

The Home Extension Line

October and November, 2007

Volume 7, Issue 5

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Individual Highlights:

National Number 811	1
Benefits of Antibacterial	
Wash Products	2
Trans Fat on Food Labels	3
Find it Fast on IRS.Gov	4
Buying Beef?	5
Autumn's Sweet & Healthy	
Orange Vegetables	6
Fitness for Kids	7
Fire Safety Tips for Hearing-	
Impaired People	8
Ways to Reduce the Cost of	
Fruits and Vegetables	10
Florida Food Fare	11

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National 811 Number

Planning a home improvement job? Planting a tree? Installing a fence or deck? WAIT! Here's what you need to know first:

Whether you are planning to do it yourself or hire a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before each job. Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs. The depth of utility lines varies and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you and potentially result in fines and repair costs. Calling 811 before every digging job gets your underground utility lines marked for free and helps prevent undesired consequences.

More information can be found at <http://www.call811.com>.

Benefits of Antibacterial Hand and Body Wash Products

Extra measure of protection. Every day, people come in contact with millions of germs, including bacteria that can cause illnesses and lead to missed school and work days and medical bills. While frequent hand washing and good personal hygiene are essential for preventing the spread of germs, antibacterial products provide consumers with extra germ-fighting protection.

Effective. Antibacterial personal care products, depending on their active ingredient(s) and specific formulation, are effective at killing, reducing or inhibiting the growth of bacteria that can cause odor, skin infections, intestinal illnesses or other commonly transmitted diseases.

Safe. Antibacterial personal care products are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The safety of these products is supported by more than 30 years of use by consumers as well as extensive scientific data.

Convenient. Because most people lead busy lives, they prefer products that are convenient and easy to use. For example, antibacterial hand gels allow consumers to get rid of germs on their hands anytime and anywhere, even when soap and water are not available.

Popular. Hygiene-conscious consumers choose antibacterial products because these products not only help get rid of germs, but, depending on their active ingredient, can also control the growth of bacteria.

Take extra care to keep germs away...

- When you are sick
- When someone at home or at work is sick
- After using your hand to cover up a sneeze or cough
- When caring for young children
- If you have cuts or wounds on your hands or body
- After using the bathroom
- Before eating and drinking
- Before and after handling and preparing food
- After using an ATM machine or handling money
- After using a public telephone
- After handling pets or garbage
- After riding public transportation
- After returning from a public area (e.g., playground, mall)

Source: The Soap and Detergent Association

Trans Fat on Food Labels: The New Math

New FDA rules allow fewer than 0.5 grams of unhealthy fat to not count

When it comes to food labels that list levels of unhealthy trans fats, zero plus zero doesn't always equal zero. That's because newly implemented U.S. Food and Drug Administration rules on labeling allow foods with less than 0.5 grams of trans fats per serving to claim "zero" grams of trans fats on their labels.

Under these guidelines, which went into effect on January 1, a food with 0.4 grams of trans fats can be listed as having zero trans fats. That means that Americans who consume three or four servings of these foods in a day will have unwittingly eaten an extra gram or two of trans fats. And that's important because trans fats, like saturated fats, can raise the risk of heart disease as they increase levels of LDL ("bad") cholesterol.

Currently, the FDA estimates that Americans consume an average 5.8 grams of trans fats per day. Barbara Schneeman, director of the Office of Nutritional Products, Labeling and Dietary Supplements for the FDA, said the reason the FDA is allowing foods under 0.5 grams of trans fats to be rounded down to zero is that current detection methods for trans fats aren't very reliable below 0.5 grams.

So, what's a concerned consumer to do? "If you see a food with zero trans fat, check the ingredient list. Look for the words, 'partially hydrogenated.' If you see partially hydrogenated, that means the product contains some trans fats," advises nutritionist Samantha Heller, from New York University Medical Center.

The FDA adds that products with shortening or hydrogenated oils in their ingredient lists also contain some trans fats, and the higher up in the ingredient list you find those items, the greater the amount of trans fats the product will contain.

Trans fats are created when liquid oils are transformed into solids, a process called hydrogenation. They're prevalent in many processed foods because they add to a product's shelf life and increase flavor stability. Heller said that most foods containing trans fats are foods you should eat in moderation. She said they're often found in deep-fried restaurant foods, doughnuts, cookies, cakes and muffins.

