



Family and Consumer Sciences Newsletter

Greetings From your FCS Agent

UK Cooperative
Extension Service

Carter County
March 2025

I hope this newsletter finds you well and you are warm and safe! As I write this I am cozy under my electric blanket on a snow day. We have had way too many of those these last two months! I am also thinking of our friends and neighbors east of us affected by flooding. I am looking forward to sunshine and warmth that I know is ahead.

I feel like I haven't seen many of you in a long time. Many of our regular scheduled programs have had to be canceled due to weather, but I've still been busy teaching Savor the the Flavor, Laugh and Learn, and Getting Out of a Mealtime Rut. We had a fantastic barn quilt class and will be offering another one in the fall.

The most exciting news I have for you is that we are FINALLY utilizing our new facility. I'm most excited about my "playroom" that will permanently be setup for our Laugh and Learn program and Mom Group. It will save me so much time and open up doors to many other programs for small children and adults caring for small children. The teaching kitchen should be completed this month sometime. It will be ideal for Super Star Chef camp this summer and I promise I will finally schedule a baking series for next fall! Our large meeting room holds 100. We have hosted large groups for two Ag meetings and in-service training for close to 50 FCS agents. The existing meeting room will continue to be used by everyone for smaller meetings such as homemaker clubs, and will continue to be used for sewing and quilting. The biggest benefit is the availability for scheduling. The other agents and I are able to offer programs at the same time in different rooms, so we can essentially offer three times the amount of programs to better serve our people.

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Mark your Calendars

- March 11th- Extension Council 3pm and District Board 4pm
- March 18th-Interagency Council 1pm
- March 20th-Community Baby Shower 10-1
- March 21st -Laugh and Learn Olive Hill 10am
- March 25th-Kinship Tea 11am (Grandchildren Make Grand Cooks)
- March 28th-Laugh and Learn- Grayson 10am

***We will follow Carter County School's schedule in regards to cancellations. If school is cancelled FCS programs will be cancelled as well.





Homemaker News

- Homemaker state (KEHA) awards are due March 15th. This includes the scholarships. You can find them on the KEHA website. All county chairman have award information in their packets. I would like for each chairman to review the applications and be thinking about next year and the possibilities.
- The state newsletters should be arriving soon. If you are attending the state meeting this year, the registration form is included. Please let Whitney know if you are interested in attending.
- Please email me your club reports each month so I can report your attendance numbers and lessons that you do. It's also nice for me to have an idea of what is happening with each club.
- Council Meeting- The next council meeting is April 29th.
 - Club presidents and county chairman will all have an opportunity to share updates so please come prepared if you have anything.
 - It's really important to value each others time and we keep the meetings as efficient as possible. If you have an item that you would like to add to the agenda, it must be submitted to the executive council via the office one week before the meeting. New business will not be added the day of the meeting.
- If you did not attend the lesson training, you can pick up your binder with the lesson materials for the next three months. We have one for each club.
- Save the Date for the Annual Meeting May 29th at 5pm at the Extension office. Details to come in the April newsletter.



AIR FRYERS

Annhall Norris

Extension Specialist for Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

The air fryer is a popular kitchen countertop appliance that is easy to operate and even easier to clean. Air fryers circulate hot air around food, cooking it quickly and evenly. This method is a healthy alternative to conventional frying because you use little or no oil in the cooking process. Food comes out crispy on the outside while moist and tender on the inside.

AIR FRYER BASICS

Air fryers sit on the countertop and plug into an outlet, much like a slow cooker. They consist of an electric heating element, a fan, and a basket to hold food. The top half of the unit holds the heating element and fan. The bottom half has a pull-out basket that holds food. When the unit is on, hot air circulates, cooking food quickly and evenly.

Some units have digital control panels while others have large dials or knobs. Some units may be multifunctional, combining several appliances in one unit. These units look like toaster ovens, and air frying is just one of their functions. Multifunction units offer rotisserie cooking, dehydrating, and toasting in addition to air frying. All units come with an operator's manual that includes recommended cooking times and temperatures. Many units will come with recipes. Many brands have cookbooks for sale, as well.



