

Family Issues

March-April 2006

Information for Southwest Idaho
Area Families and Consumers

Take the Time: Talking With Your Family About End-of-Life Health Care Decisions

I want to introduce you to a new University of Idaho Extension web site available- Isn't it Time to Take the Time: Talking With Your Family About End-of-Life Health Care Decisions

A majority of Americans have not prepared end-of-life health care directives. Struggles surrounding the life and death of Terri Schiavo emphasize the importance of planning your care, and writing and communicating your wishes. Families of individuals who do not have Advance Directives are likely to face needless emotional and financial stress.

A new University of Idaho Extension web site teaches consumers about two important end-of-life planning documents: a living will and durable power of attorney for health care. Consumers also learn from real life examples how to communicate their wishes with loved ones. Access this Advance Directives for Health Care information at <http://www.ag.uidaho.edu/lsyff/communicate>

This web site was funded by an eXtension subcontract from Clemson University. University of Idaho Extension faculty who developed the web include: Marilyn Bischoff, Director; Marlene Fritz, Beverly Healy, Ben Troka, Brad Beckman,

and Becky Schwartzkopf. Elizabeth Gorham, South Dakota State University Extension Specialist, also serves on the development team.



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<p>Family Issues is published six times a year. This newsletter provides current information in the areas of family development, leadership skills, nutrition, food safety, money and time management.</p>	



Idaho Beans – Low in Cost and High in Nutrition

Idaho dried beans are an inexpensive and healthy food to include in your 5 A Day diet. A serving (1/3 cup of cooked beans) contains around 80 calories, not cholesterol, lots of complex carbohydrates, and little fat. In addition, beans are a good source of B vitamins, potassium, and fiber, which promotes digestive health and relieves constipation. Eating beans may help prevent colon cancer, and reduce blood cholesterol (a leading cause of heart disease).

How do beans fit into your 5 A Day?

Beans are often thought of as a side dish; however, they make excellent meat free entrees. You don't have to be vegetarian to reap the benefits of legumes – start slowly, eating beans instead of meat twice a week.

How long should I soak dry beans?

Thoroughly rinse and drain dry beans before soaking. Discard damaged beans and any foreign material. Then use one of the two methods below to rehydrate the beans:

Quick Hot Soak:

Cover beans with water and boil for two minutes. Cover pot; soak for one to four hours. Discard soaking water; cover beans with fresh water and two tablespoons of oil before cooking. Oil reduces foaming during the cooking process.

Overnight Cold Soak:

Cover one pound of dry beans with six cups of room-temperature water and allow to soak overnight (12 hours or more). Discard soaking water; cover beans with fresh water and two tablespoons of oil before cooking.

I think my beans are fresh, but they didn't soften after cooking. Why?

Always use fresh dry beans if possible. Beans that have been stored over 12 months or in unfavorable conditions may never soften.

Hard water may also cause hard beans. Add ¼ teaspoon sodium bicarbonate for each pound of beans to increase tenderness.

Add acidic foods, such as tomatoes, vinegar, lemon or calcium-rich molasses until near the end of the cooking time as these foods may toughen the skins.

Don't add salt until just before serving as it may also toughen skins.

Additional information and tasty recipes using dried beans are available from the Idaho Bean Commission – contact at www2.state.id.us/bean.

My Pyramid for Kids

On September 28, 2005, the government launched the first Food Pyramid for kids, aimed at children 6 to 11 years old. This dietary guideline looks almost identical to the adult version, which was revised and updated this year by the US Department of Agriculture. It contains the same nutritional messages: (1) Eat more fruit vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein; (2) eat some healthful fat such as nuts, avocados, and olive oil; (3) limit intake of processed food and drinks, especially those that are high in unhealthy fats (fried foods) and added sugars (soft drinks); and (4) be physically active daily for at least 60 minutes (in adults the recommendation was for at least 30 minutes).

The website contains computer games, lesson plans, worksheets, and tips for families. The interactive computer game is called "My Pyramid Blast Off Game," in which a Food Pyramid spaceship blasts off. The ship only makes it to Planet Power if kids load it up with the right combination of healthy food: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat or fat-free milk and lean meat.

