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Greetings

Classes are starting. I am offering a one credit graduate course this spring. It is a history and philosophy of Family and Consumer Sciences/Home Economics course. It will be a good exercise for me to get back to our beginning and move forward through the 20th into 21st century with our students.

My message to you this time is short and I hope thought provoking. As I write this I am also processing the course syllabus, and I have questions to which I would like for you to respond. I plan on asking our on campus faculty as well as FCS professionals from my past.

1) What caused you to select FCS/Home Economics as a major? undergraduate and/or undergraduate?
2) At what point did we and the general population start confusing Home Economics with homemaking? Yes they are related but are they the same?
3) How do you see the future of FCS?

Please send your responses to: sonyam@uidaho.edu

Thank you and Happy New Year!
Is Your Dip Safe?

How do you feel when you notice someone dunks the same chip two or three times after biting the chip? “Double-Dipping,” is re-dipping a chip or a cracker that has been bitten. Regardless of the type of the chip or dip, many people consider this double-dipping impolite and unsanitary, while others see no problem and feel no shame in double-dipping. Whether this habit is nasty and rude or not, there are some serious food safety questions remained: Does this double-dipping really cause any food safety problem? Is it really possible that bacteria in your mouth transferred through the chip into the dip?

A food science major undergraduate research team led by Dr. Paul Dawson at Clemson University was intrigued by these questions and investigated if double dipping affected: (1) the amount of bacterial contamination, (2) the acidity of the dips, and (3) what role the type of dip had on the outcomes.

First of all, the research team compared the bitten and unbitten crackers by measuring how many bacteria could be transferred from the cracker to a cup of water. The result showed that there were 1,000 more bacterial cells/ml of water when crackers were bitten before dipping than when unbitten crackers were dipped in a cup of water.

In a second experiment, the team dipped bitten and unbitten crackers in water solutions with different pH (4, 5, and 6) and viscosity. They measured the bacterial numbers right after and two hours later. The test results showed that more acid solutions tended to lower the bacterial numbers over time.

The research team also compared three different kinds of dip, Tostitos Chunky Salsa (pH 4), Hershey’s Chocolate Syrup (pH 5.3) and Fritos Mild Cheddar Cheese dips (pH 6), which have different pH levels and viscosities. They also tested the bacterial counts of the different dips two hour after dipping, with interesting results. Right after double-dipping, the bacterial count of the salsa (1,000 bacterial cells/ml of dip) was five times higher than chocolate and cheese dips (150-200 bacterial cells/ml of dip). However, two hours after double-dipping, the bacteria count of the salsa decreased to the same levels as the chocolate and cheese. The team tried explain why there was a noticeable reduction in bacterial counts of the salsa based on basic food science. First of all, the thicknesses (or viscosities) of the dips are different. The lower viscosity of the salsa makes a greater portion of the dip touched by the bitten cracker fall back into the dipping bowl rather than sticking to the cracker. As it drops back into the dip, it transfers bacteria cells from the mouth of the double-dipper.

Secondly, salsa is more acidic after two hours, the high acidity of the salsa had reduced the bacterial counts for two hours after double-dipping. Thus, the bacterial counts in the dip after double-dipping are affected by both viscosity and acidity.

The study indicated that double-dipping can transfer bacterial cells from mouth to dip, but do we need to be so anxious about it?

The human mouth has a unique microflora composed of a tremendous variety of bacteria and viruses, most of which are harmless. However, some clinically critical human disease can be transmitted through saliva, with coughing and sneezing aero-
lizing up to 1,000 and 3,600 bacterial cells per minute.

That’s why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommends covering the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing to prevent spreading “serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).” With that in mind, there may be a concern over the spread of oral bacteria from person to person due to double-dipping. A person doesn’t have to be sick to pass on germs by double-dipping. The research team and Dr. Dawson suggested that you may need to clear their favorite snacks if you detect double-dippers in the midst of a festive gathering and that you don’t double-dip if you are sick.


