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*Family and Consumer
Sciences Department
University of Florida Extension
for Sarasota County*



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Salad Toppers and Flavor Poppers

Sometimes people think green salad = lettuce = blah. Not so. The only limits to exciting salads are limits of the imagination.

Begin with salad greens. Enhance the eye appeal and nutrition of a salad by adding colorful fruits and vegetables. Keep it light by limiting the amount of salad dressing to about 1 tablespoon per 1 ½ to 2 cups of greens. Then make the flavor really POP by adding some of the following ingredients. You can either put them atop or mix them in your salad.

While some of these salad additions are higher in fat than others, just small amounts (about 1 tablespoon) can give extra flavor without too many calories. Also, many provide a nutrition boost! Add from one to three of these flavor accents depending on how many other ingredients are in your salad.

- Marinated artichoke hearts
- Parmesan cheese
- Homemade whole grain croutons
- Dried cherries, cranberries, raisins or other fruit
- Fresh herbs, basil, chives, dill, parsley
- Fresh fruits such as apples, pears
- Black or green olives
- Toasted almonds or walnuts
- Red onions
- Sliced oranges or tangerine segments
- Toasted sunflower seeds
- Radishes

**Source: Alice Henneman, MS, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator,
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, Food Reflections
Newsletter.**

New Wheelchair Keeps People on the Move

Imagine losing use of your legs, and still being able to stand up. It's possible, with a new self-propelled wheelchair that knows how to keep its balance.

The Independence iBOT 3000 Mobility System is a battery-operated wheelchair that will enable people with mobility impairments to go up and down stairs, reach high shelves, climb curbs, travel over a wide variety of terrain, negotiate uneven or inclined surfaces, and hold eye-level conversations with others who are standing.

The Food and Drug Administration expedited review of the iBOT because it represents a breakthrough technology with the potential to benefit people with disabilities. "Its approval is emblematic of FDA's commitment to help innovative medical technologies reach patients promptly," says FDA Commissioner Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D. According to the FDA, which approved the device in August 2003, an estimated 2 million Americans use wheelchairs.

Powered by a rechargeable battery that can operate up to a full day on a single charge, the wheelchair uses an integrated system of software, sensors, and electronics to automatically adjust itself according to the seat's movement and the user's center of gravity.

To select the mode of operation, the user pushes a button to command either standard, 4-wheel drive, balance, stair climbing, or remote functions. A joystick controls the speed and direction of travel. The iBOT can be easily converted from a standard chair, with four wheels in contact with the ground, to an elevated chair balanced on only two wheels. This allows the user to reach high objects or to be at eye level for conversations. The user shifts his or her weight over the back wheels and the iBOT system responds by lifting one pair of wheels off the ground, while balancing on the other pair of wheels.

Four-wheel drive enables the user to traverse rough terrain, travel over gravel or sand, go up slopes, and climb four-inch curbs. Because of its unique balancing mechanism, the wheelchair remains stable and the seat stays nearly level during all these maneuvers. For use on stairs, there are two sets of drive wheels that rotate up and over each other to climb up or down, one step at a time. When operating on stairs, users lean forward or backward, directing the chair to go up or down.

The iBOT isn't for everyone, however. The chair is available only with a doctor's prescription, and people must have use of at least one arm to maneuver it. The chair also must be calibrated to the patient's weight, which is limited to no more than 250 pounds, and users must undergo special training. Using the wheelchair requires some physical effort, and users must have the skills and judgment to constantly assess the environment and choose between different travel routes and device functions. Although the chair is priced at about \$29,000, people who buy the iBOT may escape the costs of typical wheelchair modifications, such as ramps and elevators, needed for home use.

As a condition of approval, the iBOT's manufacturer, Independence Technology of Warren, N.J., a Johnson & Johnson company, has agreed to report periodically to the FDA with updates on the chair's usage, functioning, and any injuries that may occur.

