

The Communicator

March 2012

Interim Director

- 1 Greetings
- 1 In the Journal of FCS
- 1 Thanks to FCS
- 2 Moving Mom
- 2 Save the Date—FCS Alumni Brunch

Food Safety

- 3 Emerging Technology: High Pressure Processing
- 3 Practical Things Consumers Can Do to Evaluate Food Safety in Restaurants

Family Development

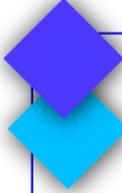
- 5 Why Young Couples Aren't Getting Married—They Fear the Ravages of Divorce
- 5 Media Multitasking is Distracting
- 6 Traumatic Experiences May Make You Tough

Nutrition Education

- 7 Sugar Intake Affects Body Fat Measurements
- 7 Prolonged Inactivity May Increase Fat Synthesis
- 8 Walk in Place during Television Commercials
- 8 March is National Nutrition Month®

Greetings

Here in FCS we have been busy with annual evaluations and award nominations. This is the best part of being a department head. At least once a year I have the privilege of meeting with each faculty member individually and talking about what they are passionate about. There is a lot of good learning going on here on campus and throughout the state with our quality academic and Extension programs. Grant proposals are being written, research is being presented at conferences, and publications keep FCS in the forefront of new knowledge. I also have the pleasure of writing any number of letters that support award nominations for students, faculty, and staff. When the weather outside is frightful, at least my job is delightful!



Interim Director



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In the Journal of FCS

The Fall 2011 *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* has a lot of interesting reading:

Nancy Franz co-authored an article of “Determining and Sharing the Public Value of FCS: Telling the Story.” They argue that “FCS needs to engage more in the story-telling movement to help show value,” particularly public value. The Journal is asking for your public value story—a nice opportunity for what we are doing here in Idaho.

“Planning Single-Event Nutrition Education: A New Model” by Lora Beth Brown emphasizes “The appeal of tasty, easy to prepare, and inexpensive foods was more effective in changing behavior than the admonitions about the negative consequences of an unseen component.” For example, people can’t see calories, but they can taste the good flavor of an easy, healthy snack. An example of how behavior change might be documented is suggested.

“Barriers Affecting Physical Activity in Rural Communities: Perceptions of Parents and Children” by Sharon McWhinney, et al. documented the findings from focus group interviews. Many parents could not afford to have their children participate in organized sports. Children reported academic and

domestic responsibilities as a limiting factor. Both groups felt that their community was not safe enough to play outside. These findings might support the development of Extension programming to decrease the incidence of childhood obesity.

Thanks to FCS

The School is often invited to participate in events on and off campus. FCS was a sponsor of this year’s production of *The Vagina Monologues* as part of V-Day activities. V-Day coincides with Valentine’s Day and is an outgrowth of Eve Ensler’s award winning play. V-Day has become a movement to end violence against women and girls worldwide. Learn more by visiting www.vday.org. In the early years of Home Economics, students worked in settlement houses and orphanages, seeing first-hand the effects on the lives of women who did not have access to education, let alone birth control. We continue the initiative to educate about women’s rights and their options.

On February 27th, I had the pleasure of representing FCS at the Moscow High School Career Fair. It was organized by **Diane Potter**, an FCS alumnae and one of my first students. I had a table with examples from all our teaching programs and Extension. Ms. Potter cleverly located the FCS table next

to the Extension table, so **Karen Richel** and **K. D. Dial** were ready resources, as they demonstrated personal finance applications in Second Life. I had a steady stream of students all morning, in part because Ms. Potter had a list of questions for students to answer about each exhibitor. I was honored to be the Bonus Question, as well—"What is the name of the Interim Director of Family and Consumer Sciences?" and "How many classes did Ms. Potter have with her?" (4) Student responses were entered into a drawing for cool prizes. We were given healthy, nutritious breakfast choices and lunch. It was really fun and I hope to participate next year.

Moving Mom

I was reminded in recent weeks about the personal value of having a working knowledge of Family and Consumer Sciences. Last weekend I moved my mother into assisted living from an independent apartment. It was challenging for the obvious reasons—moving is always exhausting and the reason for this move is a clear and present reminder of the inevitable journey from aging and disability to death.

However, it was the nurse's reply to one of my questions that brought this major change into perspective. She said, "Well, it sounds developmental." When we examine human development across the lifespan, we understand that development doesn't stop at age 21. People who are over 90 have physical, mental, and social capabilities that are unique to where they are in the life span. Deciding what to move to an assisted living apartment is really not much different than moving into a big-boy bed, packing for college, or donating maternity clothes to a friend because "we're done having babies at this house."

