Prairie County Homemakers,

Happy St. Patrick’s Day! I hope by the time this newsletter reaches you, we will have some spring weather! We have a number of free gardening publications available to you at the Extension Office to help treat your spring fever. We have a Spring Potpourri scheduled for April 11th at 2 p.m., Jody Haidle will share spring decorating & crafting ideas. Clubs are asked to share a favorite recipe too!

This issue of the Domestic Engineer contains information about the upcoming Spring Council Meeting which is scheduled for April 24th at 7:00 p.m. at the Prairie County Courthouse. An agenda is included for your club to review and discuss prior to the Council meeting.

Sincerely,

Sharla Sackman
Prairie County Extension Agent

A HUGE Thank You to all Homemakers who brought food and worked a shift to make the Annual Bake Sale & Luncheon a great success!
Prairie Fare: How Do Late-night Snacks and Beverages Affect Sleep?
By Julie Garden-Robinson, NDSU Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist

I glanced at my alarm clock one morning. I was expecting the alarm would be going off any minute. I usually get up at 6 a.m. The clock said 7:24 a.m. I blinked hard and looked again. The time hadn’t changed. We had overslept. I jumped out of bed and knocked on my school-age daughter’s door. She was still in bed and mumbled something about being tired. She was due at school in about 10 minutes. I let her know she needed to be ready to leave in five minutes, and then I went looking for my husband.

My husband usually gets up at 5 a.m., feeds our dogs and shovels the sidewalk when necessary. He never oversleeps. Now I was a little worried. Had he fallen into a pile of snow? Fortunately, I found him sound asleep on the couch, all wrapped in a fuzzy blanket.

“It’s 7:25!” I announced.

“Is it Friday?” he asked groggily.

We were at the end of an exceptionally busy week. Despite oversleeping, somehow we got to where we needed to be on time.

Does eating and drinking before bed affect your sleep, or were we just exhausted? I had enjoyed a snack with some chamomile tea. I know that having a small cup of chamomile tea relaxes me, but oversleeping was not what I wanted to do.

Researchers have shown the merits of drinking chamomile tea. According to some studies, chamomile tea may promote better sleep quality, with fewer episodes of awakening. Chamomile contains a natural antioxidant called apigenin that may help initiate sleep. In fact, a study with nursing home residents showed that consuming some chamomile extract improved their sleep.

However, you also probably do not want to drink a lot of fluid before bed for other reasons. Food and beverages can affect your sleep, but the research on the timing of eating sometimes is conflicting.

Researchers have reported that eating the majority of calories late in the evening can influence our weight and health. People who sleep less than seven to nine hours at night tend to weigh more.

You might have heard that you never should eat past your dinner meal; however, more recent evidence shows that having a small bedtime snack might be good for us. A recent study with men examined the effect of having 150 calories in a protein-rich snack before bed. The snack helped with muscle building, metabolism and satiety, at least among men who had exercised.

For example, a small bowl of whole-grain cereal with milk will be enough to stave off hunger with its blend of protein and carbohydrate.

Remember these sleep hygiene tips to get the rest your body needs. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day. Keep your bedroom quiet and relaxing, and not too warm or too cold. Avoid interacting with electronic devices, including phones, and try to get physical activity during the day. Finally, avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bed. Visit https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/nourishyourbody and click on “sleep” to learn more.

I slept well after having this tasty soup recipe for dinner at 6 p.m. I served it with “Golden Cornbread,” a recipe available in the bread section of our recipe database at https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food.

I enjoyed a cup of chamomile tea with a couple of crackers and cheese before bed. I also adjusted the volume on my alarm clock.

Mexican Fiesta Chicken Soup

2 Tbsp. canola or sunflower oil (or favorite oil)
2 pounds chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 c. onion, chopped
1 Tbsp. garlic, minced
3 (15-ounce) cans low-sodium chicken broth
2 (10-ounce) cans diced tomatoes with cilantro and lime*
1 (14.5-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 (14.5-ounce) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 (4-ounce) can green chili peppers
Salt and pepper (to taste)
1 c. Monterey jack cheese, shredded
Optional: tortilla chips (broken into pieces)
Optional: sliced avocado

*If diced tomatoes with cilantro and lime are not available, substitute fire-roasted diced tomatoes and add the juice of one lime and 1/2 cup chopped cilantro.

In a large pot, heat the oil and add chicken breast. Cook until the chicken is no longer pink. Add onion and garlic and continue to saute until chicken is fully cooked. Add the chicken broth, tomatoes, green chilies and beans and, simmer for 25 minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings as desired. Ladle into bowls and top with cheese, tortilla chips and sliced avocado, if desired.