This pyramid has numerous cartoon drawings that focuses on physical activity:

- A girl running up the steps to the top of the pyramid.
- Kids playing soccer, baseball, and basketball.
- Walking a dog, riding a bike, stretching, and even doing yoga.

Source: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index/html>

Key words: foods, youth

Do You Qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit?

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a tax credit for people who work but do not earn high incomes. For eligible taxpayers, EITC is a valuable tool to lower their taxes or to claim a refund. The IRS wants all eligible taxpayers, but only those who are eligible, to claim the EITC.

Many taxpayers who qualify for EITC may also be eligible for free tax preparation and electronic filing by participating tax professionals and volunteers. Call the Idaho CareLine at 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588 for information on Free tax help. To determine if you qualify for EITC, visit with a tax professional or visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov.

Do You Qualify for EITC?

To qualify, you must meet certain requirements and file a U.S. Individual Tax Return. As described below, some EITC rules apply to everyone. There are also special rules for people who have children and for those who do not.

Individuals and families must meet certain general requirements:

- You must have earned income.
- You must have a Social Security Number for yourself, your spouse (if filing jointly) and your qualifying child.
- Investment income is limited to \$2,700.
- Your filing status cannot be "married filing separately."
- Generally, you must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien all year.
- You cannot be a qualifying child of another person.
- You cannot file Form 2555 or Form 2555-EZ (related to foreign earned income.)

Your income cannot exceed certain limitations. For Tax Year 2005, you must have adjusted gross income of less than:

- \$35,263 (\$37,263 if married filing jointly) with two or more qualifying children
- \$31,030 (\$33,030 if married filing jointly) with one qualifying child.

□ \$11,750 (\$13,750 if married filing jointly) with no qualifying children.

If you claim a child, he or she must meet three eligibility tests.

- Residency Test – the child must have lived with you in the United States for more than half of 2005.
- Relationship Test – The child must be your son, daughter, stepchild, foster child, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, or a descendant of any of them. Your child includes:
 - A foster child who was placed with you by an authorized placement agency, or by judgment, decree, or other order of any court of competent jurisdiction.
 - A legally adopted child or a child lawfully placed with you for legal adoption.
- Age test – At the end of 2005, the child must have been under age 19, a full-time student under age 24 or any age if permanently and totally disabled at anytime during 2005.

Your qualifying child cannot be used by more than one person to claim EITC. If a child meets the rules to be a qualifying child of more than one person, only one person can treat that child as a qualifying child and claim EITC.

If you don't have a child, you must meet three additional tests:

- At the end of 2005, you must have been at least age 25, but under age 65.
- You cannot qualify as the dependent of another person.
- You must have lived in the United States for more than half of 2005.

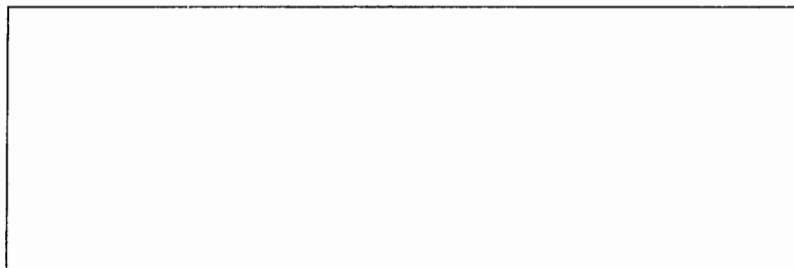


Free Tax Help –
call 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine or
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Food Safety Advisor Program – Sign Up Now!

If you're making plans for a garden this spring, and don't know how to safely preserve the future harvest, sign up now for the 2006 Food Safety Advisor Class! The six-week course is scheduled to begin on Thursday, April 13th and will not only provide instruction on food preservation and food safety, but will also include the latest, safest methods for turning your summer bounty into canned and/or dried fruits and vegetables, jams, jellies, conserves, pickles and salsa.

Applications are being taken now. For further information please call the Ada County Extension (377-2107) and ask for Alexis.

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