



# Strengthening Oklahoma Families

## Parents/caregivers as agents of change for children’s diets

When rushing around, living life day to day, parents and caregivers may not give a lot of thought to how much influence they have over the foods children eat now – and in the future.

“This extends beyond merely choosing and serving their food or talking to them about the foods they are consuming,” said Ashlea Braun, Oklahoma State University Extension nutrition specialist and assistant professor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences. “Humans learn in social contexts, meaning we learn from observing others. Research shows that the quality of a child’s diet is related to the diet quality of their caregivers.”

Does the diet of the parent/caregiver adhere to the United States Dietary Guidelines and include adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables? If not, then the child’s may not. Or, are the adults intentionally modeling healthy eating?

“Modeling healthy eating includes behaviors such as intentionally trying to eat healthy food in front of children or displaying excitement about eating healthy foods,” she said. “Research has shown for years that having family meals together can influence the diet of children. However, it’s not just eating together, but what you’re eating together as a family, and children observing their caregivers making healthy choices.”

Modeling these behaviors in



front of children can help build their confidence to eat healthier while shaping norms about eating. In addition, children like to have autonomy – they like to make their own decisions. By encouraging children to eat healthier foods via social cues and modeling, parents/caregivers can encourage such choices while honoring autonomy.

Braun said this is a better approach than trying to get children to eat foods via force. In fact, research indicates this can create a great deal of tension between families at mealtime. In addition to the concept of modeling via observation, if parents/caregivers adopt higher-quality eating patterns, they’re more likely to have higher quality foods present in the home. In turn, this makes children more familiar with these healthier choices, leading children to consume those foods both in and out of the home.

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## Simple Snack Tips

### Keep snacking simple

Parents don't need to spend more than 10 minutes preparing a wholesome snack that kids will love. If the snack takes more than 10 minutes to prepare, it's likely too complicated and chances are kids won't like it!

When choosing nutritious snacks for kids, those that have fewer, simple ingredients are always the better choices. Ideas include colorful veggie kabobs that can be made by threading grape tomatoes, cucumber slices, pea pods, and other veggies onto wooden skewers; serve with hummus or low-fat Ranch dip. Or, make a pinwheel sandwich by spreading nut butter and berries on a slice of whole grain bread and roll up.

Source: <http://www.thevillagenews.com/>

### Drinks lots of water

Summertime often means outdoor activities on hot days, so it's important to stay hydrated throughout the day. Teach your child to quench thirst with water. Add lemon, lime or orange slices to chilled water to entice kids to drink more water. For a little more pizzazz, serve sparkling water flavored with two tablespoons of cranberry or orange juice.

Remember, sodas are high calorie and have no nutritional value and they are not a good choice for staying hydrated.

Remember—sports drinks are not necessary for most youth activities or sports. To stay hydrated have them drink plenty of water before and during the event.

### Serve Appropriate Portions

Snacks are an important part of a child's diet, and can help fill the gaps in nutrients that might be missing from meals. Be careful to choose nutritious snacks and make every bite count. But, watch the portion size. Sometimes kids eat too much at snack time, making them not want meals. This can be frustrating for parents and caregivers and lead to power struggles at the dinner table.

Help your kids listen to internal hunger and fullness cues. Discuss what it feels like to be hungry with your child. And, talk about how it feels to be satisfied. When kids listen to their bodies, they are less likely to overeat. Help them understand it is OK to stop eating before they feel full, even if there is food left on the plate.

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Some research takes it even further, examining the presence and/or absence of traditional healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables and those considered less healthy, such as foods rich in added sugars.

"Unfortunately, our desire to consumes those less-than-healthy choices can be powerful given those foods are generally very appealing and palatable," Braun said. "Having those foods present in excess can overpower our potential desire or intention

to consume healthier choices. Social and environmental cues are important, and some research suggests these cues can be more impactful than merely setting rules about eating 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' foods."

The effects hold true for both younger and older children and can be particularly important as older children are exposed to more and more external food environments that can shape their eating, including restaurants, ads on television, and other social

influences.