Source: *FDA Consumer magazine*, November-December 2003 Issue

Air Cleaners

With the increasing concerns over pollution and air quality, the sale of air cleaners, also known as “air purifiers,” has skyrocketed. Consumers bought 3.4 million air cleaner units in 2002; that is a 70% increase in sales from the year 2000.

But, do air cleaners really remove all of the pollutants from the air as the ads claim? Is the air in your home so dirty that you need an air cleaner to provide allergy and asthma relief? How do air cleaners work?

Do you need an air cleaner?

Does anyone in your family have asthma or suffer from allergies? If the answer is “yes,” then a carefully selected air cleaning system may be of some benefit. However, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends ventilation and eliminating or controlling the source of indoor air pollution before air cleaning. Examples of source control include banning indoor smoking, vacuuming regularly, and washing laundry in the hottest water possible to kill dust mites. Examples of ventilation include opening windows and using the exhaust fans located in kitchens and bathrooms.

The general medical community remains skeptical about air cleaners. Dr. R.A. Woods, director of Pediatric Allergy Clinic at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore said, “People who do not have any respiratory diseases are very unlikely to be affected unless their indoor air quality is dramatically bad.” The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies said air cleaners are probably helpful in some situations in reducing allergy or asthma symptoms, but are not consistently and highly effective in reducing symptoms.

How do air cleaners work?

There are three basic types of air cleaners.

1. Filter – With this type of air cleaner, a fan pulls air through a paper or fine mesh filter. Most room air cleaners use a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter.
2. Electrostatic precipitation – This type of air cleaner draws air through an electrical field, where particles become magnetically charged. These particles are then trapped on oppositely charged collection plates. Many of these types of air cleaners generate a small amount of ozone, which has an odor that some consumers may dislike.
3. Hybrid – This type of air cleaner combines a fan and electrostatic precipitator.

There are also whole-house air cleaners and room-sized units. The whole house systems are much more effective than room-sized units, but they are also more costly. **Because of limited air circulation, room units are not very effective.**

Whole-house units use forced air heating and cooling systems and should be professionally installed. The least expensive types of whole-house systems use filters. Filters restrict some airflow, especially when using high quality filters. These systems are not very effective against small particles and smoke. The whole-house electrostatic precipitators that are available do not restrict airflow as much as filters.

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Air Cleaners (continued)

When shopping for air cleaners, look for the certification of the cleaner. The Association of Home appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) certification gives the maximum coverage and clean air delivery rate of the cleaners. Also be sure to check the details of the warranty.

Air cleaners are moderately successful at reducing smoke particles, pollen, pet dander, and dust particles (but not dust mites, since they are rarely airborne). They are not successful in removing odors, gases, such as carbon monoxide, or viruses.

Lastly, keep costs in mind when shopping for air cleaners. The overall costs of the air cleaner will include the initial purchase of the cleaner, maintenance costs (costs of new filters), and operating costs (costs for electricity).

Do not purchase an ozone generator, even if it is sold as an air cleaner. Ozone is considered a lung irritant by the American Lung Association. Ozone in larger quantities can be especially damaging for persons with asthma, children, and the elderly.

Sources: American Lung Association, Consumer Reports, Environmental Protection Agency.

Ipecac No Longer Recommended

For years, physicians and pediatricians have recommended that parents keep a bottle of ipecac in their home, to use in case a child ingests poison. **However, the American Academy of Pediatrics no longer recommends syrup of ipecac be used.**

There are several reasons for this reversal. First, serious childhood poisonings are less common. In the 1940s, there were about 500 childhood deaths per year due to poisonings, but today the number is about 25 per year.

Also, there is evidence that syrup of ipecac is unreliable and somewhat ineffective. Ipecac does not always prevent poison in the stomach from getting into the bloodstream or empty all the contents of the stomach. Syrup of ipecac can also cause side effects, such as lethargy or prolonged vomiting. Today, syrup of ipecac is rarely recommended by poison control centers.

