

Family and Community Health “Connections” in Runnels County

Have a Healthy Holiday Season

Brighten the holidays by making your health and safety a priority. Take steps to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy—and ready to enjoy the holidays.

Volume 10, Issue 12

December 2023

Healthy Holidays in 1-2-3

Even in a few minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity can deliver some health Benefits and count towards reaching the following recommendations-



Preschool-Aged Children (3-5 years)

Physical Activity every day throughout the day.

Active play through a variety of enjoyable physical activities.



Children and Adolescents (6-17 years)

60 minutes (1 hour) or more of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity daily.

3 days a week:

- ⇒ Vigorous Activity such as running or soccer
- ⇒ Activity that strengthens muscles such as climbing or push ups
- ⇒ Activity that strengthens bones such as gymnastics or jumping rope



Adults (18-64 years)

At least 159 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity such as brisk walking.

At least 2 days a week of activities that strengthen muscles.



Older Adults (65 or Older)

At least 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity such as brisk walking.

At least 2 days a week of activities that strengthen muscles.

Activities to improve balance such as standing on one foot.



Adults with Chronic Conditions and Disabilities

Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical a week and get at least 2 days a week or muscle-strengthening activities that include all major muscle groups.



Pregnant and Postpartum Women

Get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity a week such as brisk walking during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Inside this issue:

Healthy Holidays in 1-2-3	1
Holiday Fast Food Safety with Multi-Cookers, Slow Cookers and Immersion Wands	2
Healthy Holiday Travel	2
Driving Safety During the	2
Family Fun Holiday Activities	3
County News	4
Slow Cooker Potato Soup Recipe	4



When shopping walk a few laps around the shopping center before going into any stores, take the stair every opportunity, park farther away and walk briskly to your destination, walk with a group of friends and take a walk instead of a drive to see holiday lights.

Source: CDC.Gov
Physical Activity for Different Groups

Holiday Fast Food Safety with Multi-Cookers, Slow Cookers and Immersion Wands !

Holiday food preparation can be eased with the use of a slow cooker. This useful kitchen appliance can make meal prep more convenient and save families time later. Opening the front door on a cold winter evening and being greeted by the inviting smells of beef stew or chicken noodle soup wafting from a slow cooker can make one smile. The flexibility of a slow cooker takes less electricity to use and helps ease a rushed meal.

Tips for Food Safety:

- ⇒ Make sure your slow cooker is safe with beginning with a clean cooker, utensils and work area. Also, wash hands before and after food preparation.
- ⇒ Keep perishable foods refrigerated until preparation time. If you cut up meat and vegetables in advance, store them separately in the refrigerator. Constant refrigeration assures that bacteria "which multiplies rapidly at room temperature" do not get a "head start" during the first few hours of cooking.
- ⇒ Always thaw meat or poultry before placing into placing in the slow cooker safely in the refrigerator.
- ⇒ Use the right amount of ingredients.
- ⇒ Make sure the cooker is plugged in and turned on.
- ⇒ Keep lid in place.




MULTI-COOKERS, SLOW COOKERS, AND IMMERSION WAND FOOD SAFETY

Multi-cookers, slow cookers and immersion wands are convenient ways to prepare food. Care should be taken to avoid temperature abuse (holding food between 41°F - 135°F for 4 hours or more) which can lead to foodborne illness. Use a thermometer to ensure safe cooking temperatures have been reached. Always wash hands, cooking equipment and food preparation areas before starting. Manufacturer's instructions should always be followed for safe use.

Multi-cookers

This multi-functional device cooks food at high and low temperatures

- Always use a thermometer to make sure food has reached a safe temperature.
- Wash hands, appliances, utensils and preparation areas before starting to cook.
- Avoid temperature abuse, be careful when using the delay feature, foods left at room temperature are at risk of bacteria multiplying rapidly and causing foodborne illness.
- Refrigerate or freeze leftovers immediately and do not store food in the pot.

Immersion wands

Cooks food at a low temperature for an extended period of time

- Do not fill pot above maximum fill line.
- Use plain water only.
- Seal bagged food before immersing in water.
- Press air from bag so it stays immersed.
- Follow the minimum and maximum cook-time instructions that come with your device. If immunocompromised choose higher temperature range.
- If food will not be eaten immediately cool by plunging into ice water to reduce the temperature quickly, then refrigerate or freeze.

