

CONSUMER MANAGEMENT NEWS

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MAY 2002

Dear Readers:

I'm rushing as fast as I can and I'm still behind. Do you ever feel that way? I've decided not to use that as an excuse; and, somehow, I'm still finding time to squeeze in my walking. Yes, I'm still walking and doing 3 to 4 miles about 5 days a week. I haven't run out of books on tape yet; and, if I do, I plan to start over again. I'm really enjoying the "e word" (exercise)!

Along with my new exercise routine I decided to join Weight Watchers. It seems everyone I talk to is on the WW program and getting good results. The American Dietetics Association recommends WW as a sensible approach to weight control. Well, I'm not one for going to extra meetings. I mean, I get enough meetings at work. The alternative, WW on-line. It's great and easy. WW on-line provides access to your own private journal, recipes, food point calculators, a chat room, and a weekly newsletter and helpful hints. I've only been a member for 8 days and already lost 4 pounds. It's probably the most flexible diet I've been on. Excuse me, they call it a "new life-style". Anyway, I'll keep you informed on my progress.

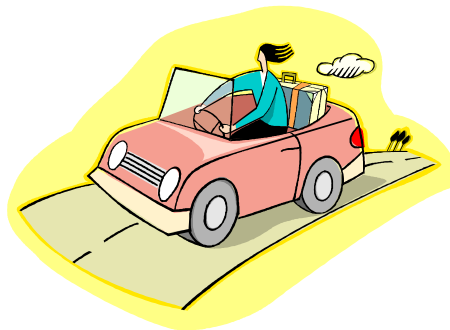
Those wanting to brush up on the new canning recommendations will want to attend my Food Preservation Workshop, Wednesday, June 5, 2002. Look on page 6 for more information. In July, I'll hold another Eating Well...Living Well workshop on summer fruits and vegetables. Look for information in next month's newsletter.

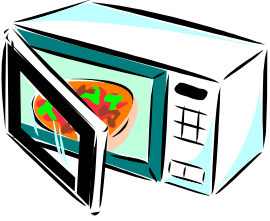
I'm off to San Diego to check in on my parents. Mom's laser surgery for cataracts and macular degeneration was successful, and now she can actually see well enough to drive. She's planning on having the other eye done soon.

Sincerely,

Marciel A. Klenk

Marciel A. Klenk, CFCS
Nutrition, Family & Consumer Science Advisor
Youth Development Advisor





PLASTICS AND MICROWAVE OVENS

Lately some questions have been raised about the safety of plastic containers and plastic wrap used in microwave ovens. Ed Machuga, Ph.D is Consumer Safety Officer with FDA and he had this to say:

“We have no evidence that plastic containers can produce dioxins when heated in microwave ovens. In fact, most, if not all, plastic containers would not even have the correct chemical composition to theoretically form dioxins.”

Very small amounts of dioxins can be present in bleached food-contact paper. However, FDA has worked very closely with the paper manufacturers and all U.S. paper mills are complying with a voluntary specification for residual dioxin that ensures that all food packaged in such products do not pose any safety concern.

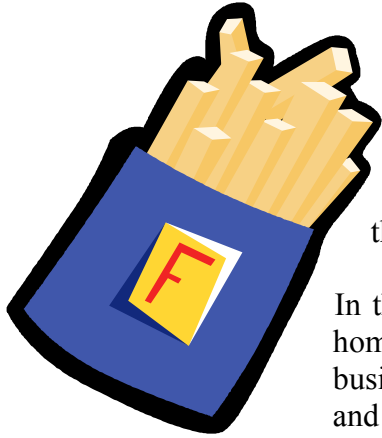
It is true that small amounts of low molecular weight chemicals can migrate to food from plastic containers and plastic film. However, plastic materials used in microwaveable and dual ovenable food containers such as those used to hold TV dinners must undergo premarket approval by FDA before they can be marketed for their intended use. As part of this approval process, manufacturers must provide data showing that dietary exposure to these low molecular weight migrants do not pose a safety problem. Dr. Machuga says that "as far as he knows, dioxin has never been shown to be one of the chemicals that can migrate from plastic containers or films to food."

