

**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER**

5339 County Road 579, Seffner, Florida 33584-3334

Phone: (813)744-5519 FAX: (813)744-5776

Visit Our Website At: <http://hillsboroughfcs.ifas.ufl.edu/>

**August 2007**

## **Don't Let Emergencies Become a Financial Disaster**

Lisa Leslie, Hillsborough County Extension Agent

It is hurricane season and most Florida residents know to stock up on emergency supplies. But what about your emergency fund? Do you have money to cover expenses that can happen when a storm hits? Do you have money set aside to pay insurance deductibles? Keep in mind, that hurricane deductibles for homeowners insurance are usually much higher than \$500.00.



An emergency fund is not only important to help you weather a tropical storm, but also all the unexpected emergencies that come your way. This will keep you from having to resort to high interest credit cards in the event of an emergency...and does anyone's hot water heater really go out on payday? With an emergency fund, you can pay for unexpected things like that hot water heater flooding the garage, a broken arm or

chipped tooth, or your car's transmission suddenly deciding it will never go into reverse again.

The emergency fund is also a hedge fund in case you get laid off or are injured and have to miss work without sick leave. You certainly don't want to run up a high-interest credit card with daily living expenses, and this is a good alternative. Establishing an emergency fund is the key step to stop living paycheck to paycheck and gaining financial control.

Credit cards or pay day loans should not be considered an emergency fund. While they can bring temporary relief, carrying debt balances month to month is expensive and a sign of financial instability. Although people rarely plan to carry high balances, expenses of daily life often get in the way and debt becomes a high cost way of life.

The rule of thumb is to keep 3- 6 months of your income set aside for an emergency fund. But just how much money you set

aside should depend on your particular situation. If you are carrying high credit card debt, you probably want to have a smaller fund and work towards paying off those balances. If your finances are really tight then just set an initial goal of \$500 or \$1000. People with more stable financial situations will want to have emergency funds that include money for short term financial goals (less than five years) –such as a car purchase, vacation, or home remodeling. Job stability, health, and financial responsibilities are also important considerations.

The best way to build an emergency fund is to dedicate a fixed amount of your income to

----- savings. I have found that direct deposit works well. The money

**DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Give this information to your Accounts Payable/Human Resources Department to have your paycheck deposited directly into your bank account.

**9-DIGIT ACCOUNT #** -----

**ROUTING #** 111906271

goes directly to an account so it forces you to live on less income and “pay your-self first.”

Where you plan to keep your emergency fund will depend on how much you have saved, how quickly you need to access the money, and the rate of return. You probably do not want to keep an excessive amount of money in a savings account earning low interest.

Luckily, there are many options such as online savings accounts that offer higher interest rates. Money market deposit accounts are another option, but they usually require larger minimum balances. Certificates of Deposit (CD’S) offer even higher rates of returns but usually require you to keep your money in the account for six months or pay a penalty.

If you have established a significant amount of money in your account- this would include at least two months of emergency savings and money for short term goals- you may want to put your money in different accounts. The two months of emergency money could be placed in a savings or money market account. The money for your short term goals could be saved in a certificate of deposit.

When selecting a place to keep your short term savings fund, consider:

**Accessibility also called liquidity:** Your emergency funds should be some place you can access quickly without penalty. Funds that are allocated for goals that are six months or more away do not need to be as accessible as your emergency fund.

**Safety:** You will want to make sure your money is not at risk. FDIC insured means your account is insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Credit Unions are insured by National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund.

**Rate of return:** Safe savings products usually offer a lower rate of return, than investments such as stocks. But you do have some choices and they can have an effect on whether or not your money grows or loses value by not keeping pace with inflation.

For more information about savings options and strategies for savings money, visit our website – <http://tampabaysaves.ifas.ufl.edu>

*Source: Money Crunch Young Investor Series, University of Tennessee*

# Older Parents

Diana Converse, Family Life Educator

All over the country, women are having babies later in life. They are redefining the boundaries of age and reshaping the profile of motherhood and family life. Why are women waiting so late in life to have babies? According to research found in the Ohio State University Fact Sheet, "*In Praise of Older Parents*," one big reason is careers. Many women are waiting until their careers are established, and they feel more financially secure before having children. Others have simply put off marriage and children in favor of a career. Divorce and remarriage also play a factor. Women who remarry after a divorce or the death of a spouse often want to establish a "new" family. These new families are often established when couples are in their late 30s even 40s.

