

# Living Well

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER FOR NORTHEAST COLORADO



## March – April, 2021

### 5 Tips for Planning a Vegetable Garden

The days are getting longer and in mid-March we spring forward into Daylight Savings Time – gaining an hour of light to our evenings. Yep, gardening season is just around the corner.

1. It's never too early to plan. Consider site selection and sun/shade patterns, what was grown there last year, and how much produce do I want. The layout and form of a garden (for example, in-ground or raised bed) can also play a significant role in its productivity. Raised beds with a block style layout can save space, drain faster, heat up earlier in the spring, and save water.
2. Plan with water in mind. Consider the source and cost of water. Irrigation systems and mulch are two tools for conserving water. Note: mulching too early in the season may reduce productivity.
3. Soil matters. A soil test can provide baseline information to help plan for soil amendments and fertilizers. Contact local County Extension office for soil testing information.
4. Determine your timeline for starting seeds indoors to get the jump on the growing season. Starter plants that become too large are more sensitive to stress of transplanting. Know your frost dates for your area. Cool season crops (spinach, lettuce and broccoli and more) do better in the cooler temperatures and can resist a light frost. Putting warm season plants (tomatoes, squash, melons and more) in the garden must wait until the threat of a freeze has passed.
5. Plan with a full season in mind. Many like to donate extra produce to neighbors, or friends, or family. If so, consider planting a few extra vegetables. To receive more information about gardening and sharing the harvest, sign up for the **Grow&Give** newsletter at <https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/grow-give/> Check out the

**CO-Horts Blog** <http://csuhort.blogspot.com/> for the complete text & links.

*Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Colorado State University Extension is implied.*

#### *Joy Akey*

Yuma County  
joy.akey@colostate.edu  
(970) 332-4151

Morgan County  
(970) 542-3540

#### *Gisele Jefferson*

Washington County  
gisele.jefferson@colostae.edu  
(970) 345-2287

Phillips County  
(970) 854-3616

Logan County  
(970) 522-3200, Ext. 2

#### *McKayla Stephen*

Kit Carson County  
mckayla.stephen@colostate.edu  
(719) 346-5571

#### **Extension Online**

<https://goldenplains.extension.colostate.edu/>

<https://logan.extension.colostate.edu/>

<https://morgan.extension.colostate.edu/>



**GOLDEN PLAINS AREA**  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
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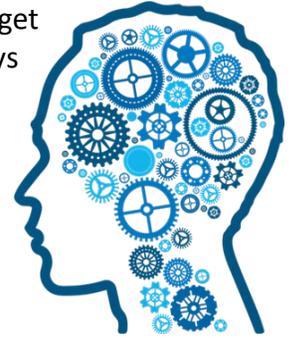
Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Kit Carson, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma Counties cooperating.

Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

## Getting Organized Improves Brain Function

“People who organize their time in a way that allows them to focus are not only going to get more done, but they’ll be less tired and less neurochemically depleted after doing it,” says Daniel J. Levitin, author of *The Organized Mind*.

Slowing down and focusing on what really matters, one thing at a time, are the keys to handle today’s speed of information and help prevent information overload. His book offers three lessons to help organize your mind and make good decision making with less effort.



1. Our brain performs best by focusing on one thing at a time. It gets stressed by constantly switching tasks and making decisions, be they large or small decisions. The brain consumes energy to make decisions, even the little ones that do not impact our lives. Making choices is time-consuming and distracts us from what really matters. So, focus on the important information and decisions. Don’t let the little stuff consume your time and energy.
2. Organize your environment – your office and your home – to best suit your brain. Declutter, simplify and organize your space. The brain likes to categorize items and remember where they belong. Keep your space the same as long as you can. Your mind will be fresher because it does not have to work at remembering new locations for stuff.
3. Organizing your work and using external tools help declutter your mind. “The most fundamental principle of the organized mind is to shift the burden of organizing from our brains to the external world,” Levitin noted. So write your ideas and tasks on paper or use digital devices. Don’t overload your brain with too much data and trying to remember too many tasks.

Choose the tasks to dedicate your time and attention. Analyze each task quickly and decide to: do it, delegate it, defer it or drop it. Use the 2-minute rule: if something can be accomplished in less than a couple of minutes, do it right away. To work efficiently, it is essential to do one thing at a time. Avoid distractions and interruptions. Multitasking does not work. You are actually switching very quickly from one task to another and back again. This causes fatigue and loss of time. So, in the end you are less productive and will feel more tired.

