

PANHANDLE PATH TO HEALTHY LIVING



December 2020

WORLDWIDE FOOD SERVICE SAFETY MONTH

Worldwide Food Service Safety Month is an annual designation observed in December. The goals of this month are to focus on keeping food safe as it's prepared in the service industry, as well as reminding us to be safe and cook properly when we are making our own food at home. This month, the holidays are in full swing; so what better a time than now to practice safety while cooking?

- More than 200 diseases are spread through food alone
- One in ten people become sick every year from eating contaminated food
- 420,000 people are die from these illnesses every year
- Proper food preparation can prevent almost all foodborne illnesses
- Everyone has a role in keeping food safe
- Shared responsibility among government, producers, food service industries, and consumers.

Kay Rogers

Educational Programs of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Path to Mindfulness

HOW MINDFULNESS MEDITATION & DEEP BREATHING CAN HELP MANAGE ANXIETY

For many, the financial stressors, relationship stressors, and limitations on mobility brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have led to increased anxiety and frustration.

Meditation—which can be practiced at home, for free—can help relieve stress and calm spiraling thoughts, says resident physician Kyle Street, DO, of Rowan University Department of Psychiatry.

Mindfulness meditation is a simple practice that helps strengthen the mind's ability to stay focused on what is happening, meeting the present moment with kindness and non-reactivity. Ongoing practice can help us respond in a calmer manner to negative thoughts and lead us to make more appropriate decisions not based on fear.

Research has shown mindfulness meditation may physically change the brain and body. Meditation increased gray-matter density in the hippocampus, known to be important for learning and memory, and in structures associated with self-awareness, compassion, and introspection.

“This study is compelling because it shows the potential effects of meditation on human brain structure, which supports the theory that we can literally change our brains and by extension our minds,” says Dr. Street.

Step 1: Find your quiet place

Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down.

Step 2: Practice breath focus

Focus on your breath. Bringing your full attention to the feeling of your breath coming in and out of your lungs. Take 10 long breaths, about five seconds each. Then relax your body while continuing to breathe deeply, but at your natural pace. Instead of expanding and collapsing your chest, contract and expand your stomach. *Controlled breathing can assist you in disengaging from distracting thoughts and sensations. Deep breathing encourages full oxygen exchange, which can lower heart rate and blood pressure.*

Step 3: Observe and redirect your thoughts

Observe thoughts that take your focus away. It's important to remember that 'thoughts' are not an indication of poor meditation but actually correct meditation. Thinking on the other hand can be disruptive to effective meditation.

Having thoughts spontaneously arise is to be expected. Continuing to follow the thought process is 'thinking', which you want to try to avoid, says Dr. Street. When thoughts are detected, observe them but do not get involved with them. This process can be therapeutic, and you may notice an improved attitude and reduced anxiety over time.”

Tell yourself that you are doing the best you can. Make it a habit.

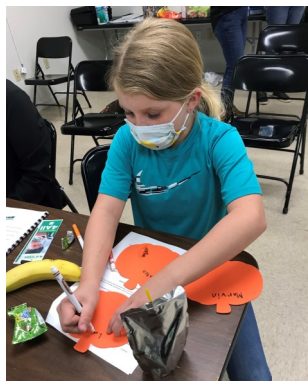
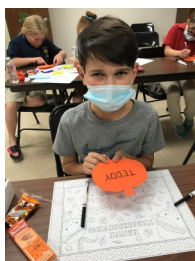
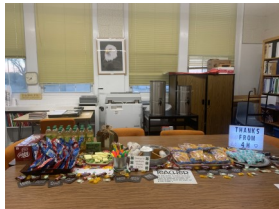
To continually reap the benefits, make mindfulness meditation / breathing a part of your daily life.

Feelings come and
go like clouds
in a windy sky.
Conscious breathing
is my anchor.

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FEARLESS SOUL | ITUNES, SPOTIFY, GOOGLEPLAY



4-H and Youth Development



Dallam & Hartley Counties

Boomer Consumer 4-H Club

Thursday, December 3
6:00pm

Meet at The Legacy to sing
Christmas carols at the win-
dows of the residents

Top of Texline 4-H Club

Meeting cancelled

Mean Green Scientists 4-H Club

Meeting cancelled

Leaders & Feeders 4-H Club

Meeting cancelled. Alternate
activity will be announced
soon

Channing 4-H Club

Virtual Meeting
Thursday, December 10
5:00pm

Hartley Plainsmen 4-H Club

Meeting cancelled

Check the
Dallam & Hartley Counties 4-H
and Extension Facebook pages or
call the office at 806.244.4434 for
more information!

Path to Protection..... Food Safety



Worldwide Food Service Safety Month has been recognized since December 1994 to remind everyone that food safety is crucial when cooking for others and ourselves.

Here are some food hygiene tips for next time you're cooking a meal at home

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap before handling food and make sure you thoroughly wash them again when you're done.
2. If you have any cuts on your fingers, hands, or wrists, cover them with bandages before handling food.
3. Thoroughly wash your fruits and veggies with clean, warm water before use.
4. Make sure your cooked foods are separate from raw foods to avoid harmful bacteria cross-contamination.
5. Use fresh utensils when switching from raw meat to other foods during preparation.
6. Regularly wash your dishcloths and towels in the kitchen using hot water to keep as clean as possible.
7. Do not undercook your meat. Use a thermometer to make sure you get it right!



TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

"Panhandle Path to Healthy Living" is a Family Community Health Information resource for area families in the Texas Panhandle Counties. The newsletter is published monthly. Readers are encouraged to read the newsletter and then pass it on. Any information may be reproduced for education purposes in any form and credit cited appropriately.

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Kay Rogers is a Family and Community Health Agent with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension **Dallam & Hartley** counties. Family and Community Health helps Texans better their lives through science-based educational programs designed to improve the overall health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities. FCH focuses on topics such as child and adult health, nutrition, child care, financial management, passenger and community safety, and building strong families. Our goal is to encourage lifelong health and well-being for every person, every family, and every community. [https://\(county\).agrilife.org](https://(county).agrilife.org)

Path to Plate.....

Greek Yogurt Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients:

2 pounds yukon gold potatoes chopped in one-inch pieces

1/2 cup Greek yogurt, nonfat, plain

1/2 cup skim milk

2 tbsp butter or olive oil (can sub olive oil)

1.5 tsp salt

1 tbsp rosemary finely



Directions:

If desired, peel potatoes. Chop into one-inch pieces.

Place potatoes in a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Once boiling, boil 15-20 minutes until potatoes are fork tender.

Drain potatoes and place in a large bowl. Mash thoroughly. Add Greek yogurt, milk, butter or olive oil, salt, and rosemary; mash or stir to combine.

Serve immediately and enjoy! Alternatively you can make up to 24 hours in advance and reheat prior to serving.