Finally, some critics of ipecac worry about the abuse of the product when it is used in child abuse, in which a caretaker feeds a child, and then repeatedly feeds the child ipecac.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the safe removal of syrup of ipecac from the home, such as flushing it down the toilet. Also, parents and caretakers should pay special attention to poison prevention measure, such as using child resistant packaging for medications and chemicals, keeping poisons out of the reach of children, and disposing of medication no longer needed.

Source: Housing and Built Environment Newsletter, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Reducing the Size of Recipes

Many recipes can be cut in half or thirds. Here are some guidelines to help you adapt a larger recipe to a smaller one.

- It may be easier to make the entire recipe for baked goods and freeze half.
- When reducing recipes you may need to use smaller saucepans, skillets and baking pans. The time for baking smaller amounts of food may be less.
- The standard size egg for recipes is the large egg. To halve an egg, break it, mix it together with a fork and use 2 tablespoons. Refrigerate the rest and use in an omelet or scrambled eggs within two days.
- A 9x2x13-inch pan holds 14 to 15 cups; when halving a recipe use a square 8x8x2-inch pan or a round 9x2-inch pan. When using a different pan size, try to keep the depth of food the same. Reduce the oven temperature by 25°F when substituting a glass pan for a metal one.
- Two Web sites that let you adjust their recipes to smaller serving sizes are:
 - www.mealsforyou.com
 - www.allrecipes.com
- To help divide recipes, remember:
 - 1 cup = 16 tablespoons
 - 1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons
 - 1 cup = 8 fluid ounces
 - 1 fluid ounce = 2 tablespoons
 - 1 pound = 16 ounces (weight)
 - 1 pint = 2 cups
 - 2 pints = 1 quart
 - 1 quart = 2 pints

When the recipe says:	Reduce to: (to make 1/2 recipe)	Reduce to: (to make 1/3 recipe)
¼ cup	2 tablespoons	1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon
1/3 cup	2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons	1 tablespoon plus 2 1/3 teaspoons
½ cup	1/4 cup	2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons
2/3 cup	1/3 cup	3 tablespoons plus 1 1/2 teaspoons
¾ cup	6 tablespoons	1/4 cup
1 cup	1/2 cup	1/3 cup
1 tablespoon	1 ½ teaspoons	1 teaspoon
1 teaspoon	1/2 teaspoon	Generous 1/4 teaspoon
½ teaspoon	1/4 teaspoon	Scant 1/4 teaspoon
¼ teaspoon	1/8 teaspoon	Scant 1/8 teaspoon
1/8 teaspoon	Dash	Dash

Source: University of Nebraska, Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, Lincoln, NE

Don't Fall for Illegal Tax Scheme

Promoters often advertise the following schemes. Don't fall for them. They are illegal and/or inaccurate.

“Never Pay Any Taxes Again!”

Don't Withhold Taxes From Your Wages. Promoters may suggest that you, as an employer, NOT withhold federal income tax or employment taxes from wages paid to your employees. This scheme is based on incorrect interpretation of the tax law; the courts have rejected all variations of this scheme.

“I Don't Pay Taxes – Why Should You?”

Promoters may talk about how they don't file or pay taxes and then charge people a fee to share their “secret.” The secret they don't reveal is that many of them actually do file and pay taxes –they just won't publicly admit it.

“Deduct the Cost of Your Personal Residence, or Deduct the Cost of Your Child's Education.”

Participants incorrectly claim that non-deductible personal living expenses can be claimed as deductible business expenses by transferring ownership of assets or income to a trust, partnership, or other entity. Any investment scheme that claims you can deduct these types of expenses should be considered highly questionable.

“The IRS Doesn't Want You to Know About This.”

If there are legal documents that can reduce your taxes, the IRS wants you to know about them and use them. The mission of the IRS is to provide America's taxpayers top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and by applying the tax law with integrity and fairness to all.

