

FACES NEWSLETTER

Family and Consumer Science



October 2014

Get the Jump on the Cold and Flu Season

Develop a great defense against those germs

Robin T. Seitz
Extension Agent,
Family & Consumer
Science

Peggie L. Garner
County Extension
Director

The great vacation migration is over ... school is back in session ... and summer is a fading memory. The fall schedule changes make it the perfect time to re-evaluate your health habits and explore measures that will help prepare your family for winter's inevitable cold and flu season. But getting the family on board with germ-preventing practices can be challenging, says Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute® (ACI). As in football, the best defense is a good offense!

First Line of Defense: Clean

Contact Us:

NCCE-Onslow County
4024 Richlands Hwy.
Jacksonville, NC
28540

(910) 455-5873
(910) 455-0977 Fax
<http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu>

North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

Hands

Frequent hand washing is the number-one way to prevent the spread of germs that cause colds and flu.

Hands should be washed *before*:

- Eating or preparing food
- Treating wounds or giving medicine
- Touching a sick or injured person

Hands should be washed *after*:

- Preparing food, especially raw meat or poultry
- Using the bathroom
- Changing a diaper
- Touching an animal
- Blowing your nose
- Coughing or sneezing into your hands
- Treating wounds
- Touching a sick or injured person
- Handling garbage



The key to getting into good hand washing habits is to have the necessary supplies conveniently at hand. Whether you choose to use bar soap or liquid hand soap – just be sure there's one or the other at every sink in the house. And don't assume everyone knows how to do it properly. Posting instructions near every sink might just get their attention. Here's the play-by-play:

- Wet hands with warm, running water.
- Apply soap, rub hands together vigorously to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue scrubbing for 20 seconds or about as long as it takes to sing one verse of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm."
- Rinse well under warm, running water.
- Dry hands thoroughly.

In strategic spots where there's no running water, such as the playroom, the back deck, the garage and the car, stock up on hand sanitizer or hand wipes. Remember, too, that kids learn by example. So make sure all the grown-ups in the house follow the team rules.



Second Line of Defense: Good Cleaning Practices

Use a disinfectant cleaning product to keep germs under control on countertops, cutting boards, dishes and utensils. Don't neglect the turf under your feet. Kitchen floors are a good breeding ground for germs.



Third Line of Defense: Pay Attention to the Sidelines

Light switches, doorknobs, faucet handles, drawer pulls, remote controls and other surfaces that everybody touches are great places for germs to linger and breed. For quick, frequent cleaning, keep pop-up disinfectant wipes within easy reach, particularly in the kitchen and bathroom. Be sure to choose a location that is accessible to adults but not children.

Fourth Line of Defense: Level the Playing Field with a Flu Vaccination

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend getting an annual flu shot to help protect yourself and others from the flu.



Breast Cancer Awareness Month

A statement by HHS Secretary
Kathleen Sebelius

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to rededicate ourselves to lessening the impact of the most common cancer affecting women. Breast cancer is also the second leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States, after lung cancer. All women are at risk for breast cancer. A woman in the United States has a 1 in 8 chance of developing invasive breast cancer in her lifetime. But when breast cancer is caught early and treated, survival rates can be near 100 percent. That is why, it is critical that we ensure access to screening and, when necessary, high-quality treatment for everyone.

With the help of the Affordable Care Act, we are beginning to make progress towards overcoming some of the most significant barriers to access, screening, and quality treatment.

The health care law already requires most health plans to cover certain recommended preventive services at no out-of-pocket cost. This means that women can get free annual mammograms, and those who are at increased risk of developing breast cancer can get genetic counseling at no additional cost. Starting in 2014, a woman cannot be denied coverage because of a pre-existing health condition, like breast cancer. Also, it will be illegal to charge a woman more for the same coverage than a man. Being a woman will no longer be a pre-existing condition! These new protections will go a long way toward improving the health and well being of our nation. This month marks the beginning of the six-month-long open enrollment period for the Health Insurance Marketplaces. Millions of uninsured American women and men now have the opportunity to sign up for quality, affordable health coverage that meets their needs and budget. Coverage begins as early as Jan. 1, 2014.