There are definite advantages to being mid-life parents.

### **Older men tend to be more involved fathers.**

Many middle-aged men choosing fatherhood today are well-established baby boomers. Fatherhood in the 1950s usually meant a distant male who went to work, supported the family, but left the child rearing to mom. Men of this era may not remember having much affection or physical contact from their dads. Many of today's dads are part of the team and are more committed to fatherhood.

### **Parents are more established with their careers.**

If career issues are ironed out, children are less of a threat. Parents feel like they have time for both their career and a family. Parents are also more financially stable. They probably own property or a house. This is one less financial burden. This also means that they can probably better afford quality child care.



**Older parents say they are more patient, calm, and better able to go with the flow than they were then they were younger.** The farther away from childhood that you are, the easier it is

to understand it. Many parents feel that if they had become parents in their 20s, they were still to much a child themselves to be a good parent. They've reached a new level of maturity. They don't worry so much about their children's position on the developmental scale. They realize now children don't have to be perfect. They don't need children to fulfill their ambitions and prove they are good people. The children are freer just to be individuals and grow up in loving, supportive atmospheres.

**Older parents have more time to spend with their children.** They realize what a precious gift they have been given and want to make the most of it.

### **Issues older parents face:**

Being a mid-life parent does affect some aspects of parenting. It can make you feel isolated among parents who are much younger than you are. This often happens at school events and even during childbirth classes. It can also bring out questions from perfect strangers who ask, "Are you the parent or the grandparent?"

Bending and squatting isn't as easy as it was when you were younger, but many parents today are very health conscious, and exercise is often a part of the daily routine. And you've heard parents say they get tired so easily – but what parent doesn't? No one likes to have his or her sleep interrupted in the middle of the night.

You may also worry about how your children will feel about having older parents and how old you will be when they graduate from high school. You may also worry about having enough energy to play soccer at age 50.



Having a baby at any age is a big decision. Whether you're 20 or 40, most parents will tell you that becoming a parent is one of the most satisfying things you've ever done in your life.

## Make it a Nutty Summer

Mary A. Keith, PhD, LD, Extension Agent III, Foods, Nutrition and Health

If you are part of the average American population, the chances are very high that your diet is low or marginal in several key nutrients. The most common ones we miss are fiber, potassium, vitamin E and magnesium. Would you like an easy, one word food to help you increase your intake for those missing items? It's Nuts!



Nuts have all of those, plus more of the healthy, unsaturated fats, good protein and other minerals. If you can also increase fruits and whole grains in your daily dishes in addition to more nuts, you will increase those top 4 as well as folate, vitamins A, C and D too.

The World Health Organization says that low plant food intake is a major risk factor in at least 4 chronic diseases: some cancers, coronary heart disease, stroke and hypertension. A big study in Iowa of post-menopausal women found that those who had nuts in their diet 1 to 4 days a week had almost 20% fewer deaths. A summary of 6 different studies of doctors found that those who ate peanuts or peanut butter once a day had a 20% lower risk of coronary heart disease. Nurses in 5 studies who substituted nuts or peanut butter for saturated fat in their diet lowered their risk of heart disease by 25%. Some studies have found that eating 1 to 2 ounces of nuts 5 days a week cut heart disease risk in half!



What's the magic ingredient in nuts? There are probably several. Besides the **fiber**, nuts also have mostly 'good' **polyunsaturated fat**. That means we make less cholesterol and don't plug up our arteries as much.

Along with the fat come several **antioxidants** including the fat soluble vitamin

E. Another less well known antioxidant that comes in nuts, especially walnuts and pecans is ellagic acid. This is also found in tea and



may be part of its health benefits. The antioxidants prevent

cholesterol from oxidizing into more dangerous forms and protect blood vessel walls. Walnuts are one of the very best sources of antioxidants in foods. Even peanuts have more antioxidants than many vegetables.

**Ellagic acid** is also a prime candidate as cancer prevention. It seems to force cancer cells to die more rapidly, at least in test tubes. So, there is hope that foods containing it will help protect us from cancers too.

Many people have heard that red wine is a good source of **resveratrol**, another anti-cancer, antiviral and anti-aging compound. It also reduces inflammation, which may be a cause of arterial disease. Peanuts are another, less talked about source of the same phytonutrient!



