



Family and Consumer Sciences Newsline

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Oklahoma Home & Community Education Week Declared

By Katie L. Reim, OSU Ag Communications

The first week of May 2007 has been declared Oklahoma Home and Community Education week in Tulsa County.

OHCE is a program of continuing education in all aspects of home and community life, said Charlotte Richert, Tulsa County Extension educator. “On Monday, May 7, Tulsa County Commissioners will be recognizing the group for their work in the home and community,” continues Richert.

“The organization’s ultimate mission is to educate its members to be well-informed and to handle change in their home and community,” she said. “With its relationship with the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service, OHCE presents research-based information to its members.”

OHCE provides monthly educational lessons, leadership development and community service projects which provide OHCE members an opportunity to apply this research-based information in their homes and communities.

“OHCE has a unique position to assist individual members, their families and communities develop a higher level of living through education. No other organization is better poised to develop community leaders and inform citizens through the programs they offer,” said Richert.

Sue Gilliam, OHCE vice president, said OHCE members are the backbone of our families and communities. Through OHCE more leaders are made to lead our communities, our states and our nation.

Working in a cooperative effort, OHCE members and Extension educators are able to identify local issues facing families. These issues become the basis for OHCE educational programming and efforts are made to help families solve these problems, said Richert.



Fresh fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet. They provide vitamins, minerals and fiber to

help keep your body healthy. Occasionally, fresh fruits and vegetables can become contaminated with harmful bacteria or viruses, which are also known as pathogens. This contamination can occur at any point from the field to your table.

If eaten, contaminated fruit and vegetables can cause foodborne illness. Common signs of foodborne illness include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and fever. These symptoms usually appear within 12 to 72 hours.

Although foodborne illness can be serious, there are several easy steps you can take to help keep fresh fruits and vegetables safe to eat.

1. SHOPPING: When shopping for fresh produce, avoid items that are bruised, damaged or moldy or that show signs of insect damage. Bruises and cuts may allow pathogens to enter a fruit or vegetable. Damaged fruits and vegetables may also spoil faster. Shopping at a local farmer's market this time of year allows for the freshest produce that is "in season." Right now, lettuce, spinach, green onions, radishes, asparagus, rhubarb, and herbs are plentiful. It is also time to harvest beets, broccoli, cabbage, peas, and strawberries.

When shopping for pre-cut fresh fruits and vegetables, buy only those that are refrigerated on ice. Keep fresh fruits and vegetable separate from meat products. Also keep them separate from household chemicals in the shopping cart or grocery bag.

2. STORING: Once you have brought your produce home, it is important that you store it properly at room temperature and in the refrigerator to prevent foodborne illness.

At room temperature:

- Do not wash them before storage, instead, wash them when you are ready to use them. If the produce is very dirty, rinse it and then dry

Selecting and Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

it well before storing it.

- Keep your storage areas clean and pest-free. Store fruits and vegetables in bowls, bins, or mesh bags off the floor.
- Keep the produce in a cool, dry, dark place. Do not store it near heat sources such as ovens, water heaters, hot water pipes or direct sunlight. Heat causes food to spoil more quickly.
- Store fresh fruits and vegetables away from household cleaning products. These products are poisonous.
- Do not place heavy items on top of fruits and vegetables because bruising can cause spoilage.
- Check stored fruits and vegetables often. Throw away items that show signs of spoilage such as mold or slime.
- When in doubt, through it out!

In the refrigerator:

- All fruits and vegetables must be stored in the refrigerator once they are cut or peeled. Pre-cut fruits and vegetables bought at the store should be refrigerated immediately.
- Do not wash whole fruits and vegetables before storing them.
- Be sure to store all fruits and vegetables in the crisper or produce area of your refrigerator. Do not overload the crisper. It is best to buy only the amount of produce you will use within a few days.
- Cover cut fruits and vegetables tightly with plastic wrap or store them in sealed plastic bags or clean, air-tight containers.
- Keep fruits and vegetables separate from raw meats and seafood.
- Do not place heavy items on tops of fruits and vegetables.
- Keep the temperature of your refrigerator at 40°F or below.
- Clean the refrigerator as needed with warm, soapy water or according to the manufacturer's instruction. Throw out spoiled food and wipe spills right away!

Source: Safe Handling of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, Texas Cooperative Extension, Peggy Van Laanen and Amanda Scott



How to Save Money on "Fixed" Expenses

Tips to lower your budget and increase savings!

According to a survey by American Express, of America's 50 largest metropolitan areas, Oklahoma City ranks 49th in personal savings, based on public information on investments, net worth, homeownership of second homes, foreclosures and bankruptcies.

Think you can't save because you're living paycheck to paycheck? Try these suggestions* to boost your savings and trim your budget.

First, decide that you're going to start saving. Research shows people who don't save money don't earn less money; they just think about money differently. When you want to lose weight, you have to make up your mind to do it, right? It's the same with creating a budget and setting aside money for savings.