For the very first time, Americans can go to one place to get accurate information on different plans and make apples-to-apples comparisons on benefits, quality, and cost. Learn about the Marketplaces and the new health insurance options at HealthCare.gov.

In addition to this increased access to screening and care, our nation has made a tremendous investment in biomedical research. As a result, there have been dramatic improvements in breast cancer treatment; with many women and men living long and productive lives well after their treatment has ended. Through ongoing research, the health care law, and the Marketplaces, we will be able to save more lives and improve the quality of life for Americans with breast cancer. During Breast Cancer Awareness month, let's take the time to appreciate the progress we've made against this disease and work even harder to help all those affected by it.



Home Preserving Pumpkins
(Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation)

Pumpkins offer far more than a doorstop at Halloween. This season is also the prime time to find and use sugar or pie pumpkins, the best for cooking and baking.

Pumpkin seeds from any pumpkin can also be dried and roasted. Although you may wish to preserve pumpkin for later use, it is important to know that home canning pumpkin butter or mashed or pureed pumpkin is **NOT** recommended. In fact, home canning is not recommended for any mashed or pureed pumpkin or winter squash. In 1989, the USDA's Extension Service first published the Complete Guide to Home Canning that remains the basis of safe preservation recommendations today. It was last revised in December 2009, if you are using a publication that was produced before that time, we recommend you update it for the safety and health of your preserved products. The only acceptable directions for canning pumpkin and winter squash are for cubed flesh. In fact, the directions for preparing the product include the statement, "Caution: Do not mash or puree." More information can be found here:

http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/uga/pumpkin_butter.html

Always follow current and approved directions when preserving food products at home. If you are interested in saving your pumpkin or other winter squash do it this way:

Canning Cubed Pumpkin

Only pressure canning methods are recommended for canning cubed pumpkin. To be safe, all low acid foods, including pumpkin, must be canned using tested pressure canning processes. Older methods, such as boiling water canning for vegetables, oven canning and open-kettle canning, have been discredited and can be hazardous.

An average of 16 pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 10 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints – an average of 2¼ pounds per quart. Pumpkins and squash should have a hard rind and stringless, mature pulp and should be ideal quality for cooking fresh. Small size pumpkins (sugar or pie varieties) make better products. Wash; remove seeds, cut into 1-inch-wide slices, and peel. Cut flesh into 1-inch cubes. Boil 2 minutes in water. Caution: **Do not mash or puree**. Fill jars with cubes and cover cooking liquid, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process following the USDA recommendations.

Freezing Pumpkins

Freezing is the easiest way to preserve pumpkin, and it yields the best quality product. Select full-colored mature pumpkin with fine

texture (not stringy or dry). Wash, cut into cooking-size sections and remove seeds. Cook until soft in boiling water, in steam, in a pressure cooker, or in an oven. Remove pulp from rind and mash. To cool, place pan-containing pumpkin in cold-water bath and stir occasionally. Pack into rigid containers leaving headspace, and freeze.

Drying Pumpkin and Pumpkin Seeds



Wash, peel, and remove fibers and seeds from pumpkin (or Hubbard squash) flesh. Cut into small, thin strips no more than one-inch wide by 1/8-inch thick. Blanch strips over steam for 3 minutes and dip briefly in cold water to stop the blanching action. There is no need to cool to room temperature prior to drying. Drain excess moisture. Dry the strips in an electric dehydrator until brittle.

Pumpkin also makes excellent dried vegetable leather. Purée cooked pumpkin and strain. Add honey and spices, and then dry on a home food dehydrator tray.

Drying seeds and roasting seeds are two different processes. To dry, carefully wash pumpkin seeds to remove the clinging fibrous pumpkin tissue. Pumpkin seeds can be dried in the sun, in an

electric dehydrator at 115-120°F for 1 to 2 hours, or in an oven on a very low, warm temperature only, for 3 to 4 hours. Stir them frequently to avoid scorching. Dried seeds should not be stored with any moisture left in them.

