



## Food & Fitness



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

October is Popcorn Poppin' Month. Did you know Nebraska has consistently ranked in the top two states in the nation in popcorn production. Nutritious, low calorie and crunchy, popcorn naturally appeals to all ages. Enjoy this recipe from the Popcorn Board. For more popcorn recipes and information, check the Popcorn Board's web site at: [www.popcorn.org](http://www.popcorn.org)

### Cheery Cherry Popcorn

- 2 1/2 quarts air-popped popcorn
- Butter flavored spray (like PAM)
- 1 package cherry flavored gelatin

Put popcorn into a very large bowl and spray lightly with butter flavored oil. Sprinkle with gelatin. Put in 350 degree oven for five minutes. Gelatin will dissolve slightly and stick to the popcorn. (AH)

## Consider non-food treats for halloween

"Offering nonfood treats benefits not only the Halloween doorbell ringer, but the treater as well" advises Pat Kendall, Food Science and Human Nutrition Specialist, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension.

Why? Because there is no leftover candy sitting around saying "Eat me!" Just box up the favors not given out and save them for next year recommends Kendall. Here are some non-food treats suggested by Kendall: pencils, erasers, stickers, miniature toys, crayons, and rubber spiders or worms.

Check the party favor section at supermarkets, discount stores and other stores for

additional ideas for small non-food treats. One mother in a discussion group on the Internet said she gave quarters wrapped in plastic wrap and tied with orange ribbon. They were suitable for all ages and no one was disappointed.

Kendall goes on to advise if the idea of nonfood treats doesn't grab a person's fancy, to consider a less sweet alternative such as juice box packages, small packages of nuts or raisins, and coupons good at local fast food establishments. Another possibility from Kendall is a package of instant cocoa mix the trick-or-treaters can enjoy after a chilly night out!



## Focus on Food



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### Q: What causes popcorn to pop?

**A:** According to the Popcorn Board: "Popcorn's ability to pop lies in the fact that the kernels contain a small amount of water stored in a circle of soft starch inside the hard outer casing. When heated, the water expands, creating pressure within, until eventually the casing gives way, and the kernels explode and pop, allowing the water to escape as steam, turning the kernels inside out."

### Q: Is there anything I can do if popcorn has lost its pop?

**A:** If your popcorn does not pop into fluffy, crunchy kernels, it may have lost some of its moisture according to the Popcorn Board. The Board suggests: rejuvenate popcorn by filling a 1-quart jar 3/4 full with popcorn. Add one tablespoon of water. Cover and shake every five to 10 minutes until all the water is absorbed. In two to four days it should be perfect for popping. (AH)

## Modified food guide pyramid for ages 70+

Older adults looking for some good advice about foods to meet their needs as they grow older soon may not need look much farther. A group of researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University have developed a modified food guide pyramid especially for people over age 70.

The pyramid is designed for healthy, independent living adults looking for some guidance on food choices to help them stay healthy. As individuals grow older, they often find they can't eat as they once did. Energy needs decrease but the need for vitamins, minerals and protein is pretty much the same as in younger days, if not higher in some cases. The modified food pyramid for adults over age 70 still follows basic dietary principles:

- eat a variety of foods;
- choose foods from all of the food groups; and
- balance food intake with physical activity.

In addition to these basic principles the modified pyramid

suggests that a "supplement" flag be added at the very top of the pyramid, and that eight or more servings of water will make up the base of the pyramid. The "supplement" flag brings attention to the need for nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D and vitamin B12 that may be harder to get as a person ages.

The recommended servings within each food group have been adjusted for older adults to better match their energy needs while maintaining adequate nutrient intakes. The modified pyramid recommends the following number of servings for the older adult:

- 6 servings of bread, fortified cereal rice and pasta
- 3 servings of vegetables
- 2 servings of fruits
- 3 servings of milk, yogurt and cheese
- 2 servings of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts

Older adults also are encouraged to consider primarily whole grain, enriched or fortified foods from the bread, cereal, rice and pasta group. To make additional gains in fiber intake, food choices from vegetables and

fruits should include the whole product more often than juices. Fruits and vegetables of deeper color also will be richer in vitamins and minerals and would make good selections.

Along with encouraging a higher fiber intake is a strong recommendation to get more fluids. Fluid needs can vary depending on the older adult's level of physical activity, use of medications and kidney function. One thing is certain—the thirst mechanism isn't a good indicator for when to take a drink because older persons don't always easily detect their thirst. The modified pyramid for older adults advocates at least eight glasses of fluid daily. Coffee, tea and alcohol shouldn't be a major portion of the fluid intake.

**SOURCES:** Linda Boeckner, Ph.D., R.D., nutrition specialist, NU/IANR; Russell RM, Rasmussen H and Lichtenstein AH. "Modified food guide pyramid for people over seventy years of age." J. Nutr. 129751-753, 1999. (AH)

## Kids in the kitchen

Children like helping in the kitchen and are often more willing to eat foods they help prepare. It's important that you give kitchen tasks appropriate for a child's age. Here are some recommendations that the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture gives in its materials on the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children.

Remember: Children have to be shown how to do these activities. Each child has his or her own pace for learning, so give it time and the skills will come. Expect a few spills — it's a small price to pay for helping your children become comfortable around food.

**2-year-olds:** wipe table tops; scrub vegetables; tear lettuce or greens; break cauliflower; snap green beans; wash salad greens; play with utensils; bring ingredients from one place to another.

**3-year-olds:** can do what 2-year-olds do, plus . . . wrap potatoes in foil for baking; knead and shape yeast dough; pour liquids; mix ingredients; shake liquids in covered container; spread soft spreads; place things in trash.

**4-year-olds:** Can do all that 2- and 3-years-olds do, plus . . .

peel oranges or hard cooked eggs; move hands to form round shape; cut parsley or green onions with dull scissors; mash bananas using fork; set table.



**5- to 6-year-olds:** Can do all that 2-, 3-, and 4-years-olds do, plus . . . measure ingredients, cut with blunt knife, use a manual egg beater.

When your child is helping you with food preparation, remember to stress handwashing. Wash hands using soap and warm running water before and after handling food or utensils to prepare food.

## Clean Hands Campaign

Have fun using "glo-germ" to teach handwashing to youth and adults. Receive handouts for your group and a supplementary copy of reproduction-ready handwashing activities. This activity can be used with any number of people.

Call Alice Henneman at 441-7180 to check out the Clean Hands Kit and receive about 15 minutes of training on using it. Kit must be checked out and returned within the same week. Available on a first come, first served, basis. (AH)



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