Around the house

- Picnic in the park rather than take the family out to dinner.
- Take your lunches and snacks to work rather than spend money on fast food, soda or candy.
- Borrow movies or music from the library instead of renting or buying.
- Wash only full loads of dishes or clothes.
- Use a clothesline and use your dryer just to soften air-dried clothes.
- Use shades, blinds and drapes to regulate your home temperature: Keep them open in the winter to let in light and drawn in the summer to block the sun's rays.
- Install a programmable thermostat so your home is heated or cooled only when you're actually there.
- When not in use, turn off lights, TVs, stereos, computers and other items that do not need to stay on.
- Make extra food when you're already cooking and freeze leftovers to use later. Freeze in the portions size you need.
- Buy generic brands when possible and purchase fruits and vegetables in season.
- Look through your refrigerator each day and use food before it goes bad.
- Quit smoking!
- Get the family involved in meal planning so you only buy what you need and shun impulse purchases. Avoid recipes using "exotic" ingredients or things you probably will not use again. Browse weekly grocery store circulars to see what's on sale and use coupons.

Check out the savings in your driveway

- Compare insurance rates and discuss a new quote with your agent.
- If you're driving less, tell your insurer; you may get a cheaper

rate.

- Request all the car insurance discounts you deserve, such as good-driver, good-student and multiple-car discounts.
- Cancel collision and comprehensive insurance on cars older than five to seven years.
- Investigate carpools and public transportation, and see if your employer offers any subsidies.
- Bike or walk as often as possible.
- Avoid repair bills by maintaining your vehicles properly with regular oil and filter changes.
- Group your errands and, if you have more than one car, use the vehicle with better gas mileage.

... And in medicine cabinet ...

- Request generic drugs when available.
- Search for free and low-cost clinics.
- When possible, go to an urgent-care clinic rather than an emergency room.
- If you pay cash, ask for discounts.
- Carefully review all medical bills for errors.
- Make sure your insurance claims get paid before you incur late fees or other charges.

Be a cheapskate when you shop

- Shop consignment and thrift stores for lightly-used items.
- Give kids a clothing allowance or offer "matching funds" for what they want to buy.
- Hold a clothing swap with friends.
- Discover what looks good on you and stick to classic styles that won't look outdated next season.
- Inventory your wardrobe and buy pieces that work with what you already own.
- Sell stuff you don't wear or donate it to charity. Be sure and get a receipt for your taxes.

Other tips

- Don't be afraid to haggle over prices. What's the worst that will happen if you ask?
- Do not subscribe to magazines and throw them out immediately when you get them.
- Avoid ATM charges by visiting your bank or by requesting the cash overage when you go to the store. Keep your checkbook balanced and avoid the "insufficient fund" charges faced when a check bounces.

What you need to know about meningitis

With several cases of meningitis in the news lately, Oklahomans may be wondering what exactly it is and how it can be prevented.

Meningitis is a severe infection of the lining (meninges) and fluid around the brain and spinal cord, said Youmasu Siewe, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service health education and family development specialist.

“It can be caused by different types of organisms, but most commonly by bacteria and viruses,” Siewe said. “The type of meningitis caused by a virus is more common, less serious and usually doesn’t need specific treatment. However, the type of meningitis caused by bacteria is less common, but causes a more serious disease. It also can cause complications such as brain damage, hearing loss, learning disabilities and other problems of the central nervous system.”

While anyone can get meningitis, it is more common in infants and children. Also at a higher risk are adolescents such as college students living in dormitories. Others at risk include household or classroom contacts of a person who is known to have the disease, people who have a suppressed immune system or those traveling to parts of the world where meningococcal meningitis is common.

In Oklahoma, reports the Oklahoma State Department of Health, 33 meningitis cases were reported in 2006. More than half of those cases occurred in February and March. Approximately 2,500 people in the United States are infected each year and about 300 die from the disease.

“Meningitis is spread by the meningococcus, the bacteria that causes meningitis, by the close contact with saliva or secretions from the nose or throat of

an infected person. Meningitis is not transmitted by breathing the same air in a room with an infected person,” Siewe said. “It also is not transmitted in water supplies, swimming pools or by casual contact in restaurants, restrooms or other public places.”

Some individuals may carry meningococcus in their nose and throat and never show any signs of illness.

Symptoms of meningitis appear two to 10 days after the initial exposure. Symptoms include high fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck and a rash. He said other symptoms may include confusion, seizures and a rash around the armpit and groin. A spinal tap and laboratory tests are used to confirm the disease.

Siewe said about 10 percent to 15 percent of those who contract the disease may die in spite of treatment.

“Early treatment with penicillin and certain related antibiotics is very effective in treating meningitis,” he said. “Only people in very close contact with an ill person have a higher risk of the disease and should be considered for precautionary treatment. These include household members, intimate contacts, daycare center classmates, some health care workers and persons with direct contact to secretions from the nose or throat of the infected persons.”

Siewe said there are some steps that can be taken to help reduce the risk of contracting meningitis. Cigarette smokers and children exposed to cigarette smoke have an increased risk, so it is important to stop smoking. Also, avoid upper respiratory infections by getting the influenza vaccine. Cover the mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing and wash hands frequently.

“Living a healthy lifestyle to improve overall health increases your ability to resist disease,” he said.