Keywords: health, food safety, bacteria, virus.

Norovirus Vs Influenza

On December 10, 2015, Boston public health officials confirmed that norovirus was responsible for the gastrointestinal illness that had sickened scores of people who ate at a Chipotle Mexican Grill restaurant in Brighton, MA. The Boston Public Health Commission said tests identified a single strain of norovirus responsible for the dozens of people with nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. The following day, another Chipotle Mexican Grill restaurant in Seattle, WA was closed for receiving red violations during three consecutive inspections, according to the official Public Health. Recently it was also reported that there were several norovirus incidents in the Spokane Valley area. Although the cause has been narrowed down, the outbreak is expanding. I would like to provide a brief overview of norovirus by comparing with typical influenza.

What is norovirus and how serious is a norovirus illness? Norovirus illness is commonly called other names such as viral gastroenteritis, stomach flu, and food poisoning. Norovirus infection causes acute gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines). The most common symptoms are watery diarrhea, explosive projectile vomiting and stomach pain. Anyone can get norovirus, and can have the illness multiple times in their lifetime.

The main sources of norovirus are people (specifically, the feces and vomit of infected individuals), as well as raw or undercooked shellfish.

Norovirus illness is highly contagious. As few as 10 viral particles can cause infection; the average stool or vomit volume can contain over 100 million particles. People with norovirus are contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill to anywhere from 3 days to 2 weeks after they have recovered. Norovirus can survive in the environment for long periods of time. It can survive freezing conditions and heat exposure up to 140°F. Norovirus can spread rapidly in closed environments like dormitories, daycare centers, prisons, cruise ships, and nursing homes.

The differences between norovirus and influenza

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Norovirus</th>
<th>Influenza (Flu)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>symptom</td>
<td>Nausea and vomiting and/or watery diarrhea with cramps. Low grade fever, chills, body aches sometimes occur.</td>
<td>Fever (up to 104º F), headache, sore throat, cough, body aches and congestion. Vomiting and diarrhea are less common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>24 to 72 hours</td>
<td>3 to 7 days, often longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severity</td>
<td>Dehydration is the most common complication, particularly among young children and the elderly.</td>
<td>Among young children, the elderly, and people with underlying health problems (such as asthma, chronic lung disease, chronic heart disease, diabetes, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>- No vaccine is available. - Infected person should wait at least 48 hours after their last symptom before preparing food for others. - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. - Cook shellfish thoroughly before eating.</td>
<td>- Vaccine is available. - Infected person should stay home from work and school until at least 24 hours after the fever is gone. - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. Cover coughs and sneezes with the elbow or shoulder, or with a tissue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Keywords: virus, health.
Young Children, Language and Play

Research in recent years has amply documented the key role that early language plays in school success for children. One of the strongest findings is that children learn their language in interaction with adults, and those whose parents regularly engage them in conversation have larger vocabularies by school entry and fare better throughout school. (See for example, Children Learn Language through Interaction, Communicator, May 2014).

Now a new study of young children from the Norwegian Reading Center at the University of Stavanger shows yet another important function of language competence. That is, two-year-olds with poor language skills fare worse than their peers at play and, subsequently, fall behind socially.

While 70 percent of 2-year-olds with normal language development function well when playing with other children, only 11 percent of 2-year-olds with poor language skills manage to play with others. Children with poor language skills also have problems keeping up when playing. This causes other children to stop including them, meaning children with poor language skills are excluded from the all-important playtime.

"Two-year-olds with limited language skills miss out on important social experience, which is also important for language development," says study author Elisabeth Brekke Stangeland. "Our research shows that children with language difficulties struggle socially and that this persists into secondary school. Previous studies that have been done in other countries have focused on older children. We wanted to look at these relationships in Norwegian children in kindergarten," says Stangeland. Most Norwegian children attend a public or private barnehage—or kindergarten—from the age of 1.