PREPARING TO AIR FRY

Find the right place in your kitchen to operate the air fryer. Always operate the air fryer on a level, heat-resistant surface. Do not place it on a stovetop, gas grill, or propane tank. If your countertop isn't heat resistant, use a heat-resistant mat. Allow at least 5 inches of space around the unit. This includes the back, sides, and top. Do not operate the unit against a wall and do not sit anything on top of the unit. Be sure to use the proper power source, and do not use an extension cord.

Use the proper breading technique. You cannot cook foods with wet batter in the air fryer. The batter will fall off the food and burn in the bottom of the basket. Coat the food with flour first, then an egg wash and follow with breadcrumbs. Press the breadcrumbs onto the food so they stick and don't blow around during the cooking process.

Use the right accessories. You can use air fryers to bake and roast food too. You can use any baking dish that is oven-safe in the air fryer as long as it fits in the basket and doesn't touch the heating element. Keep in mind that most air fryer baskets are small, and you will need to buy specially sized baking dishes and cake pans separately. There are also disposable air fryer liners available for purchase to aid in clean up.

OPERATING YOUR AIR FRYER

Preheat the unit before adding food. Follow the instructions for your specific unit. As a rule, turn the fryer to the temperature you need and set the timer for 3 to 4 minutes. When the timer goes off, the unit will be hot and ready to add food to be reheated or cooked.

Prep the food. Use cooking spray or toss food in a few teaspoons of vegetable (or olive) oil along with your choice of seasoning before placing in the basket. You only need a light coating of oil for food to come out crispy. Do not spray oil onto the basket. Frozen food and leftovers do not need any preparation.

Don't overcrowd the basket. Do not put too much food in the basket. Overfilling the basket will prevent air from circulating around the food and some pieces may not cook completely. Food that is stacked in a basket won't crisp and brown evenly and will result in longer cook times overall.

Set the temperature and time. Follow the instructions for your specific unit. Most units come with a chart of times and temperatures for cooking common foods. As a rule, the air fryer temperature should be set 25 degrees lower than you would set your oven.

Flip foods over halfway through the cooking process. For the best results, turn foods over (just like cooking in a skillet or on the grill) so they cook and brown evenly. You can flip some foods, like tater tots, by shaking the basket. You'll need to flip other foods individually using tongs.

Pull out the basket to check on doneness. Removing the basket will not interrupt the cooking process. The fan will stop but it will start up again when you put the basket back in place. The time and temperature will resume as if you had not removed the basket. Use a metal-stem food thermometer to check for doneness when cooking meats, poultry, and eggs in the air fryer. Place the thermometer in the thickest part of the food without touching any bones. Cook or reheat foods to the internal temperature listed in the chart below.

PRODUCT	MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURE
Steaks, chops, and roasts (beef, pork, and veal)	145°F with 3-minute rest time
Ground meats (beef, pork, lamb, veal)	160°F
Poultry (whole birds, parts, ground meat)	165°F
Eggs	160°F
Fish and shellfish	145°F
Leftovers and casseroles	165°F

Don't just dump the basket of food when cooking is complete. Even if you aren't cooking with oil, some of the foods you cook naturally contain fats and oils. Grease will collect in the bottom of the basket during the cooking process. Remove food from the basket with spoons or tongs to avoid pouring grease over your perfectly cooked food.

CARING FOR YOUR AIR FRYER

Unplug the unit after use. Allow the unit to cool before cleaning. Use a damp cloth to wipe down the outer body.

Remove the basket and any accessories. You can wash the basket and accessories in the dishwasher or by hand with hot soapy water. Follow the cleaning instructions for your specific unit for placement in the dishwasher.

Wipe the inside. Use a soft damp cloth or nonabrasive sponge with a little dish detergent to wipe the inside of the unit. Follow up with a clean damp cloth, if necessary, to remove soap.