Makes eight servings. Each serving has 390 calories, 11 grams (g) fat, 42 g protein, 33 g carbohydrate, 10 g fiber and 520 milligrams sodium.
What Is a Credit Score?

From Syracuse University-Whitman

A credit score is a numerical rating from 300 to 850 that expresses how much of a potential risk you may be to lenders. Simply put: A low number means you are a risky investment.

While companies define their risk categories differently, the range tends to look something like this:

- **Bad Credit**: 600 and Under
- **Poor**: 600-649
- **Fair**: 650-699
- **Good**: 700-749
- **Excellent**: 750 and Above

Having a credit score that falls on the lower end of the spectrum can result in being denied loans and even leases on apartments. A bad credit score is not only inconvenient, it is also expensive. Even if you’re approved for a loan, your interest rate is determined in large part by your credit score.

How Is a Credit Score Calculated?

A credit score is based on your credit report information, usually from the three most prominent credit bureaus in the United States: TransUnion, Equifax and Experian. The most common calculation of a credit score is through the FICO method, which uses the following five factors to determine a score:

1. **Payment history** — **35 percent**: Often the most important part of your credit score, payment history tells lenders if you have a history of paying your debts on time.
2. **Amounts owed** — **30 percent**: A high amount owed is not necessarily a bad influence on credit. FICO looks at your “Credit Utilization Ratio,” which is the percentage of your available credit that is currently being used. For example, if your credit card sets your credit limit at $1,500 and you keep a balance of $1,400, you may be at risk of negatively affecting your credit score.
3. **Length of credit history** — **15 percent**: In general, the longer your credit history, the better. For those just starting to build a credit history, don’t worry. It is still possible to maintain a high credit score by paying extra attention to the other criteria.
4. **Credit mix in use** — **10 percent**: The credit mix looks into the types and number of credit accounts owned. While it is a good idea to maintain credit accounts, it is not a good idea to open an account you don’t intend to use.
5. **New credit** — **10 percent**: Opening multiple new lines of credit in quick succession can negatively affect a credit score. Despite myths about credit inquiries being harmful, these alone tend to have little to no effect.

Keep in mind that your credit score is just one factor lenders consider. They will likely look into your income, debt-to-income (DTI) ratio, and length of employment in addition to your credit score before issuing a line of credit.

How Do I Find My Credit Score?

You’re entitled to one free credit report per bureau every 12 months, but in order to get your credit score you’ll most likely have to pay a fee. Certain banks offer free credit scores with memberships. You can purchase your score directly from FICO, or find a credit report monitoring service you like and purchase a subscription to get your credit score included for free.

It is important to monitor your credit report and immediately dispute any fraudulent or incorrect information. The Federal Trade Commission lays out that process.

If you have a checkered credit history, fixing a bad credit score is possible, but it is a lengthy process. FICO provides a list of tips for repairing a credit score. The most important word for those working to improve their scores is “patience.”
Foods That Do Not Freeze Well


Effect of Freezing on Spices and Seasonings

- Pepper, cloves, garlic, green pepper, imitation vanilla and some herbs tend to get strong and bitter.
- Onion and paprika change flavor during freezing.
- Celery seasonings become stronger.
- Curry develop a musty off-flavor.
- Salt loses flavor and has the tendency to increase rancidity of any item containing fat.

When using seasonings and spices, season lightly before freezing, and add additional seasonings when reheating or serving.

### Table: Foods That Do Not Freeze Well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foods</th>
<th>Usual Use</th>
<th>Condition After Thawing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage*, celery, cress, cucumbers*, endive, lettuce, parsley, radishes</td>
<td>As raw salad</td>
<td>Limp, water-logged, quickly develops oxidized color, aroma and flavor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish potatoes, baked or boiled</td>
<td>In soups, salads, sauces or with butter</td>
<td>Soft, crumbly, water-logged, mealy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked macaroni, spaghetti or rice</td>
<td>When frozen alone for later use</td>
<td>Mushy, tastes warmed over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg whites, cooked</td>
<td>In salads, creamed foods, sandwiches, sauces, gravy or desserts</td>
<td>Soft, tough, rubbery, spongy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meringue</td>
<td>In desserts</td>
<td>Soft, tough, rubbery, spongy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icings made from egg whites</td>
<td>Cakes, cookies</td>
<td>Frothy, weeps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream or custard fillings</td>
<td>Pies, baked goods</td>
<td>Separates, watery, lumpy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk sauces</td>
<td>For casseroles or gravies</td>
<td>May curdle or separate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sour cream</td>
<td>As topping, in salads</td>
<td>Separates, watery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese or crumb toppings</td>
<td>On casseroles</td>
<td>Soggy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayonnaise or salad dressing</td>
<td>On sandwiches (not in salads)</td>
<td>Separates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gelatin</td>
<td>In salads or desserts</td>
<td>Weeps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit jelly</td>
<td>Sandwiches</td>
<td>May soak bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fried foods</td>
<td>All except French fried potatoes and onion rings</td>
<td>Lose crispness, become soggy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Cucumbers and cabbage can be frozen as marinated products such as "freezer slaw" or "freezer pickles". These do not have the same texture as regular slaw or pickles.
CALL TO ORDER ~ Arlene Morast