She looked at the relationship between language and social skills in over 1,000 children aged 2 years and 9 months. There is a major difference between the 10 percent of the weakest children and the rest of the children in that particular age group.

"Play requires a good grasp of language. Even children under the age of three years use language when playing and it is essential that children understand each other in the process. In role play, for example, children who do not understand everything that is being said are quickly reduced to playing minor roles. They may end up playing the dog or the baby. Other research shows that these children quickly seek the company of adults instead of the other children and that they function badly in free play. Thus they miss out on social training, social codes for playing in the kindergarten and important linguistic stimulation," says Stangeland.

Stangeland and her colleagues in the Stavanger Project hope that the findings from this study will help to raise awareness among adults working with small children. According to Stangeland, "Adults have an important role here. They can keep an eye on events and help the child to get involved and play. It is important that these children receive help at an early stage to get involved and play and understand linguistic and social codes. Poor social skills do not suddenly occur at school age."

Source: University of Stavanger, http://www.uis.no/news

Keyword: early childhood.
**Disconnect Between Parenting and Certain Jobs a Source of Stress**

Some working parents are carrying more psychological baggage than others—and the reason has nothing to do with demands on their time and energy.

The cause is their occupation.

According to University of Iowa researchers, parents who hold jobs viewed by society as aggressive, weak, or impersonal are more stressed out than parents whose occupations are seen in a light similar to parenting—good, strong, and caring.

"We know that one source of stress for parents is the time and energy bind," says researcher Mark Walker. "But what I wanted to examine was the extent to which discrepancy between the cultural meanings of a person's occupational and parental identities could impact the psychological well-being of working parents."

"What we found is, in fact, it does," he adds.

"I think the research gives a name to something that I think many working parents experience but couldn't quite put a finger on," says Walker. "Identifying the issue as a social problem rather than an individual one, or even worse: an imaginary problem, could be helpful to working parents in and of itself."

Walker's premise for the study was the fact that for every role people play in their lives—be it parent, church member, or professor—there is an identity. And attached to that identity is a "cultural meaning," which is how society views that identity.

"We use cultural information to define those identities," he says. "How people treat us and react to us is based on that cultural information."

For his study, Walker merged data on the cultural sentiments attached to parental and occupational identities with a traditional large-scale survey on work-family conflict and came up with a three-dimensional graph on which various occupations were plotted. What Walker discovered is that the public is often skeptical about the abilities of parents whose occupations seemingly do not align with being a mother or a father.

"If a person is constantly met with skepticism, he or she can begin to feel stressed because that skepticism will take a toll over time," he says. "Those parents are always swimming upstream trying to convince people they are, for example, a legitimate parent or a legitimate attorney."

Among occupations that create more psychological baggage are: attorney, salesperson, laborer, receptionist, police officer, or politician. Those that align better, in terms of societal perception, with parenting include: teacher, physician, registered nurse, principal, and professor.

According to co-author Mary Noonan, "I used to think the whole conflict was about time and energy and not so much this internal conflict about identity. These are pretty exciting results."

Walker says the study could help shape policy and workplace changes designed to reduce the psychological strain of juggling the roles of parent and worker. "If employers are aware that working parents in a given occupation are more at risk of experiencing psychological strain, they could provide more targeted mental health resources for those in 'at risk' occupations," he says.


Keywords: parenting, stress, work and family.
Update on Adopting a Healthy Lifestyle

It is January 2016, the beginning of a new year. This is when many people plan on making healthy lifestyle changes that include eating healthier and/or losing weight. Here are some proven techniques that may help you.

Use Stacking to Adopt a Healthy New Habit

Want to be more active or eat healthier? Try adding or stacking a new habit to an established habit. Dr. Wendy Wood, a psychologist, believes that this minimizes the need for willpower and keeps the mental link between the old and new habits as strong as possible.

Here is how to get started stacking new habits:

• Start by looking at your existing routine and find your daily habits (doing the dishes, taking a shower, making coffee).
• Be specific with your new habits. Instead of wanting to eat more fruit, eat a piece of fruit after doing the dishes.
• Start small: limit your new habit to 5 minutes or less.
• Pick new habits you really want to adopt.