Slow cookers

Cooks food at a low temperature approximately 170°F-280°F

- Pre-heat cooker.
- Always thaw meat and poultry first.
- Add liquid, this is necessary to create the steam needed to cook the food.
- Do not cook on warm which is designed to keep already hot foods hot.
- Keep the lid on to maintain temperature.
- Check food with a thermometer before eating to make sure it has reached a safe temperature.



NC STATE
EXTENSION

For more information contact ncsa@safeplates@ncsu.edu
Updated August 19, 2020

Top Tips for Healthy Holiday Travel!

Holiday travel can sometimes be stressful: try these useful tips for a safe, fun and healthy trip!

1. Quench your thirst with water and no-or low-calorie drinks instead of sugary drinks.
2. When stopping at a rest stop or convenience store at least take a 10 minute walk, do a few jumping jacks to get the required daily activity. Also, be aware of your surroundings.
3. Choose healthy snacks by bringing fruit, nuts to keep your body and your wallet happy.
4. Traveling on a plane? Walk to your gate, when possible, instead of taking a tram or shuttle. Some airports have signs that tell you how far it is to walk to your gate.



Driving Safely During the Holiday Season!

In the United States, motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for people age 1-54, and about 36,100 people were killed in crashes in 2019. Early estimates indicate that crash deaths increased to 38,680 in 2020-a 7% increase in deaths, despite people driving less.

Motor vehicle crash deaths and injuries can be prevented.

- a) Always buckle up.
- b) Drive at safe speeds.
- c) Never drive impaired.

Car Seats and Booster Seats provide protection for infants and children in a crash, yet car crashes are a leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 13. They is why it is so important to choose and use the right car seat correctly every time your child is in the car.

Safety Facts: 325 Children Under 5 saved by car seats in one year.

Family Fun Holiday Activities!

The holiday are a special time families: seeing a child's face light up at a display of holiday lights. The delicious smell of cookies. Holiday activities and traditions that connect with every generation. Opening gifts and seeing faces of joy and gratitude. Stay connected with your family and try these ideas!



Texas A&M AgriLife

Name: Kandice Everitt
Title: CEA-FCH
Address: 608 Sealy Ave
Ballinger, TX 76821
Phone: 325-365-2219
E-mail:

kandice.everitt@ag.tamu.edu

County Website:
runnels.agrilife.org

Facebook:
[@runnelscountyfch](https://www.facebook.com/runnelscountyfch)

Family and Community Health **"Connections"**
is provided by the following
AgriLife Extension

Family and Community Health Agents:

Courtney Parrott, Brown County
Kailey Roberts, Burnet County
Chanie Schaffner, Coleman County
Milissa Wright, Concho Valley
Kelli Maberry, Jones County

Karen DeZarn, Lampasas County
Whitney Whitworth, Llano County
Carrie Ross, McCulloch County
Staci Winders, Nolan County

Kandice Everitt, Runnels County
McKinley Crownover, San Saba County
Kim Miles, Taylor County

Courtney Redman, Tom Green County
Stacy Drury, D7 Regional Program Leader
Lorena Iverson, BLT Regional Project Specialist

County News

The Runnels County Extension Office will be closed December 22-25 in observance of the Christmas holiday. We will also be closed January 1, 2024 in observance of New Years Day.

Slow Cooker Potato Soup

Comfort soup for the family

1 (30 oz) bag frozen hash-brown potatoes
2 cans chicken broth
1 can cream of chicken soup
1/2 cup onion
1/3 tsp black pepper
1 package cream cheese (softened)
Garnish: minced green onion, cheddar, shredded and bacon



1. Place frozen hash browns, chicken broth, cream of chicken soup, chopped onions, and black pepper in a slow cooker.
2. Cover the pot and turn the heat on low. Cook for 5 hours.
3. Add 8 ounce of the softened cream cheese. Cook for an additional 30 minutes and stir now and then until combined.
4. Optional: but highly suggested to top with shredded cheddar, bacon strips, and minced onion.

ENJOY!

Source: tasty.co/recipe/slow-cooker-potato-soup