Decisions about objects have to do with what the individual is interested in and is capable of. If muscle strength is limited, easy-open snacks are a good choice. If balance is iffy, pulling books, tapes, and CDs to the front of the bookshelf at head height maintains interests without compromising safety. If short-term memory is limited, moving only the craft supplies that the individual can attend to or you can help with maintains problem solving skills and facili-

tates a sense of accomplishment. In my mother's case, she seems genuinely relieved to have less "stuff" in a smaller space: That trip from the couch to the bedroom was getting pretty long, with an unused computer to maneuver around.

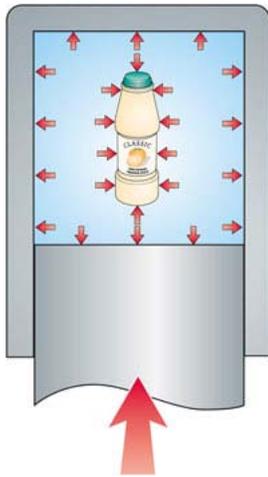
Likewise, the assisted living facility is organized around what is developmentally appropriate for people with physical, cognitive, and social capabilities typical of this age group. There are many social events to choose from, including day trips, concerts, service projects, and games. The sororities come in and do manicures; elementary students nearby come to read with the elders. The emphasis is on maintaining social connections with others by appealing to a wide range of interests.

Making all the decisions related to caring for an elder can be daunting, but when I could work through them by focusing on what was "developmentally appropriate," it was easier on her, me, and my family. I'm pleased to report that FCS is examining what it will take to revive our Aging Studies Minor.

Save the Date—FCS Alumni Brunch

The annual FCS Alumni Brunch will be Saturday, April 21, 2012, from 10:00am to Noon in the Silver and Gold Room of the Student Union Building on the Moscow Campus. Here is the link to register: <https://www.sites.uidaho.edu/uirsvp/default.aspx>.

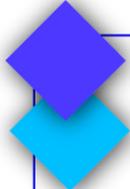
Even if you are not an alum, you are welcome to join us for an extensive breakfast buffet and a chance to visit with some fabulous movers and shakers. Tickets are \$20. Show your FCS spirit and wear RED!



Emerging Technology: High Pressure Processing

High pressure processing (HPP) is food processing technology in which high moisture, packaged foods, such as jams, vegetable purees, salad dressings, meats and fish, can be pasteurized with little or no heat. Flexibly packaged foods are put inside a pressure chamber, water is added to the chamber, the chamber is sealed and the pressure is increased to a very high level for a set time. The pressures used range from 60,000 to 87,000 pounds per square inch (for comparison, air pressure at sea level is 14.4 pounds per square inch). These high pressures kill pathogenic and spoilage bacteria (the vegetative cells are killed, research is underway to develop parameters to destroy spores) and molds and yeast, thus eliminating food safety risks and increasing shelf life. HPP kills microorganisms by causing damage to cell membranes and denaturing some intracellular proteins. The nutrition and flavor qualities of the pressurized foods are largely unaffected.

Commercial use of high pressure processing in the food industry has been around for a couple of decades, but recent advances have resulted in an increase in the number of products to which the technology is being applied. Jams were the first wave of pressure-treated commercial products, and were introduced into the Japanese market in 1990. Guacamole was the first commercialized product in the United States in 1997. Two new introductions in 2011 have been Cargill's ground beef and turkey



Food Safety

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for the foodservice market and Starbucks' Evolution Fresh juice brand.

The novel nature of HPP technology and high equipment costs are barriers to widespread commercialization, but increased consumer demand for fresher tasting foods containing fewer preservatives is driving increased usage.

Source: Balasubramaniam, V.M., Farkas, D. & Turek, E. J. 2008. "Preserving Foods through High-Pressure Processing," *Food Technology*, November; Beecher, C. 2012. "Putting on the Pressure: 'No Heat' Way to Zap Pathogens," *FoodSafetyNews.com*, January 31.

Keywords: food industry, food science, technology.

Practical Things Consumers Can Do to Evaluate Food Safety in Restaurants

The following information is adapted from a list compiled by Roy Costa, R.S., M.S./M.B.A., who worked on restaurant food safety for Florida public health for 21 years and who currently operates a food safety consulting firm. He is a vocal advocate for food safety enhancement. This list identifies the things consumers can look for to evaluate food safety in restaurants.

