

Washington State University Extension engages people, organizations and communities to advance economic well-being and quality of life by connecting them to the knowledge base of the university and by fostering inquiry learning, and the application of research.

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Skagit County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Ideas for Healthy Living

Providing interactive learning experiences in Skagit County

NEWSLETTER

January / February 2017



Washington State University Skagit Extension welcomes our newest project, **The Backpack Program**! The weekend Backpack Program partners with local schools and food banks to provide children with weekend bags of nonperishable foods to help fight weekend hunger. According to Washington State Employment Security Department (2013), 24.5% of children in Skagit County live below poverty line.

Statistics show that children who skip meals or are food insecure over the weekend will need an additional 2.5 days of regular meals to retain what they are learning. This means that if a child comes to school hungry on Monday they are not ready to learn until Wednesday afternoon. Backpacks are distributed every Friday to ensure that children will have food over the weekend and return to school Monday ready to learn.

Many schools in Skagit County participate in the Backpack Program:

Anacortes: District-Wide

Burlington: Allen Elementary, Westview Elementary

Concrete Elementary

Mount Vernon: Little Mountain Elementary, Washington Elementary, La Venture Middle, Mount Baker Middle

Sedro Woolley: Big Lake Elementary, Central Elementary, Clear Lake Elementary, Evergreen Elementary, Lyman Elementary, Mary Purcell Elementary, Samish Elementary, Cascade Middle, Sedro Woolley High, State Street High

Want to learn more or see if you qualify?

Contact your local school counselor for more information.



Wondering what local crops are available throughout the winter (December-March) in Skagit County? Apples, beets, carrots, chard, collards, kale, kohlrabi, mushrooms, onions, parsnips, pears, potatoes, turnips, and winter squash are all growing! Buy some today!



GROCERY STORE TOUR



According to studies at Cornell University, we make over 200 food-related decisions each day. The more we know about our food and take control of our consumption, the more we're able to achieve our goals of wellness and financial health. WSU offers grocery store tours for local agencies and groups as well as individuals.

During a tour, we'll increase your knowledge of nutrition label reading, take a look at your consumption patterns to identify quantities which make the most economical sense for our household, and learn to use unit pricing and comparison shopping to help stretch our food budget.

We can offer this at a low cost to individuals, but are often able to offer this for agencies and groups working with low-income households at no charge due to grant funding through United Way and SNAP-Ed. Through these interactive and educational tours, we help adults get the most nutrition for their food dollars. Please contact j.bryan-goforth@wsu.edu for more information or to schedule a tour.



SPOTLIGHT Film Festival

The Spotlight Film Festival is a series of documentaries shining a light on issues that impact the lives of Skagit County residents. Each film highlights a different topic, followed by a community panel or discussion. Join other community members as we dive into these deeply relevant topics affecting our community.

Offered at the Lincoln Theatre, 712 S 1st Street in Mount Vernon, from 7:00 pm – 9:00pm on Thursdays from January 19th – February 23rd for the following films:

1/19 Screenagers

1/26 Caregivers

2/2 Becoming Bulletproof

2/9 The Mask You Live In

2/16 In Utero

2/23 Someone You Love

The films are free with a suggested donation of \$5.00.





Winter Activities

Winter in Skagit County can be very beautiful but it can also present challenges. Fresh produce is more expensive, the weather often prohibits easy exercise options like walking or jogging, and we have less sunshine which can lead to seasonal affective disorder or “winter blues.” Additionally, we often put on some weight leading up to the New Year which can be difficult to shed. There are many simple strategies to help with these issues.

Staying active is a great way to increase your physical and mental health. Many wintertime outdoor activities are available for people of all ages in Skagit County. The Eagle Festival in Concrete and Rockport (accessible by bus route 750 and 717) during the month of January offers some great walking trails for families and events including a 5k Salmon Run. The winter is also a great time to develop a new hobby, connect with your community by volunteering, or take a class. Listed below are a small selection of free or affordable activities in January and February.



