



September & October 2006  
Choctaw County

## Packing a safe school lunch requires following food safety guidelines

With schools across the state back in session, those new lunchboxes may be getting a workout along with all of the new pencils, crayons, notebooks and erasers.

Although some children purchase their lunches at school, many opt to bring a lunch from home, said Barbara Brown, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service food safety specialist.

“Not only are students learning new things in math and science, it’s a great time to teach children about basic food safety issues when bringing lunch to school,” Brown said. “In fact, food safety is just one aspect of science. Safe home lunches are an important part of the learning process. And to help make food safety fun, involve your child in the process just as you do when deciding what foods will go into the lunchbox.”

Food safety starts at home. It is important to keep your preparation area clean, including all counter surfaces. Also make sure the food containers being used are clean as well. Wash hands and always use clean utensils when packing a lunch.

Clean the surfaces and wash hands before preparing foods, and clean up any spills along the way. Remember to clean the lunchbox itself along with all of the food containers, thermos and eating utensils.

The next thing to keep in mind is food temperature. When packing a lunch it is best to use an insulated lunch box. To help ensure foods stay cold, include a freezer gel pack. If a parent is sending a juice box in the lunch, freeze it the night before and use it as a freezer pack. Juice also can be frozen in reusable plastic drinking

containers and be used as a cold pack in the lunchbox.

“It’s very important to keep perishable foods such as meat, poultry or eggs, nestled close to the freezer gel pack or the frozen juice box,” Brown said. “Frozen gel packs or ice packs will help ensure cold foods remain cold until lunchtime. However, these gel packs don’t normally last all day, so any leftover perishable foods should be thrown away right after lunch or be discarded when your child gets home after school. It’s not safe to keep uneaten food and use it in the next day’s lunch, even if the food still feels cool.”

Although a brown paper bag could be used in place of an insulated bag, the paper bag will not retain the cold as well.

Double bagging can help provide some additional insulation, but when it comes to ensuring food safety, using an insulated bag is the best bet.

“Be sure to keep lunch boxes out of direct sunlight and away from radiators and other heat sources,” she said. “Check to see if your child’s school has a refrigerator available where children can store lunchboxes until it is time to eat.”

Just as it is important to keep cold foods cold, consumers must keep hot foods hot. Use an insulated bottle or thermos for foods such as soup, stew or chili. To help ensure the foods stay as hot as possible, fill the insulated bottle with boiling water and let it sit for a few minutes. Discard the water and fill the bottle with the hot food. Be sure to keep the insulated bottle closed until lunchtime to ensure the food stays nice and hot.

## Help You're Family Grow Stronger

### How can family members be stronger as a family?

- ♥ Show each other caring and appreciation
- ♥ Spend time together
- ♥ Give each other encouragement
- ♥ Commit to one another
- ♥ Communicate with others
- ♥ Help each other cope with change
- ♥ Share spirituality
- ♥ Build community and family ties
- ♥ Define clear roles for everyone



### What are some ideas of how you can do this?

Write short notes to each other (a simple hello, praise for a job well done, and good luck for an event). Tuck the notes under the person's pillow or slip them into a backpack, lunch bag, dresser, gym bag, or purse. Write at least one note to each family member every week.

Part of coping with change is learning to take on new roles unexpectedly. Once a month, ask family members to think of a chore or a job they usually do that they would like to "give away" for a day.

Trade tasks with each other. For that day only, the person does that job. The next day, talk about how it felt to switch roles and how the family can prepare to fill in for each other in the future.

**Choose a good time for a discussion:** at the dinner table, in the car, in the evening while relaxing. Eliminate distractions and allow enough time for everyone to talk and share their views.

### Use these fun ideas to start a conversation:

One really good thing that happened to me is...

My biggest goof last week was...

Our family is really good at...

My favorite meal is...

One thing I like about each person in my family is...

**Strengthen ties you have with neighbors by finding ways to be helpful.** For example, watch a pet, share a favorite dessert, bring in the newspaper, or shop for someone who is ill.

Resource: University of Missouri Extension

## A Great Way to Start Your Child's Day

Fruit juice is an easy way to enjoy fruit. Keeping juice on hand is good for your whole family. Here's what it provides:



**Vitamin C** to help heal cuts and bruises, fight infection, and use iron from food.

**Vitamin A** are in some juices for healthy eyes and skin.

**Carbohydrates** for energy.

Even though fruit juice has a lot to offer... Go easy! Because juice is convenient, it's easy to drink too much of it. Here's why drinking too much juice can be problem:

☺ Juice has calories. Too much may give your child more calories than he or she needs. That may contribute to overweight.

☺ If juice replaces milk your child may not get enough bone building calcium.

☺ Sipping juice a lot promotes cavities. Sometimes diarrhea is a problem too.

### How much juice is right for children?

Offer your child enough, but not too much. Children 1 to 6 years of age need  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of juice a day.