Records. Ask to see the latest inspection report. In Idaho, Health Districts 1 through 6 (see map) provide a summary of inspection results online at their websites. Go to <http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/HealthDistricts/tabid/97/Default.aspx> and click on the link to the District you are interested in, then look for “Inspections” or “Inspection Report” on the website.

Bathrooms. Bathrooms may or may not indicate the safety of food handling in the kitchen but excessively soiled bathrooms are a danger sign. Other problems:

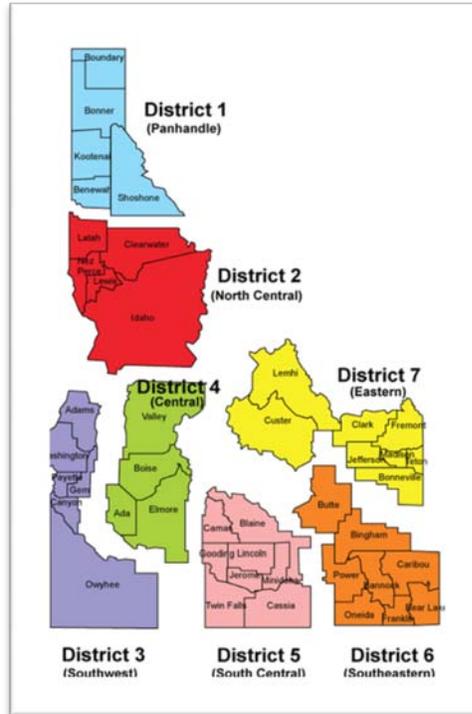
- No paper towels, soap, or broken sinks and fixtures
- No warm water at sink (not always required unless employees use the sink, they may have their own bathroom)
- No cleaning schedule posted or not up to date
- No mandatory employee hand wash sign
- No covered waste receptacle in ladies room

Food temperature. Hot foods served to you must be hot. Reject any lukewarm foods, especially foods prepared in bulk such as soups, gravies, rice, cooked vegetables. Cold foods, like prepared salads and sandwiches, must be cold.

Proper cooking. All cooked foods must be thoroughly cooked. Reject any undercooked foods especially fish, hamburgers, pork, and chicken. Color is deceptive but red blood is definitely a sign of under cooking of meat. Rare steaks and roasts may be ordered per consumer request. Look for warning signs about undercooked foods on the menu, language must be readable. Look for consumer warnings where raw shellfish is served.

Foreign objects. Excessive jewelry on the food workers you can see and on waitresses is a concern. Employees without hair restraints of some type, especially production personnel if you can see them, are also a concern.

Hygiene. Issues to watch for: Workers with soiled aprons. Workers in the bathroom still wearing



gloves (yes it happens). Workers in the bathroom must remove their aprons. Employees who do not wash their hands between orders and tasks that have direct contact with your food. Excessive sneezing or coughing of any food related personnel. Workers who handle foods excessively without using gloves.

Food protection during storage display and service. Failure to provide sneeze guards, proper utensils with handles out of product and covers for food in self service areas. Self service to be posted with “use a new plate for refills” sign. Recycled relish trays. Open bread bags and foods in

containers that customer must reach into with bare hands. Ice that customers scoop themselves. Any open unprotected displayed foods. Any protein rich foods stored or displayed without temperature controls, especially Calzones, Stromboli, and even pizza. Self serve cans and bottles or other food containers in un-drained ice (very common in convenience stores).

Pest control. Flies in production, dining, or serving areas. Any roaches seen, or any crawling insects including ants. Any rodents seen (file complaint with agency).

Waste management. Water leaking through the parking lot from dumpster or compactors. Excessive odors near dumpsters. Overflowing trash at dumpster. Evidence of mop water disposed in parking lot.

Source: Costa, R. E. “What can restaurant patrons do to evaluate food safety?” May 16, 2010 post to FoodSafe listserv.

Keywords: consumer, food service, food safety.

Why Young Couples Aren't Getting Married—They Fear the Ravages of Divorce

With the share of married adults at an all-time low in the United States, new research by demographers at Cornell University and the University of Central Oklahoma unveils clues why couples don't get married—they fear divorce.

Among cohabitating couples, more than two-thirds of the study's respondents admitted to concerns about dealing with the social, legal, emotional, and economic consequences of a possible divorce.

Despite the concerns, middle-class subjects spoke more favorably about tying the knot and viewed cohabitation as a natural stepping stone to marriage compared to their working-class counterparts. Lower-income women, in particular, disproportionately expressed doubts about the "trap" of marriage, fearing that it could be hard to exit if things go wrong or it would lead to additional domestic responsibilities but few benefits.