Source: OSU Extension Service, Dr. Youmasu Siewe, Health Education & Family Development Specialist



Practical Graduation Gift Ideas

- Laundry basket with personalized items such as a laundry bag; basket; detergent, stain removal guide, fabric softener, etc.
- Car care kit including battery charger, gas card, road care coverage.
- Tool box with the basic items. Personalize with colored duct tape or etching.
- Shower and bath kit with personalized towels, caddy, and gift card for replacement items.



Dare we hope we've had our last frost? Well, it doesn't get boring! Congratulations to Patsy Rowland on being selected District Heart of Home and Community Education winner. She'll be all healed and ready to represent the NE District at State in July. We were also proud to be represented at District by Clara Perkins and Coe Ann Patton.

Thanks for the wonderful baskets you fixed for the District Meeting Silent Auction. The 12 baskets brought in \$546.

State has asked for Tulsa County HCE history information on County-wide projects. I especially need it for the 60's and 80's. Please call me if you can furnish any information.

May 18, 2007—9:30 AM

HIGHLIGHT THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR

OHCE Business Meeting - *OUTSTANDING PROGRAM*

Will Hill and Jehnean Washington - Indian Storytellers and Performers. They have performed before many audiences, including Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

A meeting and program you will not want to miss!!

Reminders and looking ahead:

MAY

- 4 Executive Board Meeting 10:00 am at Extension Office
- 6-12 OHCE Week
- 8 CENTENNIAL PARTY 10:30 am to 2:00 pm Extension Office
- 18 Business Meeting 9:30 am Extension Center *Candleliters Hostesses*
- 22 Leader Training 10:00 am Owasso June and July lessons
- 28 Extension Office closed for Memorial Day



JUNE

- 8 County Fair Committee meeting, 10:00 a.m. OSU Extension Center

JULY

- 2 OHCE Scholarship Applications due
- 4 Extension Office closed
- 8-10 OHCE State Meeting, Oklahoma City
- 20 Leader lesson 10:00 am Extension Office

AUGUST

- 1-5 County Fair

REMINDER

What's cooking? Oklahoma Birthday Bash for HCE Week
Tuesday, May 8th, 2007 at 10:30 am to 2:00 pm

at OSU Extension Office
4116 E 15th St, Gate 6

Costume contest, door prizes, food & entertainment
Ya all come!



Eating Oklahoma Locally Grown

Clara Perkins, Valley View HCE member, trained the teachers for the May OHCE Lesson. Her beautiful display provided the following tips when shopping at farmer's markets:

- Fruits or vegetables may only be displayed, no sampling is allowed without the OK State Department of Health approval.
- Spoiled or decomposing products are not allowed.
- Products must be protected from contamination from outside sources.

Rowland Recognized as OHCE holds Northeast District Meeting

Oklahoma Centennial: Strong Heritage, Promising Future," was the theme for the Northeast District Oklahoma Home and Community Education meeting that took place March 27 at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center in Stillwater. Tulsa County member, Patsy Rowland, won the Northeast District Heart of Home and Community Education (HCE) award. She will be recognized further at the Statewide meeting in July.

The meeting was hosted by Pawnee and Payne Counties and brought together 21 counties that are in the Northeast District to participate in workshops and recognize achievement from the past year.

"OHCE believes the family should come first in the life of the individual, the community and nation," said Brenda Miller, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service Northeast District Family and Consumer Science Program Specialist. "This meeting allows for the county OHCE leaders to come together to participate in workshops, listen to speakers and to gather information that will benefit their local OHCE group."

Workshops included: OHCE making a difference in Oklahoma; Managing Challenging Situations and People; Nine Patch and Beyond; Make Room for 'Shrooms – Growing Shitake Mushrooms for Fun and Profit; What Can I Do with These Gourds?; What is All the Talk About Ethanol?; Vintage Aprons – Our Ties to the Past; Challenges of Hospice; Dispelling the Myths about Water Wise Gardening; Who is ABLE Tech and What Do They Do?; and Fighting Crime with Man's Best Friend.

Donna Jones, OHCE state president, addressed the group, followed by a style show with historical clothing from 1830-1930 given by the Oklahoma Historical Society.

"Thirty-five Tulsa County, members registered for the event," said Elizabeth Bartlett, Tulsa County President. "It was especially exciting as we prepare to host the 2008 conference," she continued.

"The district OHCE meetings are always a great time to congregate and reflect on the past year and get new ideas to implement into our county programs," Bartlett said. "I am glad we had the opportunity to come together to focus on personal growth and to recognize the achievements our leaders have accomplished," Miller said. "I hope participants take the knowledge they have gained and share it in their counties." Miller said.

Source: Katie Reim, OSU Ag Communications

Sincerely,

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This newsletter is published by OSU Extension Service/Tulsa County Family and Consumer Sciences Department. Information about Oklahoma Home and Community Education (OHCE) groups may be obtained by contacting Tulsa County Extension, 4116 East 15th St., Tulsa, OK 74112-6198 918-746-3703 or log onto: www.oces.tulsacounty.org

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