## Spring Clean Your Pantry (source: Penn State Extension)

Do you have packaged food items in your cabinets that are collecting dust? Spring is a great time to take stock and clean out your kitchen cupboards.

### Getting Started

Start your spring cleaning by removing all items from the pantry or cupboard, so that you can thoroughly clean and sanitize the shelves. Use a mild detergent, appropriately mixed in warm water to clean, and then rinse with clean warm water.

At this point, you may want to consider sanitizing the shelves. If using commercial sanitizing wipes, be sure to read the label for use. If you are making your own sanitizer with chlorine bleach, again read the label on the bottle of bleach to be sure it is safe to use on kitchen and food contact surfaces. The bleach should be unscented.

When mixing chlorine bleach to use as a sanitizer be sure to follow the guidelines from University of Minnesota Extension for the correct concentration of chlorine bleach to water. For ultra-chlorine bleach (6% sodium hypochlorite), mix  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon per quart or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons per gallon of warm water. Regular chlorine bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite) should be mixed at a concentration of 1 teaspoon per quart or 1 Tablespoon per gallon of warm water. Spray or wipe on the solution and allow the shelves to completely air dry before returning food items.

### Keeping or Tossing

Next, check the “use by” or “best by” dates on the food items from your cupboards. This date is determined by the manufacturer and is the last date recommended for use of the product for best quality. Most people wonder if the product can be used after this date and the answer is, it depends. It depends on the product itself, how it was handled, how it was stored, and how it is to be used. For example:

The shelf life for baking powder and baking soda is 12-18 months. This is critical for these items, otherwise, the desired effects of leavening or helping a batter rise may not occur. To test the freshness of baking powder, mix 1 teaspoon with  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup hot water. Vigorous foaming means it still has rising power. Mix  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons baking soda with 1 tablespoon vinegar, if it fizzes, then it will still leaven a food.

Spices and herbs tend to be other items that stay in our cupboards for many years and lose their potency for flavoring foods. In general, ground spices and herbs are good for 1 year, and whole spices for 2 years, when stored in a cool, dry location. If you have any of unknown age, you can use the “sniff” test to help determine their freshness. Ground spices when opened should have a strong aroma and spicy smell. Break, crush, or scrape whole spices looking for that strong spicy smell. Herbs that have a fresh aroma when crushed between

fingers are still good to use. Do not smell pepper or chili powder though, as they can irritate your nose.

Now, determine what you are going to discard. Certainly, any canned goods that are rusted, dented, or bulging should be discarded. Look for signs of pests, such as egg casings or small holes in packaging and discard as well. This is also a good time to inspect and wipe off jars and cans of accumulated dust, dirt or other residue. By using food at its peak of quality, we can prevent food waste. If you are not sure about an item, remember, when in doubt, throw it out.

### Restocking

As you prepare to re-stock your cupboard, check the “use by” or “best by” dates and place older dated items in the front to ensure they are used first. This is the FIFO (First In First Out) method of storage.

Remember that the ideal storage temperature for non-perishable foods is between 50°F and 70°F. If at all possible, avoid storing food in cupboards by the stove, dishwasher, or under the sink, as well as locations with extreme temperature changes such as the garage or basement.

A clean and organized kitchen pantry helps make food preparation more efficient and enjoyable and is also important for food safety.

## Balsamic Strawberry Flatbread (source: [herbsandflour.com](http://herbsandflour.com))

### For the Greek yogurt flatbread crust

- 1 1/4 cup flour + more to roll out
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup Greek yogurt

### For the Toppings

- 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese
- 1 1/4 cup strawberries sliced
- salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup feta cheese crumbled
- 8 basil leaves julienned
- 1/4 cup balsamic glaze  
place 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar to a small sauce pan and bring to a boil. Allow to boil until it is reduced by half.



