



Beaver County

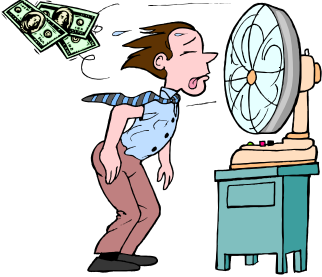
Family and Consumer Sciences

Newsline

July 2005

*Beaver County OSU Extension Office * Box 339 Beaver OK 73932 * Courthouse * 580-625-3464

How to Keep Cool and Save Cold Cash with Your Central Air Conditioning Units



Cooling and heating your home uses more energy and drains more energy dollars than any other system in your home. Typically, 44% of your utility bill goes for heating and cooling. It seems that the cost of energy keeps going up. And it doesn't appear there's relief in sight anytime soon. So what can homeowners do to conserve energy around the house? To help answer this question, the following tips on the operation and maintenance of home air conditioning units will help keep homeowners cool and save cold cash this summer:

\$ One of the best ways to save energy is to keep the cool air in the house and the hot air out. This involves caulking, weather stripping and insulating all outside windows, doors and attic areas to close any air gaps.

\$ Plan hot household work such as washing and drying clothes, baking and cooking for the cooler morning and evening hours.

\$ Pull drapes and shades over the windows facing the sun. And keep windows and doors closed when the air conditioning is on. Both are simple and effective energy savers.

\$ Set the thermostat to the highest comfort level. Each degree raised reduces energy consumption by 3 to 4 percent. Some thermostats can be set to automatically increase or decrease home temperatures for daytime/nighttime differences. By simply turning your thermostat back 10% to 15% for 8 hour, you can save as much as 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills.

\$ Clean or replace air filters on a regular basis. Dirty filters block the cooling air flow throughout the house and increases energy consumption. Some thermostats in newer heating and air conditioning systems have built-in visual reminders to do this.

\$ Check and clean your outside unit on a regular basis. Keep it clear of leaves and other airflow obstructions that can lower a unit's energy efficiency.

\$ Have the air conditioning unit serviced each spring by a certified technician for peak energy efficiency.

\$ Seal and/or insulate your ducts to prevent leaks. It is even more important if the ducts are located in an unconditioned area such as an attic or vented crawl

space. Ducts that leak heated air into unheated spaces can add hundreds of dollars a year to your heating and cooling bills. Insulating ducts that are in these spaces is usually very cost effective.

\$ Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible in the summer. The less difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.

\$ Don't set your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and, therefore, unnecessary expense.

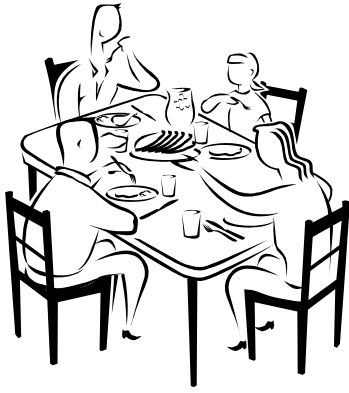
\$ Set the fan speed on high except in very humid weather. When it's humid, set the fan speed on low. You'll get better cooling, and slower air movement through the cooling equipment allows it to remove more moisture from the air, resulting in greater comfort.

\$ Consider using an interior fan in conjunction with your window air conditioner to spread the cooled air more effectively through your home without greatly increasing your power use.

\$ Don't place lamps or TV sets near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

\$ Plant trees or shrubs to shade air-conditioning units but not to block the airflow. A unit operating in the shade uses as much as 10% less electricity than the same one operating in the sun.

Sources:http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/housing/energy-savers/heatcool.html and <http://www.ari.org/pr/2005/06-05-KeepCool.html>



Family Meals Nourish Body and Soul

If you're like most families, you're caught in a time crunch. Adults and youth may all hold jobs. There's sports practice and dance lessons and music lessons and homework and a house to clean and clothes to wash and perhaps an older parent or relative to care for, etc.

Research says family meals are important. Researchers studying characteristics of strong families found that one of the strengths of emotionally healthy families is spending time together. One characteristic of these families is eating meals together on a routine basis. However, just sitting together at the

table doesn't always lead to fascinating family conversations or warm mealtime memories.

Here are some ideas for building family traditions, improving nutrition and reducing stress.

- 1. Start Slow and Learn as You Go.** If you're not dining together as a family -- before you set the table and ring the dinner bell, STOP! Decide your family priorities before squeezing one more thing into your schedule. Consider dropping at least one thing BEFORE you add in time for family meals. Don't try to go from no meals to nightly meals. Start with one meal together weekly. Find what works for your family and go from there.
- 2. Focus on Food Choices Vs. Forcing Food.** Registered dietitian and mother, Connie Evers, recommends you "allow children to eat until they're full without forcing 'one more bite' or a clean plate." She says children develop healthy eating attitudes through choice not coercion. Instead of forcing food, offer a variety of nutritious choices.
- 3. It Doesn't Have to Be Hot to Be Healthy!** Tuna sandwiches, a salad and some frozen yogurt can be just as healthy for your family as something you slaved over at the stove.
- 4. Don't Answer The Phone During Mealtime.** How often are your meals interrupted by the phone? If you can't stand to ignore a ringing phone, either unplug it or turn off the ringer. Use an answering machine or voice mail if it's hard to refrain from responding to a call. If there are some calls you need to answer immediately, get caller I.D.
- 5. Turn Off The TV.** Encourage family members to star in their own lives and relate to each other rather than to some image on the TV screen. If there is an "absolutely must see" show that occurs during dinnertime, tape it for later viewing.
- 6. Get Children Involved in Making Meals.** Children, especially younger children, tend to tune in more to meals they help prepare. Have children look through cookbooks and select the menu based on the photos they see in the book that they like. If everyone's hungry and in a hurry when they get home at night, try cooking together with children over the weekend. Or, prepare something for the next day *after* the meal. Have your children rename their favorite dish. Allow them to use their creativity and make up a recipe card with their chosen title on the recipe. By allowing children to be involved, they will request this dish again and make meal planning easier for you.
- 7. Cook it Quick But Eat it Slow.** Though you may hurry meal preparation time, allow ample time to enjoy the meal with your family. Check out the many cookbooks and Internet resources that give tips for putting together healthy meals in a hurry.
- 8. Add some ethnic flare to your meals.** Prepare a Mexican fiesta or an Italian night and discuss that heritage at dinner. It is even more fun to make dishes from your family's heritage to teach children about their family history.
- 9. Discuss manners during dinner.** This is a good time to talk to kids about proper etiquette for the next time you are eating at a friend's house or restaurant. Discuss the importance of saying please and thank you. This is also a good time to discuss with your children how they should try new foods.
- 10. Play a question game during dinner.** To help children learn about nutrition, write a nutrition tip on cards and have each member of the family draw and read their card. This makes a great conversation starter and provides an opportunity to talk to your children about nutrition and food.
- 11. Make placemats out of old maps.** Just cut to size and cover with clear contact paper. Kids can use their imagination and you can talk about various states or cities that are featured on the placemat.

