



Strengthening Oklahoma Families

Caregiving During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Within the last several weeks, Oklahoma, along with the rest of the United States and the world, entered an unprecedented time. As COVID-19 continues to spread, public officials have implemented new policies regarding social spaces, increasing to shelter-in-place orders across the state.

Kris Struckmeyer, Oklahoma State University Extension assistant specialist, said many families are left to figure out how to both work from home, as well as help continue their children's educations.

"But for some families, it isn't about trying to figure out 'new' math or brushing off their geography skills, but instead, how to best care for an aging relative," Struckmeyer said.

Coronavirus disease 2019, also known as COVID-19, is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted by close contact with an infected person through droplets produced when they cough or sneeze. Another way the disease can be transmitted is coming in contact with a surface or object that has the droplets on it, then touching their mouth, nose

or eyes. Some symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. While some patients have reported mild cases, individual with weakened immun systems, such as older adults or those with asthma, are at an increased risk for severe- even deadly- respiratory symptoms.

"So, what can caregivers do to protect themselves and their loved ones? First and foremost, it is vital as the caregiver to keep yourself well," he said. "Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water. Caregivers also should avoid crowds. This has become a little easier as people are sheltering at home."

Other tips include coughing or sneezing into the bend of your elbow or a disposable tissue and cleaning frequently touched surfaces in your home. This includes mobility and medical equipment.

Not only do caregivers need to keep themselves well, they also need to keep their loved one well, too.

continued on page 2



Lincoln County Extension Office

Address

811 Manvel, Ste 2
Chandler, OK 74834

Phone

405-258-0560

Email

Jessica Riggan
jessica.riggan@okstate.edu

Website

oces.okstate.edu/lincoln

Social Media

Facebook: /
LincolnCountyOSUExtension
Blog: jessicaskitchentable.
wordpress.com

In this issue

Emotional Eating

Helping Children Cope with
COVID-19 Stress

COVID-19 Food Safety with
Takeout

Grilled Balsamic Veggies

OHCE News

Emotional, Mindless, and Mindful Eating

Everyone experiences times of stress, sorrow, boredom, and grief every now and then. For many, these emotional experiences can lead to emotional eating. Emotional eating is eating for reasons other than physical hunger. So, how do you know if you are eating from physical hunger or from emotions?

Usually, physical hunger will come on gradually. You may start to feel like you are hungry, but you could wait and be just fine. Also with physical hunger, many types of foods might sound good and will satisfy you. Emotional eating comes on quickly and suddenly and probably will include a craving for comfort foods that are higher in sugar or fat and we usually do not feel satisfied after eating. We actually may feel worse because the negative emotions are still there.

Emotional eating can sometimes go hand-in-hand with mindless eating. Mindless eating is eating without paying attention. An example of this is snacking in front of the television. Before you know it, you've eaten an entire family size bag of chips with a jar of salsa! When we eat mindlessly, it may be out of an emotional trigger or simply because of habit. Either way, it is very easy to eat more than we meant to.

If you think you may be eating due to an emotional trigger, there are some things you can try to curb your "stress appetite." When you feel the urge to eat, check-in with your body and your emotional state. How are you feeling? What has happened during the day? Are you feeling sad? Stressed? Bored? Maybe you actually are hungry. Once you have asked yourself how you are feeling, have

a glass of water. Go for a walk. Take a bubble bath. Read part of a book. Call a friend and chat about your day. Do something that is good for you, and then check-in again. Try to replace bad habits with good ones. If you are craving something sweet but suspect it is an emotional craving, intentionally do something else to try to change your trigger response.

Mindful eating is pretty much the opposite of mindless eating. It is paying attention while you eat. Mindful eating is very enjoyable, but it does require conscious effort because we are not really accustomed to it in our culture. Try out these techniques for mindful eating:

Continued on page 3

Caregiving during Coronavirus cont.

"To help reduce the risk of exposure, take your loved one to the emergency room only if they're having difficulty breathing or a very high fever," Struckmeyer said. "Otherwise, your best bet is to call your healthcare provider. Check into telehealth options. Medicare has expanded the benefits for telehealth."

He also suggests helping your loved one remember to wash their hands. Caregivers could even put written notes around the house with reminders. For those fortunate enough to have hand sanitizer in the home, keep it out in the open so it serves as a visual reminder to use it. Also, have an alternate plan in mind in the event that you as the

primary caregiver becomes ill.

"In these times, it's important to remember that social distancing doesn't mean isolation. Encourage your loved one to think beyond their circle of friends and reach out to neighbors or congregation members," he said. "Thankfully during this time, technology can help with social distancing while still feeling in touch. Show your loved one how to video chat with a loved one, or make the call yourself and hand off the phone."

"While technology is a wonderful tool to use, going old-school can be just as much fun," Struckmeyer said. Ask other family members and friends to write letters or cards

to help lift your loved one's spirits.