Eat at Regular Times to Eat Healthier

This recommendation, eating at regular times, may sound intuitive, but it works. Researchers at the University of Minnesota and North Carolina, Chapel Hill, studied eating habits of college students. They found that these students were significantly (p <0.001) more likely to consume a healthier diet (e.g. eat more fruits and vegetables) and consume fewer processed or sugary foods if they did the following:

• Ate breakfast and dinner regularly
• Prepared meals to eat at home and didn’t eat on campus
• Didn’t eat on the run or use media (Smart phones, tablets, etc.) while eating


Track Your Food Intake and Weight to Lose Weight

Keeping track of the food you eat and how much you weigh may help you lose weight. There are approximately 100 million individuals who use apps such as MyFitnessPal and Lose It to help them lose weight. Does it work? It depends on what they recorded (i.e. food and/or weight) and if they recorded this information at least once every three days.

Researchers analyzed data from approximately 30,000 individuals who indicated they were obese or overweight. They found that, over a one-year period, individuals lost:

• 8.2 pounds by tracking food and weight
• 4.2 pounds by tracking their weight
• 2.4 pounds by tracking food intake
• 1.1 pounds if they did not track food or weight

As these results show, the key to losing weight by using a food and weight tracker app is consistency. National Institutes of Health researcher Carly Paganowski theorizes that tracking may force people to pay attention to the type and amount of food they are eating, which may affect their weight.

Low-fat or Low-Carb Diets: Which Works Best for Weight Loss?

For many years, there has been a debate on whether following a low-fat or low-carb diet results in greater weight loss. That is what researchers at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s College in Boston studied by analyzing the results of 53 published studies containing more than 68,000 adults.

They found that the average weight loss in the two groups was six pounds and that after one year, the low-carb dieters were approximately two pounds lighter. In other words, there was not much difference.

Lead researcher, Dr. Tobias, stated that “the key to success seems to have more to do with adherence than a specific weight-loss plan. Being able to stick to a diet in the long term will probably predict whether or not a diet is successful for weight loss.”

Source: http://thelancet.com/journals/landia/article/PIIS2213-8587(15)00367-8/fulltext

Keywords: weight loss, diets.

Restrict the Number of Hours That You Eat During the Day to Lose Weight

Eating three meals a day may not be the norm for most people. That is what researcher Dr. Panda of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California found. For three weeks, Dr. Panda had 150 subjects (adults between 21-55 years-old) continuously take photos of all the food, drinks, and nutritional supplements they consumed, using an app. This app tracked the calories, time, and exact location of where the food was consumed. None of the subjects were asked to alter their eating habits and none of them were on a diet.

The researchers found that their subjects had eating habits that were both erratic and continuous. They tended to eat all day long, i.e. whenever they were awake. The majority ate over a 15-hour period each day and fasted only when they slept. They consumed the fewest amount of calories (< 25 percent) before noon and more than 35 percent were consumed after 6 p.m.

Could restricting the number of hours a person eats help them lose weight? That’s what researchers wanted to find in a follow-up study. They tracked eight participants, who were classified as obese, and consumed food stretching beyond 14 hours a day. The researchers asked them to restrict all food intake to a 10-hour block of time per day for 16 weeks.

The results showed that, even though subjects were not instructed to change their food intake, their calorie intake decreased by 20 percent and they lost seven pounds after four months. Also, the subjects reported sleeping better and having more energy.


Keyword: diet.

Burn More Calories by Adjusting Your Speed While Walking

Walking is an excellent low-impact workout that most people can fit into their daily routine. Varying your walking pace can burn up to 20 percent more calories, compared to walking at a slow, steady pace. That is what researchers at Ohio State University found.

In this study, they found that the number of calories their subjects (N=16) burned was lowest when they walked at their preferred or slower pace. Their metabolic rate increased if they walked at a faster pace, started and stopped walking, and walked in a curve. In other words, if you want to burn more calories, walk in a way that feels unnatural to you.