Dry all parts. Allow the basket and any accessories to completely dry before putting it back together and storing.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE BUYING

AIR FRYER PROS

- Easy to operate
- Easy to clean – baskets and accessories are dishwasher safe
- Versatile – you can roast, grill, bake, and some will dehydrate
- Healthier than frying in oil
- Up to 20% faster cooking time
- Uses less energy than your oven
- No “deep fried smell” in the house after cooking
- No used oil to dispose of
- Great for reheating leftovers

AIR FRYER CONS

- Takes up counter space
- The fan can be loud
- Limited cooking capacity - not suitable for preparing large quantities of food
- Needs additional accessories for baking
- Food has different flavor and texture than deep fried food

If you are thinking about buying an air fryer, you should consider cost, enjoyment, ease of operation and features, as well as where you might store it. How much money are you willing to spend? Air fryers range from \$69 to \$200 depending on the size, features, and added functions. Most units require additional equipment for added options such as baking or dehydrating.

How much do you enjoy eating deep fried food? The flavor and texture of some foods, especially meats, are slightly different than conventional frying. If you are looking for that deep fried flavor, an air fryer may not be the best option.

How often will you use it? Will this be a primary method of cooking, or will you just use the appliance for frozen novelties and reheating leftovers? Will you get your money's worth and is it worth the counter space?

How many people do you cook for? The fryer baskets are relatively small. An air fryer with a 1.75-to-3-quart capacity is best for preparing meals for a household of one or two people. Even a large air fryer with a capacity of 5 to 6 quarts will often require food to be cooked in batches. If you cook for a household of four to six people, you will be extending your cooking time.

CONCLUSION

Air fryers are an innovative kitchen appliance that offer many benefits. They cook food by circulating hot air using little to no oil – making them a healthier cooking method than deep frying. Air fryers are relatively small and affordable when compared to other kitchen appliances. They are available in a variety of sizes and offer multiple cooking methods. Consumers should consider their lifestyle and choose an air fryer that meets their needs.

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USDA – Food Safety and Inspection Service

https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/safe-minimum-internal-temperature-chart/ct_index

Frontiers in Nutrition

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnut.2022.889901/full>

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MONEYWISE

VALUING PEOPLE. VALUING MONEY.

MARCH 2025

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

STRETCHING YOUR DOLLAR: WHAT TO DO WHEN THE "ENDS" DON'T MEET

"Making ends meet" is getting harder in today's economy. If you've ever wondered how to make your dollars and resources go farther, think about these tips for managing your money in tough financial times.

SPENDING WISELY

There are two basic ways to balance a budget: either **increase your income** or **reduce your expenses**. Scaling back on spending may be the quicker and easier of the two strategies. Start by taking a look at your spending habits to see where your money goes each pay period. List small purchases (like fast food, hobbies, and other "wants") and large expenses (like housing, insurance, and your family's "needs").

Next, use a highlighter to mark more **flexible** categories where you can cut back (or cut out altogether). While not always pleasant, looking for small ways to save in the present allows you to redirect that money where it matters most. This increases your family's future financial stability. Cancel "wants" until you can make ends meet again, like streaming services or monthly subscriptions. Or, cut back on things like eating out or buying name brands. For example, saving



\$10 a week is \$520 a year; saving \$20 weekly is \$1040 annually; saving \$50 a week is \$2,600 a year; and so forth. Small savings really do add up.

PRIORITIZING YOUR FINANCES

Household expenses fall along a continuum of fixed and variable costs. **Fixed costs** are the same amount each month. These may include bills such as mortgage or car payments, insurance premiums, cell phone plans, internet, and streaming services. You can budget fixed expenses more precisely because you know the exact amount that will be due and when.

Variable costs, on the other hand, include charges that are different each month. Food costs, utility bills, revolving credit card



NOTE EACH MONTHLY “PAY DAY” (OR ANY DATE YOU EXPECT MONEY TO COME INTO YOUR ACCOUNT)



payments, and “extras” are all variable costs. Some of these expenses may be necessary (e.g., food and electricity are essential), but often there are ways to cut costs in each category.

