

Wagoner County OSU Cooperative Extension Service

Don't let hectic schedules interfere with family cohesiveness

With children back in the classroom and schedules ramping up, it can be tough juggling the multiple demands families are facing. As people navigate the waters of these hectic schedules, it's a good time to take stock of what is needed to be a successful family.

Matt Brosi, Oklahoma State University Extension family sciences specialist, said it's more than scheduling sports practices, obtaining the right school supplies or attending PTA meetings.

"Now is a good time to truly step back and look carefully at what we need from and within our family relationships to thrive under the pressure of busy schedules," Brosi said. "It's vital to look at how we as individuals can prepare, how we can prepare in our intimate relationships and what we can do as a family system to become more ready to tackle the changes."

It's important for parents to have clarity over what they can control and what they can't, all while maintaining flexibility to adapt to changes that will come. Brosi said getting organized, setting clear, meaningful and attainable goals, as well as prioritizing demands can help people stave off the feelings of being overwhelmed by the pressure.

"When a person feels pressured to continually give without reprieve or reciprocity it can lead to eventual



burnout," he said. "Learning to communicate more effectively with others is a proactive measure that can keep emotions from boiling over and leading to emotional reactivity. This results in saying things we often don't mean, or perhaps we do mean but wish we hadn't said it so harshly."

There is something to be said for taking care of mental, emotional and physical needs. Maintaining perspective and logical thinking helps to separate issues as all or nothing, thus triggering a survival stance.

Brosi said being aware of maladaptive coping is also important and recognizing some of our reactions, such as emotional eating, using substances or binge-watching television, aren't helpful. This awareness may help us engage in more adaptive and helpful coping mechanisms. One of the best ways to deal with stress and subsequent mental health issues is to get adequate sleep.

"Couples tend to thrive when they both prioritize their relationship. Even after marriage, dating one another helps maintain that feeling of connection and care," he said. "Don't put off difficult conversations. Having those conversations

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In this issue:

Don't Let Hectic Schedules Interfere with Family Cohesiveness	1
Family Cohesiveness, cont.	
Turkey-Stuffed Acorn Squash	2
Let Cholesterol Fall Challenge	3
Health Literacy Month	
National Cholesterol Education Month	4
OHCE & FCS dates to remember	5

helps couples feel productive and growing rather than stagnant and disconnected. Talking about feelings of disappointment rather than blaming keeps things moving forward as opposed to breeding defensiveness.”

As a family unit, it’s important for parents to be active in parenting their children and spending time together in meaningful ways. This helps kids feel grounded and connected. Take a walk together after dinner or go on a family bike ride to the park. Show your children that they are important to you.

Continuing family traditions, or creating new ones for your family, facilitates value, togetherness and predictability. These all are factors in maintaining a healthy family.

“Regular mealtimes together at the table – without cell phones within reach; everyone sharing about their day, including the highs and lows; and sharing family fun time together are just a few examples of building family cohesion,” Brosi said.

Turkey-Stuffed Acorn Squash



Ingredients:

- 2 whole acorn squash cut in half
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 lb ground turkey or ground beef
- 1 ½ cups baby bella mushrooms, chopped
- 1 cup honeycrisp apples, peeled and chopped
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, chopped finely
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 cup shredded cheese (cheddar, gruyere, or mozzarella all work great!)

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment & spray with olive oil to prevent squash from sticking.
3. Slice acorn squash in half, scoop out seeds and place flat on sheet sprayed with olive oil. Bake the squash for 20 minutes, until it is tender when pierced with a fork.
4. While the squash cooks, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a pan. Sauté turkey in olive oil for 10-15 minutes until brown.
5. While the turkey is cooking, chop mushrooms, apples + herbs.
6. Add in chopped mushrooms, apples, chicken stock, and spices to the pan with the cooked turkey. Sauté for an additional 5 minutes.
7. When the squash is done, remove from the oven & scoop out most of the cooked center, leaving a little bit of filling in the acorn squash.
8. Add the squash filling to the turkey/mushroom/apple mixture in the pan + stir until completely mixed in.
9. Scoop the turkey/squash mixture back into the squash + top with cheese of choice.
10. Bake them at 450 for 5-10 minutes until cheese melts. Optional: broil for 2-3 minutes so the cheese gets crispy.

