



In Touch, In Tune

www.extension.purdue.edu/dearborn



December, 2022

Dear Friends,

If you feel the world is wildly spinning, you're normal. This phrase is the note on a weekly calendar for next week. How are you managing stress? You might read In Touch, In Tune, which gives you information or opportunities to practice activities like walking to slow your world down in December.

In Touch, In Tune has information to help you navigate the holidays. May your holidays be filled with time to relax, connect with family and friends, enjoy the sights and sounds of the holidays, and consume the foods and drinks of the holidays mindfully! Merry Christmas and a Blessed 2023 to you and your family!

Best Regards,
Marcia Parcell
Extension Educator, Health and Human Sciences

DATES TO REMEMBER

- January 3—Organizing In The New Year, 1:00pm, Pregnancy Care Center, Lawrenceburg.
- January 17—Homemade Baby Food, 1:00pm, Pregnancy Care Center, Lawrenceburg.
- January (Date To Be Determine)—Cooking 101 With Purdue Extension.
- February 1, 8, 15 & 22—Do you have concerns about falling? The award winning program, *A Matter Of Balance*, might be for you. Wednesday 10:00-12:00, North Dearborn Library, RSVP early to North Dearborn Public Library at 812-637-0777, space is limited.
- February 6—In The Kitchen-Healthy Desserts, 6:00-7:00pm, North Dearborn Public Library.
- February 9—Health and Human Sciences Advisory meeting, 10:00am, Extension Office meeting room.
- March 1, 8, 15 & 22—Do you have concerns about falling? The award winning program, *A Matter Of Balance*, might be for you. Wednesday 10:00-12:00, North Dearborn Library, RSVP early to North Dearborn Public Library at 812-637-0777, space is limited.

WINTER WALKIN'

Start your New Year's resolution early this year by joining the Aurora Public Library and Dillsboro Public Library on their meeting date ready to walk!

Aurora: Fridays at 8:30am
Dillsboro: Wednesday at 8:30am



Before the clock strikes midnight on December 31st be sure to lift your left leg. That way you will start off the new year on the right foot.

How many Seconds are in a year? 12! January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd, April 2nd, May 2nd, June 2nd, July 2nd, August 2nd, September 2nd, October 2nd, November 2nd, December 2nd.

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HOW TO PET PROOF YOUR HOME WHEN DECKING THE HALLS

The holiday season is a special time of year. Many factors combine to make the holiday season so unique and festive, and that includes all the effort people put into decorating their homes.



Much thought is given to holiday lighting arrangements and which tree to buy, but it's equally important to consider pets when decorating. Many common household pets are naturally curious, and that curiosity can make it difficult to decorate safely come the holiday season. But various pet-proofing strategies can ensure holiday decorations and displays aren't compromised by four-legged friends this season.

- Secure the Christmas tree. Much like other residents of the home, pets may be mesmerized by a glowing Christmas tree. Pets may sniff around the tree or investigate it closely, which can increase the chances that it tips over. That poses a significant safety hazard and underscores the importance of using a sturdy stand. Fastening the tree to a wall, much like one might do with a television that isn't mounted, adds a further layer of protection from tip-overs.
- Block off the base of a live tree. Live trees need water to stay green and keep their needles throughout the season. That water could prove enticing to thirsty pets. Drinking water from a tree stand could increase the risk of the tree tipping over and the water could upset the stomach of pets if the tree was treated with pesticides prior to being brought home. When decorating with a live tree, make sure the base of the tree where the water will be is blocked off. A small fence around the tree could keep curious pets away. The room where the tree is located should be locked or inaccessible when pets are home alone.
- Inspect and conceal light wires. Wires can become frayed over time, and that could pique pets' curiosity. Lighting wires should always be inspected prior to decorating and frayed or damaged wires should be thrown away, even if it means replacing lights. If wires are still sturdy, conceal them along the base of the wall using a cable concealer, which prevents pets from chewing on them.
- Avoid lighting candles. Candles should not be lit in homes with pets. Even candles on shelves that are seemingly beyond pets' reach can be hazardous, as pets, especially cats, have a way of accessing spaces they seemingly shouldn't be able to reach. Use electric candles in lieu of traditional ones.
- Speak to a vet about seasonal plants and flowers before bringing them into the home. Pet owners can speak with their veterinarians before bringing poinsettias, holly and other seasonal plants and flowers into their homes. Some pets could suffer allergic reactions if they eat certain seasonal plants, so it's best to err on the side of caution and speak to a vet before including live plants and flowers in decorative displays.

