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Family, Food & Finance

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FEW QUESTIONS ANSWERED: Stimulus Payment

Submitted by Diane Orr

Is the Stimulus Payment Taxable Next Year?
NO!

Will this Payment Affect the Amount of SSA Benefits You Receive?
NO!

When Will I Receive My Payment?
The IRS will begin mailing checks in early May.

For More Information:
You can visit the IRS web site at www.IRS.gov

WATER TOXICITY: A Growing Concern

Submitted by Diane Orr



For most Americans, the idea that drinking too much water is unhealthy seems far-fetched. However, if one takes a course in toxicology, one of the first things you will learn is the dose makes the poison. Simply put, nothing is toxic if the dose is low enough, and everything is toxic if the dose is high enough. This is true even for a substance as critical to life and health as water.

Last year the danger of drinking too much water over a short period of time was made clear by the death of an apparently healthy 28 year old mother of 3 who died from acute water intoxication as the result of a radio show contest called "Hold your wee for a Wii". The KDND-FM radio "Morning Rave" show had 18 contestants compete for a Wii by drinking as much water as they could without urinating. According to the Coroner's Office the woman was apparently in good health and died as a result of "water intoxication."

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension in Niagara County provides equal program and employment opportunities.

Clearly drinking too much water over a short period of time is dangerous and can result in acute toxicity.

It is not clear how much the woman drank but another contestant said he quit after eight 8 oz. glasses of water and this woman kept going.

When plain water or other beverages including sport drinks are consumed in large amounts over several hours this can lead to the dilution of electrolytes like sodium and chloride in the blood. Low sodium (<125mmol/L) in the blood or hyponatremia frequently results when fluid intake dilutes the blood too much. If serum sodium drops below (120mmol/L) it can lead to death. Dilutional hyponatremia results in brain swelling and is usually accompanied by headache, nausea, lethargy, vomiting, disorientation and convulsions.

For many years, endurance athletes have been encouraged to drink before and during endurance events. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) for years recommended endurance athletes consume 600 to 1200 ml of fluid per hour. However, such guidelines to drink well in excess of thirst appear to be largely responsible for a growing epidemic of hyponatremia in endurance athletes. A study of 488 runners in the 2002 Boston Marathon found that 13% finished the race with hyponatremia and 3 had a critically low serum sodium level (<120mmol/L). Researchers noted that smaller people who took longer to finish the race were at higher risk of hyponatremia especially if they gained weight during the event. They also found that drinking sports drinks with added salt was not associated with any reduction in the risk of hyponatremia.

Certainly drinking too little water and becoming dehydrated can lead to heat stroke, which is also dangerous. While many sports nutrition experts tell people that they should drink enough to prevent weight loss during an endurance event this may not be the best advice. Certainly the

loss of about 0.5% of one's initial weight during the first 3-4 hours of competition will not impair athletic performance or lead to heat stroke. In ultra-endurance events lasting more than 4 hours but less than 16 hours, one should probably try to limit weight loss to no more than about 3 to 4% of one's initial body weight.

Because of growing concerns about hyponatremia there is a growing trend of adding more salt to sports drinks and encouraging people to consume more salty foods before a race. Unfortunately eating more salt lowers aldosterone levels in the blood and greatly increases the amount of salt lost in the sweat. The resulting increased loss of sodium in sweat may very well increase the risk of severe hyponatremia. In any case, Americans already suffer from salt toxicity and one cannot justify the use of more salt as a solution to a problem that is fundamentally caused by consuming too much fluid.

Bottom Line:

Drinking fluid well in excess of thirst can result in hyponatremia, which can impair athletic performance and in extreme cases can even be life threatening. Encouraging athletics to consume more salt and saltier sports drinks are of no proven value to preventing hyponatremia but certainly increase the risk of hypertension in the long run. Source: James J. Kenney, PhD, RD, FACN as printed in *Communicating Food for Health*, March 2008

***LIVING WITH YOUR TEEN:
Understanding the Changing
Parent-teen Relationship***

Submitted by Kathy Bowers

Disagreements between parents and teens are normal. Many parents are overwhelmed by the responsibilities that accompany child-rearing. Often, parents believe they are solely responsible for how their children turn out. Many parents believe that if they

don't do the right things, their children won't become well-adjusted adults. This misconception may cause the normal struggles that occur between parents and teens to take on exaggerated importance. Parents need to understand that although they are very important in their child's life, other influences also are important. Peers, teachers, counselors and especially popular public figures have some influence on the developing teenager.