Nutrition Facts: Serving size: 0.5 acorn squash. 399 calories, 15g fat, 92mg cholesterol, 576mg sodium, 1298mg potassium, 30g carbohydrates, 4g dietary fiber, 4g sugar, 37g protein.

For more on this recipe, visit thecleaneatingcouple.com

Let Cholesterol Fall Challenge

September we will work to lower out cholesterol by practicing the following themes each week.



1. **Monday:** Plan your meals for the week around heart-healthy food options like beans and lentils, whole grains, oats, fruits, vegetables, and olive oil. Be sure to incorporate at least one heart-healthy food in each meal for the week. For more on heart-healthy options, visit heart.org.
2. **Tuesday:** Try a new workout on Tuesdays, whether it's a new fitness class, new walking route, or something similar.
3. **Wednesday:** Wednesdays are made for walking. Challenge yourself to get as many steps in as possible both on the clock and off. Walking helps to improve heart health and also reduces stress.
4. **Thursday:** Think about your mental health on Thursdays with breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation techniques, journaling, meditation, or prayer. Stress presents a number of potential consequences to our health and can even impact your cholesterol.
5. **Friday:** Fresh fruit is the perfect Friday treat and offers better health benefits than packaged snacks. Instead of opting for less nutritious options, opt for fruits for your afternoon snack.
6. **Saturday:** Stay strong on Saturdays by lifting weights, practicing strength training exercises, or taking care of otherwise tiring yard work.
7. **Sunday:** Unwind and prepare for the coming week with a walk or yoga practice in nature.

Health Literacy Month

For more information on National High Blood Pressure



Studies consistently show that a significant number of people have problems reading, understanding, and acting on health information. This impacts personal health and healthcare resources. Personal health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

Promoting health literacy improves health outcomes, as well as healthcare safety and quality. At the same time, it reduces health disparities and healthcare costs.

(Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Healthy People 2030: Health Literacy in Healthy People.)

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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National Cholesterol Education Month



September is National Cholesterol Education Month, which seeks to promote the monitoring of cholesterol levels and people's understanding of them. High cholesterol is an important risk indicator for heart disease, and this month encourages us all to monitor our numbers and engage in preventative measures like healthy diets and exercise. Join us this September as we celebrate!

For more information on National Cholesterol Education Month, visit heart.org or nationaltoday.com.

Strengthening Oklahoma Families is a bi-monthly publication of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The information given herein is supplied with the understanding no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Cooperative Extension is implied.

Dates to Remember

September

- ❖ 19th - Co-Parenting for Resilience (Wagoner County OSU Extension Office)
- ❖ 20th - Shahan OHCE Meeting
- ❖ 30th - Family Fun Day @ Maple Park in Wagoner

October

- ❖ 5th - Fall Extravaganza
- ❖ 7th - Senior Health Fair @ Wagoner Civic Center
- ❖ 10th - In-Towners OHCE Meeting
- ❖ 11th - OHCE Executive Meeting
- ❖ 18th - Shahan OHCE Meeting
- ❖ 24th - Co-Parenting for Resilience (Wagoner County OSU Extension Office)
- ❖ 24th - FCS Day on Campus
- ❖ 25th - OHCE Council Meeting

November

- ❖ 2nd - Starlight OHCE Meeting
- ❖ 8th - OHCE Executive Meeting
- ❖ 14th - In-Towners OHCE Meeting
- ❖ 15th - Shahan OHCE Meeting
- ❖ 10th - Office Closed Veterans Day
- ❖ 23rd-24th - Office Closed Thanksgiving

Wagoner County Groups

In-Towners

2nd Tuesday of Month, 10 a.m.
Yorkshire Village, Wagoner

Shahan

3rd Wednesday of Month, 10 a.m.
Wagoner County Fair Building

Starlight

1st Thursday of month, 7 p.m.
Individual homes



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