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I still think moving is frustrating and exhausting; the excitement left several weeks ago. My spouse and I are still unearthing, unboxing our treasures. Maybe that is why the excitement is gone. Now I just want to be finished with unpacking and having everything in its place, even if that means recycling center or one of our thrift shops! However I really hope to avoid any more going to the landfill.

Unfortunately my consumption habits have not disappeared. Although I would like to think that purchases I made back in late May/early June were for a good cause. Last month Dr. SeAnne Safaii shared her summer research adventures in Japan and Italy. What a fascinating project. Now I want to share my summer adventure.

My adventure started on May 19th when I left Moscow to participate in the International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) Culture and Industry tour focused on the Highlands of Guatemala. For fourteen days we immersed ourselves in a setting rich in textile arts, culture, ceremony, traditions, community and amazing vegetation. Our ITAA trip coordinators previously traveled in Guatemala on a similar tour which added to the depth of our experiences. Including our experienced coordinators there were 15 participants on this tour; all but tour are (were) textile and apparel academics at US universities.

Our Guatemalan experiences were arranged by, Mayan Hands. Mayan Hands (.org) is a fair trade organization partnering with hundreds of Mayan women weavers assisting with bringing them out of extreme poverty toward empowerment and self-sufficiency. We were introduced to amazing and talented women living in what many of us would consider very poor living conditions. But, what an opportunity had to hear their stories and learn how organizations such as Mayan Hands have made a difference in their lives.

We started our adventure in Guatemala City. From there we traveled to Xeabaj (Xela), the second largest city in Guatemala. While in Xela we traveled to Santa Appolonia to meet with Mr. Juan De Rios who is a double ikat master weaver. This small city is also the home of the oldest church in Central America.
As we left Xela we traveled the Coastal Plain route to Santiago Atitlan. Santiago Atitlan sits on the edge of Lake Atitlan and the area is surrounded by volcanos. The lake was formed by a volcano. Our accommodations there were by far the most unique of any of our stops. We stayed at Pasada de Santiago. Each guest room was actually its own separate little stone building. Some had curved doors which caused us to dub this the Hobbit hotel. The real highlight of Santiago, however, was helping serve lunch to some of the city's elderly. We met with the coordinators of Sharing the Dream (sharingthedream.org). To me it seemed like a reverse meals on wheels. The people brought containers with them for their food and beverage. They receive 3 meals a week. The organization is supported through the sale of craft items and donations. A small group of women create the most beautiful jewelry and ornaments from seed beads. And of course I had to support the organization through purchases. What was most amazing, though, was how appreciative the elders were of our simple service activity. As they left the building we were subject to hugs and cheek kisses.

The sales from their weaving support their children’s education. One of the women, 28 years old, is completing her own education. She is scheduled for 5th and 6th grades this year. She is very proud of her accomplishments. And yes they do carry things on their heads. And, the men carry heavy loads on their backs with the aid of a wide strap over their forehead.

Unique forms of transportation for our group in some locations. On the left: it was not unusual for us to see groups of people being transported in the back of a pickup. In fact it was referred to by our guides as a rural taxi service. On the right is the line of tuk tuks it took to get our group around the former capital city of Antigua, a beautiful city which caters to a more upper class market group. However, that did not seem to hinder our group from adding to the Guatemalan economy.

We did see Mayan ruins, were given a fire ceremony where each of us learned our element and spirit animal, and amazed by the people and their talent. I would love to share more like the co-op in Guatemala City which started a school and health clinic for their community, the group of weavers who also create felted figures (they also served us lunch), or the group who makes hooked rugs from recycled T-shirts. It was an incredible and thought provoking 14 days.

Photos by my good friend and colleague, Eulanda Sanders, Donna R Danielson, professor in Apparel Merchandising and Design, Iowa State University.
Transgender Children: Building a Body of Evidence

Marlo Mack’s son was 3 years old when he told her very adamantly that he was not a boy, but a girl.