To minimize the amount of these chemicals migrating from plastic films to fatty foods, FDA recommends that, if these films are used to cover food being heated in a microwave oven, the consumer should try to not let the film touch the actual surface of the food. In addition, consumers should only use food-approved, microwave-safe plastic containers and film wraps for microwave heating.



National Poison Control Hotline

There's a new national toll-free hotline number that will allow you to reach a poison control center from anywhere in the United States...**1-800-222-1222**. Keep this number handy; you never know when you will need it.



SIZE MATTERS

Take a walk downtown, turn on the TV, even visit a local elementary school and you will notice what nutrition experts are saying, "obesity in the US has reached epidemic proportions." Many experts feel one contributing factor is the portion size of the meals eaten away from home.

In the 1970s, US residents spent 34% of their food budget on meals away from home and by the 90's that figure rose to 47%. Historians who follow the fast food business tell us portion sizes began to increase around this same time. The "biggie and super-size" portions really took off in the 80s and 90s.

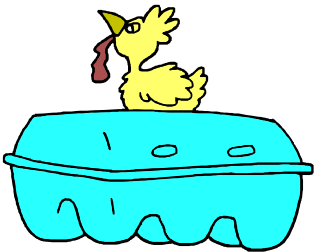
These new, big portions far exceeded the portion sizes on the Food Guide Pyramid and on US food portion labels. And just how big did these big portions sizes get? When compared to the USDA standard portion size, some cookie products were 700% larger. Bagels and muffins got bigger along with pasta servings, steaks and burgers. Product sizes increased from between 195% to 480%.

The fast food industry began the "super-sizing" in order to "retain and expand market share". They say profits score as they increased size. Consumers view the "supersizing" as a real bargain and find them irresistible often forgetting they also add extra calories. Consumers have begun to accept these bigger sizes as standard that many new cars come with the larger cup holders.

While the experts agree the "supersizing of America" is only one of the factors contributing to the obesity epidemic, it is one that individuals have control over.

Reference: Young LR, Nestle M. Big Portions, Big People, [Nutrition CloseUp](#) Vol.19 - Number 1. Spring 2002.

CARDBOARD OR STYROFOAM?



Which do you prefer to buy, supermarket eggs that come in styrofoam or the ones in cardboard cartons. Does it really make a difference? The experts say it does. According to the journal, Poultry Science, cardboard is better. While the packaging may not change the way the eggs taste or change their cholesterol levels, it does make a difference in getting them home without cracking. Researchers at Clemson University in South Carolina compared the two types of packaging. The cardboard had a 4.6 percent breakage rate, while the styrofoam had a breakage rate of 12.6 percent.

Source: poultrydigest@wattnet.com

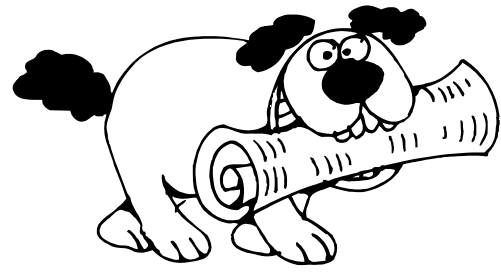
SERVING SIZE EXPLAINED

Do you know what the standard size serving of pasta, nuts or cheese is? To make it more understandable, USDA nutritionists have come up with some comparisons to help those of us who are more visual learners. I think you will find the following comparisons helpful.

Standard Serving Sizes

Food	Serving	Looks Like
Chopped Vegetables	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ baseball or rounded handful for average adult
Raw Leafy Vegetables (such as lettuce)	1 cup	1 baseball or fist of an average adult
Fresh Fruit	1 medium piece	1 baseball
Dried Fruit	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped	$\frac{1}{2}$ baseball or rounded handful for average adult
Dried Fruit	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	1 golf ball or scant handful for average adult
Pasta, Rice Cooked cereal	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ baseball or rounded handful for average adult
Ready-to-Eat Cereal	1 oz. which varies from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups (check label)	
Meat, Poultry, Seafood	3 oz. (boneless cooked weight from 4 oz raw)	Deck of cards
Dried Beans	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked	$\frac{1}{2}$ baseball or rounded handful for average adult
Nuts	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	Level handful for average adult
Cheese	$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. (2 oz. if processed cheese)	1 oz. looks like 4 dice