Decorating is part of the holiday season. Pet owners must exercise an extra bit of caution to keep their pets and homes safe when decorating during this special time of year.

Source: Over 50, registerpublications.com

TIPS TO PREPARE TO HOST HOLIDAY GUESTS

They're back! Family, friends and acquaintances are once again taking up residence on cots and fold-out sofas across the country as loved ones gather to celebrate the holiday season. That's welcome news nearly three years after a pandemic first restricted such gatherings. But hosts must ask themselves: Am I ready to host house guests?

Travel is a big component of the holiday season. According to a 2021 survey by The Vacationer, a travel tip and vacation guide, nearly 63 percent of Americans age 18 or older planned to travel for at least one holiday in 2021, with most raveling in December. That marked a 37 percent increase in travel from a year prior. Holiday travel for 2022 may be even higher as families adapt to life during the pandemic.

As individuals get ready to host holiday guests, here are some strategies to maximize space and make guests feel comfortable.

- Discuss plans in advance. Every traveler is different. Some people thrive on making lists and following itineraries. Others fly by the seat of their pants. It's reasonable to ask potential house guests how they envision their visit, including if they plan to stay long and if it will include sleeping over. This way you can make accommodations accordingly, particularly if guests request to borrow a vehicle or want to see the sights.
- Create some extra privacy. While some homes are equipped to handle guests comfortably, smaller homes may not be equipped with such luxuries. Folding screens can be used to create a barrier and add some privacy in open spaces where guests will be staying.
- Stash away travel samples. Travel-sized soaps, shampoos and lotions can make guests feel more welcome. Stock up at the grocery store or pharmacy and leave them in the room where guests will be staying.

- Stock up on new linens. Treat guests to fresh fluffy towels and new bed linens, especially if it's been awhile since you have restocked these items.
- Ask about food preferences. Your guests may not want to munch on kale chips and tofu hot dogs apart from the holiday meal. Don't push your food restrictions on others. Ask guests what they typically eat and then fill the pantry and refrigerator with some of the items they mention. When guests need snacks, they'll have familiar foods on hand.
- Be mindful of bedtimes. Consider guests' preferences about bedtimes. While you may be a night owl, some guests may hit the hay much earlier, particularly older relatives or those with young children. If need be, make an effort to be quiet when kids or early birds are staying over.

Hosting for the holidays requires a little creativity and flexibility. All that effort is well worth it when loved ones have a good time while staying over.

Source: *Over 50, registerpublications.com*

FINANCE CALENDAR ACTION ITEM FOR DECEMBER

- Calculate your net worth by reviewing your assets and liabilities. The end of the year is a great time to reflect on how the past 12 months went and prepare to set new goals in January. Experts suggest reviewing your net worth at least once a year. The goal is for your net worth to increase year after year. Keep a record of your net worth in your financial binder and see the progress you are making over time. For more expert personal finance tips, visit powerpay.org.
- Involve your family in holiday planning. Discuss ways to have fun spending less during the holidays. Make a holiday bucket list that includes free activities and opportunities to serve others. Trimming holiday expenses can also help to simplify the season.

HEATING

Heating your home accounts for 45% of an average home's energy bill—the single biggest energy expense in your home.

Most homes have a furnace or boiler to power the heating system. These systems are regulated by a thermostat, which tells the system how much energy to use—and controls the temperature of your home.



Set your thermostat at 68 degrees F in the winter and 78 degrees F in the summer to save energy.

Also think about replacing an old furnace, especially if yours is older than 15 years. New high-efficiency furnaces are far more efficient than older models.

Programmable thermostats automatically adjust your home's temperature to maximize your savings by turning down the heat while you are away during the day and while you sleep at night.