Should you choose 100% fruit juice or juice drink? Labels can help you choose beverages for your family. The Nutrition Facts label can tell you how calories and nutrients differ. The ingredients list can tell you what it's made of. For nutrition, 100% fruit juice is the best. Juice drinks have some juice and added vitamin C.

## Nutrition & Food Preparation Classes

Held every Monday

10:00 a.m.

Choctaw Co. Library, Hugo



Presented by the OSU Cooperative Extension Service and the Community Nutrition Education Program (CNEP).

# Celebrate National Grandparents Day September 10<sup>th</sup>

## Family Activity

### Benefits of Grandparenting

- ♥ Being involved in your children's and grandchildren's lives and their many achievements.
- ♥ Providing extended family support, encouragement, and companionship
- ♥ Being a better grandparent than perhaps you were a parent, due to years of experience.
- ♥ Continuing the family line.



### Benefits to Grandchildren

- ♥ Developing positive attitudes toward aging.
- ♥ Learning about their families' origins, culture, and customs or traditions.
- ♥ Developing life skills and leisure-time activities.

### 8 Best Gifts to Give to Grandchildren

1. Spend time one-on-one with grandchildren.
2. Provide listening for their concerns as well as their joys.
3. Send special notes and cards.
4. Offer companionship for activities they enjoy.
5. Share your history and family traditions.
6. Be a role model and show that older people can be fun.
7. Show grandchildren that you accept them just as they are.
8. LOVE – the best gift of all.

***These words refer to Grandma and Grandpa in the following counties:***

Germany -- *Oma* and *Opa*

India -- *Nana-ji* and *Nani-ji*

Greece -- *Ya-ya* and *Pa-p*

Japan -- *Oba-chan* and *Oji-chan*

China -- *Popo* and *Gong-gong*

Italy -- *Nonna* and *Nonno*



### *Me and My Gran – Hand in Hand*



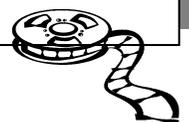
1. Child draws around Grandparent's hand. Then place her own hand in outline of Grandparent's hand and child and Grandparent together trace child's hand. This idea can be used to make a refrigerator drawing, a framed keepsake, a placemat, etc.
2. Another idea is to make grandparent's handprint with red or yellow fingerprint. After it dries, overlap child's handprint using blue or green finger-paint.
3. Or both hands can be cast in 3/4" deep plaster, side by side.
4. Or handprints can be embroidered. This is an opportunity for the grandparent to teach grandchildren how to embroidery.



**UPCOMING ATTRACTION**  
**Coming to Choctaw County**  
**September 2006**

**Active Parenting Now**  
September 28, Thursday  
5:30 – 6:30 pm  
OSU Extension Office, Hugo  
To enroll or for more information,  
contact Tommie M. James,  
Extension Educator at 326-3359.

**PREVIEW...** A program geared for parents of children ages 5 to 12, to help parents raise responsible and cooperative children who are prepared to meet the challenges of the teen years.



# Choctaw County OHCE Update



## NO Lunch-n-Learn for September

**October 26, Thursday**

NOTICE: Changed Date

### OHCE Executive Meeting

10:00 am

### Home for the Holidays

*Tasty treats and gift giving ideas*

12:00 noon

OSU Extension Office, Hugo



*Coming to Antlers  
during the month of November...*

### OHCE's Explores Holiday Cultures

*Featured Countries:  
Denmark, Mexico, Brazil and  
England*



More details will be announced at a later date.

Family & Consumer Science Newsline is published as one way of communicating educational information to the citizens of Choctaw County:



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## 2006 Choctaw County Fair September 13 - 16

### Wednesday, Sept. 13

1:00 – 7:00 pm Enter all exhibits, except perishable foods and livestock

1:00 – 7:00 pm Booth setup

8:00 pm All Buildings Closed

### Thursday, Sept. 14

8:00 – 9:00 am Enter perishable foods

8:30 – 10:30 am Enter Goats, Poultry and Rabbits

9:00 – 12:00 noon Judging of all exhibits  
(Building Closed for Judging)

1:00 pm Pickup perishable foods

Exhibits open for viewing

3:00 pm Judge Rabbits and Poultry

5:00 pm Judge Goats

7:00 Entertainment: Gospel Singing

8:00 pm All Buildings Closed

### Friday, Sept. 15

8:30 – 10:30 noon Enter Beef and Lambs

9:00 am All exhibits open for viewing

10:00 – 11:00 am Wheat Heart Bread Entries

11:00 am Judge Wheat Heart Breads

3:30 pm Livestock Judging Contest

6:00 pm Lamb Show

7:00 pm Entertainment

8:00 pm All buildings closed

### Saturday, Sept. 16

9:00 am All exhibits open for viewing

9:00 – 9:30 Enter Cute Baby Contest

9:30 Cute Baby Contest

11:00 Kiddie Pet Show

11:45 am Livestock Judging Awards

12:00 noon Beef Show

7:00 – 8:00 pm Exhibits pickup

8:00 pm Outdoor Entertainment

8:00 pm All buildings close

