

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER

Ashe County Center

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County Drinking Water Screening Results Are In..



Cold clear water running from the tap, and plenty of it, that is what everyone wants when they turn on the spigot. For almost 20 years, Cooperative Extension has screened private wells and springs for contaminants that never affect the water's color or taste. Recently, 80 samples that provide drinking water for 102 families, were checked for coliform bacteria. Of the samples screened, 63 were from wells and 17 from springs. Twenty samples contained coliform bacteria. Recommendations for cleaning the water systems contaminated with coliform were provided to the people who participated in the drinking water screening. Coliforms live on the surface of the ground and are referred to as "indicator" bacteria. If coliforms are found in a drinking water supply, this is an indication that other contaminants can be present in the drinking water. Coliforms have no color or taste, so they often go undetected until there is illness.

A special thank you to Tim Church, Jefferson Water Resources and volunteers from Ashe County Extension and Community Association (ECA) for their work with the water screening: Mary Gordon Tugman, Swansie Baldwin, Willeen Fortner, Sue Bradshaw, Ruth Anne Phipps, Janet Ward, Carol Skroch, Hilbish Jones, Beverly Bickford and Betty Pickett.

Each year the county drinking water screening raises awareness about the need to maintain and protect private wells and springs. Minimal activity within a 100 feet radius around the well or spring will help protect drinking water. All drinking water springs and wells that are five years old or older should be checked for bacteria each year.

For additional information about drinking water please contact the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Ashe County Center at (336) 846-5850.

Pressure Canner Clock Face Gauge Check

Cooperative Extension will test your pressure canner clock face gauge by appointment at no charge. You only need to bring the lid. Clock face canner gauges should be checked every year to ensure their accuracy; this is an important step to keeping canned food safe.

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"Home Food Preservation In Ashe County 2016" is Ready!



"Home Food Preservation In Ashe County 2016," is a collection of updated canning and freezing information of the most commonly grown foods in the county, including meat. Tested canning recipes are included. You may pick up your copy at the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Ashe County Center (134 Government Circle, Suite 202, Jefferson, NC—second floor Agriculture Service Center) between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday—Friday. There is no charge for the packet.

Food Preservation DVD's are available for check-out through Extension. Canning and freezing fruits, vegetables, pickles, jams, jellies and more are demonstrated in, "So Easy To Preserve" DVD's produced through the University of Georgia Extension. If you want to self study these topics, you may check out a DVD for two weeks to learn more about canning, freezing, and drying. Call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Ashe County Center at (336) 846-5850 for additional information.



Canning In Electric Multi-Cookers Not Recommended

Before every canning season, new equipment or a new and improved utensil seems to hit the market. Being a good consumer and doing research on these items before you buy them is always recommended.

Much conversation has been generated about the electric multi-cookers pressure cooker that comes with instructions for pressure canning. The United States Department of Agriculture (*USDA*) does not recommend using this appliance for canning, even though manufacturer's instructions are given for canning. Reasons electric multi-cookers are not recommended for pressure canning include:

- *The heat distribution inside the jars during the canning process is important to raise the temperature high enough to keep food in the jars safe. The position of the jars in the canner and the flow of steam around the jars contributes to the temperature of the food and this has not been tested.*
- *The temperature inside the canner is most important, not the pressure. Venting the canner before building pressure in the canner is vital to having the adequate temperature for processing. Multi-cookers do not use this technique. Power surges during the processing time can impact the processing temperatures. These appliances process three to four jars at one time, while a regular pressure canner can process seven. For more information on these appliances, visit...*

http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/nchfp/factsheets/electric_cookers.html

<http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/nchfp/factsheets/pressurecookers.html>

Chef and Child Coming August 2, 3, & 4, 2016 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon



Do you have a child, grandchild or know of a youngster who wants to learn to cook? If so, encourage them to register to attend Chef and Child at the Agriculture Service Center Conference Room August 2-4, 2016 from 9:00 a.m.—12:00 noon each day. The program is for youth, ages 9-13. They will learn to prepare easy, tasty meals and snacks, learn about kitchen and food safety and learn about eating healthy and eating the food they prepare. A local chef will be teaching, along with Extension Agents and staff. The program is sponsored by the Triad Chefs Association, Lowes Food and Cooperative Extension, which allows youth to attend at no charge. Class size is limited and the class often has a waiting list. *For more information contact the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Ashe County Center at (336) 846-5850.*

Ginger-Mango Salsa Recipe

This is a good salsa for beef mushroom tacos or as a chip dip. You can substitute pineapple for mango or use a combination if you like.