The study also found working-class cohabitating couples were more apt to view marriage as "just a piece of paper," nearly identical to their existing relationship. They were twice as likely to admit fears about being stuck in marriage with no way out once they were relying on their partners' share of income to get by.

Source: Cornell University, www.pressoffice.cornell.edu/releases.

Keywords: marriage, divorce, young adults.

Media Multitasking is Distracting

With the rise of new electronic media forms for home use, families are commonly tuned into more than one device at the same time. However, recent research shows that this split attention comes at a cost. Multitaskers who divide attention between the program on their television set and the information on their computer screen are driven to distraction by the two devices.



Family Development

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Boston College researchers observed people who spent a half an hour with both a television and a computer and found that they switched their eyes back and forth between the two devices a staggering 120 times in 27.5 minutes on average—or nearly once every 14 seconds. Researchers S. Adam Brasel and James Gips used advanced cameras to track where research subjects were looking to understand the physical demands and likely disruption caused by switching between the television and computer. "We thought it was going to be high, but the frequency of switching and amount of distraction going on was really shocking," said Brasel.

What's more, the subjects were not aware of their own actions. On average, participants in the study thought they might have looked back and forth between the two devices about 15 times per half hour, but they were actually looking nearly 10 times as often. Even if quick "glances" less than 1.5 seconds are removed, people were still switching over 70 times per half hour.

Prior surveys have shown 59 percent of Americans use their computer and television at the same time. In addition, youths under 18 report this type of media multitasking is now the dominant mode in which they use both devices. Media multitasking at home is on the rise, increasing 35 percent in 2009 alone.

Brasel and Gips determined that the dominant medium in this side-by-side challenge was the computer, drawing the attention of the study participants 68.4 percent of the time. But neither device proved capable of holding the attention of study participants for very long, regardless of their age. The median length of gaze lasted less than two seconds for television and less than six seconds for the computer, the researchers found.

It's not just younger people who are rapid-fire media switchers; men and women over 40 who participated in the study still switched an average of nearly 100 times in 27.5 minutes. It was rare that a person looked at either screen for more than a minute. Just 7.5 percent of all computer gazes and 2.9 percent of all glances at the television lasted longer than 60 seconds, the study found.

Understanding the physical behavior of multi-media multitaskers raises questions about the level of comprehension among people who switch their eyes between the devices, specifically the impact on productivity or on children doing their homework.

A new media age has arrived for families with profound effects. The researchers note the study did not take into account the impact of another ubiquitous device that's now a staple of the media mix: the mobile phone. "Clearly, the rules we developed for the mono-media culture no longer apply," said Brasel. "Our assumptions about how people are using media need to be updated. The era of the mono-media environment is over."

Source: Revised from "Media multitasking is distracting: new scientific evidence," May 02, 2011, www.stonehearthnewsletters.com.

Keywords: family, internet.

Traumatic Experiences May Make You Tough

Your parents were right: Hard experiences may indeed make you tough. Psychological scientists have found that, while going through many experiences like assault, or hurricanes can be psychologically damaging, small amounts of trauma may help people develop resilience.

"Everybody's heard the aphorism, 'Whatever does not kill you makes you stronger,'" says researcher Mark D. Seery of the University at Buffalo. However, a lot of research shows that miserable life experiences are bad for you. Serious events, like the death of a child or parent, a natural disaster, being physically attacked, or being forcibly separated from your family, can cause psychological problems. In fact, some research has suggested that the best way to go through life is having nothing ever happen to you. But not only is that unrealistic, it's not necessarily healthy.

In one study, Seery and colleagues found that people who experienced many traumatic life events were more distressed in general—but that people who had experienced no negative life events had similar problems. Those with the best outcomes had experienced some negative events. Another study found that people with chronic back pain managed better if they had experienced some serious adversity, whereas people with either a lot of adversity or none at all were more impaired.

One possibility for this pattern is that people who have been through difficult experiences have developed their ability to cope. "Negative life experiences can toughen people, making them better able to manage subsequent difficulties," Seery says. In addition, people who get through bad events may have tested out their social network, learning how to get the help they need.

This research isn't telling parents to abuse their kids so they'll grow up to be well-adjusted adults, Seery says. "Negative events have negative effects," he says. "I really look at this as being a silver lining. Just because something bad has happened to someone doesn't mean they're doomed to be damaged from that point on."

