

# Family and Community Health “Connections” in Runnels County

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## Sesame is the newest major allergen in the U.S.

Sesame is the newest major allergen in the U.S. On April 23, 2021, the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research (FASTER) Act was signed into law, declaring sesame as the 9th major food allergen recognized by the U.S., effective January 1, 2023. Sesame has been a concern in the U.S. for many years but was not included in the original 2004 allergen food labeling law because it was unclear how many Americans were allergic to sesame. Since then, it's estimated that more than one million Americans are allergic to sesame.

Sesame and sesame containing foods have become popular in American diets. For example, hummus—which contains sesame in the form of tahini—is present on 13.7% of U.S. restaurant menus, and restaurants that use hummus as a central ingredient, such as Roti, Cava, and Hummus & Pita Co., are popular in many American cities.

Increased sesame exposure, regulatory requirements, and overall consumer desire for food transparency will increase the need for restaurants to have sesame allergen and ingredient information on-hand and update allergen training. Five states already require restaurant allergen disclosure or training and many restaurants provide allergen information voluntarily.

Sesame is popular for its deep savory flavor and is found in many common foods including sesame seeds, sesame oil, breads, bread crumbs, baked goods, sauces, soups, dipping sauces, and dressings. Sesame can cause mild to life-threatening allergic reactions like many food allergens. To avoid an allergic reaction people with a sesame allergy must avoid sesame and sesame products.

Sesame goes by many different names. Look for these food names as sesame containing ingredients:

benne (benne seed, benniseed)	gingelly (gingelly oil)	gomasio (sesame salt)
Halvah	sesame seed	sesame flour
sesame oil	sesame paste	sesamol
sesamum indicum	sesmolina	sim sim
Tahini	tehina	

Look closely at sesame oil. Studies show that most people with specific food protein allergies can safely eat highly refined oils made from those foods (examples include highly refined peanut and soybean oil). However, sesame oil is not highly refined, which means people who are allergic to sesame should avoid it.

Source: ServSafe—<https://www.foodsafetyfocus.com>

## *Tips to Manage Stress Eating*

Have you ever felt like eating a piece of chocolate cake or a bag of chips after a stressful day at work? If so, you're not alone. Studies show that stressful events activate systems associated with metabolism, cognition and reward.

What does this mean for your waistline? It means that the candy bar you are reaching for after a stressful event (or a series of stressful events) may be driven by a combination of physiological and psychological factors.

### **How does stress affect your appetite?**

Studies show that women with high chronic stress levels tend to engage in emotional eating. In addition to psychological responses to stress, there may also be physiological responses. During a stressful event, the body releases cortisol, a hormone that helps the body protect itself. However, if cortisol levels are elevated for a prolonged period of time, such as during repeated and constant stressors, this can lead to increased food consumption, fat storage and weight gain.

### **Does timing matter?**

According to a study from the Johns Hopkins Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, timing may play a role in appetite and gut hormone responses to meal and stress challenges. (A challenge is used in research studies to see how people react to different foods or stress factors.) This study showed that the "afternoon/evening may be a high-risk period for overeating, particularly when paired with stress exposure, and for those with binge eating." This means that your commute home or evening meal may be a time period when you have a greater likelihood to eat more than you should.

To help curb this increased chance, pay attention to snacking habits after a long day of work to help prevent weight gain. Try preparing snacks in advance to control portion size or even using a food journal to track what you eat, how much of it and when.

### **How can you manage stress eating?**

1. Practice mindful eating. Know that your craving may be a result of a stressful event, and then ask yourself, are you truly hungry? Wait a few minutes before eating.
2. Find healthier options. If you still feel the need for a snack, consider a lower-calorie, lower-fat option than what you may have previously chosen. Here are some healthy snacks to enjoy:

Something sweet: Cut up an apple and spread some nut butter on it. The combination of carbohydrates, protein and healthy fat should help curb your appetite and satisfy your need for a sweet.

Something savory: Consider adding hummus to deviled eggs for a lower-calorie, high-protein snack option.

3. Watch portion size. Instead of taking the whole box with you, put a snack-size amount on a plate. Check the package to see what one serving size is, and try to stick to that.

It's always a good idea to consult your doctor or a dietitian when you make changes to your diet.

Source: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org>

There's no doubt that power outages occur all over the state of Texas. Rather it's from a natural disaster, inclement weather or accidental/coincidental, it's necessary to keep our food safe.

## Sensory Gardens

Sensory gardens are designed specifically to center around the visitors' five senses as they explore plants (Figure 1). A sensory themed garden might have herbs that can be smelled or eaten, plants of various textures (such as lambs' ears or African violets) that can be touched and many different colors and sizes of flowers for a visually appealing space. A sensory garden could also have a noise element like flowing water or wind chimes. This type of sensory garden space is meant to encourage both active and passive engagement within the garden and create a sense of calmness within its visitors.



Figure 1: Sensory garden at The Botanic Garden at Oklahoma State University (photo by David Hillock)

Source: <https://extension.okstate.edu>



### KEEP YOUR FOOD SAFE DURING POWER OUTAGES

-  Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
-  A refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if the door is kept closed.
-  A full freezer will hold its temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if half-full).
-  If the power has been out more than 4 hours, throw out refrigerated foods—including meat, poultry, fish, eggs and milk.
-  Once power is restored, use appliance thermometers to keep the freezer at 0 °F or below, and the refrigerator at 40 °F or below.
-  Use dry ice or freeze containers of water and gel packs to help keep food cold if the power goes out.

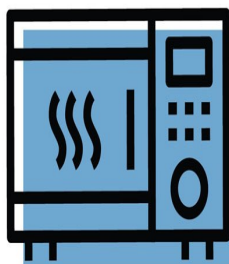
**WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.**



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The microwave is a very handy household appliance, but it's important to remember to cook and reheat foods properly in the microwave based on the wattage and cooking and standing times.

## PREVENT FOOD POISONING



- Know** your microwave's wattage.
- Check** for wattage inside the door, in the owner's manual, or on the manufacturer's website. Lower wattage means longer cooking time.
- Follow** recommended cooking and standing times to allow for additional cooking after microwaving stops.
- When reheating**, use a food thermometer to make sure food reaches an internal temperature of 165°F.



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## Sheet Pan Chicken Tostadas

### Ingredients:

12 Yellow Corn Tortillas	3 Tablespoons Olive Oil
14 ounces canned refried black beans	1 pound chicken breast, shredded
1 cup low fat cheddar cheese, shredded	1/3 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
1/4 cup red onion, diced	1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
12 cherry tomatoes, chopped	

### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Brush both sides of the tortillas with oil and place on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 8-10 minutes, or just until they start firming. Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Flip the tortillas over and spread each one with refried beans and top with chicken and cheese. Return the tostadas to the oven and bake for an additional 5 to 6 minutes or until the beans and chicken are heated through and the cheese is melted. Top each tostada with a teaspoon of nonfat plain Greek yogurt, diced onion, diced cherry tomato and cilantro.

Source: <https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu>



Nutrition Facts	
2 Tostadas servings per container	
Serving size (258g)	
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>340</b>
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	15%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 60mg	20%
Sodium 540mg	23%
Total Carbohydrate 29g	11%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 28g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 123mg	10%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 591mg	15%

\*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,500 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

## Runnels County News

**Walk Across Texas! is  
coming back this fall! Stay  
tuned for more information!**



Family and Community Health "Connections"  
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