"Above all, always ensure your loved one feels included. As we are all homebound during this unprecedented time, it may be a good idea to ask your loved one to complete a project," he said. "Be sure that the project is something that excites them and keeps them engaged, though it does not need to be a large project. This also is a great time to get your loved one to tell stories of their youth. Record short videos or audio tapes to capture these precious memories."

Help Children Cope With the Stress of the COVID-19 Pandemic

With all of the new information being shared about the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, it is easy for parents to become overwhelmed. More time at home with family members can be positive, but the expanding roles of parents as teachers, child care providers and more can cause stress for the whole family. Below are tips that may help parents.

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS DO FIRST?

Calm yourself so you can calm your child. Before parents can talk to children of any age – including teenagers – they need to be calm themselves. The calming process starts with being attentive to your own thoughts and feelings. If you are sad or angry, feel like screaming or crying or can't stop negative thoughts, try one of the practices outlined below. Reach out for professional help if these steps don't increase your ability to cope and be calmer.

- Monitoring – pay attention to negative thoughts and feelings
- Self-Care – take time to nurture relationships, exercise, sleep, declutter and organize
- Breathing – breathe in to the count of four and out to count of seven to calm mind and body
- Mindfulness – practice mindfulness, meditation or prayer to reduce anxieties
- Self-Kindness – replace self-criticism with self-understanding and patience

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS DO FOR CHILDREN?

Parents are the primary filters for the information that reaches children. In times of disaster and tragedy, parents need to be particularly attentive to the fact that they must filter out information that can be overwhelming and filter in love and reassurance.

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS FILTER OUT?

- Anything that affects your child negatively. You may see this in their thoughts, feelings or behaviors.
- If your child seems overwhelmed or out of control, increase your filtering. When talking things over, try to answer questions simply – in this case less is usually better.

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS FILTER IN?

- Love and support – Show your child how much you love

- them. Do all you can to be comforting and encouraging.
- Expressing feelings – Accept that your children may be scared or concerned by the things they hear or see. It is okay for them to feel sad, angry, afraid or confused. You can help them manage feelings by accepting them and encouraging them to talk. Help them learn to take deep, calming breaths or play a “let's pretend” game where they blow themselves up like a balloon (deep breaths) and then sail over the countryside while slowly letting out their air and gently sitting on the ground.
- Good coping behaviors – Physical activity and exercise are excellent for reducing stress and staying healthy. Keep up relationships with distant relatives through phone, text and chat.

Emotional Eating cont.

- When you take a bite of food, pay attention to the aroma, the flavor, the texture. Is the food sweet or savory? Is it salty or sour? Is it crunchy? Soft? Tough? Is it moist or kind of dry and crumbly?
- Put your eating utensil down between bites. Take your time chewing and swallowing your food so that you can get the most enjoyment out of it. This also slows down the speed at which you are eating, giving your brain time to send out signals that you are full.
- Enjoy meals and snacks with people you like to be around.
- Try to not snack or take meals in front of the television.
- Don't rush. Meals can be leisurely and relaxed.



COVID-19 AND FOOD SAFETY FAQ

IS CORONAVIRUS A CONCERN WITH TAKEOUT?

CDC, FDA and USDA are not aware of any reports at this time that suggest COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging. Current evidence shows the biggest risk of transmission of COVID-19 is being around individuals who are symptomatic. Food businesses should be following employee health policies and health department recommendations to keep these individuals home.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF TAKEOUT OR DRIVE-THRU FOOD?

- There is no current indication that takeout or drive-thru meals will increase illness.
- This option is a good risk management choice, especially for high risk and elderly groups because it helps maintain social distancing and reduces the number of touch points.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF FOOD DELIVERED TO HOME?

- Similar to takeout, food delivery helps maintain social distancing and reduces the number of touch points between preparation and serving of food.
- Many delivery programs have also instituted no touch/no interaction options, which further reduces risk.

CAN I GET COVID-19 FROM TOUCHING FOOD OR PACKAGING EXPOSED TO CORONAVIRUS?

- The risk of transfer of viruses is very low, based on current research.
- To further minimize risk, handling food packaging should be followed by handwashing and/or using hand sanitizer.

WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR BODY IF YOU DO INGEST CORONAVIRUS THROUGH FOOD?

- Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. It may be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a contaminated surface or object and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose, but this is not thought to be the major way the virus is transmitted.
- Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of the virus directly by eating food that might inadvertently contain virus.
- In commercial food production, processing, and preparation, there are many best practices that are routinely followed as per federal, state, and local regulations. These are all designed to prevent foods from becoming contaminated with microbes from the environment, including viruses.
- The best thing a consumer can do is to continue using good food safety practices before preparing or eating food, like always washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after using the restroom, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

extension.okstate.edu

For more info, visit: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov)

Updated March 24, 2020



NC STATE
EXTENSION

Balsamic Grilled Vegetables, serves 6

For the marinade:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dijon mustard
- Kosher salt, to taste
- A few turns of fresh cracked pepper

For the veggies:

- 2 sweet bell peppers (red, orange, or yellow), sliced
- 2 yellow squash, sliced into rounds
- 2 zucchini, sliced in rounds
- 1 small onion (I prefer red, but anything works), sliced thin
- 1 lb. asparagus stalks, chopped into 3 inch stalks
- 4 ounces goat cheese or feta cheese (optional)
- 2 additional Tablespoons high quality balsamic vinegar or balsamic reduction, if desired

In a measuring cup, whisk together all of the marinade ingredients until well combined. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour the marinade over the vegetables and allow to sit for at least 15 minutes or place in the fridge and marinate several hours.