Both Heller and Schneeman emphasize that trans fats are only part of the picture. "You can't look at trans fat alone. Some manufacturers might have eliminated trans fat by using products that are high in saturated fat," said Schneeman. "What we encourage consumers to do, to help lower their cardiovascular risk, is to look at trans fat, saturated fat and cholesterol levels. A product can have zero grams of trans fat, but what is the amount of saturated fat?" She also said that consumers should check food labels to see how much cholesterol a product contains.

"Trans fats are bad for you. Minimize them as much as possible. But be careful, because many companies are replacing trans fats with saturated fats," said Heller. "Just because something has zero trans fats doesn't mean people can eat as much as they want. We don't want to repeat the 'Snackwell Syndrome' when people thought they could eat a whole box of cookies because they were fat-free."

Source: Prevention.com newsletter

Need Help? Find it Fast on IRS. Gov – Products and Answers

There is a wealth of free tax information on the IRS Web site, IRS.gov. The IRS has just about everything except the kitchen sink and Shakespearean plays. But even those might have tax implications that can be discovered by a visit to the site.

Individuals and businesses can find answers to almost any question about federal taxes on the web site. During the 2007 filing season, the IRS web site was accessed approximately 150 million times. In fact, during the tax filing season from January through April, IRS.gov is one of the most heavily visited sites on the Internet.

The award-winning IRS Web site has been designed to help you get to the information you need. Helpful links found at the top of the home page will take you directly to topics centered on Individuals, Businesses, Charities and Non-Profits, Government Entities, Tax Professionals, the Retirement Plan Community and Tax Exempt Bonds.

In addition to the latest news coming from the IRS, the homepage can lead you to statistics, news releases and tax tips, local IRS offices, the Taxpayer Advocate Service, and thousands of IRS forms and publications. Frequently asked questions and answers are available or you can use two separate search icons: one by keyword and one by answering “I need to . . .”

There’s much, much more. For example, small business owners and the self-employed will find that there are special products and resources made just for them by selecting from among more than two dozen links. There is even an A-Z find-it-fast link for small businesses and a small business workshop video you can view online.

The best way to learn about the IRS Web site is to take some time to browse through the pages of information that interest you the most. Understanding the tax system may never be easy, but the IRS is constantly working to make it easier to find the information you need on IRS.gov.

You can have the advice of tax experts and all of the resources of the IRS right in the comfort and convenience of your home by visiting IRS.gov. If you don’t have a computer with internet access, many libraries offer this service.

Why wait until your taxes are due? Fall is a great time to visit IRS.gov.

Source: Internal Revenue Service

Buying Beef?

A guide to choosing the leanest cuts

Government food-labeling laws determine which cuts of beef can be called “lean” or “extra-lean” based on fat and cholesterol content.

Nutrition Labeling	Definition	Cuts Include
Lean beef	A 3.5-ounce serving that contains less than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10 grams total fat ● 4.5 grams saturated fat ● 95 milligrams cholesterol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Round steak ● 95% lean ground beef ● Chuck shoulder roast ● Arm pot roast ● Shoulder steak ● Strip steak ● Tenderloin steak ● T-bone steak
Extra-lean beef	A 3.5-ounce serving that contains less than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5 grams total fat ● 2 grams saturated fat ● 95 milligrams cholesterol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eye of round roast ● Top-round steak ● Mock tender steak ● Bottom-round roast ● Top sirloin steak

Additional tips for decreasing the fat content of beef include:

- Select beef that is labeled “Choice” or “Select” instead of “Prime” – which usually has more fat.
- When buying ground beef, look for packages with the lowest percentage of fat – 10 percent or lower. Most grocery stores offer several types of ground beef with varying percentages of fat by weight.

Source: MayoClinic.com

Autumn's Sweet and Healthy Orange Vegetables

What's round and orange with green on top? If it hasn't been smashed by the neighborhood hooligans, it's that Halloween pumpkin that graces the doorstep at the end of October. Had you been living in a country with high starvation rates, someone probably would have stolen it for nourishment instead of smashing it. That's because pumpkins and so many other kinds of winter squash are full of vitamin A.

The vitamin A that we get from orange-colored sweet potatoes, carrots, mangoes and apricots benefits more than our eyesight. Vitamin A may help prevent and repair damage to our body's cells because it is an antioxidant.