Eating good food will help remove the holiday weight gain and improve your concentration, mental health, and energy levels. This is a great time of year to assess your eating habits and spend some time on meal planning and food prep. With a little effort, you can increase fruit and veggie consumption while decreasing your food budget. An easy strategy for increasing veggies while decreasing the waistline is to develop a love of soup, which can be an easy, low cost, healthy meal for busy families. There are many online sites promoting meal planning and healthy freezer meals, and WSU Skagit also offers a range of classes and workshops on this subject. For more information, recipes, or list of available classes, please contact j.bryan-goforth@wsu.edu

January

- * Eagle Festival, Concrete. Activities all month, Salmon Run and Nature Walk 1/7 360-853-8784.
- * Padilla Bay offers more free classes and workshops than we can list! Call 360-428-1558 for more information.
- * 7th Free Kids Crate Toolbox Workshop at Home Depot, Call 360-757-1986 to register.
- * 10th Mount Vernon School District Tech Fest, 6-7:30, free admission, interactive exhibits, photo booths, robots, games, food trucks, prizes, and giveaways!
- * 10th Children's Museum Community Free Day
- * 19th-Free Zumba at YMCA for Mount Vernon residents, 6:45-7:40
- * 24th Animal Biology Workshop, free at the Mount Vernon Library for kids ages 8-12.
- * 28th Country Living Expo-amazing classes! Visit <http://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/countrylivingexpo/>

February

- * 11th A Drumming Workshop for Adults, McIntyre Hall 7-9pm, free, reserve spot by calling (360) 416-7727
- * 12th Drumming for kids- 2pm, McIntyre Hall, \$5 kids adults do not need tickets. 360-416-7727
- * 14th Children's Museum Community Free Day
- * 16th -Free Zumba at YMCA for Mount Vernon residents, 6:45-7:40
- * Padilla Bay offers more free classes and workshops than we can list! Call 360-428-1558 for more information.
- * Mount Vernon Senior Center offers a range of dance classes for adults and older children, free (some have a very small class fee after a few lessons). Call 360-424-4608 for more information.
- * Guided Forest Hikes at Rockport State Park, see 300 year old trees towering at over 250 feet, free on weekends in January and February-360-853-8461



In Praise of Crock Pot Cooking

Preparing food can be a burden, even for those of us who enjoy cooking. Budget limitations, picky eaters, time restrictions, and lack of inspiration can make cooking feel like a chore. And sometimes in order to avoid that chore, we opt for quick choices like frozen pizza or fast food which typically full of fat with little nutritional value.

Cooking with crock pots can be an effective strategy to provide tasty, nutritious meals with minimal prep in the morning. Most recipes only require a 5-15 minute prep time-perfect for working families who can return home to delicious aromas and a hot, ready to eat nutritious

meal! Leftovers can easily be frozen for future quick meals.

Stock your pantry and freezer with crock pot staples:

- Dried beans-black, pinto, kidney, and others
- Brown rice and other whole grains
- Broth or bullion cubes
- Canned tomatoes
- Marinara sauce
- Enchilada sauce
- Salsa
- Root vegetables-potatoes, carrots, turnips, sweet potatoes, etc
- Low cost winter vegetables including cabbage , onions, celery
- Canned or frozen veggies
- Cornstarch
- Nonfat yogurt or sour cream
- Frozen meats-ground turkey, chicken breasts, low fat sausage, stew meat.

Cheesy Tex Mex Chicken

- ◆ 2 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- ◆ 24 oz jar of salsa
- ◆ 1 can black beans, drained
- ◆ 1 can of corn, drained
- ◆ 7 oz can diced green chilies
- ◆ 3 T taco seasoning
- ◆ 8 oz package nonfat cream cheese or nonfat yogurt

Combine everything but the cream cheese in crock pot and mix well. Cook on low for 6-8 hours or high for 3-4 hours. 30 minutes before eating, cut the cream cheese into cubes (or pour yogurt) and add to crock pot. Continue cooking for 30 minutes. Remove whole pieces of chicken and dice or shred by using two forks. Return the chicken to pot and stir. Serve with whole grain tortillas, or over steamed brown rice and a side salad.