Source: [fourminutebooks.com](http://fourminutebooks.com)

## 10-Minute Stress Busters

**Encourage your children to try these quick tips to reduce stress (and try a few for yourself too!).**

1. Listen to Music. Classical is relaxing, but can choose any genre that speaks to you.
2. Laugh! A good chuckle can increase blood flow and relax muscles.
3. Take a walk. It can help clear your head and boost endorphins. Bad weather? Crank up your favorite song and dance!
4. Pet a Dog. A four-legged friend can help lower your heart rate and take your mind off things.



Check out more tips that can help your family reduce stress! HEALTHY ESSENTIALS®

<https://www.healthyeentials.com/wellness-solutions/how-to-reduce-stress>

## Getting Wealthy by Being Healthy



Lately everyone has been trying to find ways to save money. Check out the following tips to help make healthier decisions and save money!

**Future Savings** – Making more nutritious decisions today can help improve your health and save money in the future. Better nutrition leads to fewer days missed at school or work as well as fewer medical bills.

**Make a plan** – Plan your menu for the next week or two and write down the ingredients you need. Try planning meals based on the advertised sales and coupons. Think about your schedule for the week; consider when you are most busy and when you have more time. Plan meals accordingly.

Write down your meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for each day of the week. Include snacks too. Think about meals or recipes with enough servings for multiple meals to reduce the number of ingredients needed and save time preparing another meal.

**Shop your kitchen first** – Before going to the grocery store, check your refrigerator and pantry. You may have more items than you realize..

**Take time** – Make a grocery list and stick to the list. Extra purchases can add up! Check sales and coupons. Compare unit prices. This may take some time at the beginning, but will be easier with practice. Precooked or pre-sliced items may save you time, but cost more for convenience.. Try to shop on days when the stores have greater savings!

**Bulk** – Buying items you regularly eat in bulk can save you money. Items such as rice, oatmeal, flour, dried beans, corn meal, etc. have a long shelf life. **Freeze** – Use your freezer, especially if you are buying in bulk! Extend the shelf life and have meals for later.

**Buy Generic** – Generic store brands are often just as good or even better quality than the brand name, and they cost less.

**Portion Correctly** – Meats and cheeses are more expensive. Serving a normal portion of meat will allow you to stretch them further so you don't need to buy as much. One serving size of meat is 3-4 ounces.

Don't forget to involve your kids! If you are going to prepare more home cooked meals, [involve your kids in the preparation](#). Kids are more likely to try new foods if they help prepare and cook. Ask them to pick a meal they would like to try when you are creating your shopping list. Let them help [stir ingredients or knead bread](#).

Make your own fast food! A McDonald's Sausage McMuffin can cost around \$3.23 with taxes. If you bought 24 McDonald's sandwiches you would be spending \$77.52. You can make 24 sandwiches for \$29.79. Making your own sandwiches saves you almost \$48!

**Resources:** Small Steps to Health & Wealth: <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/family-home-consumer/small-steps-to-health-and-wealth-9-158/> and <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/family-financial-stability/> Shopping on a Budget: <https://foodsmartcolorado.colostate.edu/nutrition-and-health/healthy-eating/tools-for-healthy-eating/shopping-on-a-budget/>



## March is National Nutrition Month

Every year the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics launches its campaign to promote healthy habits. Everyone is encouraged to learn about making informed food choices, developing healthy eating habit, and incorporating physical activity into their daily routine.



Each year the Academy includes a theme and this year it is, “Personalize Your Plate!”

Each week of March has its own focus. Try to incorporate at least one tip every day during each week!

### Week 1: Eat a variety of nutritious foods every day! March 1st – 7th

- Include healthful foods from all food groups!
- Hydrate healthfully. Water is always the great choice!
- Learn how to read the Nutrition Facts Panel. Check the label to make sure you are picking the best option.
- Avoid distractions while eating. Turn off the T.V. or set work a side, focus on eating.
- Take time of enjoy your food. Savor each bite!

### Week 2: Plan your meals each week! March 8th – 14th

- Use a grocery list to shop for healthful foods.
- Be menu-savvy when dining out.
- Choose healthful recipes to make during the week.
- Enjoy healthful eating at school and at work.
- Plan healthful eating while traveling.