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WOMEN’S CREED

ROLL CALL ~ Lotty Rambur
  Roll call: Each club pays $2 dues per member

MINUTES OF THE FALL COUNCIL MEETING - Lotty Rambur

TREASURER’S REPORT ~ Nancy Birkholz

BILLS AND CORRESPONDENCE

REPORTS
  Fall Banquet
  Club Reports ~ Exchange of Ideas
  Potpourri ~ Eileen Nielsen
  Food Sale and Luncheon ~ Lois Pfieffle

UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS

Cowboy Bandstand:
  2019 Maintenance ~ Ama de Casa
  2019 Christmas decorating ~ Fallon

Spring Potpourri w/ Jody Haidle ~ April 11 @ Legion - clubs to bring a recipe to share

Fair (August 2-4)
  Booth theme is “free choice”
  Pie & Baked Goods Auction
  Chair Club: Ash Creek
    Proceeds recipient ?
    Retain percentage ?

ONGOING BUSINESS:

* Speaker/Entertainment ideas for Fall Banquet
* 50 Year Members & 60 Year Members
* Potpourri Presenter for 2019? Summer? Fall? Christmas?
* Programming ideas for the coming year

Freshments for Fall Council meeting ~ Fallon

Nursing Home list (determine if there are residents who don’t have a club “sponsor”)
  * Activity Ideas

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President and Treasurer to be elected at Fall Council meeting

Refreshments served by Cabin Creek
  * Club representatives should come prepared with their club’s ideas on these topics
We often discuss when to propagate house plants, but we rarely say how to do it. Most people simply place cuttings in water and hope for the best. The shoots of some species, such as the lipstick plant or creeping Charlie, will root in water, but many species won't. Even after those that root in water have sent out numerous new roots, they must be repotted into soil soon. They may survive on water alone, but they will not thrive. There are several ways to propagate houseplants.

Herbaceous stem cuttings are made by clipping a piece of stem from the parent plant about 4 to 5 inches long, with leaves attached. Make the lower cut just below a node, or the point of attachment of a leaf. Remove any leaves on the bottom 1 1/2 to 2 inches of the stem. Dip the base of the stem in water and then into a commercial rooting hormone, which is usually a dry powder. Shake the excess hormone from the stem. With a pencil, pen, or small stick, make a hole in your potting media, and place the stem into the hole. This allows the rooting hormone to remain undisturbed on the stem. Firm the media and moisten it. Place your cutting in a warm place. If you are taking cuttings from plants with sticky sap, allow the base to dry for a few hours prior to dipping in the hormone to reduce infection.

Leaf Cuttings: Take healthy leaves from your mother plant and stick their petioles into the potting media. New roots and shoots will form from the base of the petiole.

Lay leaf blades of Bryophyllum, jade plant, and begonia flat on the media, with their lower surface pressed gently into the media for good contact. New roots and shoots will form from the leaf, which eventually will decay.

Using just a leaf of some plants will produce only roots and no shoots. In this case, the leaf-bud cutting is in order. Take a leaf plus its axillary bud and a portion of the stem. Dip the stem portion into rooting hormone, make a hole in the media with a pencil, and stick the cutting into the hole.

Swordshaped leaves on plants such as Sansevieria can be cut into cross sections, each of which is then placed in the rooting media. New shoots and roots will form from the bottom, or basal end of each cutting.

When you propagate houseplants, you should not use garden soil unless it has been sterilized. There are microorganisms in garden soil that could damage your houseplants or reduce the possibility of successful rooting. Use a mixture of sand and peat or of sand and vermiculite in which to root cuttings, or a good potting soil blend. Add no fertilizer to the rooting media.