10 minute Healthy Meat Balls

- ◆ 2 pounds ground turkey
- ◆ 1 cup brown rice, uncooked
- ◆ 2 eggs
- ◆ 1 t salt
- ◆ 2 t Italian seasoning
- ◆ 1/2 t pepper
- ◆ 3 cups vegetable or chicken broth, low sodium
- ◆ 4 t cornstarch

In a large mixing bowl, add all but reserve the broth and cornstarch, using hands to mix well. Form 10 large meatballs a bit smaller than a tennis ball. Place in a single layer in your crock pot, they will fit tightly. In a medium bowl whisk broth and cornstarch, pour gently over meatballs. Cover and cook on low for 7-8 hours or on high for 3-4. Serve with a salad, frozen or low sugar canned fruit, and a slice of whole grain bread. Or serve with a sauce of vegetable marinara mixed with nonfat yogurt or sour cream.

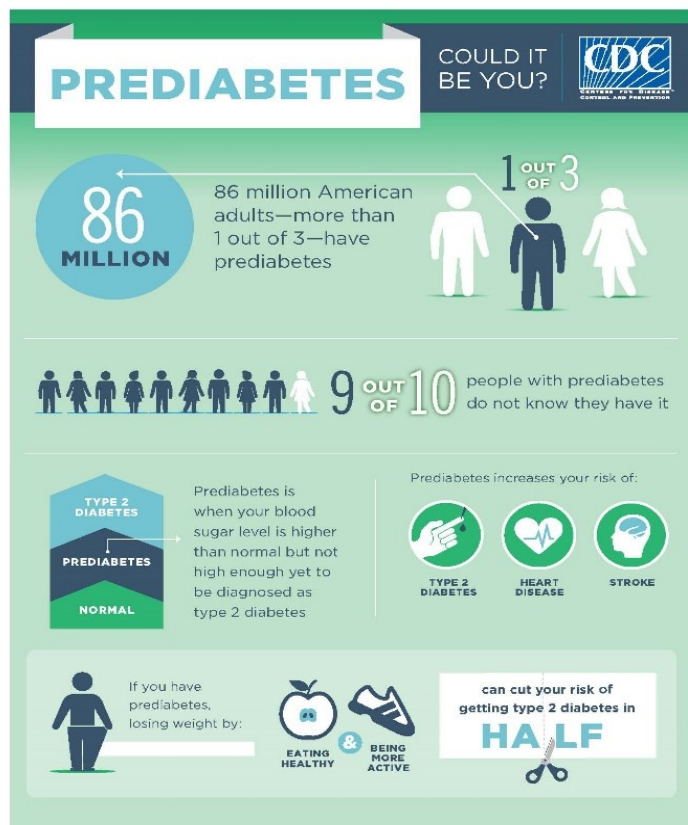
Irish Stew

- ◆ 2 pounds beef stew meat, cut into 1 inch cubes
- ◆ 1/4 cup flour
- ◆ 1/2 t each salt and pepper
- ◆ 4-6 cloves of minced garlic
- ◆ 1 chopped onion
- ◆ 3 potatoes, diced
- ◆ 6 carrots, sliced
- ◆ Water or broth
- ◆ 1/2 cup chopped celery
- ◆ 1 medium chopped parsnip
- ◆ 1 bay leaf

Place beef in slow cooker. Mix together flour, salt, and pepper in bowl, pour over meat and toss to coat. Add enough water or broth to cover meat completely, usually 2-4 cups. Stir in remaining ingredients. Cook on low for 10-12 hours or high for 4-6.



WSU Skagit County Extension Diabetes Prevention Program Begins in January!



The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) is a Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) evidenced-based lifestyle program to prevent type 2 diabetes. Last year WSU Skagit County Extension DPP program received national recognition for our success!