To begin prioritizing your finances, use a blank calendar and note every recurring monthly payment your family has (fixed or variable) on its due date. Also keep a running list of family expenses that are due quarterly or annually, like property taxes or insurance.

Next, note each monthly “pay day” (or any date you expect money to come into your account rather than go out of it). Do you have enough income to cover the required payments in between pay periods? If not, talk with the collector about the due date. Most companies offer flexibility in choosing a payment date that works for your financial situation. Be sure to pay bills on time to avoid late fees and additional finance charges or interest.

SAVING WHEN EXPENSES ARE TIGHT

To save on groceries, gas, utilities, clothing, and other household essentials, begin by

shopping your home. For example, don’t go grocery shopping until you’ve shopped your pantry, fridge, and freezer. Eat or repurpose leftovers, get creative with the ingredients you have on hand, and use food before it expires. When we toss food in the trash, we’re trashing our cash too.

The same goes for clothing or other household goods. Look for items to sell, trade, refresh, or repurpose before going shopping. To save money on gas, group your errands and limit your shopping trips to one day a week or certain days a month. You can also carpool or use public transportation. For utilities, use energy-saving practices to lower your costs (like wearing layers and monitoring the thermostat).

LOOK TO THE PAST

As you explore ways to save, consider the penny-pinching practices of past generations. They used what they had and weren’t wasteful. They borrowed from friends and neighbors. They sold and traded goods. They repurposed furniture, fabric, and clothing. They lived within their means and considered “a penny saved is a penny earned.”

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ADULT

HEALTH BULLETIN



MARCH 2025

Download this and past issues of the Adult, Youth, Parent, and Family Caregiver Health Bulletins: <http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins>

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

THE POWER OF POSITIVE LANGUAGE AROUND FOOD



The way we talk about food can have a big impact on how we feel about it and how we take care of our bodies. When we use positive, respectful language around food, it helps us build a healthier relationship with what we eat. A healthy relationship with food means not feeling guilty or stressed about what we eat but instead enjoying food as something that nourishes and energizes us.

Words have a lot of power. The language we use can shape our thoughts and feelings. If we call food “bad” or “unhealthy,” we might start feeling bad about eating it. For example, saying things like, “I shouldn’t eat this,” or “this is so unhealthy,” can make us feel guilty when we enjoy our favorite foods. But when we use words like “balanced” or “nourishing,” it reminds

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While it's important to make choices that provide our body with the nourishment it needs most of the time, it's not helpful to label food as all good or all bad.

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us that food is not the enemy — it's something our bodies need to stay strong and healthy.

We often talk about food in ways that make it seem like some foods are “good” and others are “bad.” While it's important to make choices that provide our body with the nourishment it needs most of the time, it's not helpful to label food as all good or all bad. All foods can be good for us in one way or another. Whether it's the nutrients it provides us or the enjoyment we get from eating it. The key is to focus on balance, not perfection. If we can learn to talk and think about food without judgment, it can help us feel more relaxed and less stressed about eating.

Talking about food in a mindful way can also help us enjoy it more. Mindful eating means paying attention to what we're eating, how it makes us feel, and how much we're eating of it. When we use words like “enjoying,” “savoring,” or “appreciating,” we remind ourselves to slow down and notice the flavors, textures, colors, and smells of our food. This helps us be more aware of when we're full and prevents overeating. Instead of rushing through a meal or eating while distracted, we can focus on the experience of eating and truly enjoy it.

Language around food is also important in the way we talk about it with others. If we constantly talk about dieting, weight loss, or food rules, it can create stress and pressure around food. Instead, focus on how food makes us feel good, how it helps our bodies grow, and how it brings people together. When we talk about food in a positive, relaxed way, it can help create a more supporting environment for everyone.

The words we use around food matter. They can help create a healthy, positive relationship with food. By avoiding judgment, focusing on balance, and practicing mindful eating, we can build a better relationship with food.

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