The teen's struggle for independence becomes a real problem when it is viewed by parents as a struggle for control. For many parents, the method used to ensure that a child will grow up "right" is to maintain control over many aspects of the child's life. Such parents choose their children's clothes, friends, hobbies and even course of study. As their children grow older, they begin to realize they can never grow into adults without assuming control of their lives. Therefore, teens begin to fight for their control which turns into fighting with their parents, defying them, demanding control, and in the process, running the risk of angering and hurting the parents they love. For these teens, the struggle for adulthood is risky because they risk losing their parent's love. At the same time, parents can feel rejected and hurt by the behavior of their once obedient and happy children. They are also concerned about their child's ability to be in control of their own life when the time comes. To some parents, defiant behavior is proof they must have failed as parents. The struggle is double stressful when each person cares so deeply about the other.

It is not just a teenage problem. Many professionals who work with parents and teens believe that parents' problems also contribute to the problems of teens. Often the parents of teens are middle-aged, which can result in some issues of middle adulthood such as unrest, discontentment, change and self-introspection. During this time, many adults ask themselves what they have done with their lives and what they still want to do. Some adults may be depressed because they haven't achieved their personal or professional goals. Others may be anxious because they don't know

what they will do after their children have grown and left home.

What are some ways you as a parent can improve your relationship with your teen? First, it helps if you recognize that teenagers must become independent in order to become adults, just as they had to learn to walk and talk from infancy to childhood. The first toddling steps away from a parent and the first "No, I can do it myself" are the beginnings of growth toward independence, a task of every child. The task can be completed only when the child learns to function independently of his or her parents.

If becoming independent is the task of children, then the task of parents must be to help their children reach independence in a healthy and safe way, allowing them to slowly take control of their own lives. It is common for the changing parent-child relationship to cause problems in some families. It is helpful when parents are able to accept changes and support their teens towards independence. This requires patience, understanding and lots of unconditional love! Source: Bonnie-Jo Westendorf, CCE-Columbia County

SPRING MEANS BBQ TIME!

Submitted by Chris Brown

When warmer weather arrives, so does BBQ season. Follow these tips for a safe and healthy BBQ:

- ➡ Add meat and poultry to your shopping cart just before you head to the checkout, then head right home and put the meat and poultry into the refrigerator.
- ➡ If you freeze your meat and poultry, when it comes time to thaw it, safely thaw it in the refrigerator, not on the kitchen counter.



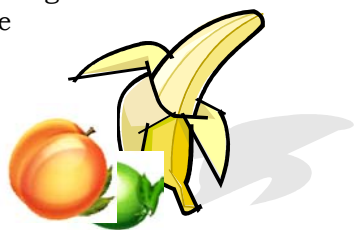
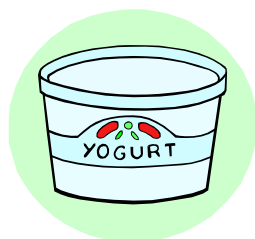
- ➔ Marinating? Keep meat and poultry in the refrigerator while you marinate it. This will help to keep harmful bacteria from multiplying. Throw away the marinade after you put the meat on the grill. If you want any to use as a sauce once the meat is cooked, save some before you add the meat and keep it in the refrigerator.
- ➔ Use one plate to take the meat and poultry to the BBQ, and use a clean plate to stack the cooked food when it is done.
- ➔ Use a meat thermometer to make sure your meat and poultry are safely cooked. Hamburgers should be 160°F, whole chicken or chicken breasts or thighs should be 160°F, steaks and roasts should be 145°F for medium rare and 160°F for medium, hot dogs should be 160°F and all cuts of pork should be cooked to 160°F.
- ➔ Refrigerate leftovers in shallow containers within 2 hours of serving. If it is hotter than 90°F outside, food should not sit out any longer than 1 hour.

GRILLED FRUIT KABOBS

Submitted by Chris Brown

Makes 4 servings

- 6 (6-to8-inch) bamboo or metal skewers
- 1- 8-ounce carton low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1 teaspoon grated lime peel
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1-20ounce can unsweetened pineapple chunks, drained
- 2 large ripe, yet firm, nectarines or peeled peaches
- 2 medium ripe, yet firm, bananas
- 1 tablespoon melted margarine
- 2 teaspoons lime juice



Directions:

1. Soak the skewers (if bamboo) in warm water for several minutes. Meanwhile, for the sauce, in a small bowl combine the yogurt, lime peel, the 1 tablespoon lime juice, and the cinnamon. Cover and refrigerate until serving time.
2. For the kabobs, drain the pineapple. Cut nectarines or peeled peaches into wedges. Cut bananas into chunks. Alternately thread pieces of fruit on the skewers. In a small bowl combine melted margarine and the 2 teaspoons lime juice. Brush over kabobs. Grill on the rack of an uncovered grill directly over medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes, turning once or twice. Serve kabobs with the sauce.