Source: Association for Psychological Science, www.psychologicalscience.org.

Keyword: stress.

Sugar Intake Affects Body Fat Measurements



Danish researchers tested how sugar or sucrose (a combination of glucose and fructose) intake affects body fat measurements. They randomly assigned subjects (n=47) to one of four test beverage groups which consisted of water, fat-free milk, diet cola, or sucrose-sweetened cola. Subjects consumed one liter of their test beverage each day for six months. Lead researcher, Dr. Richelsen, chose overweight or obese subjects because he anticipated that they might be more sensitive to dietary changes than people of normal weight.

Six measurements were taken at baseline and at the end of six months. They included: (1) blood lipid levels (cholesterol and triglycerides), (2) fat content in the liver, (3) fat content in skeletal muscles, (4) visceral fat content (abdominal fat that surrounds organs e.g. liver, kidney, intestine), (5) total body fat mass, and (6) body weight.

The results showed that subjects who consumed the sugar-sweetened beverage had significantly higher cholesterol and triglyceride levels, approximately double the amount of fat in the liver and skeletal muscles, and 25 percent more visceral fat around their organs than subjects who did not drink the sugar-sweetened beverages. Excess visceral fat is associated with an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and non-alcoholic liver diseases. Body weight and total fat mass of subjects did not change over the six month period. Richelsen theorized that subjects in the sugar-sweetened beverage group reduced the amount of calories they ate or drank to compensate for the extra calories in the soda.

Individuals who drink sugar-sweetened beverages should consider switching to beverages that are sugar free.

Source: *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, February 2012, 95:2, 283-289.

Keyword: sugar.



Nutrition Education

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Prolonged Inactivity May Increase Fat Synthesis

Professor Amit Gefen, in the Biomedical Engineering Department at Tel Aviv University in Jerusalem, studies muscle tissue of people who are paralyzed after spinal cord injuries. He found that, over time, sitting or lying too long, resulted in extra fat being deposited in the hips and buttocks region, presumably, to cushion the muscles and that their fat cells began invading major muscle tissues.

Gefen theorized that when a person is in a sitting or lying position for a prolonged period of time, their body weight produces a mechanical load on the fat cells which stretched them and increased fat cell synthesis. He tested this theory by placing pre-adipocytes (precursors to fat cells) in a laboratory dish and stretched them for two weeks and compared them to pre-adipocytes that had not been stretched.

The results showed that the stretched fat cells developed 50 percent more fat than the non-stretched fat cells. Even though these results are most applicable to individuals confined to a wheelchair, Gefen stated, "It appears that long periods of static mechanical loading and stretching, due to the weight of the body when sitting or lying, has an impact on increasing lipid production."

Additional research is needed to determine if sitting or lying down for hours actually increases bottom fat. In the meantime, it would be a good idea to get up periodically and walk around.

Source: *American Journal of Physiology–Cell Physiology*, January 2012, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22012328.

Keyword: fat.

Walk in Place during Television Commercials

A January 2012 report on television viewing habits, compiled by the media research company Nielsen, during 2011 revealed that Americans spend an average of 32 hours and 47 minutes a week watching TV. Researchers at the University of Tennessee studied whether walking/stepping in place during television commercials could be an effective way to incorporate physical activity.

Listed below is the number of calories subjects (n=23) burned in one hour if they:

- Were inactive and sat and watched TV for one hour = 81 calories burned
- Stepped in place during TV commercials (25 minutes) = 148 calories burned and 2,111 steps walked
- Walked on a treadmill at a rate of 3 mph = 304 calories burned

The researchers felt that commercials could serve as a reminder for participants to be active. If they watched TV daily, this is one way they could make physical activity a part of their daily routine. They commented, "given the large number of hours American adults watch TV, we suggest that TV commercial stepping is one potential approach for

reducing sedentary behavior and increasing physical activity."

Source: *Journal Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, February 2012, <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2011-Reports/StateofMediaConsumerUsageReport.pdf>; <http://journals.lww.com/acsm-msse/pages/currenttoc.aspx>.

Keywords: television, physical activity.



March is National Nutrition Month®

National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly known as the American Dietetic Association). The theme for this year's campaign is "Get Your Plate in Shape." Some of their key messages are:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Cut back on sodium and the empty calories from solid fats and added sugars
- Vary your protein choices
- Little steps add up to big results

For tips on implementing these messages, click on: <http://www.eatright.org/NNM/content.aspx?id=5342>.

Source: <http://www.eatright.org/nnm>.

Keywords: nutrition.