

Family and Community Health “Connections” in Lampasas County

Let Turkey Improve Your Mood—Naturally!



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Regular sleep, exercise and proper diet can make an enormous difference both physically and mentally. Good athletes benefit most from proper training, adequate rest and a high-protein, high-carbohydrate diet just before a big event. This type of meal provides extra oxygen to the bloodstream, which in turn supplies the heart, brain and lungs. A similar principle applies to maintaining energy and stamina throughout the day for regular activities. A well-balanced diet that is high in protein and carbohydrates helps the body produce the energy that it needs to perform at its highest level.

This same diet is also critical for good mental health. During the winter months, shorter day lengths and cold weather may keep us cooped up inside. Cabin fever may set in. Understanding how food affects mood may help you eat your way to a better attitude.

Protein and carbohydrates stimulate production of amino acids in the brain. By eating certain foods, we can control how we feel throughout the day. Amino acids dictate how the body responds to stress, hunger and other stimuli. For example, carbohydrates trigger the production of serotonin, which is known to elevate moods and promote calmness.

Knowing how different foods cause the body to produce certain amino acids can be a useful way to plan a nutritious, low-fat, tasty meal. Enjoying a turkey sandwich before a meeting is much more likely to boost alertness than a plain bagel or a candy bar. Adding chopped turkey to a lunchtime salad will set the proper mind-frame for a productive afternoon at the office or in school.

A diet high in protein and carbohydrates and low in simple sugars and fat is one that will lead to a healthy life—both physically and mentally. All bodies react to food differently, so it may take experimentation and time to figure out the best balance. That, however, is worth the thought to bring about healthy results.

Start experimenting with turkey: substitute turkey for higher fat meats in other recipes that combine protein and carbohydrates to eat your way to better physical and mental health.

Source: National Turkey Federation



Decorating with Plants!

The Holidays are here, and with all the entertaining and hosting going on, it's fun to use some plants from the landscape to decorate for Thanksgiving and bring in Christmas cheer. There are many common evergreen plants that can be used to brighten up the home, such as holly, juniper, Japanese yew, and euonymus. Just prune off small branches to use for centerpieces or arrange on a fireplace mantle. As long as pruning is done carefully and does not take away too much of the canopy of the shrub, pruning this time of year won't hurt the plant.

A beautiful homemade wreath can be created from these plants as well, simply use a coat hanger and bend it into a circle. Use wire to secure cuttings all around it, then take it outside and spray it down with a spray adhesive - this will keep it from turning brown and falling apart too quickly. Decorate with ornaments or ribbon and hang on the front door.

Mistletoe is also readily available this time of year, and while it's considered a pest because it's parasitic to the host tree, it's a very traditional decoration. Simply take a small branch of mistletoe and tie a ribbon on the stem, or make a mistletoe ball by using a sphere of florist foam and sticking in leaves all around it. Use a ribbon to hang in a doorway.

Rosemary is a great evergreen herb that can be utilized during the holiday season as well. Cuttings smell great and can be used along with the other evergreen cuttings, or a small potted rosemary plant can be pruned into the shape of a Christmas tree and decorated with small ornaments.

One fun way to spark up conversation at a holiday party is to incorporate edible flowers into the menu. Several types of common cool-season flowers are safe to eat and can add color and interest to food, such as pansies, Johnny jump-ups, chrysanthemums, roses, and dianthus. Use the flowers in salads, drinks, or use to decorate cookies and pastries. Not all plants are safe to eat though, so be cautious and make sure it's an edible species and that no pesticides have been applied.

Source: Allison Watkins, CEA-Horticulture

A Safe Holiday Feast



FOOD SAFETY is IMPORTANT!

Follow these simple rules to ensure a **SAFE** holiday feast.

SHOPPING for your FEAST



Make room for your feast in the fridge and freezer.

Keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat and poultry, and keep all food away from household chemicals in your shopping cart and in bags.

Refrigerate perishable foods as soon as you get them home from the store.

ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION to "SELL BY" & "USE BY" DATES.

BUY A FOOD THERMOMETER!

PREPARING your FEAST



WASH HANDS, SURFACES & UTENSILS *between* EACH FOOD-PREP STEP.

THAW FORMULA: 4 LBS. PER 24 HOURS

Thaw frozen turkey in a refrigerator in its original packaging. Stuff turkey just prior to cooking.

COOK TURKEY BREAST & STUFFING to **165°F**

Temperature is the only indicator that food is cooked for quality and safety. Turkey thighs are best at 175°F.

Keep hot foods above 140°F. Refrigerate all cold foods until ready to serve (40°F).

Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables just before using or consuming unless labeled "ready-to-eat" or "pre-washed."

EATING your LEFTOVERS



Leftovers cool more quickly in shallow containers. Bring gravy to a boil before re-serving.

REHEAT LEFTOVERS to **165°F**

EAT or FREEZE LEFTOVERS within **3 to 4 DAYS.**

EAT or FREEZE GRAVY within **2 DAYS.**

FIND MORE INFO at **HOLIDAYFOODSAFETY.ORG** and **EATTURKEY.COM**



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Enhance Taste without Calories!

