

# THIS 'N THAT

Williams County Extension Homemakers

& Friends Newsletter

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2009



Williams County  
Courthouse, 205 E Broadway  
P.O. Box 1109  
Williston ND 58802-1109  
Phone: 701-577-4595  
Fax: 701-577-4597  
maryf@co.williams.nd.us

## TIDBITS

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Well, we had our vacation this month and Dusty is heading back to NDSU today, so it looks like summer really has passed me by. It will take some adjusting to a quieter household again... I'll be in that empty nest syndrome again for awhile.

The fall will be a busy season too, so I won't have too much time to feel sorry for myself. The chokecherries are ripe in the pasture so I will be making jelly this weekend... if the birds haven't eaten them all up by the time I get out there again! My September calendar is looking very full already.

The new programs for Homemakers have been announced and we will be getting the materials in September. They are: (1) Casino Gambling Among Older Adults in ND; (2) Go Green Project: Energy Use; (3) Nourish Your Brain; (4) Our Traveling Food; (5) Saving & Investing on a Shoestring: Finding Money to Save; (6) Understanding Depression in Later Life.

Please visit our website to keep up on Extension news. The newsletter is also available on the web, just in case you misplace yours or want to review an older edition. Let us know if there is anything else you would like to see on the website- or in the newsletter. *Mary*

### COMING UP

- Sept. 3 **Let's Make Salsa! Class** at WHS Family Consumer Science Room, 6:00–9:00pm  
Registration Deadline August 28th
- Sept. 9-11 **Bethel Lutheran Foundation's College for Seniors**  
Educational program for Seniors at Bethel Lutheran Home
- Sept. 11-13 **Tioga Farm Festival**  
For schedule of events visit: [www.tiogand.net](http://www.tiogand.net)
- Sept. 13 **Tables of Contents**  
Williston Community Library from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. Unique table arrangements and ideas for entertaining. Admis-
- Sept. 15 **Artist Reception**  
An Artist Reception for Kathleen Moorhead Johnson will be at the James Memorial Art Center at 5:30 PM. Kathleen will present a Gallery Talk featuring a bed turning with original quilts from her company August Wind Quilt
- October 19 **Homemakers Fall Council Meeting , 7:00 pm**  
2nd Floor Conference Room, Williams County Courthouse

## Flu Season is Starting. Get Ready Now!

The flu season is starting and will last through the fall and winter. More than one kind of flu virus will be spreading this season, including seasonal flu and the 2009 H1N1 flu. If you get the flu, you can get sick and can spread the flu to others at home, at work, and in the community. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

### Important Actions to Take to Stay Healthy

- Every time you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and throw used tissues in the trash.
- Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use alcohol-based hand cleaners if soap and water are not available.
- Wash your hands before and after preparing food or eating, after using the restroom, before and after touching your nose, eyes, or mouth, and after touching items that may have been exposed to bodily fluids
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way. Get vaccinated for seasonal flu. For more information about seasonal flu vaccination, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm).

### Please do NOT go to work if you are sick with a fever AND cough or sore throat.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that sick employees stay home if they are sick with flu-like illness until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

Get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available, **if** you are at higher risk for flu complications. If you are at higher risk for complications from the flu and you are sick, contact your health care provider as soon as possible. Children younger than 5 years of age, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as pulmonary disease, asthma, diabetes, neuromuscular disorders, or heart disease), and people 65 years of age and older are more likely to get complications from the flu. Your health care provider may prescribe antiviral drugs, and they are most effective when started within 2 days of getting sick.

In addition, emergency warning signs that the sick person needs **urgent medical attention** include

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough



Stay home for at least 24 hours after you are free of a fever or signs of a fever.

**Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze, with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**



## LET'S MAKE SALSA! CLASS



NDSU Extension Agents, Mary Froelich of Williams County and Marcia Hellandsaas of McKenzie County, will be teaching a class on making garden fresh salsa on September 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6:00-9:00pm in the WHS Family Consumer Science lab. The cost of this class is \$10.00.

While many excellent types of salsa are available in supermarkets, you can tailor home-made fresh salsa to suit your

own taste buds. By following research-tested recipes, you can safely process salsa in a water bath canner for later enjoyment. You can make fresh salsa by buying fresh produce or from ingredients grown in your own garden. Garden varieties for salsa will also be discussed.

Participants will make a batch of fresh (not processed) salsa to take home with them.

For further information and to register for this class call the Williams County Extension office at 577-4595 or the McKenzie County Extension office at 444-3451.

**Registration deadline is August 28<sup>th</sup>.**



By following research-tested recipes, you can safely process salsa in a water bath canner for later enjoyment.

## PRAIRIE FARE: PRESERVE SUMMER'S BOUNTY SAFELY

**After all the weeding, watering and activity associated with growing a garden, why risk producing unsafe canned food?**

By Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist  
NDSU Extension Service

After being away from home a few days, my husband, 11-year-old daughter and I eagerly checked our backyard garden. We noted bountiful carrots, beets and onions. Our lettuce is past its prime, but our 18 tomato plants are drooping with tomatoes and taking over the garden.