Unsure of what to do, Mack went in search of answers. She found little information online, her pediatrician knew nothing about transgender children, and even a psychologist who specialized in child identity issues couldn’t answer her questions. Mack quickly learned there was almost no research that could help her determine whether to allow her son to live as a girl, or tell her what might happen if she did.

“It’s like stepping into the abyss,” said Mack, who uses a pseudonym to protect her child’s identity. “There are almost no resources out there.”

A new study by Kristina Olson at the University of Washington aims to provide insight that could help parents like Mack. The study’s initial results, which are being published soon in Psychological Science, involved 32 transgender children ages 5 to 12 from around the U.S. who are living as their identified gender in all aspects of their lives and in supportive environments.

The paper, believed to be the first ever to focus on this group of children, is intended to launch the first large-scale, nationwide, longitudinal study of transgender children in the United States.

Olson embarked on the project a year ago, partly out of her interest in how children think about social groups, but also because she’d witnessed the challenges of a close friend with a transgender child.

“Seeing how little scientific information there was, basically nothing for parents, was hard to watch,” Olson said. “Doctors were saying, ‘We just don’t know,’ so the parents have to make these really big decisions: Should I let my kid go to school as a girl, or should I make my kid go to school as a boy? Should he be in therapy to try to change what he says he is, or should he be supported?”

Olson’s study sought to determine how deeply held a participant’s gender identity was, or whether transgender children were, as others have suggested, confused or simply pretending to be the opposite gender. The research combined the children’s own self-reporting about gender with tests that assessed the speed at which they associated with various concepts of male and female.

The study found that participants’ responses were indistinguishable from those of two control groups, suggesting that “identity is a deeply held one.”

The findings are likely to be controversial. The notion that prepubescent children can be legitimately transgender has been met with skepticism in the public realm. And some experts believe the best approach for gender-variant children is not to allow them to live as the “opposite” gender, but to instead try to help them be comfortable with their biological gender.

But growing numbers of doctors, parents and mental health professionals are advocating that children be permitted to live as their identified gender. The attitude shift is motivated at least in part by the often tragic outcomes for transgender people. Forty-one percent of transgender people attempt suicide, compared with 1.6 percent among the general population, and transgender adults face staggeringly high rates of unemployment, poverty, discrimination and homelessness.
Olson hopes to follow the children in her initial study into adulthood to observe how the support they have received influences their development and whether it translates into more positive outcomes than in today’s transgender adults.

“We have absolutely no idea what their lives will look like, because there are very few transgender adults today who lived as young kids expressing their gender identity,” Olson said. “That’s all the more reason why this particular generation is important to study. They’re the pioneers.”


Keywords: children, children at risk, parenting.

Many “Deadbeat Dads” Support Children through Gifts, Not Cash

Low-income fathers who might be labeled “deadbeat dads” often spend as much on their children as parents in a formal child-support arrangements, but they choose to give goods like food and clothing rather than cash, a recent study found. In the first examination of in-kind child support, the team found many disadvantaged noncustodial fathers spend an average of $60 a month on in-kind provisions, while dads paying formal child support spend about $38 a month. Men who were the most disadvantaged tended to give a higher proportion of their support in gifts, the study found.

“The most disadvantaged dads end up looking like they’re completely distanced from their kids, but they’re actually giving quite a lot,” said author Kathryn Edin, a Johns Hopkins professor of sociology. “I was really surprised by how much these disadvantaged guys, these truly marginally employed men, are putting all of this thought and what little resources they have into showing their children that they care.”

Edin, along with co-authors Timothy J. Nelson and Jennifer B. Kane, studied 367 lower-income non-custodial fathers in three cities: Philadelphia; Austin, Texas; and Charleston, South Carolina.

Nearly half of the fathers – 46 percent – contributed in-kind support to a child, while 23 percent gave formal support (through the court system), and 28 percent gave informal support (in the form of cash given directly to the mother). In-kind support included items like baby products (diapers, formula, strollers, and cribs), clothing, shoes, school expenses, school supplies, after-school program costs, gifts, and food.