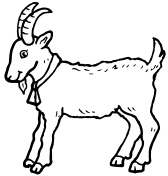




IN THE NEWS

Foodborne Illness Drops...The USDA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report declines in the incident of food poisoning and bacteria found on meat and poultry is down 21% from 1996 to 2001. Officials say this is a result of strict hazard-control systems. *Source: [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com). April 19, 2002.*

CA Nuts Get Glazed...Diamond of California introduces two new glazed nut flavors, Apple Cinnamon Glazed Walnuts and Pecan Pie Glazed Pecans retailing for about \$3.49 per 8-ounce bag. *Source: [Press Release](#), Diamond of California, April 19, 2002.*



Goat on the Menu...Southern farmers in need of diversifying are exchanging fields of cotton for fields of meat goats. Large numbers of immigrants from goat-eating regions have caused the demand for goat meat to rise over the past ten years. Goat is naturally low in fat and higher in protein than chicken. Texas is the number one producer of goat-meat followed by Tennessee and Georgia. *Source: [USATODAY.com](http://www.usatoday.com): [Money](#). April 22, 2002.*

Cranberries Yield New Health Benefits...Recent research studies confirm that the cranberry contains the most potent antioxidants of all fruits studied so far. In addition, they possess anticancer properties, inhibit the growth of common foodborne pathogens in the gut and contain antibacterial properties to aid in the prevention of urinary tract infections. *Source: [Press Release](#), The Cranberry Institute. April 22, 2002.*

Find the Sizzle...Can't find your favorite hot sauce? Try [FireGirl.com](http://www.FireGirl.com) on the web. They carry 800 different hot sauces and will ship to your door. *Source: [MaineToday.com](http://www.MaineToday.com). April 19, 2002.*



Consumer Study...A new Market Research Poll shows most consumers shop for groceries weekly and care about getting the most for their money. Forty-one percent say they spend 31 to 60 minutes preparing the dinner meal and that their hectic schedules make flexible shopping hours like the 24-7 stores an important factor in their choice of stores. Frequent shopper programs, store brands, coupons and sales all play an important role in food choices. *Source: [Press Release](#), eBrain Market Research. April 9, 2002.*



"DO IT YOURSELF HEALTH"

Americans are focused on "do-it-yourself" health products. This new trend is estimated to be a \$40 billion opportunity for retailers. Just last year 78% of supermarket consumers used fortified foods to help maintain their health. One consumer study concluded that:

- 86 % used over-the-counter medications
- 74% of consumers use dietary supplements
- 55% avoided additives/preservatives
- 37% used organic foods
- 35% used herbal supplements
- 20% used homeopathic remedies

Americans see health maintenance/prevention as the new number one health goal, followed by weight reduction, more exercise, stress reduction and proper sleep. More and more, Americans are now diagnosing and treating common conditions on their own. The majority of Americans, 96%, say they feel confident and 56% say they feel very confident in doing so.

Consumers are also making food purchases with health concerns in mind. It is estimated that 75% of supermarket shoppers try to lower the risk of a condition through food purchases and 58% are trying to manage or treat an existing condition. Just last year, functional food sales totaled \$17.4 billion.

America's health concerns are shifting. Eyesight, heart disease, cancer, cholesterol and high blood pressure now top Americans' list of health concerns. Next on the list are colon cancer and stress and its relation to blood pressure.

Source: The Soy Connection, Vol. 10, No. 2, Spring, 2002.

FOOD PRESERVATION WORKSHOP

Find the latest information on home canning, freezing, and drying at UCCE's Food Preservation workshop, Wednesday, June 5, 2002, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the UCCE Meeting Room, 1710 Soscol Avenue, Napa. Participants will receive free recipes, learn up-to-date food preservation techniques that save time and taste a variety of home preserved foods. The workshop is free, but reservations are suggested. Phone the UCCE Office at 253-4221 to reserve a space.