I'm not complaining about our prolific produce by any means. I am beginning to question, however, why we planted so many tomatoes. I guess we didn't expect them to grow so well.

We will be eating fresh tomatoes soon and preserving the rest to enjoy this winter. Tomatoes can be frozen, canned in a water-bath canner if they are acidified with bottled lemon juice, or made into salsa or spaghetti sauce using a research-tested recipe.

As tempting as it might be, one thing we won't be doing is creating our own salsa recipes prior to canning. We also won't be experimenting with food preservation recipes from old cookbooks. Recommendations have changed, so grandma's recipes may not be considered safe by today's standards.

After all the weeding, watering and activity associated with growing a garden, why risk producing unsafe canned food?

Salsa is a mixture of acidic foods, such as tomatoes, and low-acid foods, such as peppers and onions. The pH, or level of acidity, determines how to can a food safely. For safety, low-acid foods, such as vegetables and meat, must be pressure canned.

Naturally acidic foods, such as jams, and acidified foods, such as tomatoes with added bottled lemon juice, can be canned safely in a boiling water-bath canner.

Why is the acidity of foods so important? Microorganisms, such as *Clostridium botulinum*, can survive or grow in some foods, depending on their pH level. This type of bacteria can produce a toxin or poison in an airtight container. Someone eating a tainted canned food could get botulism, a potentially fatal form of foodborne illness. (cont'd on back page)

We have all new, and revised food preservation brochures available in our office now!

Stop in or call...

- Let's Preserve Fruit Pie Fillings
- Home Canning Fruit and Fruit Products
- Jellies, Jams and Spreads
- Home Canning Low-acid Vegetables
- Pickled Products
- From the Garden to the Table: Salsa!
- From the Garden to the Table: Garlic!
- Sauerkraut: From the Garden to the Table
- Jams and Jellies from Native Fruits
- Canning & Freezing Tomatoes & Making Salsa
- Q & A's About Using a Boiling Water Bath
- Q & A's About Using a Pressure Canner
- Why Add Lemon Juice to Tomatoes & Salsa Before Canning?
- Food Preservation-Facts or Myths?

The good news for people with prolific tomatoes and other vegetables is that there are safe canning recipes available. Approach making salsa and doing other home food preservation like a scientist. Follow the recipe's formulation exactly.

When preparing salsa, always start with high-quality ingredients. Don't add extra peppers or onions to salsa recipes because they will affect the acidity level. You can substitute one type of pepper for another to vary the heat, but don't vary the amount in the recipe.

Don't thicken salsa with cornstarch before canning because thickening will affect its safety, too. If needed, you can thicken the salsa after opening.

Add bottled lemon juice or vinegar as directed. Acidic ingredients in salsa help preserve it. Research-tested salsa recipes have added lemon juice or vinegar because the natural acidity of the tomatoes may not be high enough.

You can substitute lemon juice in a recipe calling for vinegar, but do not substitute vinegar in a recipe calling for lemon juice. Lemon juice is more acidic than vinegar. The vinegar you use should be at least 5 percent acid. Here's a research-tested recipe from one of the canning publications produced by the NDSU Extension Service. For more information about safe food preservation, visit <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/preservation.html>.

To get alerts about new publications, recipes and other tips, become a fan of the "Eat Smart. Play Hard" Facebook page at <http://www.ndsu.edu/eatsmart>.



National Food Safety Education Month\*

## FOOD SAFETY THRIVES WHEN YOU FOCUS ON FIVE!



### **Avoid Purchasing Food From Unsafe Sources**

You can't make unsafe food safe. That's why it is important to check all food when you purchase it. Always make sure the food you receive is in good condition, and at the right temperature.



### **Clean and Sanitize Correctly**

Dirty equipment and utensils can contaminate food with disease-causing pathogens. To keep food safe, clean and sanitize all food-contact surfaces. Cleaning a surface removes food and other dirt, and sanitizing a surface reduces pathogens to safe levels.



### **Prevent Cross Contamination**

Disease-causing pathogens can spread from dirty hands, equipment, and utensils to food. If this happens, the food might make someone sick. You can help prevent this by ensuring workstations, cutting boards, and utensils are cleaned and sanitized before using them.



### **Prevent Time-Temperature Abuse**

Some food, like meat and dairy, require time and temperature control to keep it safe. It's called TCS food (Time and Temperature Control for Safety). Disease-causing pathogens will grow well in TCS food if it's kept at temperatures between 41°F and 140°F. You must keep TCS food out of this temperature danger zone to keep it safe.



### **Practice Personal Hygiene**

Touching food with dirty hands can make people sick. That's because disease-causing pathogens can be transferred from hands to food. Always wash your hand after using the restroom, or any time they get dirty.



Harmful bacteria can grow rapidly in the "Danger Zone."

Remember the 2-hour rule.  
Discard any perishable food left at room temperature longer than 2 hours.