The "ox" in antioxidant is related to the word oxygen. Oxidation is caused by oxygen molecules called "free radicals." Although they sometimes defend us against potentially harmful bacteria, free radicals are unstable little creatures because they possess unpaired electrons. To achieve stability, a free radical scavenges electrons from other molecules, and creates more instability, possibly setting the stage for cancer development.

Years of exposure to ultra-violet light, X-rays, heat, cigarette smoke, alcohol and some pollutants cause the body to produce free radicals. But antioxidants like vitamins A, C and E help to repair much of the harm they may cause. Like the boisterous kids who might destroy your jack-o-lantern, free radicals' vandalism is reduced if antioxidants reinforce that pumpkin (your cell) so it can get bonked without breaking.

Vitamin A becomes something called "beta-carotene" after you've eaten it. You can think of it as "beta-carrot-ene," since the orange color of carrots and squash signal its presence (although perfectly green vegetables, like broccoli and cabbage, are also rich in beta-carotene). Because it is a fat-soluble vitamin, beta-carotene is absorbed from foods best when it is eaten with a moderate amount of a healthful fat, such as olive oil. Although it is an essential vitamin, taking too much, especially in supplement pills, may cause toxic side-effects.

Pumpkin, squash, carrots and sweet potatoes are all delectable either in savory foods like soups or desserts like puddings and pies.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research

Fitness for Kids: Getting Your Children off the Couch

For many children, biking to the playground and playing kickball in the backyard have given way to watching television, playing video games and spending hours online. But it's never too late to get your kids off the couch. Use these simple tips to give your kids a lifelong appreciation for activities that strengthen their bodies.

Set a good example

If you want active kids, be active yourself. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park the car farther away from your destination. Talk about physical activity as an opportunity to take care of your body, rather than a punishment or a chore.

"A parent's active lifestyle is a powerful stimulus for a child," says Edward Laskowski, M.D., a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation and co-director of the Sports Medicine Center at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn. "Set a good example for your children by making physical activity a priority."

Limit screen time

A surefire way to increase your children's activity level is to limit the number of hours they're allowed to watch television each day. You might limit screen time – including television, video games and computer time – to two hours a day. To make it easier, don't put a television in your children's bedrooms, and keep the computer in a family area. Also limit other sedentary activities, such as text messaging or chatting on the phone.

If your children play video games, opt for those that require movement. Activity-oriented video games – such as dance video games and video games that use a player's physical movements to control what happens on the screen – boost a child's calorie-burning power. In a Mayo Clinic study, kids who traded sedentary screen time for active screen time more than doubled their energy expenditure.

Establish a routine

Set aside time each day for physical activity. Get up early with your children to walk the dog or do jumping jacks together after dinner. Start small, gradually adding new activities to the routine as you – and your children – become more fit.

Let your children set the pace

For many kids, organized sports are a great way to stay fit. But team sports or dance classes aren't the only options. If your child is artistically inclined, take a nature hike to collect leaves and rocks that your child can use to make a collage. If your child likes to climb, head for the nearest neighborhood jungle gym. If your child likes to read, walk or bike to the neighborhood library for a book. Or simply turn on your child's favorite music and dance in the living room.

"Every child is wired differently," Dr. Laskowski says. "We all have certain strengths and characteristics that influence our interests. The key is finding things that your children like to do."

Promote activity, not exercise.

To keep your kids interested in fitness, make it fun.

- **Be silly.** Let younger children see how much fun you can have while being active. Run like a gorilla. Walk like a spider. Hop like a bunny. Stretch like a cat.
- **Get in the game.** Play catch, get the whole family involved in a game of tag or have a jump-rope contest. Try classic movement games such as Simon Says or Red Light, Green Light. If you don't remember the rules, make up your own!
- **Count your chores.** You might even make it a friendly challenge. Who can pull the most weeds out of the vegetable garden? Who can collect the most litter in the neighborhood? Who can shovel the craziest path in the snow?
- **Try an activity party.** For your child's next birthday, schedule a bowling party, take the kids to a climbing wall or set up relay races in the backyard.
- **Put your kids in charge.** Let each child take a turn choosing the activity of the day or week. Batting cages, bowling and fast-food play areas all count. What matters is that you're doing something active.