Some fathers (66 in the study with 95 children) avoided cash payments altogether – dads who would traditionally be considered “deadbeat.” But they gave $63 per child a month through in-kind support – support that is currently unacknowledged in any government surveys or statistics.

Other notable findings:

- Fathers who did not visit their kids gave each child goods worth about $48 a month while dads that spent at least 10 hours a month with their children gave them nearly twice as much in-kind support – $84. Each additional hour of visitation was associated with an increase of nearly $1 of in-kind support per month.
- Fathers who were romantically involved with the mother offered 52 percent of their support through in-kind provisions, while dads not involved with the mother gave 36 percent in-kind.
- The value of in-kind support varied by the child’s age, with young children getting the most in-kind support – an average of $78 for children under 5 – compared with $41 for children 10 and up.

The researchers also learned what motivates men to give their children these tangible items rather than handing cash over to their mothers. Fathers see the gifts as a chance to bond with their children, they found.

“What we learned is that these dads are purchasing a relationship with their children,” Edin said. “They want their kids to look down at their feet and say, ‘My dad cares about me because he bought me these shoes.’ We need to respect what these guys are doing, linking love and provision in a way that’s meaningful to the child.”

Source: Johns Hopkins University; www.jhu.edu, June 15, 2015.

Keywords: family, fathers, divorce, children at risk.
Salmonellosis: Common Food Poisoning Associated with Poultry

Salmonellosis is a food poisoning caused by a pathogenic bacteria, *Salmonella*, which is commonly found in poultry including turkey. Since turkey is one of the traditional meals in holiday seasons, it could result in Salmonellosis if the raw meat is contaminated and the preparation is not safe enough to kill the bacteria.

Symptoms
Symptoms of salmonellosis include vomiting, headache, diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps. The symptoms are seen in 12 to 72 hours after consuming contaminated foods and usually illness lasts 4 to 7 days. Mostly infected people can recover without any treatment, sometimes diarrhea accompanied with dehydration can be severe and hospitalization is necessary. The highest incidence of severe illness occurs in children under 5 and the elderly.

Causes
*Salmonella* is mainly inhabited in warm blooded animals as well as humans. Infections are usually associated with the animal origin sources such as:

- Raw meat, poultry, eggs, unpasteurized milk or dairy products, and seafood: Feces may get onto raw meat, poultry, and eggs during the butchering, egg-laying, and processing process. Seafood may be contaminated if harvested from contaminated water.
- Fruits and vegetables: Some fresh produce, particularly imported varieties, may be hydrated or washed with water contaminated with *Salmonella*.

Prevention
According to FDA, food must be cooked to 145 – 160°F), and liquids such as soups or gravies must be boiled. Freezing is not sufficient to kill *Salmonella* below infectious levels. Although *Salmonella* is usually heat-sensitive, it could be heat resistant in high-fat environments such as peanut butter.


Keyword: Salmonellosis.

7 Tips to Enjoy Turkey on Thanksgiving

Holiday seasons are times of the year when we cook for family and friends, and turkey is one of the most popular dishes of all time. If the meal you prepare is delicious and safe, everybody would enjoy holidays even more delightfully.

Whether you are an experienced chef or the first-time volunteer cook for your loved ones, you have to make sure to prepare turkey in the safest way from picking up your turkey to taking care of leftovers.

First, wait to select the turkey
If you add the turkey to your cart first while you are shopping, the turkey may start to thaw. As the meat comes to room temperature, bacteria can grow and multiply. Also, the texture of the meat is degraded
by certain enzymatic reactions. This is the reason why you need to put the bird in the freezer immediately upon arriving home.

Second, thaw the turkey safely
You need to take the turkey out of the freezer at least one day before you cook it. The USDA recommends that the turkey should be placed on a tray to catch juices that may leak out. In this way you can prevent cross-contamination of other foods in the fridge.