Keywords: walking, physical activity.
Mobile Financial Services

A part of the mission of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) is to empower consumers to take more control over their economic lives. Given the increasing use and proliferation of mobile technology to access financial services and manage personal finances, last November the CFPB released a “Mobile Financial Services” report with a summary of comments from the public on opportunities, challenges and risks for the underserved. The underserved population includes low-income, unbanked, underbanked and economically vulnerable consumers. The report is based on comments received by the CFPB in response to their request for information in June 2014.

Consumers are using mobile financial services (MFS) – financial services and products accessed through mobile phones and other devices – more and more to access accounts, pay bills, deposit funds and manage their financial lives. About 9 out of ten adults (87-90%) in the United States have a mobile phone and approximately 62-64 percent of consumers own smartphones. For those with bank accounts, the rate of mobile banking use went from 22 percent in 2011 to 39 percent in 2014. Over half (52%) of consumers with smartphones reported using mobile banking in 2014.

Key takeaways from the report related to mobile financial services and the underserved include:

1. Smartphone use among underserved households and individuals is growing significantly. For example, 44 percent of unbanked individuals and 50 percent of adults living in households earning less than $30,000 per year have smartphones. For many, their smartphones or devices are the primary way they access the Internet.
2. Hispanic adults have a higher rate of smartphone ownership and mobile banking and mobile payments usage than the general population.
3. Rural residents appear to have lower rates of smartphone ownership and mobile financial services activity.
4) Underserved consumers tend to use alternative financial services over bank services because they want immediate access to funds or they may not qualify for bank accounts. If financial institutions could provide faster access to funds, some underserved adults might not choose to use higher priced alternative financial services such as high-fee check cashing services.

Mobile financial services can save consumers money and time.

The CFPB concludes that the increase in smartphone use presents opportunities for expanded use of MFS for the underserved. The trend also presents opportunities for Extension educators to offer educational programs that address these emerging needs of clients. Privacy and security concerns are a significant barrier to the use of MFS. Underserved adults are less able to absorb financial losses or interruptions that may result from security-related problems. Digital access and digital financial literacy need to be improved for most consumers and are excellent program topics for Extension educators.


Keywords: Personal finance, mobile financial services.
Football and Finances

After a couple weeks of college football championship and bowl games and the hype beginning for Super Bowl 50, I began thinking about football and finances.

Recent research was published in the American Economic Review, entitled “Bankruptcy Rates Among NFL Players with Short-Lived Income Spikes.” The researchers tested for consumption smoothing using bankruptcy data on players in the National Football League (NFL) who typically earn several million dollars during an income spike that lasts a few years. The life-cycle hypothesis predicts that players should save substantially while playing and then have little risk of bankruptcy post-NFL. However, the players in the sample began to file for bankruptcy soon after they stopped playing and continued to file at a high rate through at least the first 12 years of retirement.


Keywords: Football, bankruptcy, personal finances.

Football and Advertising

Football affects the finances of many more than just the players themselves. A 30-second Super Bowl ad for the 50th Super Bowl airing on February 7, 2016 is selling for as much as $5 million, according to CBS network president and chief executive Leslie Moonves. The price is 11 percent higher than the base price of $4.5 million that NBC charged advertisers during the previous Super Bowl, according to ESPN. Between 2005 and 2014, the price of a 30-second spot has increased 75 percent, generating a total of $2.19 billion in sales.

Prices are only as high as marketers are willing to pay to gain access to the enormous Super Bowl audience. Some 114.4 million people on average tuned into the 2015 Super Bowl to watch the Seattle Seahawks play the New England Patriots, making the game the most-watched broadcast in the history of U.S. television. That estimate doesn’t even account for larger viewing groups at private parties or bars. “For some advertisers, $5 million for that many eyeballs is a price worth paying.”


Keywords: Football, advertising, Super Bowl.