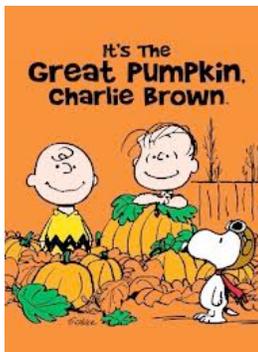
For more on storing dried vegetables, see recommendations here:

http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/dry/pack_store.html

To roast the seeds, take dried pumpkin seeds, toss with oil and/or salt and roast in a preheated oven at 250°F for 10 to 15 minutes.

Pickling Pumpkin

Pumpkin can be used in pickled recipes such as salsas, chutneys, and relishes; however, your recipes for these must be treated as fresh prepared foods and kept refrigerated. We do not have tested recipes and procedures to recommend for safely canning these types of products by either the boiling water or pressure canning method.



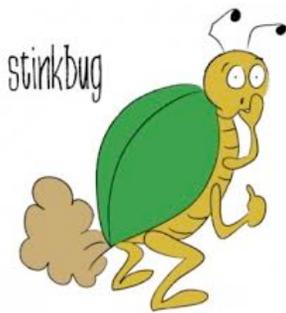
Pumpkin Preserves

Gelled preserves rely on the natural acidity present in most fruits for safe food preservation. Most fruits have natural acids so resulting jams or jellies can be safely canned in a boiling water bath process. Pumpkin, however, is a low acid vegetable and cannot be safely canned in the boiling water bath process. A jam or sweetened preserve would have to have enough sugar and/or added acid to be treated safely without concerns about botulism. A certain acidity level is also required to cause the pectin molecule to form a gel structure. The USDA currently does not have any tested recipes to recommend for safely home canning pumpkin preserves (jams, jellies, conserves, or pumpkin butter) and storing them at room temperature. These pumpkin products must be stored in the refrigerator or freezer and treated the same as fresh pumpkin.

Think Safety

Think safety when planning to preserve pumpkins. Pumpkin is a low acid vegetable and requires special attention to preparation and processing. Use excellent sanitation in handling the fresh or preserved pumpkin. Do not let cut pumpkin sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours

during preparation prior to preserving. We have no properly researched procedures to recommend for home canning of pumpkin butters or pickled pumpkin products such as salsas, chutneys and relishes; recipes you try should be served immediately or stored under refrigeration at all times.



Stink Bugs Causing a Stink

It is that time of year for the brown marmorated stinkbugs to start their fall invasion of homes and commercial buildings. Stink bugs feed on a wide range of fruit trees, ornamentals and field crops. At this time of year, the days grow shorter and the adults decide it's time to call it quits and start looking for places to pass the winter. This triggers the large aggregations that people will find on the siding of their homes or businesses and inevitably some of the bugs make it indoors. This is essentially the same issue we have seen the Asian lady beetle and the kudzu bug (which is still happily hanging out in soybean fields and kudzu).

For people who want to try insecticidal sprays, they can use products containing cyfluthrin, lambda-cyhalothrin, permethrin, tralomethrin and similar pyrethroid products and target the treatments to critical areas around windows, doors and other entry points. However, chemical control is marginal for a variety of reasons including the relatively short residual effect of these chemicals outdoors (they simply don't weather well). Second, it's simply impossible to effectively and safely treat all of the areas where these pests can invade. In some cases, the limitation is the location of the surface. Under the EPA's revised label requirements for the pyrethroids in particular, these products cannot be applied to vertical surfaces located over impervious surfaces (driveways, sidewalks, etc.) where there is a high likelihood of run-off into storm drains.

Using a licensed pest control service may provide slightly better results because those companies have the equipment to treat more surfaces. However, many people have an expectation of no more invaders and that's simply not going to happen. This phenomenon is likely to continue for several weeks particularly as the temperatures drop and more critters head for warmer places.

Indoors, physical removal is still
the best approach.

For more information please
contact your local Extension office

Source: Michael Waldvogel, PhD
Extension Assoc. Professor &
Specialist, Structural & Industrial
Pests

North Carolina State University
Onslow County Center
4024 Richlands Highway
Jacksonville, North Carolina 28540
NON-PROFIT