Many people receive a diagnosis of prediabetes from their physician and often face a major lifestyle change equipped with only a pamphlet and a brief conversation on nutrition. Making such a change can be a challenge for most people, but this transition period can be a success with more education and support through the transitional period.

This unique program combines nutrition classes with a lifestyle coach. The class meets weekly for 16 sessions, with follow up options including workshops and telephone calls for 8 additional months from our instructor and lifestyle coach Laura DeFreese.

The average weight loss achieved by participants who attended four or more sessions was 7.6% of body weight and the average weight loss achieved by participants who attended the 16 week core-sessions and at least one follow-up session was 9.1% of body weight. The attention of the life-style coach makes a difference. The CDC-DPP curriculum is presented at weekly sessions giving participants a chance to share stories and learn from others on how to best manage food choices and stay motivated to achieve their health goals. The life-style coach provides personalized feedback on food records and activity reports. Encouragement, reflection and problem solving

are skills that the life-style coach incorporates in the counseling and coaching provided.

Many folks have prediabetes but may not even know it. If you're curious, or want to learn more, go to
-<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/prediabetes.htm>

Interested in joining an upcoming DPP session? Due to grant funding, we are able to offer this course at a 95% discount—a \$600 value for only \$30! As this is a grant funded opportunity, we may not be able offer this reduction in the future, so be sure to take advantage!

*A new class series begins
January 2017.*

Call Laura DeFreese, DPP Lifestyle Coach at
360-428-4270 ext. 224
to learn more about the program and enroll.

Not sure if you're ready for the whole series? Free
intro workshop at the Burlington Library on February
6th at 6:30pm.



Harvest of the Month

Growing Healthy Students



Every month WSU Extension will feature a fruit or vegetable which is grown in our beautiful Skagit County. We will send home some information on the featured produce with a fun and delicious recipe! In January, WSU Skagit County Extension is featuring carrots in your child's school cafeteria! Carrots may be harvested late into the fall and winter in this area and are packed with nutrition. Carrots provide your body with lots of Vitamin A which help your eyes to see night and day! Vitamin A also helps your immune system stay strong to ward off illness! One large carrot every day will give your body the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin A. Vitamin A can also be found in any orange or yellow vegetables, such as squash, peppers, pumpkin and corn to name just a few! Hope your child enjoys the carrots, healthy eating is a SNAP!



In February, WSU Skagit County Extension is featuring cabbage in your child's school cafeteria! Cabbage may be harvested late into the fall and winter in this area and is packed with nutrition. Cabbage provide your body with lots of Vitamin K which helps your body's ability to heal cuts or scrapes. Cabbage also provides your body with lots of Fiber. Fiber is essential for your body's digestive system. Without fiber in our diets our body would not be able to absorb all the important vitamins and minerals our bodies need to be healthy! One half cup of cabbage will give your body Vitamin K and 2 grams of fiber! Hope your child enjoys the cabbage, healthy eating is a SNAP!

Free Gardening Workshops!

Thanks to a United Way Grant, Ideas for Healthy Living is able to offer Backyard Gardening Workshops free of charge at area schools and community organizations. In this workshop, participants learn about designing a garden with a focus on best use of space, raised beds and container gardening, organics, gardening with kids, and developing a low-cost and low-maintenance project. Through a partnership with Finney Farm, participants also receive free, organic, heirloom seed produced right in Skagit County. The best time to offer these workshops is late Feb-early May. If you are interested in attending or would like your organization to host a free workshop, please contact us at j.bryan-goforth@wsu.edu

Special thanks to NW artist Joe Wirtheim who allowed us to use his art for our flyer! More of his work may be seen at www.victorygardensoftomorrow.com

GROW FOOD

Backyard Gardening Workshop at
Jefferson YMCA
March 16th, 6-7pm

Learn all about backyard gardens and growing food with kids at this free workshop. Organic seeds will be provided at no charge!
Questions? Email j.bryan-goforth@wsu.edu