Nut protein has more **arginine**, an amino acid, than many other foods. Arginine helps relax blood vessel walls. That makes them more flexible and lowers our blood pressure.

One final note on nuts. Because of their good quality fat and protein, nuts satisfy our hunger. People who eat 1 -2 ounces of nuts a day have **less chance of gaining weight** than those who avoid nuts. So while you can't eat a whole jar of peanuts and expect to lose weight, you can expect to add a couple of tablespoons to your diet without gaining weight. And you might gain a lot of other health benefits if you do. Have a nutty summer!

# It Is Never Too Little, or Too Late

By Jessica Brennan, EFNEP Extension Agent

Some promising studies released lately show that the smallest changes even later in life will result in better health.

The first shows that no matter how late in life a person begins healthy lifestyle practices, they will gain benefits. These behaviors include eating at least five fruits and vegetables each day, exercising at least 2 ½ hours per week, maintaining a healthy weight and not smoking. By adopting these four practices, even at age



50 or 60, heart problems can be reduced by 35 percent and the risk of dying by 40 percent when compared to those who have less healthy lifestyles.

Another study looked at the amount of physical activity needed to make an impact on a person's health. Results showed that as little as 72 minutes of moderate exercise per week (about 10 minutes per day) can improve your fitness level.

Research also shows that to reach a higher fitness level, you can stick to 10 minute spurts of moderate activity, and just increase the number of times a day you do them. No longer do you have to continuously exercise for 30 minutes or longer to get rewarded; you can split the time up throughout the day. Another thing to note, this study's participants were overweight women around 60 years old, showing that you do not have to begin doing this early in life to see benefits.

Finally, even the smallest changes in diet and activity level can make a big impact. Researchers say that 90% of Americans could maintain their current weight by cutting 100 calories from their diet per day. Do this twice a day, and you can actually lose weight.

There is no magic solution, however. You have to eat less and move more, in some combination that cuts out or burns calories. Did you know that walking for 10 minutes can burn 50 calories? And to cut 50 calories out of your diet, you could eat a couple less spoonfuls of your dessert. Here you are reducing your energy consumption by 100 calories.

## Here are some easy tips to help you eat less and move more:

- Instead of taking the elevator, walk up the steps.
- During commercial breaks, **move**. Then relax when your show comes back on.
- Instead of letting your dog out to go to the bathroom, take him on a walk.
- Don't like low fat salad dressing? Dip your fork into the salad dressing instead of pouring it on the salad. This will cut back on the amount you use.
- Flavor your water. You can keep the taste interesting, while cutting calories.
- Park your car at the back of the parking lot and walk the extra distance when running errands.
- Don't use the remote control for the television. Get up when you want to adjust the volume or channel.
- Cook your meal instead of ordering from a restaurant. You will be forced to move to prepare the food. Added benefits, you can control what is put into your food & save money.



Hillsborough County Extension Service  
University of Florida  
5339 County Road 579  
Seffner, FL 33584-3334



**Non-Profit Org.**  
**US Postage**  
**Paid**  
**Permit No. 15**

**August 2007**  
**Family & Consumer Sciences**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Page 1 & 2 . . . . . Don't Let Emergencies Become a Financial Disaster  
by Lisa Leslie**

**Page 3 . . . . . Older Parents by Diana Converse**

**Page 4 . . . . . Make it a Nutty Summer by Mary A. Keith**

**Page 5 . . . . . It Is Never Too Little, or Too Late by Jessica Brennan**

*Diana Converse*  
DIANA CONVERSE, EAIV, MS  
FCS Program Leader  
Family Life Education

**Mary A. Keith**  
MARY A. KEITH, EAll, PhD, LD  
Food, Nutrition & Health

*Lisa Leslie*  
LISA LESLIE, EAll, M.Ed  
Home Environment

*Jessica Brennan*  
JESSICA BRENNAN, EAI  
Expanded Food & Nutrition  
Program

Hillsborough County Extension is a cooperative service of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners and the University of Florida. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age handicap or national origin. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURAL, HOME ECONOMICS, STATE OF FLORIDA, IFAS, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING.

Any trade names mentioned in the publication are provided solely for information purposes. The Cooperative Extension Service does not endorse or guarantee the standard of the product, nor does it wish to discriminate against any products of similar nature.