



May 2023

# EXTENSION

## STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES Family and Consumer Science News

### Eating Healthy & Reducing Food Waste



Interest rates, utility bills and food prices have skyrocketed lately, making it more difficult for consumers to make ends meet. With grocery prices at an all-time high, it's more important now than ever to make wise choices at the supermarket in order to put healthy meals on the table, stay within budget and reduce food waste. US household food waste represents about 44% of all food waste generated.

One of the best ways to stay on a budget is to plan meals, said Janice Hermann, OSU Extension nutrition education specialist. "Planning your meals in advance and buying only what is needed for those meals will help reduce your grocery bill. Plus, a meal plan can help incorporate leftovers, which reduces food waste," Hermann said. "Sunday's roast can become Tuesday's beef stew. A roasted chicken can be turned into other meals such as chicken salad or a chicken potpie. Wasting food is simply throwing money away."

As you make a meal plan, look through the refrigerator, freezer and pantry to see what's already on hand and plan around those ingredients. Be sure to include breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. If your budget allows, stock up on shelf-stable items or things that can easily be frozen. Check out sales flyers and plan meals around things that are on sale. USDA's [MyPlate](#) website has a helpful section: [Healthy Eating on a Budget](#). Read it for ideas to keep your food budget in check all while providing healthy food choices for the family. Visit the USDA's [MyPlate Kitchen](#) for recipes.

"When making your grocery list, be sure to include things such as fruits, vegetables and milk that may not be part of a recipe but are basics for healthy eating," she said. "Meat prices are higher, so in order to save money consider planning some meals with less expensive alternative proteins such as beans, peas and lentils. Try to make half of your meal from fruits and vegetables, then fill in the rest with healthy proteins, dairy and whole grains." It's important to make and stick to a shopping list. Organize the list into different sections of the store to avoid backtracking through the aisles. Because stores place the priciest items at eye level, look at the upper and lower shelves for better bargains.

Hermann suggested reading the Nutrition Facts label to help guide consumers in purchasing healthy foods. Look for reduced fat or low-fat on the label. "Compare labels on similar foods to see which one better fits a healthy eating plan," she said. "Keep in mind fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are healthy options. Seasonal produce will cost less and be at its peak flavor but buy only what you can use before it spoils."

"Drink water instead of soda and other sugary beverages. Tap water is easy on your wallet and has zero calories," Hermann said. "A reusable water bottle is a great way to take water on the go and avoid the high cost of bottled water from a convenience store."

Apps are other great tools to help ensure consumers use food while at peak quality and reduce waste; one is the USDA FoodKeeper app available for most smart devices. Consumers often throw food away because they're not sure of its quality or safety. This app serves as a guideline to help consumers better understand food and beverage storage. It also provides safe food handling and preparation information.

<https://extension.okstate.edu/announcements/family-and-consumer-sciences-newsletters/march-fcs-newsletter-2023.html>

### Beaver County Extension Office

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Facebook: Beaver County  
OSU Extension



Please help our youth workshops and the landfill. We need empty 2-liter soda bottles to use for Hydro-Rockets by June 12.

## Summer Grilling Success

- **A food thermometer is the best way to tell what internal temperature a food has reached. (The food thermometer should be placed in the thickest part of the meat and should not be touching bone, fat, or gristle. Check the temperature in several places to make sure the food is evenly heated)** Different foods have different internal temperatures,:
  - ◇ 145°F Beef, pork, lamb, veal (with a 3-minute rest) and fish
  - ◇ 160°F Hamburgers and other ground meat
  - ◇ 165°F Poultry and ground poultry



<https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/healthy-lifestyles-last-blog/2021-07-06-summer-grilling-success>

- A clean grill makes a big difference in the taste and quality of your grilled foods. Clean your grill before, during, and after grilling season.
- Precook meat in the microwave and immediately place it on the grill. Pre-cooking in the microwave first can release some of the juices that can drop on the coals.
- Use indirect heat to cook meat. This means move coals to one side of the grill and cook foods towards the other side. This helps prevent flare-ups and charred meat.
- For juicy burgers- make from meat with 20-25% fat. This would be 75-80% lean on the packaging. Leaner ground meat will not be as juicy of a burger. Cook hot and fast, but don't overcook. Some recommendations say to cook a ¾-inch burger on a 450°F grill for 8-10 minutes. Different grill types and outdoor environments may change this. Be patient with yourself while you learn how your grill works. This includes the tip to not press burgers with a spatula. For a juicy burger, the goal is not to push fats and water out of the burger and flip the burger only when it releases from the grill grates.
- Most fruit can be grilled, but look for fruits that are firm and barely ripe. Firm fruits, like apples, pineapple, and pears maintain their shape and texture when grilled. Softer fruits, like peaches, mangoes, and nectarines, become mushy on the grill if overcooked. Some sources recommend grilling for only 5-8 minutes. Like other foods on the grill, let fruit cook long enough to release itself from the grill grates before flipping.

- Remove visible fat. As fat heats up, it begins to melt. Fat that drops onto grill coals causes a flare-up, where the fat and coals create a short fire that comes back to the meat and burns or chars it.
- High-temperature cooking methods, such as grilling, frying, and roasting, can produce compounds that raise the risk of cancer, as seen in animal studies. These form in meat muscle, including beef, pork, fish, or poultry, when it is cooked using high-temperature methods. One way to reduce these compounds when grilling meat is to prevent charring.
- Before cooking fish, grease grill grates or baskets. Fish and seafood do not have much fat and need oil to help prevent sticking. This is not as big of an issue if using planks or foil packs to cook fish. Fillets and shellfish do well over direct heat, while whole fish does better over indirect heat. Recommendations vary whether to start cooking a fillet skin side up or down. Practice to find out what works better for you. Fish is ready to be flipped when it releases itself from the grill grates. If it is not ready, try it again after 1 minute. In general, a 1-inch fillet of fish will cook in 8-10 minutes, being flipped halfway through.
- Keep foods safe! Put leftovers – both grilled meats and side dishes - into the refrigerator within 2 hours of cooking, or 1 hour if the air temperature outside is above 90°F.



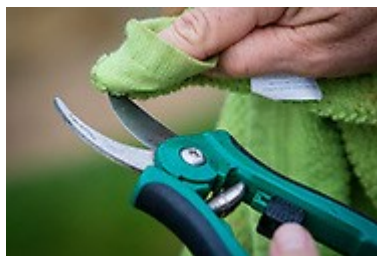
<https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/healthy-lifestyles-last-blog/2021-07-06-summer-grilling-success>

## Bereavement Announcement

Condolences to the Zielke Family. They have been hit hard with the passing of Emma (5/21/1935—3/30/2023) and her husband Larry, just 2 weeks later. Emma was a long time member of the Balko Sunflower OHCE Club. She was a faithful volunteer for our 4-H workshops too. She will be missed.



## How to Keep Garden Tools in Top Shape



Sharp garden tools make better cuts on foliage, which allows the plant tissue to heal properly. Smoother cuts on foliage mean less torque on your hands, wrists and arms. Clean tools help to prevent the transmission of plant diseases. Maintained tools will last longer and are safer to use when they operate easily. Good

maintenance protects your investment in your tools.

The three S's of maintaining garden tools are scrub, sharpen and sanitize, then lubricate. As you perform these steps, check for missing or broken parts, check the attachment points of tool heads and tighten if they are loose. Be careful not to over-tighten or you might crack the tool head. Inspect the handles to ensure they are secure and splinter free.

**Scrub:** Hand tools such as weeders, pruning shears, spades, rakes and saws should first be thoroughly scrubbed of grit and debris, then dried. Scrub with soap, water and a gentle scrubbing pad.

**Sharpen:** To sharpen flat blades, use a flat-edge file, a sharpening stone or a flat mill bastard file. Using a vise to hold the tool will make the sharpening easier and safer. Take tools with serrated edges, such as a pruning saw, to a professional for sharpening.

**Sanitize:** To sanitize, use alcohol wipes or a disinfectant spray. The active ingredients in Lysol, for instance, are less corrosive to metal than a bleach solution.

Also, Lubricate any blades or metal parts with a nontoxic oil to protect them from rust. You can oil smaller hand tools by using an "oil sock." Stuff a sock with sand or wadded rags. Tie a knot, and apply vegetable oil. Vegetable oil is less toxic to the garden than a crude oil. Rub the sock along your tool to apply the oil. Store the sock in a zip-lock plastic bag.

Finally, inspect wood handles and replace them if they are broken or cracked. To condition wood handles and prevent cracking on tools like spades, forks and picks, lightly sand them with medium-grit sandpaper and use a drying oil like boiled linseed oil. For a thorough treatment, apply it liberally, allow it to sit 15 minutes and wipe off the excess with a dry cloth. Carefully read and follow the directions for using linseed oil, as used rags can combust if stored or disposed of incorrectly. Wear gloves to protect your hands. Nitrile-coated gloves provide great defense against oils and can be hand-washed or tossed in the washer and line-dried.

Store your tools in a dry, covered area and preferably hang your tools to protect the sharp blades. It's important to keep your tools as dry as possible, so don't let them touch the ground, where they could get wet and develop rust. Ideally, your storage will be a solid, roomy dry shed or garage.

This is also a good time to check your garden hoses for leaks and check couplings, which may need new washers. Your wheelbarrow may need air in the tires, new handles or both.

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/lifestyle/the-nitty-gritty-on-garden-tools/>

## OHCE NEWS



Notice: Fair Item # 10 SEMI-HOMEMADE CAKE can utilize a cake mix. This item doesn't have to be from scratch. Recipe is still required.

The entire cake will be entered for judging but only a piece needs to be left on display after official judging.

### Upcoming Leaders' Trainings

- ◆ JUNE **"Diet & Inflammation"** - State Lesson for the July Mtg. so it's ready now. Leaders, contact the office for your copies.
- ◆ JULY — NO Leaders' Lesson (August is Fair)
- ◆ AUGUST-TBA **"Easy Meals for 2"** (Sept. Lesson)

Strawberries are not only a sure sign of spring, but also a very nutritious food. Take advantage of sales and preserve some for later. Strawberries do not require blanching before they're frozen. You can freeze strawberries without sugar as whole, sliced or crushed berries using a dry pack. Simply pack the strawberries into a container, seal and freeze.



Or you can use the tray pack method, spreading a single layer of prepared strawberries on shallow trays and freezing them. Once they're frozen, promptly package the berries and return them to the freezer. The fruit pieces remain loose, and you can pour a portion from the container and reclose the package. Prevent freezer burn by packaging the fruit as soon as it is frozen.

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[www.OHCE.okstate.edu](http://www.OHCE.okstate.edu)



Family & Consumer Sciences helps communities, families, youth and individuals address issues of health, wealth, and well-being through research-based Extension education and programs that are proven to work.

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"Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact (Liz Gardner McBee or Loren Sizelove) at (580-625-3464 or [elizabeth.mcbee@okstate.edu](mailto:elizabeth.mcbee@okstate.edu) or [loren.sizelove@okstate.edu](mailto:loren.sizelove@okstate.edu)) at least two weeks prior to the event."