12. Table Talk Tips Spend some time in conversation to learn about the other family members. Share positive things that have happened during the day. One family had a mealtime ritual where everyone told one new thing they learned that day -- including mom and dad! Some families have a night where there's an assigned table topic. Here are some popular ideas:

- Have your child give a book report during dinner. Ask them about the book they are reading at school and tell them you would like to hear all about the book and its characters during dinner.
- Describe something that happened recently that made you feel really happy.
- Someone gave you \$1,000. You have to spend some of it on your family before you can buy anything for yourself. What would you buy for everyone?
- If you could live in a different time and place, where and when would you want to live?
- If you could spend an afternoon with a famous person (living or dead) who is your pick?

If there's little time for you and your family to enjoy food and fellowship together, here's a final thought: Imagine viewing a movie through your VCR on "fast forward." You could "see" several movies in the time it takes to watch one at the normal speed. But, would you enjoy them as much? If your family's life is being lived in "fast forward," maybe it's time to hit STOP! Or PAUSE -- for several meals a week!

Sources: FOOD REFLECTIONS Newsletter, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County (lancaster.unl.edu/food/foodtalk.htm)
The Canned Food Alliance: <http://www.mealtime.org/default.aspx?id=310>

A New Dish for Fish

In less than 30 minutes from start to finish, you can whip up flavorful fish patties. *Mix and Match* from these options. You'll need:

- 1 pkg. (6 oz.) of your favorite flavor on-the-stovetop stuffing mix
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise



<u>Fish Options</u>	<u>Add-in Choices</u>	<u>Vegetables</u>
2 cans (6 oz each) Crabmeat, drained and flaked	3 Tbsp Tartar Sauce	1/2 cup finely chopped Celery
2 cans (6 oz each) Salmon drained, discard bones and skin if desired	1 Tbsp Lemon Juice 1 c Mozzarella Cheese, shredded	1/2 cup chopped Green Onion
2 cans (6 oz each) Tuna, drained and flaked	2 Tbsp Sweet Pickle Relish 1 cup Cheddar Cheese, shredded	1/2 cup shredded Carrots
3 cans (4 oz each) Tiny Cooked Shrimp, drained and flaked	1/4 cup Barbecue Sauce	1/2 cup finely chopped Green Pepper

Then follow these 3 steps:

1. Mix together stuffing mix with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water, mayonnaise or dressing, **fish**, **add-ins**, and **vegetables**. Cover and refrigerate 10 minutes.
2. Heat large nonstick skillet sprayed with cooking spray on medium heat. Shape 1/3 cupfuls of the fish mixture into patties. (Makes 12 patties.) Add to skillet in batches.
3. Cook 3 minutes on each side or until golden brown on both sides, turning over carefully.

Makes 6 servings, 2 fish cakes each.

From Kraft Food & Family Spring 2004

OHCE NEWS



HAPPY 70TH BIRTHDAY OHCE!!! That's right, this year we will be celebrating our 70th year in association with Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The 2005 meeting will be held in Oklahoma City at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center. Dates for the meeting are July 10-12th.

- ❖ *Thanks* to all of you who provided items for the door prize baskets for the OHCE Annual State Meeting.
- ❖ Please make a list of topics that would be of interest to you for lessons and workshops for next year. I would appreciate a copy of ideas by August 1st.

Beaver County Fair Set for September 7-10th. This year Beaver County Fair will go high-tech. All entries will be entered in a computer program called Show Works. Therefore **ALL** fair items need to be pre-entered by August 29th. The fair book will be printed in mid-July. Use it to make a list of your entries with all the exhibit numbers. We'll need one list per group from each president or delegate. Bring your list by the Extension Office by August 29th. Individual entries will also need to be pre-entered then.



July's Leader Lesson "*Using Humor Effectively*" will be presented on July 26th at 10 AM in the Extension Office. Linda Moeller of Anthony HCE will present this lesson.



The Western Excursion

From the tiny town of Gate, 28 women departed on a Wild West Trip. They toured, visited, ate, shopped, and enjoyed some fellowship. When pressed to answer what they enjoyed the best, The replies were as different as every guest. "The ranch", "the statues", "the chuck wagon", "the show", and "it was all fun", Just goes to prove that OHCE trips are second to none. It was quite apparent that a great time was had by one and all So make sure you don't miss a trip the next time opportunity comes to call.



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Development