Used properly, a programmable thermostat can save up to \$150 a year, according to Energy Star.

When using a programmable thermostat, make a schedule and stick to it. Program it to set back the heat two hours before you go to bed and increase it just before you wake. Set back the heat during the day if no one will be home for four or more hours.

The thermostat will let you change the schedule. But don't do this too frequently or you won't save as much money as you should.

What you can do:

- Turn down the thermostat by 5 degrees F. Why? Turning it down one degree saves about 2% on your heating bill. Turning it down five degrees saves about 10%. Install a programmable thermostat and it will do the work for you.
- Have a professional inspect and tune up your furnace. Why? Oil burning furnaces should be checked every year. Gas burning ones should be checked every two years.
- If you use a space heater, be safe! Why? Old or improperly used space heaters can be very dangerous. Make sure yours meets the latest safety standards, turn it off when you sleep, and only use it in an open area.
- Check filters. Why? Forced-air furnaces and heat pumps have filters that need to be cleaned or replaced monthly.
- Check air vents, radiators, and registers. Why? If they are blocked by furniture or drapes, heat won't get into the rest of your home.
- Clean the area around your furnace. Why? It decreases the chance of fire and improves airflow.
- Wear a sweater instead of turning up the heat. Why? Turning up your thermostat decreases your savings.

- Never use the kitchen stove to heat your home. Why? It's very dangerous! Stoves are not designed to heat large areas: doing so lets toxic chemicals into your home and is a fire hazard.
- Be safe. Why? Elderly people and people with medical conditions can have greater heating needs—and should adjust their thermostat to meet them.

Source: www.projectenergysavers.com

SAVING MONEY BY COOKING AT HOME

Groceries are getting more expensive, but eating out is even more expensive. How can I save money on food so I can buy some holiday gifts for my family?

Cooking meals at home is an excellent way to save money, so consider these tips to help you stretch your food dollar:

- ❖ Make a meal plan for the week using the sales ads to help you decide what to make. Prepare a grocery list and stick to the list. Compare unit prices (price per ounce) at the store, but buy what you will use in a reasonable time.
- ❖ Stretch your protein foods, such as meat and poultry, by making casseroles, soups and stews with plenty of vegetables. Use more dry beans and lentils in soups and stews. These foods are rich in fiber and nutrition and very inexpensive.
- ❖ Consider buying meat in larger “bulk” packages that you can freeze in meal-size portions at home. Be sure to wrap the meat properly to avoid freezer burn (drying out).
- ❖ If your favorite fruits and vegetables are out of season, check the frozen foods aisle and the canned goods section. All forms of fruits and vegetables count toward the 4 ½ cups of fruits and vegetables most people need per day.

Source: ndsu.edu

WHAT FOODS AND NUTRIENTS CAN HELP PREVENT COLD AND FLU THIS WINTER?

The transition from fall to winter brings colder weather and the holiday season. Unfortunately, winter is also a time when there is a higher chance of getting sick with a cold or the flu. A healthy immune system can prevent these illnesses. Some immune-supporting nutrients include beta carotene, vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc, and protein. These nutrients can be found in many foods especially vegetables and fruits, and can be used to create balanced meals. For example, sweet potatoes have high levels of beta carotene, broccoli has vitamin C, and tofu is a great source of zinc. Trying to get at least 5 servings of vegetables and fruits a day is a good start to getting enough of these important nutrients and strengthening your immune system.

One common myth is that taking vitamin C supplements can prevent winter colds. Although some studies have shown that increased levels of vitamin C may decrease cold symptoms, vitamin C cannot prevent catching a cold. Vitamin C is important for the growth and repair of body tissue and works to prevent disease. Eating foods with high amounts of vitamin C is a great way to get enough of this nutrient during cold and flu season. Some vitamin C rich choices are: citrus fruits such as grapefruit and oranges, tomatoes, potatoes, and green and red bell peppers. Eating these fruits and vegetables raw can help you get the most vitamin C from these foods, but even when they are cooked, they still provide vitamin C.

Prioritize good health this holiday season and consume a variety of nutrients to support your immune system daily! Additionally, wash hands properly, get an appropriate amount of sleep, and practice good hygiene.