It takes 24 hours of thawing time in the fridge for every four to five pounds of turkey. If you can't wait for the turkey to thaw in the fridge, you can submerge the turkey, still in its original wrapper, in a container of cold water. The water needs to be changed every 30 minutes. The following table is the turkey thawing chart based on the turkey size and thawing methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turkey Size</th>
<th>In the refrigerator (approx. 24 hours for every 4-5 lbs.)</th>
<th>In cold water (approx. 30 minutes per lb.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 to 12 lbs.</td>
<td>1 to 3 days</td>
<td>2 to 6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 to 16 lbs.</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
<td>6 to 8 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 lbs.</td>
<td>4 to 5 days</td>
<td>8 to 10 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24 lbs.</td>
<td>5 to 6 days</td>
<td>10 to 12 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Third, cook your turkey properly
You need to make sure the turkey is thawed before placing it in the oven. If you put a frozen turkey in the oven, the inside won't cook properly and the outside will burn. In order to kill harmful bacteria, the turkey should be cooked until its internal temperature reaches 165°F according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is well known that bacteria can survive in stuffing that has not reached 165°F, possibly resulting in foodborne illness. The FDA recommends using a thermometer to check the bird’s internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh, the wing and thickest part of the breast.

Forth, avoid cross-contamination
You have to separate foods that will be cooked, including all raw meat, seafood and eggs, from any food that won't be cooked or are ready to eat, such as lettuce and fruit. This rule should be followed in all environments, from the grocery store, to the fridge, to your kitchen counter.

Please remember not to place cooked meat or any foods that will be consumed raw on plates that have held raw meat or eggs without carefully washing and cleaning the plates first.

Fifth, be careful when you stuff your turkey
You should not use frozen stuffing and do not stuff a frozen turkey. When you make stuffing, you need to mix wet and dry ingredients separately, and blend them right before using. For optimal safety, you need to cook the stuffing outside the turkey in a casserole dish. If you want to place stuffing inside the turkey, you need to stuff the turkey just before putting the turkey in the oven. Most importantly you have to use a food thermometer in order to make sure the center of the stuffing reaches a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Bacteria can survive in stuffing if the internal temperature does not reach 165°F, possibly resulting in foodborne illness. You have to remember that stuffing the turkey can be messy. As you handle the turkey, you may contaminate everything you touch. It is also recommended to place the turkey in a pan while stuffing it in order to reduce any potential cross-contamination.

Sixth, remember that produce can be risky too
Fruits and vegetables are not always safe. Vegetables such as potatoes and carrots are grown in the ground and can be contaminated with soil bacteria. Fruits can be contaminated at any point from farm to table at home. It's important to wash fruits and vegetables and separate them from the raw foods such as seafood, meat, and poultry.

Seventh, refrigerate leftovers
Don't leave your meat and other food out at the table for too long. Food that is left out for more than two hours may become contaminated and should be discarded. Refrigerate leftovers at 40°F or below as soon as possible and within two hours of preparation to prevent potential food poisoning. When you re-heat your leftovers, make sure you cook them to the right temperature — about 140 to 165°F — before consuming.


Keyword: turkey.
Eating Alone: A Fact of Life

A 2015 Report issued by the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), an industry trade association, revealed that Americans consume approximately half of all meals and snacks by themselves. The frequency varies by meal. At breakfast, 53 percent are eaten alone (at home, in the car, or at one’s desk) and at lunch the number is 45 percent. Dinner is the meal that is the least likely to be eaten alone; approximately 75 percent of all suppers are eaten with other individuals.

There are several reasons why eating alone has increased. The first reason is an increase in the number of single family American households. From 1970 to 2012, the percentage of households that had one person grew from 17 percent to 27 percent. The second reason is that people are pressed for time. For example, many adults eat breakfast on the go, stopping at fast food restaurants. Similarly, many Americans either eat lunch at their desks or skip lunch altogether.

What about dinner? Many individuals still do not enjoy dining alone at dinner. Instead, they are eating at home and relying more on delivery from restaurants or picking up prepared meals at grocery stores.