“So New, Your Tax Professional Doesn't Even Know About It.”

Promoters use this phrase to discourage you from seeking professional advice about new tax laws. However, if there is a new law that could reduce your taxes, a legitimate promoter should encourage you to seek a second opinion. You should even ask for a reference just in case your tax professional really does not know about it yet. If the investment cannot stand the scrutiny or the review of an unbiased third party, it is probably one you should avoid. Promoters often advertise the following schemes. Don't fall for them. They are illegal and/or inaccurate.

Continued next page

Illegal Tax Scheme (continued)

“I Can Get You a Big Refund ... for a Fee!”

Refund scheme promoters may ask to “borrow” your Social Security number or give you a phony Form W-2 so it appears that you qualify for a big refund. They may promise to split the refund with you. The IRS catches most of these false refund claims before they go out. If a refund is issued, it is usually discovered and the participant ends up paying back the refund, along with stiff penalties and interest.

“Share/Borrow EITC Dependents.”

Unscrupulous tax professionals will “share” one taxpayer’s qualifying child or children with another taxpayer in order to allow both to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). For example, if one client has four children, that client only needs the first two children for EITC purposes to get the maximum credit. The preparer will list the first two children on the first taxpayer’s return, and list the other two children on another return. The preparer and the client “selling” the dependents will split a fee. The IRS prosecutes the preparers of these fraudulent claims, and the participating taxpayers could be subject to civil and/or criminal penalties as well.

“Put Your Money in a Trust and Never Pay Taxes Again.”

Promoters of abusive trust schemes may charge a fee for “trust” packages. The fee enables taxpayers to have trust documents prepared, to use foreign and/or domestic trustees as offered by promoters or to use foreign bank accounts and corporations. If a trust is legitimate, ownership of the trust assets is completely separate from your control and benefit.

Three things to remember:

1. You are responsible and liable for the content of your tax return.
2. Anyone who promises you a bigger refund without knowing your tax situation could be misleading you.
3. You should never sign a tax return without looking it over to make sure it is honest and correct.

Source: Internal Revenue Service

Seniors Can Benefit

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Americans aged 65 and older are the least active age group in the United States. Approximately 35% of those aged 65-74 years and 46% of those aged 75 or older report no leisure time activity at all. Most seniors (80%) have at least one chronic condition, and 50% have at least two. Research has shown that seniors who have healthy lifestyles that include regular physical activity reduce their risk for chronic diseases and have half the rate of disability of those who do not.

Source: Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Interactive Healthy Eating Index (IHEI)

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP), an agency of USDA Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, has created the Interactive Healthy Eating Index (IHEI) an online dietary assessment tool that provides information on your diet quality, related nutrition messages and links to nutrient information. The Physical Activity Tool, an addition to the IHEI, assesses your physical activity status and provides related energy expenditure information and educational messages. Use of this tool enhances the link between good nutrition and the health benefits of regular physical activity. This assessment tool can be found at <http://147.208.9.133/>

After providing a day's worth of dietary information or physical activities, you will receive a "score" on the overall quality of your diet or physical activity status for that day. The "score" for your diet looks at the types and amounts of food you ate as compared to those recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid. It also tells you how much total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium you have in your diet. The "score" for your physical activities looks at the types and duration of each physical activity you did, and then compares this score to the physical activity recommendation for health. Each score gives you an idea of the quality of your diet and physical activity status: for one day or for up to 20 days. A score over several days gives a better picture of your eating habits or physical activity lifestyle over time.

To make your day-to-day food and physical activity entry easier, you can choose to create a Frequently Used Foods List or Frequently Performed Activity List. Each list can store up to 20 items and allows you to add or delete items as you wish. You can choose to use either the IHEI dietary assessment or the Physical Activity Tool as you wish at any time.

The IHEI program is based on the Healthy Eating Index developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. The Healthy Eating Index measures how well the American diet complies with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and The Food Guide Pyramid.