Preheat oven to 425F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

To make the flatbread crust, mix all of the dry ingredients in a bowl. Add the yogurt and use a wooden spoon to mix well. The dough will be shaggy and sticky. Transfer to a well floured surface and sprinkle with some flour. Fold the dough in on itself a few times and then form into a ball. Place the ball onto the parchment paper lined baking sheet and pressing down with your hands, shape it into a rectangle about 1/4" thick.

Sprinkle mozzarella over the flatbread and spread it out, leaving a border around the flatbread. Season it with salt and pepper.

Sprinkle the strawberries and feta cheese over top. Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until the crust is a nice golden brown.

Sprinkle the flatbread with the basil and drizzle with balsamic glaze.

NUTRITION for 1/4 of recipe:

Calories: 303kcal    Carbohydrates: 44g

Protein: 15g    Fat: 8g    Saturated Fat: 5g

Polyunsaturated Fat: 1g    Monounsaturated Fat: 2g

Trans Fat: 1g    Cholesterol: 30mg    Sodium: 903mg

Potassium: 206mg    Fiber: 2g    Sugar: 8g

Vitamin A: 223IU    Vitamin C: 27mg    Calcium: 321mg

Iron: 2mg

## CULTURAL CUISINE PROGRAM

May 25, 2022 | 10 a.m - 12:30 p.m.

Okfuskee County Fair Building 1201 E. Columbia

Okemah, OK 74859



Participants will understand the concept of international cuisine, the role that food plays in culture and they will explore the cuisines of India, South America, and the Mediterranean.

Presenters: Jan Maples, Jessica Riggin, and Jill Gibbons, FCS Extension Educators in Okfuskee, Lincoln, and Okmulgee Counties



Scan QR code or call 918-623-0641 to Pre-register by May 20, 2022

## Tri-County Canning (& Freezing) Workshop

Wednesday, June 8th 10 a.m.— 2 p.m.

\$25 Registration Due June 1

Mail registration to:

Lincoln County OSU Extension Office 811 Manvel, Ste 2  
Chandler, OK 74834

Event Location:

First Baptist Church, 800 W. Elm St. Paden, OK 74860

Participants will learn about water-bath canning techniques to preserve high-acid foods, such as salsa and jelly. A review of freezing fruits and vegetables will also be presented. Youth may attend with a parent or guardian and it is recommended to bring your lunch. 5-20 attendees permitted for this workshop.

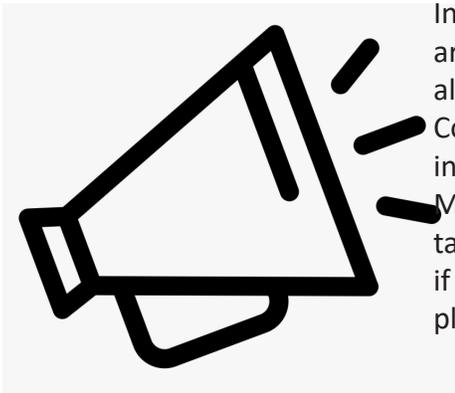


For more information, contact Jessica Riggin, Lincoln County OSU Extension Family and Consumer Science Educator, 405-258-0560.

*Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact Jessica Riggin at 405-258-0560 or [jessica.riggin@okstate.edu](mailto:jessica.riggin@okstate.edu) at least two weeks prior to the event.*

# OHCE NEWS

## Fun workshop opportunity!!



In order to bring you the best quality program that we can, the educators are going to present the June Leader Lesson, "Cultural Cuisine," as a trio, all together on May 25th from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm at the Okfuskee County Fairgrounds. We are busy preparing our presentation for you! It will include an exploration of food traditions in India, South America and the Mediterranean, including a food demo from each region and some food tastings! We will also be providing several recipes from each culture. Even if you are not assigned as the lesson leader for your local club, please make plans to attend this event. I promise it will be a good time!!

### Upcoming Dates:

May 25, 2022

Leader Lesson, 10:00 am  
Okfuskee County Fairgrounds

June 16, 2022

Executive Board Meeting, 9:30 am  
Lincoln County Courthouse

Leader Lesson, 10:30 am:

Quilting- Various Specific Techniques

Lincoln County Courthouse

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