There are positive and negative aspects to eating alone. On the positive side, some studies show that eating alone is associated with consuming smaller food portions. On the negative side, the food that is eaten is less nutritious.


Keyword: eating.

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Start Early to Get Kids to Eat Healthier

National food intake data collected from parents, on American infants 12-23 months old, during 2007-2010 showed that these infants have poor eating habits. On a regular basis, 43 percent eat cookies, cakes or pastries; 32 percent eat chips, popcorn or pretzels; 19 percent eat candy; and 31 percent consume soda, fruit or sports drinks.

Does consuming unhealthy food at an early age affect eating habits later in life? That is what researchers at the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation in Brisbane, Australia studied. They found that food preferences develop at an early age, usually within the first two years of life. This is based on data they collected from parents, on dietary habits of their toddlers (n=339) when they were approximately 14 months old and compared it to their eating habits when they were, on average, 3.7 years-old.
They found that infants who tried a greater number of fruits and vegetables at 14 months liked these foods more when they were 3.7 years old than those who did not eat these items when they were younger. In addition, infants who ate more unhealthy foods (e.g. cookies, candy, salty snacks) ate more of these items when they were 3.7 years old and also tended to be pickier eaters.

It should be remembered that parents have almost complete control over what children under the age of two eat. Lead researcher Dr. Kimberly Mallan stated, “Parents are not ‘depriving’ their child by not offering these (less healthy) foods. Rather, they are investing in their child’s long-term health.”

This study shows how important it is for parents to introduce healthy foods into their children’s diet at an early age.


Keywords: food intake, children.

The Scale Versus the Scan in Determining Body Fat

Most people dread stepping on the bathroom scale. The number tells them if they’ve maintained, gained, or lost weight. But a change in weight doesn’t tell if you have added or lost fat or muscle. Similarly, a person’s Body Mass Index (BMI), which is calculated using height and weight, is used to determine if someone is normal weight, overweight, or obese. However, researchers have found that some women with normal BMI have significant excess fat and some classified as overweight have normal fat levels.

An alternative to the scale and BMI is the whole body scan, called the Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry, or DEXA for short. In the past, the DEXA has been used to measure bone density. Now it can also measure body composition.

It provides information on the mass of your bones, fat, and lean tissue (organs and muscle) and percent body fat. It also displays very detailed information on the amount of fat and lean tissue in each body part, e.g. the right arm or left leg. This would be helpful for athletes to see if an injured limb is regaining muscle.

Someone who is trying to lose weight by following a low calorie diet and incorporating aerobic activity and strength training could use the DEXA to determine if they are losing fat and gaining muscle. It is recommended that individuals get the scans between three months and two years apart to measure progress.

There are some downsides to using the DEXA. The first is that it costs between $45 and $350, and it usually isn’t covered by insurance. The second downside is that DEXA is subject to various sources of errors. Different DEXA machines from different manufacturers give inconsistent results. Researchers recommend using the same model of machine when comparing scans.


Keywords: body fat, scans, BMI.

Enjoy the Holidays

This is the last issue of the Communicator for 2015. Enjoy the holidays with family and friends. The nutrition and health articles for the January 2016 issue will cover the latest research on how to implement healthy eating and physical activity habits.
It Is Time to Be Thankful, Not A Time to Become A Victim

We are entering into the time of year when many people increase their use of the Internet with more online shopping, browsing for holiday decorating or travel ideas, and connecting with friends and family through social networks. October was Cybersecurity Month with a wealth of information available to help consumers protect their identity and decrease their risk of becoming a victim of scams and frauds. November is an excellent time to review and put suggestions in practice.

I recently read that we should not consider if we will be a victim of identity theft, but rather when we will be a victim. In 2014, data theft reached record levels. According to the Identity Theft Resource Center, there were 783 data breaches last year, a substantial increase from previous years. The Federal Trade Commission recorded over 332,000 identity theft complaints in 2014. All forms of fraud, including identity theft, cost Americans about $1.7 billion in 2014, or an average of more than $2,000 per incident.