Source: Mayo Clinic

Fire Safety Tips for Hearing-Impaired People

The following fire safety tips are organized in three sections: before the fire, during the fire, and fire prevention. While these tips represent many fire safety approaches, the use of smoke alarms and exit planning should be considered the most crucial. According to the U.S. fire administration, smoke alarms are the single most important piece of fire safety equipment in use today. Exit planning is also extremely important, especially for individuals who may have difficulty exiting a burning building.

Before the Fire

Identify the Nearest Emergency Exit. Whether you are at home or elsewhere, you should always know the location of the nearest exit. This could save your life in an emergency.

Install Smoke Alarms. The single most important step you can take to save your life during a fire is to install a smoke alarm that suits your needs. A working smoke alarm can make a vital difference in the event of a fire and may reduce the risk of dying in a fire by as much as 60 percent. A properly functioning smoke alarm can alert you to the presence of deadly smoke, while there is still time to escape. Place visual alarms inside each sleeping area, and connect them to other alarms on every floor of your home. Keep smoke alarms clean by vacuuming them regularly. Test batteries monthly, and replace them annually. Ask friends, family members, building managers, or someone from the fire department to install and test the batteries of a smoke alarm if it is hard to reach. Make sure you place appropriate alarm devices in every room in which you may sleep (e.g., living room, den, bedroom).

Be aware that the ADA may require your landlord to provide an appropriate alarm. If your smoke alarms are hardwired (connected to the electric circuitry of your residence), make sure they are also equipped with battery backups.

A number of companies manufacture strobe lights or vibratory smoke alarms for hearing-impaired people. Many of the companies producing these special alarms already offer communication and other assistive devices to people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. If you have any questions about how to obtain an alarm, contact the fire department or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Keep a Telecommunication Device Nearby. Make sure a TTY/TDD or phone (if you use one) is next to your bed, within arm's reach. Keep emergency telephone numbers and hearing aids (if necessary) handy as well.

Plan and Practice Escape Plans. Knowing your escape plan is one of the most important steps you can take to save your life in a fire. Plan your escape around your capabilities. Know at least two exits from every room. Make sure you can unlock all your doors and windows. Be sure you know how to open your windows. If security devices, such as bars, are installed across the windows, ensure that they release from the inside. Make any necessary accommodations to facilitate escape.

Involve the Fire Department. Ask the local fire department to help you plan an escape route, and inform them of your special needs. Ask your fire department to help identify any fire hazards in your home and explain how to correct them. Any areas you plan to use as a rescue area must be identified and agreed upon by you and officials from the fire department.

During the Fire

Get Out and Stay Out. Leave your home as soon as possible. Do not try to gather personal possessions or attempt to extinguish a fire. Do not use the elevator. Once out, do not go back inside.

Test the Doors Before Opening Them. Using the back of your hand, reach up high and touch the door, the doorknob, and the space between the door and the frame. If anything feels hot, keep the door shut and use your second exit. If everything feels cool, open the door slowly and exit as low to the ground as possible if smoke is present.

Stay Low and Go. Crawl low and keep under the smoke, if you are physically able. If not, try to cover your mouth and nose to avoid breathing toxic fumes, and make your way to safety as quickly as possible.

What To Do If You Are Trapped. Close all the doors between you and the fire. Fill cracks in doors and cover all vents with a damp cloth to keep smoke out. If possible, call the fire department and tell them where you are located. Signal rescuers from a window with a light-colored cloth.

Stop, Drop, and Roll. If any part of you catches fire, do not run and do not try to extinguish the flames with your hands. Cover your face with your hands. Drop to the ground, rolling over and over. If you have another disability that prevents your taking these actions, try to keep a flame-resistant blanket or rug nearby to smother any flames.

Fire Prevention

Cooking. Never leave the stove unattended while cooking. If you need to step away from the stove, turn it off. Wear tight-fitting clothing when cooking over an open flame, and keep towels and potholders away from the flame. If food or grease catches fire, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the heat. Do not try to use water to extinguish a grease fire. When

deep-frying, never fill the pan more than one-third full of oil or fat. Never put foil or other metals in the microwave. Make sure the stove is kept clean and free of grease buildup. Turn pot handles away from the front of the stove so they cannot be knocked off or pulled down.

