eggless ice cream, says Bufano. "There are many recipes that don't call for eggs."

The same egg selection and preparation advice applies when making other foods with raw eggs, such as Caesar salad dressing, hollandaise sauce, mayonnaise, and eggnog. Commercially prepared versions of these foods are made with pasteurized egg products.

The FDA continues to work with federal and state agencies, the egg industry, and the scientific community to eliminate egg-associated SE illnesses.

Source: FDA Consumer Magazine

Red Bartlett Pears

Bartlett pears are known as the "summer pear." They are plentiful in June and July. Pears are one of the few fruits that do not mature well if allowed to ripen on the tree. As a result, pears must be picked before they are ripe to ensure quality. This is the reason you will often find firm, unripened pears at the store. After the pear has ripened, you will have a juicy, flavorful, sweet, nutritious snack. Pears are a good low-calorie source of fiber, potassium, vitamin C, and carbohydrate. Their distinctive red color makes them an irresistible snack for the "sweet tooth."

Source: FL Dept. of Agriculture

Tips for 5 A Day

The Produce for Better Health Foundation recommends you eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Here are some tips to help you do this:

- Choose healthy snacks: carrots, apples, bananas, oranges, etc.
- Eat at least one vitamin C-rich selection a day: broccoli, cauliflower, kiwi fruit, orange, strawberries, etc.
- Grow fruit and vegetables in your flower garden.
- Drink 100% fruit or vegetable juice.
- Toss a salad into your dinner menu.
- Eat a piece of medium-sized fruit today!
- Take dried fruit and nuts as snacks on road trips.
- Don't skip breakfast. Have strawberries, oranges, grapefruit, bananas, or a glass of juice.
- Freeze juice into ice pops for summertime snacks.
- Top your morning cereal with sliced bananas or strawberries.
- Drop fruit into green salads for a refreshing treat.
- Here's an easy complete meal: Add vegetables to your pasta sauce.

Source: Produce for Better Health Foundation

Personal Environmental Health Now

It's not too much of an exaggeration to say, "Your environment is your health." So to improve your health, see that your family's environment is a healthy one.

Of course, your environment isn't the only factor influencing your health. Genes play an important role, too, as your kids are sure to tell you. But, sorry, you can't choose your parents. You and your family can, on the other hand, do a lot about your personal environment — your surroundings, your exposures, your diet and your health habits — to extend your life and to improve your fitness and appearance.

For an example of how society has improved health by environmental action, you have to look no further than our protected reservoirs and water disinfection plants. The purification of city water supplies has been the most significant reason that the average life span has very nearly doubled over the past century or so. Millions and millions of us live longer and better because of clean water and because our country and industries have reduced our exposures to lead and other substances.

In addition to the environment we share, each of us has his or her own personal environment. Our personal environments can greatly influence our lifespans and how healthy we feel and are. Here are simple but important steps that you and your family can take — health-wise — about your environment:

1. Read the label on house and garden chemicals.
2. Turn down the volume (noise).
3. Put a carbon monoxide alarm in your home.
4. Grow plants.
5. Put drugs, drain openers, and vitamins out of kids' reach.
6. Know the hazards of your job.
7. See if that "cold" might be an allergy.
8. Remember that lakes and streams aren't always pure.
9. Watch for lead, a continuing threat.
10. Test for radon.
11. Don't get badly overheated.
12. Know about ozone.
13. Wash your hands.
14. Watch pesticide drift.
15. Eat a good diet.
16. Take a vitamin.
17. You can't avoid all accidents, but you can minimize the results.
18. Respect sex.
19. Don't puff or chew.
20. Watch out for the sun and sunlamps.

Source: National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

The Sunshine Vitamin

For strong bones, the body needs vitamin D, which aids absorption of calcium. Research shows that vitamin D may help prevent cancer. A supplement may be advisable for some older adults, if recommended by their physicians.

Vitamin D is unique among the nutrients the human body needs. It can come from food sources or be produced in the skin when exposed to ultraviolet light. The best food sources are fortified milk or cereal and high-fat fish, like wild salmon.