### Week 3: Learn skills to create tasty meals! March 15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>

- Keep healthful ingredients on hand. Keep canned or frozen vegetables available for meals.
- Practice proper home food safety. Safely defrost food, check cooking temperatures of meat, and always put your food away properly.
- Share meals together as a family when possible.
- Reduce food waste. Look up casseroles or one-pot recipes to use up those leftovers.
- Try new flavors and foods. Add herbs and spices to try new flavors.

### Week 4: Consult a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RD or RDN)! March 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>

- Ask your doctor for a referral to an RDN.
- Receive personalized nutrition advice to meet your goals. Want to lose/gain weight, increase muscle mass, eat healthier, learn to cook meals?
- Meet RDNs in a variety of settings throughout the community. RDNs can be found at gyms, hospitals, grocery stores, school/college/university cafeterias, and many more places!
- Find an RDN who is specialized to serve your unique needs.

Resources: <https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month/toolkit>

## Picky Eating



While children are growing, they tend to go through eating phases. One week they may only want peanut butter and crackers, the next week they won't touch these foods, or maybe a certain color is out. Although challenging for parents, this is quite common for children. There are stages in a child's mental development when certain colors, textures, and mixtures will be appealing and times when they will not. As a parent, it is important to understand this is normal behavior, but there are steps you can take to help reduce the chance of continuing this picky behavior.

**Natural Behavior:** Children during the first year of life should grow 7-10 inches. During the second year, growth slows to an average of 5 inches/year. During the third year growth averages 3 inches/year. From age 4 years until puberty, growth should be at least 2 inches per year. In various stages children may be less interested in food, which can worry parents. Your doctor will check your child's growth and will let you know if it is not normal.

**Toddlers** become more independent and want to use this independence. They may also be hesitant to try new foods. They may want to see, touch, smell, and think about it several times before actually trying it. Although it may take time, slowly offering new foods results in a better outcome than forcing or bribing a child to try them.

### Parent and Child Roles

Parents	Child
Buy and prepare food	Decides to eat
Decide meals times	Decides what to eat
Offer regular meals and snacks	Decides how much to eat
Provide a pleasant environment	Decides on their attitude

Allowing your child to choose the food you cook for them and begging your child to eat gives them all the power. This will make it difficult to break the behavior in the future when they are older. Both of you have power, and it is important to stick to your roles. Although you might be worried during periods of changing eating behaviors, your child will not suffer if they choose not to eat during a meal. This teaches kids that unless they want to be hungry, they need to be flexible with the options available. This will come in handy in the years to come.

### [Making toddler-friendly meals](#)

Remove distractions. Toddlers are easily distracted. Providing a quiet and calm environment can encourage them to focus on the meal.

Resources: Family Matters Newsletter: <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/family-home-consumer/family-matters-newsletter/>

Healthy Eating for Children: <https://foodsmartcolorado.colostate.edu/nutrition-and-health/healthy-eating/healthy-eating-for-children/>

## A Cup of Tea



Tea has been enjoyed by humans for centuries. It is the second most consumed beverage in the world and enjoyed by nearly one half of Americans. Tea is often promoted as healthy. Teas are used to detox your body, help you sleep, improve digestion, or relieve stress. There are a lot of unknowns surrounding teas and their benefits.

How tea is made? All three teas, black, green, and oolong, come from the same plant, *Camellia sinensis*. The first 24 hours after being picked, will determine what type of tea the leaves will produce.

**Black Tea:** Popular in America – After being partially dried and then rolled, black tea leaves are left on tables for 30 minutes to 2 hours at a temperature of 78°-79°F. During this time, enzymes inside the leaves react to the oxygen in the air and turns the leaves darker; this is the oxidation step. The longer the leaf is left in these conditions, the darker and stronger it will be. After the leaves are oxidized, they are dried until they contain 3% of their water.

**Green Tea:** Popular in Asia – In order to make green tea, the oxidation process is skipped. The leaves are dried or steamed to kill the enzymes that oxidize the leaves. The leaves are then rolled and dried before being packaged. Green teas usually contain higher amounts of antioxidants because they didn't go through oxidation.

**Oolong Tea:** Popular in Southern China – Oolong tea falls between green and black tea. Instead of laying on a table during oxidation, the tea leaves are rolled or shook. This movement bruises the edges of the leaves, which causes oxidation, but the whole leaf doesn't oxidize. This produces a lighter color tea with a fruity aroma.

Brewing the perfect cup!