Electrical Safety. Electric blankets should conform to the appropriate standards and have overheating protection. Do not wash blankets repeatedly as this can damage their electrical circuitry. If an appliance begins to smell suspicious or emit smoke, unplug it immediately. Replace all frayed or broken electrical cords. Never use an appliance with exposed wires. Never overload extension cords, and keep them out of traffic areas. Use only tested and UL-listed electrical appliances.

Smoking. Never smoke in bed. Make sure that you are alert when you smoke. If a gas stove or oxygen source is nearby, do not smoke. Place signs stating that oxygen is in use and warning visitors to refrain from smoking. Do not smoke while under the influence of alcohol or if you are taking prescription drugs that can cause drowsiness or confusion. Never leave smoking materials unattended, and collect them in large, deep ashtrays. Check around furniture, especially upholstered furniture, for any discarded or smoldering smoking materials. Soak the ashes in the ashtray before discarding them.

Space Heaters. Give space heaters space. Keep heaters at least 3 feet from any combustible material, including people. Follow the manufacturers' directions regarding operation, fueling, and maintenance of your space heater. Do not use heaters or other heating devices to dry clothing.

Heating. Have your heating systems and chimneys checked and cleaned annually by a professional. Never store fuel for heating equipment in the home. Keep fuel outside or in a detached storage area or shed.

Fireplaces. Open fireplaces can be hazardous; they should be covered with tempered glass doors and guarded by a raised hearth 9 to 18 inches high.

Source: www.usfa.fema.gov

Ways to Reduce the Costs of Fruits and Vegetables

- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season. Not only will they be cheaper but they also will be at their flavor and nutritional peaks.
 - Clip coupons for money off on your favorite canned and frozen fruits and vegetables and juices.
 - Watch local grocery advertisements for reduced prices on your favorite fruits and vegetables.
 - Compare prices of different brands of canned and frozen fruits and vegetables and juices and buy the cheapest.
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Florida Food Fare

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Brussels Sprouts

Description: Brussels sprouts get their name from having been grown 400 years ago in the vicinity of Brussels, Belgium. As a commercial crop, it is produced in the United States, primarily in California and New York. A few sprouts are grown in Florida, mostly in backyard gardens. They resemble small heads of cabbage and belong to the cabbage family of cruciferous. The round green sprouts are about walnut size, from 3/4 to 2 inches across and are composed of tightly packed leaves.

Availability: Brussels sprouts require cool weather for best growth. Warm weather causes individual sprouts to be soft and open rather than solid and tightly packed. The best time to grow Brussels Sprouts in Florida is during the winter. When planted in October through December, there is sufficient cool weather in most areas of the state for fair results. Though they are available year round, the peak season in this area is November through January.

Nutritional Value: Brussels Sprouts are low in fat, sodium and calories. They are cholesterol free and a good source of fiber and folate. One cup, approximately 88 g, contains 37 calories, 3.3 g dietary fiber, 36.9 mg calcium, 342 mg potassium and 22 mg sodium. It also yields 74 mg vitamin C, 53.7 mcg folate, 777 IU vitamin A and 7.8 g carbohydrate.

Selection and Care: The smaller the Brussels sprouts are, the better the taste. They should be firm and green with no yellow or discolored leaves. Store covered in the refrigerator up to 5 days.

Preparation and Use: Brussels sprouts can be boiled, microwaved, steamed or sautéed. Very young tender sprouts can be eaten raw with dip. They can be combined with seasonings such as dill, mustard, lemon, ginger and garlic or added to soups and stews. Remove any yellow or wilted outer leaves and trim the stem ends but not quite flush with the bottoms or the outer leaves will fall off during cooking. Cut a shallow "X" in the base with a small knife to help heat penetrate the solid core so it cooks as quickly as the leaves.

Recipes:

Walnut Buttered Brussels Sprouts

2 pounds fresh brussels sprouts	1/3 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
2 cups water	1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
2 tablespoons butter	

Remove wilted leaves, trim stems. Bring sprouts and water to a boil, cover, reduce heat and simmer 8 to 10 minutes or until tender. Drain, rinse with cold water and drain well. In a pan, melt butter; add walnuts; cook and stir until butter browns. Stir in ginger. Add Brussels sprouts and saute until hot.