Source: USDA, Center for Nutrition and Policy Promotion <http://147.208.9.133/>

Interesting Facts About Fruit

Pomegranate

The Chinese Apple is another name for the pomegranate. The skin is red and smooth with a juicy, spongy-soft, white membrane that encloses clusters of edible crimson, jewel-like seeds. The pomegranate has a sweet, aromatic flavor, and sometimes weight up to one pound. Pomegranates contain vitamin C and fiber and are low in sodium and rich in potassium. This is a very unusual fruit that children particularly enjoy trying!

The Second Hand Car Seat

Are you using a second-hand car seat? Double-check everything!

A new car safety seat is best. However, if you must get a used seat, shop very carefully. Keep the following points in mind:

Do not use a car safety seat that

- **Is too old.** Look on the label for the date it was made. If it is more than 10 years old, it should not be used. Some manufacturers recommend that seats only be used for 5-6 years. Check with the manufacturer to find out when the company recommends getting a new seat.
- **Was in a crash.** It may have been weakened and should not be used, even if it looks fine. Do not use a seat if you do not know its full history.
- **Does not have a label with the date of manufacture and seat name or model number.** Without these, you cannot check on recalls.
- **Does not come with instructions.** You need them to know how to use the car safety seat. Do not rely on the former owner's directions. Get a copy of the instruction manual from the manufacturer before you use the seat.
- **Has any cracks in the frame of the seat.**
- **Is missing parts.** Used seats often come without important parts. Check with the manufacturer to make sure you can get the right parts.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics website, www.aap.org

Interesting Facts About Fruit

Honeydew Melon

Honeydew is actually a member of the cantaloupe family. It is characterized by a smooth, creamy colored outside skin (no netting) and a beautiful pale green flesh inside. Honeydew is one of the few melons of this type that can continue to ripen once picked. Honeydew likes to be cool but not chilled. At temperatures below 41°F., brown spotting may occur. Honeydew is an excellent source of vitamin C. It also contains potassium and fiber. It is low in calories and contains no fat or cholesterol.

The www.NIHSeniorHealth.gov Web Site is Officially Launched

NIHSeniorHealth.gov makes age-related health information easily accessible for adults 60 and older. It is also a useful tool for family members and friends who are seeking online health information for their older relatives. This site was developed by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the National Library of Medicine (NLM), both part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

The web site is organized by health topic and currently includes information on Alzheimer's Disease, Caring for someone with Alzheimer's, Balance Problems, Arthritis, Cancer and Exercise for Older Adults. Within each topic there are sections containing general background information, open captioned videos, short quizzes, and frequently asked questions (FAQs). Other health topics of interest to older adults will be added in the future.

This web site grew out of NIA's research on older adults, cognitive aging and computer usage. The research showed that, while older adults do experience gradual declines in cognitive abilities as a part of normal aging process, they can successfully use computers if the online information is providing an age appropriate manner.

Some of the web site's senior friendly features include large print and short easy-to-read segments of information. Older users will find it easy to move from one place to another on the web without feeling "lost" or overwhelmed. Also the material on the site is presented in a way that increases the likelihood it will be retained in memory. NIHSeniorHealth.gov makes every effort to comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which aims to make federal electronic technology accessible for persons with disabilities.

Source: www.NIHSeniorHealth.gov

Interesting Facts About Vegetables

Turnips

Turnips are available year round. Among the states involved in production are California, Colorado, Indiana, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and Washington. Some common varieties include Purple Top, White Glove, White Egg, Golden Ball, Amber and Yellow Aberdeen. Turnips are a good source of vitamin C and potassium. They can be eaten either raw or cooked, and have a crunchy, delicate flavor.

Downfalls of Desktop Dining

DESKTOPS MAY BE ONE OF THE DIRTIEST PLACES IN THE OFFICE

While some office work ethics may seem to encourage eating at our desks, other offices forbid desktop dining or storing food in our private work areas. We might spill on an important document or piece of equipment. Little creepy creatures might be attracted to the crumbs.