First, let’s dispel some myths about cybercrime. All cybercriminals are not expert programmers who can gain access to your information easily. Rather, many are ordinary people who merely exploit known vulnerabilities in your software or operating system. Cybercriminals don’t discriminate and are likely to strike any vulnerable computer system whether it belongs to a home user, a small business, a Fortune 500 company or a government agency.

You cannot always tell if your computer has been infected. Some will display unwanted pop-ups or have performance issues when infected, but many viruses are specifically designed to not alert you to their presence. Last, it is a myth to believe that what you do online only affects you. Any compromised computer or mobile device can be used to infect others. How you navigate the Internet has the potential to impact everyone at home, work or around the world.

Cybercrime utilizes a wide variety of methods including the following: malware (bots, hijacking viruses, keyboard events, web bugs); spam and scams (false investment opportunities, health and diet scams, online con games); social networks (hacked accounts, fraudulent profiles, data collection); online shopping (malicious websites, unreliable sellers, phishing emails); mobile devices (evil twin attacks, wireless sniffing, shoulder surfing, smartphone worms); and identity theft (financial identity theft, tax-related identity theft, medical identity theft).


Keywords: Cybersecurity, cybercrime, identity theft.
Cybercrime and You

What can you do to protect yourself and reduce your risks of becoming a victim? First, remember that it is another myth to think that only certain types of cybercrimes occur during specific times of the year. You are vulnerable to all types, all of the time. You need to be ever vigilant and consistently take steps to protect yourself.

Your financial information should always be carefully secured and protected against unauthorized viewing and access. The methods you use protect the devices that store your files depends on the computer hardware and software that you use. You should:
1. enable your operating system’s firewall as the first step to put a barrier between your computer and the Internet;
2. update your operating system, security software, applications, web browser and plug-ins to incorporate the most recent vendor releases;
3. install software updates as soon as they are offered or allow automatic updates on all computers and devices to help to ensure security (and regularly verify that updates have installed with a third party tool, like Browsercheck at: http://browsercheck.qualys.com);
4. have antivirus or spyware protection software installed and update it regularly; and
5. never access personal or financial information over public or unencrypted wireless networks.

Passwords – One very important step to take is to always use long, strong passwords to protect your online accounts, electronic files, and mobile devices. A variety of sources recommend that for maximum strength, a password should have at least 14 characters containing at least one of each of the following types of characters: an uppercase letter, a lowercase letter, a number, and a special character. As added security, most experts recommend that passwords not contain references to your personal information (your username, real name, company name); no dictionary or complete words (English or foreign); that each password be unique; and that all passwords be significantly different from previous passwords. The most important things to remember are that longer is better and every site should have a unique password.

How can you remember such long passwords? Some experts suggest that you use the title or lyric to a favorite song. Can you decipher the password above? It represents the song title for Money, Money, Money released as a single by ABBA on November 1, 1976. Last, you should change your passwords regularly (every 45 to 90 days) and never keep your passwords written down near your computer or mobile storage devices.

You need to take steps to securely dispose of stored information when you no longer are going to use a computer, external disks, USB flash drives, or other devices. Hard drives and other disposable computer equipment may contain saved information, even if that information has been “deleted.” Run utilities and/or physically destroy the hard drive or other external storage to ensure they are clear of sensitive, private or personal information.

Social networking – Sites like Facebook, Twitter, and others are a great way to stay connected to family and friends, but be careful how much personal information you post. Social networking sites have the equivalent of email scams. Some sites allow users to hide the URL when posting a link, forcing you to click on it before knowing if it is legitimate. Cybercriminals will create a fraudulent profile to impersonate you or an official organization to try to trick you into divulging personal information. In many cases, criminals don’t even have to trick you; all the information they need to steal your identity, access your data, or stalk you can be collected from your posts and those of your friends. Carefully set your privacy and security settings and limit the amount of personal information you provide.


Keywords: Cybersecurity, cybercrime, identity theft.