

Food & Fitness



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

Since 1991, the 5 A Day for Better Health Program has raised public awareness about the importance of fruits and vegetables in disease prevention according to the National Cancer Institute. The national public-private "5 A Day" partnership seeks to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables to 5 or more servings each day.

The following official 5 A Day recipe from the National Cancer Institute provides four people with one and a half servings of vegetables each. For more recipe ideas, check their Web site at www.5aday.gov (AH)

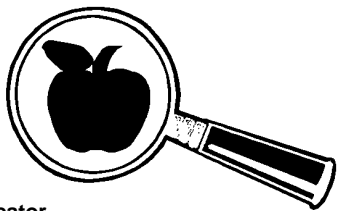
Fabulous 5-Layer Dip

1 (16 oz.) can non-fat refried beans
2 mashed avocados sprinkled with lime juice
1-1/2 cups non-fat sour cream
3 tablespoons drained, chopped mild green chili peppers
8 diced plum tomatoes

Using a 13x9x2 glass baking dish or pan, layer the ingredients in order from beans to tomatoes. Dig in with baked tortilla chips.

Serves 4

Focus on Food



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Q: What's an easy way to remove the skins from tomatoes?

A: Here's a quick way to remove the skin from tomatoes with hot water.

- 1) First, wash tomatoes thoroughly under running water.
- 2) Then, cut a small "x" in the bottom of tomatoes without cutting into the flesh.
- 3) Dip tomatoes one by one in boiling water for 15 to 30 seconds or until skins start to crack.
- 4) Plunge immediately in ice water.
- 5) Remove tomatoes when cool and slip off skins with a sharp knife. (AH)

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Cook It Quick!

Tips and recipes for cooking healthy foods in a hurry:
www.lancaster.unl.edu/food

FREE monthly Food Reflections e-mail newsletter.

To be added to the mailing list, e-mail Alice Henneman at AHENNEMAN1@UNL.EDU

Home Canning Concerns

It's canning time again! If you're new to canning or would like a refresher course, here are some "Major Canning Sins" that are potentially deadly from Charlotte P. Brennand, PhD, Utah State University Extension Food Safety specialist:

WHAT: Making up your own canning recipe. **WHY UNSAFE:** Without scientific testing, you will not know how long the product needs to be processed to be safe.

WHAT: Adding extra starch, flour or other thickener to a recipe. **WHY UNSAFE:** This will change the rate of heat penetration into the product and can result in undercooking.

WHAT: Adding extra onions, chili, bell peppers, or other vegetables to salsas. **WHY UNSAFE:** the extra vegetables dilute the acidity and can result in botulism poisoning.

WHAT: Using oven instead of water bath for processing. **WHY UNSAFE:** The product will be under processed since air is not as good a conductor of heat as water of steam. The jars also may blow up.

WHAT: Not making altitude adjustments. **WHY UNSAFE:** Since boiling temperatures are lower at higher altitudes, the products will be undercooked. (NOTE: The altitude in Lancaster County ranges from 1,200 to 1,700 feet and you'll need to follow the recommended altitude adjustments given in your canning book for this level.)

WHAT: Not venting pressure cooker first. **WHY UNSAFE:** Lack of venting can result in air pockets which will not reach as high a temperature.

WHAT: Failure to acidify canned tomatoes. **WHY UNSAFE:** Not all tomatoes have an adequate acid level. This can

result in botulism poisoning.

WHAT: Cooling pressure canner under running water. **WHY UNSAFE:** calculations as to cooking time includes the residual heat during the normal cool-down period as part of the heat process. Hurrying this process will result in under processed food.

WHAT: Letting food cool before processing in the recipes that call for "hot pack." **WHY UNSAFE:** The heat curves are based on the food being hot at the beginning of the processing. Product could be under processed.

For
CANNING AND FREEZING
information and directions
for specific foods, check the
Lancaster Extension
website at:
<http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/foodpres.htm>

Healthy Snacks Make a Feast

It was the night of the school's annual "Heritage Feast" and an 11-year-old boy proudly brought his family's food contribution to the table. He was exceptionally thrilled to present this, as he had made it himself. He had just completed a nutrition education program in his elementary school which taught him how to make the snack and why healthy eating is so important.

During the 2000-2001 school year, 1,486 Lincoln Public School (LPS) youth from limited resource area schools participated in the Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Program's (NEP) school enrichment series. Over 50 LPS teachers checked out nutrition kits developed by NEP staff to enhance their teaching of the LPS health curriculum on nutrition. Students learned about the Food Guide Pyramid, healthy snacks, nutrients important for overall health, planning balanced meals, food safety issues, and hand washing.

"This ain't no ordinary cookie, this is a nutritious cookie." "I'm going to make these for my family." "I plan to do babysitting and have a day care some day and I want to know about making foods that are healthy for them, so now I have a healthy snack I can use." These are some of the comments heard from students after their food preparation experience of measuring and mixing ingredients to create their own snack.



All classrooms using the kit began with the hand washing component and ended with the food preparation.

After learning about the importance of nutrient rich foods compared to empty calorie foods, a fifth grade classroom decided to make their Valentine's Day "party" food a little healthier than just candy. The class divided into five groups, each representing one of the five major food groups. Each group brought foods that would fit in that category. The teacher indicated they had quite a "healthy feast" and "learned a lot about food preparation and manners."

A group of first grade students showed their knowledge of the Food Guide Pyramid by bringing in food products during the school's food drive. The

teacher explained that the youth had decided to bring in items that would make up a "balanced" meal. When all foods were gathered the students organized them into meals representing the five food groups. One first grader said, "We want to help other families eat good food."

These examples are representative of how Lincoln Public School children are learning to take care of their bodies by choosing healthy foods. The partnership between Lancaster County Extension and Lincoln Public Schools has provided students with over 600 hours of nutrition education. Students receiving this education will have the opportunity to develop life-long healthy eating habits. (KW)



Clean Hands Campaign

Have fun using "glo-germ" to teach handwashing to youth and adults. Receive handouts for your group and a copy of reproduction ready handwashing activities. Call Alice Henneman (441-7180) to schedule a time to checkout the Clean Hands Kit and receive your materials. Kit must be checked out and returned within the same week. Available on a first come, first served, basis. This activity can be used with any number and takes about 20 or minutes, depending on the size and age of your group. (AH)