Heat the grill over medium high heat. Spread the vegetables out over a vegetable basket, cast iron griddle, or heavy duty foil on the grill. Grill for 4-5 minutes or until veggies are starting to brown and caramelize on one side. Flip and grill an additional 5 minutes or until vegetables are softened. Remove from the grill. Drizzle with a few more Tablespoons of high quality balsamic and chunks of goat cheese.

Recipe source: www.neighborfoodblog.com



Nutrition info per serving:

253 Calories; 13g Fat; 9g Protein; 32g Carbohydrate; 9g Dietary Fiber; 10mg Cholesterol; 304mg Sodium.



OHCE NEWS

OHCE week

Whether it is raising funds to provide scholarships for 4-H Youth, planting trees to beautify the community or sewing thousands of cloth face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Oklahoma Home and Community Education group are ready to help.

Established in 1935, the group is celebrating its service to Oklahoma families and communities May 3-9 during Oklahoma Home and Community Education Week.

“Oklahoma Home and Community Education continues to go beyond their call to duty in communities across the state. We celebrate them and appreciate all that they do,” said Jorge Atilas, associate dean in Oklahoma State University’s College of Education and Human Sciences, and who also serves as the state adviser to the organization.

To date, members have made more than 35,000 facial masks to help communities cope with the pandemic.

“They truly impact lives, and OSU Extension is grateful to have such a great community partner in OHCE,” he said. “They take our research-based information and put it to work along with the local county Extension educators.”

Leslye Owen, OHCE president, said with a membership of nearly 3,400 across the state, the group’s community service makes a significant difference.

“Our members have a hand in so many different community events and activities, including community beautification, tutoring students, supporting veterans, providing educational scholarships and supporting local 4-H’ers and other groups,” Owen said.

Oklahoma Home and Community Education’s ultimate mission is to educate its members to be well-informed and able to handle changes in their homes and communities. Through its close relationship with OSU Extension, members bring that vision into reality by sharing research-based information on a wide variety of topics, including health, family and finances.

“We also play a vital role in communities because, especially in the smaller towns, there may not be very many resources available,” Owen said. “Oklahoma Home and Community Education is able to open up more resources and educational opportunities that can help many of our state’s families. It’s vital that we adapt to the changing world; we must stay relevant for our audience.”

Last year, the group contributed more than \$88,000 in scholarships funds to 4-H’ers and other students across the state. Members also reached more than 18,000 Oklahomans through educational programming, philanthropic projects and other activities. They provided \$21,000 in support to local community organizations and projects.

Many of their contributions are priceless: In March and April, members put in more than 8,750 hours making masks at about 15 minutes each. Groups around the state also are involved in supporting military personnel by sending care packages to troops. Others share their sewing talents and create Quilts of Valor that are given to local veterans. The organization helps county events such as the Okfuskee County Fair, Farm to You educational exhibit and Make it With Wool Contest.

Jan Maples, Okfuskee County family and consumer sciences Extension educator, serves as the adviser for the OHCE group in her county.

“My members have been busy sewing masks the last few weeks, but they also do other projects,” Maples said. “Past service projects have included sewing comfort pillows for post-surgery mastectomy patients, laundry bags requested by agencies and teddy bears for children getting immunizations.

“I’m thankful that I chose to be an Extension educator because of the wonderful, strong and resilient role models I had the advantage of knowing and interacting with in my mother’s home demonstration club,” she said.

Owen also said joining Oklahoma Home and Community Education changed her life 19 years ago.

“I’m so proud of what OHCE is doing in our state. If you’re looking for a place to meet people with similar interests and have a desire to help others, Oklahoma Home and Community Education might just be what you’re looking for.”

More information about OHCE is available on the organization’s website: <https://humansciences.okstate.edu/fcs/ohce/>



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.



Oklahoma Home & Community Education, Inc. is a local and state wide partner with Cooperative Extension which brings the best knowledge from OSU to its members. Join a local OHCE group and enjoy programs that help make Oklahomans be their best. www.OHCE.okstate.edu

Oklahoma State University, as an equal opportunity employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination and affirmative action. Oklahoma State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all individuals and does not discriminate based on race, religion, age, sex, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, or veteran status with regard to employment, educational programs and activities, and/or admissions. For more information, visit <https://eoo.okstate.edu>.

This publication, issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President of the Division of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, was printed at no cost to the taxpayers of Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President of the Division of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$_25.20___ for 300 copies.