Ingredients:

- Ripe mango, peeled and diced, 1 small
- Ginger, grated 1 teaspoon
- Fresh mint, 1 tablespoon minced
- Jalapeno, 1 minced
- Salt, pinch
- Rice wine vinegar, 1 teaspoon

Instructions:

Combine all ingredients. Can be made a day ahead to allow flavors to combine. If you want less heat, remove the ribs and seeds from the jalapeno. If you want more heat, choose a hotter pepper such as a habanero.



Home Food Preservation Workshop Opportunities...

Home Canning Basics—Using a Pressure Canner and a Boiling Water Canner

(choose one)

- Thursday, June 23, 2016, 9:00 a.m.—12:30 p.m.
- Thursday, June 23, 2016, 5:30 p.m.—8:00 p.m. *(registration required by Tuesday, June 21, 2016)*

Freezing Basics: Freezing Fruits, Vegetables and Prepared Foods for Future Use

- Tuesday, June 28, 2016—6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m. *(registration required by Friday, June 24, 2016)*

Drying Foods for Future Use

- Thursday, July 21, 2016—6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. *(registration required by Friday, July 15, 2016)*



All workshops will be held in the Agricultural Service Center Conference Room (134 Government Circle, Jefferson, NC). Space is limited. Registration is required to ensure adequate seating and materials. There is no charge to participate in the workshops. *To register for any of these workshops please call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Ashe County Center at (336) 846-5850.*

Tacos - An Easy Delicious Meal

Now that warmer weather is here, many of us would prefer not to spend a lot of time in the kitchen. This recipe for beef (*or turkey*) and mushroom tacos is a great way to prepare a quick meal that is healthy using lots of mushrooms and onions which decreases the calories and increases the vegetables. Making and using your own taco seasoning enables you to control the heat and salt. If you prefer a vegetarian taco, leave out the meat and triple the mushrooms.

Beef and Mushroom Tacos Recipe

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
 1 large onion, chopped
 Taco seasoning mix, 1-2 tablespoons (*recipe follows*)
 4 tablespoons tomato paste
 2 teaspoons salt
 1 pound lean ground beef (*or turkey*), cooked & well drained
 4 cups chopped and sautéed white mushrooms



Instructions:

Heat a large skillet and add oil. Add chopped onions and cook until tender, 1-2 minutes. Add taco seasoning and continue to cook on medium heat. Add 1/2 teaspoon salt. Add tomato paste, cooked and drained beef and cooked mushrooms. Add remaining salt to taste, and 1/4 cup water if needed to loosen mixture.

To assemble:

Heat corn or flour tortillas. Place mixture on each tortilla (*begin with 1/3 cup for a small tortilla*). Top with salsa, shredded lettuce or cabbage and tomato.

Taco Seasoning Mix

This is a great alternative to the store-bought taco seasoning that contains lots of salt. Adjust the heat to your taste by using less or more cayenne.

Ingredients:

Chili powder, 1/3 cup
 Paprika (*hot or smoky*), 3 tablespoons
 Ground cumin, 3 tablespoons
 Oregano, 1 tablespoon
 Black pepper, 2 teaspoons
 Cayenne pepper, 1 teaspoon
 Sugar, 1/2 teaspoon



Instructions:

Combine all ingredients. Store in airtight jar.

Sincerely,

Carolyn B. Shepherd

Carolyn Shepherd
 Ashe County Extension Director