Source: *Indiana's Emergency Food Resource Network*

HERB QUICK BREAK TO MAKE AS A GIFT IN A QUART SIZE JAR

HERB QUICK BREAD

Makes 16 servings

2 cups all-purpose white flour	½ teaspoon salt
1 cup whole-wheat flour	½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon baking powder	½ teaspoon dried thyme
3 teaspoons caraway seeds	

Layer ingredients in a clean quart-sized jar. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate and attach a copy of the recipe card.

Source: *NDSU Extension*

Herb Quick Bread Recipe Card

1 jar Herb Quick Bread Mix

Additional ingredients:

1 egg, 1 cup fat-free milk, 1/3 cup canola oil

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a mixing bowl, whisk together the white and whole-wheat flour, baking powder, caraway seeds, salt, ground nutmeg and dried thyme. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg, milk and oil. Add the wet ingredients to dry ingredients and stir until moistened. Place mixture in a 9x5-inch loaf pan coated with nonstick cooking spray and bake for 40 to 50 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes in pan; remove from pan and place on a wire cooling rack.

HOW TO AVOID HOLIDAY WEIGHT GAIN

We often have lots of tempting treats, such as holiday cookies and candy, around us during this time of the year. *Maintaining* our current weight instead of trying to lose weight may be the best goal. Enjoy some treats but keep moderation in mind.

Here are some tips to consider during the holiday season:

- Have breakfast every day. Enjoy protein-rich foods such as eggs, yogurt and/or milk along with whole-grain toast or cereal. Protein and whole grains help keep us feeling full longer.
- Have a bowl of broth-based soup and/or an apple or other whole fruit before going to a holiday party or shopping. Soup and fiber-rich fruit can tame your appetite so you can resist the temptations.
- Use a small plate and stand away from the food table at parties. Fill your plate with lower-calorie, high-fiber foods such as fruits and vegetables.
- If you attend a potluck, set a good example by bringing a veggie or fruit tray.
- Remember that beverage calories add up quickly. Have ice water flavored with a lemon or lime slice instead of fruit punch or other holiday beverages.
- Slow down when you eat and enjoy the delicious food. Visit with your friends and wait 20 minutes before you decide to go for seconds. You might be full after the first serving.
- Set a goal for holiday eating: _____

Tiny Tastes Add Up!

Tasting food during the holiday season can add up to lots of calories eaten. Consider this:

- **Taste 1:** You had a piece of peanut brittle that someone brought for treats at work. (80 calories)
- **Taste 2:** Someone else brought chocolate covered cherries to work so you had a couple (because they are fruit, right?) (60 calories)
- **Taste 3:** You baked cookies and one broke. You ate a piece. (30 calories)
- **Taste 4:** You were thirsty and had a half-cup of old-fashioned eggnog before your guests arrived for dinner. (200 calories)
- **Taste 5:** Only a couple of tablespoons of candied sweet potatoes were left in the bowl, so you decided to eat it. (60 calories)

That adds up to 430 calories of “tiny tastes.” Just 100 extra calories per day can lead to a 10-pound weight gain in one year.

Source: NDSU Extension

HANDWASHING AWARENESS WEEK—The first week of December is Handwashing Awareness Week.

STOP GERMS! WASH YOUR HANDS.

When?

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- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• After using the bathroom• Before, during, and after preparing food• Before eating food• Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea• After changing diapers or cleaning up a child | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• who has used the toilet• After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing• After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste• After handling pet food or pet treats• After touching garbage |
|--|--|

How?

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- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.• Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.• Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from |
|---|--|

beginning to end twice.

- Rinse hands well under clean, running water.

- Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important things we can do to stop the spread of germs and stay healthy.

Source: CDC

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION OBSERVANCE DATES FOR DECEMBER 2022

- **December 7 - December 15:** Hanukkah (always on the 25th day of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar)
- **December 8:** Bodhi Day
- **December 10:** International Human Rights Day
- **December 16 - December 24:** Las Posadas
- **December 25:** Christmas
- **December 26 to January 1:** Kwanzaa



From the Purdue Extension-Dearborn County Staff