The major function of this vitamin is to maintain normal blood levels of calcium. A vitamin D deficiency in children can cause rickets. Among adults, a deficiency will worsen osteoporosis and lead to osteomalacia. Osteomalacia produces muscle weakness and bone pain.

How Much Vitamin D Do You Need?

In spring and summer, exposing your face, hands and forearms without sun-block lotion to sunlight for only 10 minutes for two or three days a week can usually supply the suggested amount. Two 8 oz. glasses of low fat milk also supply the 200 International Units (IU) recommended for adults under age 50.

After age 50, the recommended amount of vitamin D doubles, so that older adults would need four glasses of milk (preferably low fat or nonfat), if that is their only source. After age 70, the recommended amount rises again to 600 IUs. Taking more than 2,000 IUs of vitamin D is toxic. These amounts are recommended by the National Academy of Sciences. Consult with your doctor before you take a vitamin D supplement.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research Newsletter

Broccoli

Broccoli is an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of vitamin A. It is a cruciferous vegetable, part of the cabbage family. Eating cruciferous vegetables may reduce the risk of colon cancer. Broccoli contains very little sodium and fat and no cholesterol. Look for broccoli with firm, compact clusters of small flower buds. The clusters should be dark green and may have a purple cast to them. Broccoli is crisp and crunchy and is very tasty cut up and served raw with a low-fat vegetable dip.

Source: FL Dept. of Agriculture

Florida Food Fare

By Jean Meadows

Avocado

Description: Native to the tropics and sub-tropics, this rich fruit is known for its lush, buttery texture and mild, faintly nutlike flavor. Known early on as "alligator pear," the many varieties of today's avocado can range from round to pear-shaped. There are more than 56 different varieties of Florida avocados. The skin can be thick to thin, green to purplish black and smooth to corrugate. The flesh is generally a pale yellow-green and softly succulent. Both California and Florida grow avocados. The varieties grown are different for the two states. Florida avocados are smooth skinned and generally larger than California varieties.

Availability: Florida produces avocados from June through March. California avocados are available year round.

Nutritional Value: Florida avocados are lower in calories and fat than other varieties and are rich in vitamin A and potassium. However, avocados are one of the highest sources of fat (unsaturated) in the vegetable group. One-fourth of a Florida avocado contains: 85 calories, 6.8 gm fat, 1.3 gm saturated fat, 1.2 gm protein, 6.8 gm carbohydrate, 371 mg potassium 1.6 gm fiber, 465 IU vitamin A. An interesting nutritional value comparison of Florida and California avocados showed for 3.5 oz of each: calories - FL avocado 112 calories, CA avocado 177 calories; fat grams FL avocado 8.87 gm, CA avocado 17.3 gm. Other nutrients were of similar value between the two.

Selection and Care: Like many fruits, avocados ripen best off the tree. Ripe avocados yield to gentle, palm pressure but firm, unripe avocados are what are usually found in the market. Select those that are unblemished and heavy for their size. To speed the ripening process, several may be placed in a paper bag and set aside at room temperature for 2-3 days. Ripe avocados can be stored in the refrigerator for several days. Once avocado flesh is cut and exposed to the air it tends to discolor rapidly. If you are using part of an avocado leaving the seed in the unused portion and covering with plastic wrap, removing as much air as possible will lessen the darkening. Use within 2-3 days.

Avocado Ice Cream *A delightful and unusual surprise! Forget the calories here, but this may be the best ice cream you've eaten.*

2-3 medium avocados (2 1/2 cups)	3 cups whole milk
1/3 cup lime juice	1 13-ounce can evaporated milk
1 cup granulated sugar	1 large can sweetened condensed milk
4 whole eggs	1 cup whipping cream, whipped

Whip avocado pulp, lime juice and sugar in blender or food processor, making sure sugar is well blended. Beat eggs lightly in a saucepan, add evaporated milk, condensed milk, and 1 cup whole milk; mix in with eggs. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally and NOT boiling, until a simmer is reached. Simmer for 5-7 minutes until mixture is very hot. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Add avocado mixture, remaining milk and whipping cream to the milk-egg mixture. Fold together gently until blended. Pour into ice cream freezer and churn until ready. Be sure to "season" for at least 1 hour before serving. Makes 1/2 gallon.