1. Fresh, Cold Water. You should always heat up fresh, cold water. Re-boiling water can make your tea taste flat.
2. Get the temperature right. Boiling water can burn the tea leaves.
3. Read the Instructions. Most tea bags will tell you how long to brew the tea.
4. Remove the tea and enjoy. You should never drink the tea with the tea leaves or bag still inside your cup.

Possible Health Benefits: Teas contain antioxidants called polyphenols that help protect our bodies from harmful chemicals called oxidants. Antioxidants are also found in colorful fruits and vegetables. Some studies show benefits of drinking tea, while others do not.

Some studies have followed groups of people for many years and have found those who drink tea are less likely to develop chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Although this is good news, researchers are unsure if the tea causes the better health or if those who drink tea tend to make healthier choices, like being active, eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and not smoking cigarettes. More research needs to be done to prove if tea provides the health benefits. What does your personal research tell you?

### Brewing the Perfect Cup



167°F - 185°F  
Steep 1 - 3 minutes



185°F - 203°F  
Steep 3 - 5 minutes



185°F - 203°F  
Steep 3 - 5 minutes



149°F - 167°F  
Steep 1 - 3 minutes



203°F - 212°F  
Steep 5 - 10 minutes

## Upcoming Events!

- **Aging Mastery Online (Zoom) class series – Tuesdays and Thursdays: May 18 -- June 15, 2:00 – 3:30 pm**

CSU Extension is pleased to announce the first class series for Northeast Colorado of this innovative FREE ten-class health and wellness program to residents sixty and over. The Aging Mastery Program® (AMP) was developed by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) and has been successful at helping older adults build their own playbook for aging well. For more information contact: Joy Akey 970-332-4151, Gisele Jefferson 970-345-2287 or McKayla Stephen 719-346-5571.



- **Cottage Food Safety Training** - This training covers specifics of the Colorado Cottage Food Act and how to safely operate a food business from a home kitchen. Participants learn food safety guidelines and the specifics for operating a home based cottage food business from a home kitchen. Participants also learn about the most current Colorado Cottage Food Act guidelines and best practices. Cost: \$40 Several online classes available:
  - **March 19<sup>th</sup> – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cottage-food-safety-statewide-online-training-registration-137670657643?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>
  - **March 29<sup>th</sup> – 5-9 p.m.** Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/csu-extension-colorado-cottage-foods-training-online-tickets-135937792597?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>
  - **April 21<sup>st</sup> – 5-9 p.m.** Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cottage-food-safety-statewide-online-training-registration-137671379803?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>
- **Home Food Preservation: Jam Technique – March 16<sup>th</sup>, 12 pm to 1:30 pm;** cost \$10. Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/home-food-preservation-jam-technique-class-tickets-142592503015?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>
- **Home Food Preservation: Pickling technique – April 7<sup>th</sup>, 12 pm to 1:30 pm;** cost \$10. Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/home-food-preservation-pickling-technique-class-tickets-142604968299?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>
- **Home Food Preservation: Water Bath Canning – April 21<sup>st</sup>, 12 pm to 1:30 pm,** Cost \$10. Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/home-food-preservation-water-bath-canning-tickets-142591714657?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>
- **Dining with Diabetes – Online Class Series** meeting **April 20<sup>th</sup>, April 27<sup>th</sup>, May 4<sup>th</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup>** – 10 am to noon. The program is designed for people with diabetes and their family members, caregivers, and support persons. FREE – Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dining-with-diabetes-tickets-140322794255?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>
- **Growing Herbs in the Garden – March 31<sup>st</sup>, 12 pm – 1 pm.** Cost \$10. Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/growing-herbs-in-the-garden-tickets-141366126891?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>



**CSU Extension – NE Colorado FCS** – In this time of no/limited personal contact, we're all using social media!

<https://www.facebook.com/CSUExtensionNortheastFCS>

<https://www.facebook.com/PhillipsCountyExtension/>

CSU Extension – Logan County: [https://www.facebook.com/csuetensionlogancounty/?\\_tn\\_=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARCS5-NbtiQryVNn5X513c5--hwVu-1ZfnhynwZsPotP7AZIVStJaoCEoaVYzZjBFhCH0tHJLHaJxQuQ](https://www.facebook.com/csuetensionlogancounty/?_tn_=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARCS5-NbtiQryVNn5X513c5--hwVu-1ZfnhynwZsPotP7AZIVStJaoCEoaVYzZjBFhCH0tHJLHaJxQuQ)

CSU Extension – Morgan County: <https://www.facebook.com/extensionmorgancounty/>

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