****Nutrition Facts:** Yield – 6 servings; Serving size- 1 skewer; 160 calories, 15 calories from fat, 9% calories from fat, 1.5 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 40 mg sodium, 35 g carbohydrate, 3 g dietary fiber, 3 g protein, 6% vitamin A, 25% vitamin C, 8% calcium, 4% iron

Source: Better Homes and Gardens, www.bhg.com

** Nutrition facts calculated by the Food Processor ® Nutrition Analysis Software from ESHA Research, Salem, Oregon

WISDOM

An old Indian Chief told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, “My son, the battle is between two wolves. One is “evil.” It is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego.

The other is “good.” It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked, “Grandfather, which wolf wins?” The old Indian Chief simply replied, “The one you feed.”

Source: Herkimer County Living, author unknown

TIPS FOR RISING FOOD COSTS

Submitted by Katherine Streeter, R.D., M.B.A.

Feeding yourself and your family on what feels like a shrinking food dollar can be quite a challenge! These tips are all things you can try that are economical, healthy, or both:

Plan menus, and write a shopping list: A little time invested up-front can save you a lot both in terms of money and health. Menu planning can help you get organized for the week, and planned meals tend to be more healthful. Your plan can help you see where you can use leftovers (planned-overs) or buy larger quantities. Shopping without a list can cost you as much as 30% more in purchases!

Take advantage of unit pricing: You may be familiar with this idea – the price of milk is around *three dollars per gallon*, perhaps you get lemons *2 for a dollar*. These examples of "what you get for what price" are all examples of unit pricing and you can check the shelves to compare. Many times, buying larger or buying in bulk quantities pays off because you get more value for your money. However, if you cannot consume the entire quantity before it expires or if you're tying up all your cash by stocking your pantry, buying big may not always be a wise choice for you.

Use your shopping smarts: Combine the specials listed in the grocers' circulars with coupons for things you would normally buy. Stores sometimes put items on sale based on cycles (6 weeks, 8 weeks, 10 weeks, etc.), so by paying close attention you can stock up when the time is right. Be careful, however, not to be seduced into buying products you otherwise wouldn't, or buying more than you need.

Let go of brand loyalty: This is a very personal decision, but some flexibility on your part can pay off. By going where the deals are, and buying generic or store brands, you can save up to 30 percent. Many non-brand names are made in the very same processing plant as brand

names, and come with a 100% satisfaction guarantee.

Make it from scratch: You can save a bundle by trying do-it-yourself versions of your family favorites. Try a homemade pizza with part-skim mozzarella cheese, a "make it your way" trail mix including a whole grain cereal, or a good old-fashioned casserole with lots of colorful veggies.

Plant a vegetable garden: The supplies to get started can be inexpensive and the harvest can be bountiful! Having a garden of your own is a fresh and thrifty way to go. (Gardening is also a good physical activity, and can reduce stress!) Even folks with limited space can use window boxes or large pots – try leafy greens, herbs, and individual vines of tomatoes, cucumbers, and summer squash.

Shop at the Farmers' Market, roadside stands, and U-pick farms: There are so many benefits to shopping local – you get fresh goods and a great price, and support the regional economy at the same time. For more information, check out <http://www.niagarafarmmarkets.org/>

Learn more: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County's **Family Life Program** can offer additional nutrition and budgeting education for qualifying Niagara County residents. To see if your family is eligible for this *FREE* service, **call 278-8131**. We can also provide you with information about community resources such as free food giveaways.



DID YOU KNOW?

That's Not me...

Each year about nine million Americans are victims of identity theft. *Parenting Magazine* advises carrying only one or two credit cards to minimize the risk if your wallet is lost or stolen, which is still the most frequent way someone's identity is stolen. Also, make photocopies of the front and back of all cards so you can call quickly to cancel the missing ones. Thieves also steal the identities of children, so limit giving out their Social Security numbers.

Slow Connection

Internet growth is slowing much faster than predicted, says *Business Week*. Once experts predicted 75 percent of homes would have the Internet by 2005, but one recent study reported only 64 percent were wired. Surprisingly, it is not just the old or poor without Internet service; some people

simply refuse to hook up. One out of four unwired individuals are well educated, earn good incomes, and are under the age of 44. Many of them feel the Internet is a hassle or reduces human contact.

Stressful Sounds...

Over the last century, our ears hear significantly more noise – and louder noise, according to *Mens's Health*. Not only is hearing loss on the rise, but noise may be leading to other health problems. Our brains consider loud noise a threat, so these sounds surge our stress level. Some studies indicate normal traffic noise or even constant machine hums can lead to high blood pressure, sleep problems, and possibly even cardiovascular problems. One noise reduction advocate suggests using earplugs as frequently as you use sunglasses or sunscreen.

Source: Toolkit Volume 33 Number 3; May-June 2006