Whatever container you choose to use in which to root cuttings, be sure it is clean, particularly if you have used that container before. Wash your container in soapy water, rinse in clear water, disinfect in a 10% bleach solution, rinse again, and dry prior to use. After placing the propagule in the media, firm and moisten it around the base of the cutting and cover the container with plastic to maintain a high relative humidity. A plastic sandwich bag works well placed over your container. Leave the bag loose at its base to allow for some air flow.

Some houseplant species become overcrowded in their containers. Simply dividing the crowns into several segments provides plenty of planting material to fill empty pots. Be sure the soil is moist when you divide the clumps to help it remain intact against the root surfaces. Remove the rootball from the container and gently tease apart individual plantlets.
Invent a Casserole

Choose one grain, meat, and sauce. Multiple vegetables can be included. Seasoning and toppings can be added, if desired.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole grains (Cooked)</th>
<th>Vegetable (Frozen, canned, or fresh, uncooked)</th>
<th>Meat</th>
<th>Sauce</th>
<th>Seasonings and Toppings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1½ to 2 cups</td>
<td>1½ cups</td>
<td>1½ to 2 cups</td>
<td>1 cup or 1 can soup + ½ cup milk or water</td>
<td>Optional (Measure to taste)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole grain noodles, macaroni, spaghetti, or other pasta</td>
<td>Mixed vegetables</td>
<td>Tuna fish</td>
<td>White sauce</td>
<td>Seasonings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown rice</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Cooked beans</td>
<td>Homemade cheese sauce</td>
<td>Salt (up to ¼ teaspoon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>Pork and beans</td>
<td>sauce</td>
<td>Pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgur</td>
<td>Green beans</td>
<td>Split peas</td>
<td>Tomato soup</td>
<td>¼ cup chopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acorn squash</td>
<td>(uncooked)</td>
<td>Cream soup</td>
<td>onion, celery, or green pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>Lentils (uncooked)</td>
<td></td>
<td>½ teaspoon parsley, oregano, or other herb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Canned meat</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toppings (Whole grain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green pepper</td>
<td>Eggs (uncooked)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cracker crumbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>Cooked lean hamburger</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bread crumbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zucchini</td>
<td>Cooked turkey</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dry unsweetened cereal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Cooked chicken</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turnip</td>
<td>Cooked pork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sweet potatoes</td>
<td>Canned beans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To bake in oven: Layer or mix all foods except toppings in a casserole dish. Bake at 350°F for 30-45 minutes. Add toppings and return to oven for about 10 minutes.

To cook on stove top or in an electric frying pan: Measure water for noodles or rice, cook until tender. Drain off excess water. Mix in remaining ingredients except for topping. Heat 5 to 10 minutes. Sprinkle on toppings.

Microwave: Combine all ingredients except toppings. Microwave on HIGH for 6 to 8 minutes. Sprinkle on toppings.
## Favorite Combinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whole Grains (Cooked)</th>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Meat</th>
<th>Sauce</th>
<th>Extra</th>
<th>Toppings (Whole grain for grains)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hambo</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Ham</td>
<td>Cheddar cheese soup</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Bread crumbs, cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South of the Border</td>
<td>Elbow macaroni or tortillas</td>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>Lean ground beef</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Taco seasoning, olives</td>
<td>Cheddar cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monterey Chicken</td>
<td>Egg noodles</td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>Cream of chicken soup</td>
<td>Green chilies</td>
<td>Cracker crumbs, Jack cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beefy Onion</td>
<td>Elbows</td>
<td>Green beans</td>
<td>Cubed lean beef</td>
<td>Cream of mushroom soup</td>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>Caramelized onions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Special</td>
<td>Wide noodles</td>
<td>Green beans</td>
<td>Tuna</td>
<td>Cream of mushroom soup</td>
<td>Mushroom</td>
<td>Cracker crumbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chili Mac</td>
<td>Spiral noodles</td>
<td>Tomatoes, green peppers, celery, onions</td>
<td>Kidney beans</td>
<td>Tomato soup</td>
<td>Chili seasoning</td>
<td>Cheddar cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taco Rice</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>Lean ground beef or cooked beans</td>
<td>Canned tomatoes</td>
<td>Taco seasoning or chili powder</td>
<td>Cheddar cheese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Contact Us

**MSU Extension Prairie County**

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Visit [www.buyeatlivebetter.org](http://www.buyeatlivebetter.org) for more information.

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This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact the Montana Public Assistance Helpline at 1-888-706-1535 or [www.apply.mt.gov](http://www.apply.mt.gov). Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran’s Preference Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach.