

STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA



**GARFIELD COUNTY
EXTENSION**

Eat healthy, cut food costs and reduce food waste

Grocery prices are continuing to rise, and consumers are feeling the pinch. March is National Nutrition Month so now is a great time to address healthy eating while saving money and cutting down on food waste.

With higher costs on utility bills, rising interest rates and increased food prices, consumers are finding it harder to make ends meet, said [Janice Hermann, Oklahoma State University Extension](#) nutrition specialist.

“It’s more important now than ever to use wise strategies before, during and after grocery shopping to put healthy meals on the table, maintain your food budget and reduce food waste,” Hermann said. “A healthy eating style can help you be healthier now and in the future, which in the long run can save money on healthcare costs.”

Hermann suggests becoming familiar with [USDA’s MyPlate](#) and using it as a guide to create an eating plan. MyPlate can help make small changes that pay big dividends both in your pocket and with your health.

When planning meals:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Make half your grains whole grains
- Use low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt
- Vary the protein
- Consume foods with less



saturated fat, sodium and added sugar

- Drink water instead of buying other beverages
- Make small changes that are sustainable and work within your family’s food preferences, health goals and budget

Planning meals and snacks will help cut costs if consumers stick to the list and purchase only needed items. Check the MyPlate website for budget-friendly, healthy meals. Go through your pantry, refrigerator and freezer to inventory what you already have on hand and use these items in upcoming meals.

It’s important to make a grocery list and stick to it. Organizing the grocery list using the store’s layout helps speed up the shopping process and cuts down on impulse buying.

“Everyone’s schedules are busy, so choose recipes that are quick and easy to prepare. This helps eliminate the need for takeout on days when you don’t feel like spending a lot of time in the kitchen,” Hermann said.

**Garfield County OSU
Extension**

Address

316 E. Oxford
Enid, OK 73701

Phone

580-237-1228

Email

Joy Rhodes
joy.rhodes@okstate.edu

Website

<http://oces.okstate.edu/garfield/>

Social Media

Facebook: Garfield County OSU
Extension Family & Consumer
Sciences

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“On weekends, prepare larger meals and incorporate those leftovers into other meals throughout the week. This makes for a quick and easy weekday dinner if you just have to reheat and serve.”

Other ways to save on food costs include:

- Buy in-season fruits and vegetables
- Buy sale items in bulk and [freeze](#) or store properly
- Find bargains on day-old varieties
- Have a meatless meal once or twice a week
- Beans, peas, lentils and eggs are great sources of lower-cost protein
- Chicken and pork may be less expensive than other meats
- Extend meat with beans or vegetables in chili or casseroles
- Check sell-by and use-by dates to ensure you’re getting the freshest product possible
- Join a store’s loyalty program

“Oklahoma families are spending more of their budget on food than they ever have, but taking time to plan meals and shop smartly will help ensure everyone is eating healthy and reducing food waste,” Hermann said.



View the March 2024 Living Well Calendar from NEAFCS for 31 ways to Live Well this month.

<https://neafcs.memberclicks.net/assets/documents/living-well/2024-living-well/2024-March-Living-Well-Calendar%20%281920%20x%201250%20px%29.pdf>

Education Workshops for March

Check out some of these offerings for OHCE members, guests or anyone interested in a good time with friends and learning a new skill.

State Of Orange Day of Service April 13, 2024

Plans will be finalized for the Orange Day of Service on or near April 13. Information will be shared with each group after the Board meeting March 4.

OHCE Board Meeting March 4, 9:30 am

The Garfield County OHCE Board Meeting will be held March 4, 9:30 am. We will be discussing April 13-Orange Day of Service, upcoming Spring Association meeting and other necessary business.

Garfield County Spring Association Meeting April 16 6:30 pm

Be sure to add Tuesday April 16, 6:30 to your calendar for the annual Spring Association of Garfield County OHCE. Domes-ti-Kates group will be the hostess for our meeting. The County High School scholarships will be awarded this evening as well as other business. More details will be included in the April newsletter.

OHCE Leader Lesson-April Meetings

The Leader Lesson for April will be presented Wednesday, March 27, 2 pm at the Garfield County Conference Room. Our topics are the district lessons the Alpha-Gal Syndrome and Communication Skills. Please let us know which lesson your group would like for their meeting. There will be a presentation on both lessons that day.

OHCE District Meeting March 23, Laverne

Garfield County will have 8 OHCE members attending the District Meeting at Laverne later this month. The District Representative will be elected as well as lessons presented and fun workshops and visiting with friends from the western area.

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy

Monday, April 22 will begin Class 2 of the Stay Strong, Stay Healthy classes. Classes will continue at the 12:30 – 1:30 time frame each Monday and Wednesday through June 12 for a total of 8 weeks. The optional Friday exercise will be walking at Crosslin Park (as scheduling and weather permits). Benefits of the Strength Training are increasing muscle strength, improving balance, enhancing flexibility, strengthening bones, and reducing stress. Classes consist of warm-up exercises, 8 strengthening exercises, a cool down and brief meditation/breathing. Class size is limited so if interested, please call by April 16th and reserve your chair.



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Joy Rhodes
Extension Educator, FCS/4-H Youth Dev.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact Joy Rhodes, FCS Educator at (580)237-1228 or joy.rhodes@okstate.edu at least two weeks prior to the event.



Garfield County Cooperative Extension Service
Oklahoma State University
316 E. Oxford
Enid, OK 73701

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Dates to Remember

March 4 OHCE Board Meeting
March 23 OHCE District Meeting
March 27 Leader Lesson
April 13 Orange Day of Service
April 16 OHCE Spring Assoc. Meeting
April 22 Stay Strong, Stay Healthy



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