According to a 2001 survey by University of Arizona Microbiologist Dr. Charles Gerba and funded by Clorox, an office desk may contain 400 times more germs than an office toilet seat. The telephone and desktop had the most germs followed by the keyboard and computer mouse. The number of germs PER SQUARE INCH on these office surfaces were:

- *Phone: 25,127
- *Desktop: 20,961
- *Computer Keyboard: 3,295
- *Computer Mouse: 1,676
- *Toilet Seat: 49

Consider -- cleaning crews seldom touch office desktops, office phones, etc. Coughing and sneezing may increase the germ population. Crumbs on desktops may attract additional bacteria.

If you share a work space with someone, be aware some cold and flu viruses can survive on surfaces for up to 72 hours according to Gerba. Even if a sick person has gone home, sufficient bacteria to make others ill may be left behind.

If you feel you **MUST** eat at your desk, clean the surface with a disinfecting wipe. Gerba's study found the number of illness-causing microorganisms could be reduced up to 99.9 percent on office surfaces when they were cleaned daily with a disinfecting wipe. Always read and follow usage directions and precautions on the label of cleaning products before each use.

NOTE: Disinfecting wipes suitable for cleaning office surfaces aren't meant for cleaning your hands. To clean your hands at your desk, both before and after eating, keep a separate container of moist towelettes suitable for this purpose in your work area.

Source: *FOOD REFLECTIONS Newsletter*, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County

Florida Food Fare

By Mary King

Cooperative Extension for Sarasota County

Sunny Canistel Brightens Winter Menus

The showiest member of the sapotaceae family, canistel is also called egg fruit because the pulp is often likened in texture to the yolk of a hard-boiled egg. The fruit, extremely variable in shape and size, may be nearly round, with or without a pointed apex, or may be oval, or spindle-shaped. It is often bulged on one side and there is a five-pointed calyx at the base that may be rounded or depressed. Length varies from three to five inches and width from two to three inches. Unripe fruit is green-skinned, hard and gummy internally. When ripe, the skin turns yellow and is usually smooth and glossy. The flesh is yellow, firm and mealy. The flavor is similar to that of a sweet potato. Thought to originate in Belize, Guatemala, and Southern Mexico, where it grows wild, it came to Florida through the Bahamas.

The canistel needs a tropical or subtropical climate. In Florida, it survives winter temperatures as far north as Palm Beach and Punta Gorda and in protected areas of St. Petersburg. It has the advantage of coming into season in late fall and winter when few other tropical fruits are available. The canistel generally matures from November or December to February or March in Florida. When left to ripen on the tree, the fruits will split at the stem end and fall.

Fruits are best clipped from the tree shortly before maturity. If kept at room temperature, the fruits will soften to eating ripeness in three to ten days. They should not be allowed to become too soft and mushy.

The fruit can be enjoyed fresh or baked. It is used in a variety of desserts such as custard, ice cream, milk shakes and cupcakes. It can also be used to make pancakes, jams and marmalades. Canistels are rich in niacin and carotene and have a fair amount of ascorbic acid.

Recipe:

Canistel and sweet potato pudding

1 ½ cups grated raw sweet potatoes	½ teaspoon nutmeg
¼ cup brown sugar	¼ teaspoon cloves
¼ cup honey	2 cups 2 percent milk
2 eggs	½ cup butter
½ teaspoon salt	½ cup mashed canistel

Peel raw sweet potatoes and grate them finely. Combine eggs, sugar, honey, salt and spices. Heat milk and stir in grated sweet potatoes and butter. Cook just long enough to heat potatoes; add canistel. Combine the egg mixture and the canistel mixture. Mix well. Pour into an 8 by 8 by 2 inch baking pan. Bake 2 hours in a slow oven, 300°F. Serve warm. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.