Herbs grow well in North Texas even for inexperienced gardeners. The cool growing season begins in October and continues until April, and sometimes May. **Using the herbs you have grown to enhance the taste of food without adding calories offers positive benefits for the entire family.** Herbs that grow in cool weather include: Cilantro, Parsley, Dill, Fennel, Lemon balm

Fresh herbs are preferred by chefs for warm and cool dishes. If you are not sure how much of an herb to use, begin with a small amount and add more to your taste preferences.

Harvest herbs mid-morning and wash thoroughly. Wrap in damp paper towels and store in refrigerator until ready to use.

To prepare herbs, remove leaves from stems. Wash thoroughly and pat dry. For herbs on woody stems, grab the top of the stem with one hand and with the other hand move down the stem opposite the direction of growth to remove leaves. Soft-stemmed herbs can be removed from individually from stem or by pulling in the direction of growth.

Cool-season herbs are delicate and will lose flavor quickly when cooked. Therefore, it is best to add them at the end of cooking. Cool-season herbs may also be eaten fresh. Chop or mince the herbs before using to release their flavor. Here are a few common uses for cool season herbs:

- Cilantro - topping for tacos and taco salad or added to guacamole. Cilantro is a popular ingredient in Chinese and Thai cooking.
- Parsley may be added to flavor soups and cooked vegetables or served fresh. A mixture of chopped parsley and garlic adds flavor to grilled steak, fish or chicken. A combination of herbs including parsley add taste and texture to homemade salad dressings.
- Dill is often used to season cooked vegetables, in salad dressing and mixed with yogurt and lemon for flavorful sauce for fish or chicken.
- Fennel can be used in place of or in addition to dill. However, not everyone likes the licorice or anise-like flavor of fennel.
- Lemon balm is often steeped in hot water with tea leaves or added to the preparation of iced tea. To use the leaves, bruise them with a spoon while stirring to release their flavor. A bit of chopped lemon balm complements many fruits, including honeydew, cantaloupe, pineapple, apples and pears.

Source: <http://txmg.org/denton/files/2016/09/coolweather-herbs.pdf>

More
Herbs
Less Salt
Day!



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WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
LAMPASAS.AGRILIFE.ORG



*This creamy– but creamless– recipe gets great
flavor from thyme and rosemary!*

Healthy Potato Gratin with Herbs

1 1/2 tablespoons Extra Virgin Olive Oil, plus more for cake pan
1 Large shallot, minced (about 1/3 cup)
1 1/2 teaspoon chopped thyme
1/2 teaspoon chopped rosemary
2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
2 pounds medium red potatoes, very thinly sliced
Freshly ground pepper
Salt

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees and oil an 8-inch round cake pan, preferably of dark metal. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper and oil the paper.

In a medium saucepan, heat the 1 1/2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the shallot and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the thyme and rosemary and cook for 1 minute. Add the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Cook over moderately high heat until reduced to 3/4 cup, about 10 minutes.

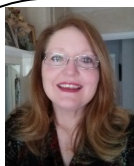
Arrange an overlapping layer of potato slices in the cake pan. Season lightly with salt and pepper and spoon a small amount of the reduced broth on top. Repeat the layering with the remaining potatoes and reduced broth, seasoning each layer lightly. Pour any remaining broth on top. Cover the pan with a sheet of oiled parchment paper and then a sheet of foil.

Bake the gratin in the center of the oven until the potatoes are very tender, about 1 hour. Remove the foil and paper and bake until the top is dry, about 10 minutes longer.

Turn the broiler on. Remove the gratin from the oven and let rest for 5 minutes. Invert the gratin onto a heatproof plate. Carefully remove the parchment round. Broil the gratin 6 inches from the heat until the surface is lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Cut into wedges and serve. Servings: 8

Nutrition Facts: 109 calories, 2.8 g fat, 2 g fiber, 19 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein.

Source: <https://www.foodandwine.com/recipes/healthy-potato-gratin-with-herbs>



Lampasas County News

Become a Master Wellness volunteer. This includes 40 hours of training in health and wellness education. In return volunteers agree to give back 40 hours to the community. Two in-person sessions will be held at the county Extension office on Jan. 22 and Feb. 10. the rest of the training will be conducted online in your home or at the office.

Be Well Live Well—a free Extension program series to be held at two locations. The series promotes independence through healthy aging. Manor at Hancock Park Apartments, 108 EE Ohnmeiss, begins Tuesday, Nov. 6 for 3 Tuesdays and 2 Fridays in a row. And Pecan Creek Apartments Community Room, 205 Riverview Drive will be on 5 consecutive Mondays beginning Nov. 19. Sessions are: 1. Be independent: Eat Well 2. Be Able: Read the Label 3. Be Safe: Eat Safe 4. Be Creative: Plan Meals 5 Be Fit: Move More. Call Karen to RSVP

Family and Community Health

*“Connections” is provided by the following
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