

The Communicator

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Cooperative Extension System

January 2003

Acting Director

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Title: *Dawn of a New Century*
Artist: *Dan Sekanwagi*

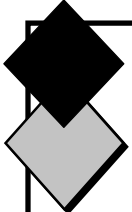
<http://www.theartroom-sf.com/dsgiclee.htm>

A New Century


Thanks to all of you who helped celebrate “One hundred years ~ enriching lives” throughout 2002. This year we begin another century of outstanding FCS program delivery to students and the people of Idaho. Best wishes for continued success as you plan and deliver programs in 2003.

Documenting Scholarship

Your questions about documenting scholarly activity and our December article coincided with Dr. Karen Brun’s presentations during the UI University-wide Extension/Outreach Conference in December. During her session on Scholarship of Engagement she reminded us that scholars are experts either in the substance or the processes that facilitate the generation, dissemination, and use of knowledge in advising and consulting with others. The designation scholar is earned and bestowed by peers. Citing Glasick, Huber, and Maeroff, in *Scholarship Assessed*, she indicated that documenting engagement scholarship is guided by clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective communication, and reflective critiques. She provided a wealth of information and resources for further consideration. If



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you didn’t get a chance to attend and are interested in materials, please contact me.

Galaxy II

Speaking of scholarly activity, just a reminder that *Galaxy II, Exceeding Expectations through Teamwork*, is scheduled for Salt Lake City, September 21-25, 2003. You can reach their website through NEAFCS. The stated mission of the event is to present ourselves as a unified group of extension professionals who are a viable and responsive force dealing with people’s needs, opportunities, and challenges in the 21st century. One of the *Galaxy II* objectives is to provide opportunities for Extension professionals to make scholarly presentations, reporting research and accomplishments of significant programs. Here’s a great opportunity to present your work without depleting your travel budget. Proposals must be submitted by January 31, 2003.

In fact, Dr. Eberlein has indicated in the December E-Notes that \$100 will be available for those who need support or \$200 for those who need support

and are giving oral or poster presentations. Amounts may change somewhat depending on response. If you need assistance, call or email Sherri Buckingham by January 17, 2003 and indicate whether or not you will be submitting a presentation proposal.

Topic Teams

I sat in on all FCS topic team meetings and enjoyed hearing the details of the work all of you have been doing. FCS specialists had productive meetings with their topic teams, with a chance to review the use of IDEAS and discuss improvements for next year. In all meetings, faculty generated a more suitable list of project titles culminating in about 8-10 projects for each team. With county faculty reporting to specific projects, the data will be much easier to organize into a report. Kudos to all of our FCS specialists who wrote thorough state reports in spite of the challenges of organizing information. Critical Issues funds will be available for topic team projects. The deadline is February 15, 2003 with instructions available at <http://extension.ag.uidaho.edu/planning>.



The Communicator

Although we discussed the use of the electronic version of *The Communicator* at our In-service in October, we have continued to be concerned about access and use of this docu-

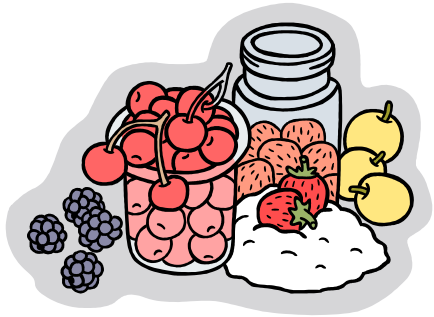
ment. We don't want time or lack of connection to be a barrier to its use. We will be sending copies to all of you who indicated that you preferred a paper copy.

Dean's Search

All departments were asked by the Provost to submit nominations for the Acting Dean. Dean Branen will step down as Dean of CALS on March 1, 2003. It is anticipated that an Acting Dean will serve from March until a new Dean is in Moscow, tentatively July 1.

NCFR

I attended the annual conference of the National Council on Family Relations in Houston this past November. Several of the plenary sessions were very interesting and I purchased videotapes of them. We haven't received them as I write, but they should arrive soon. We would like to make them available to any FCS faculty member in the School or in the state. You may wish to view for your own professional development or use in some of the workshops you present. The opening plenary session addressed a much discussed topic, *Is Strengthening Marriage to Reduce the Divorce Rate a Workable Strategy for Policy and Intervention?*, and was presented by Arlene Skolnick, William Doherty, Laura Sanchez, and Howard Markman. The entire 2003 conference (in Vancouver, BC) will address *The Future of Marriage*. Another session which might be of interest to you was entitled, *What Are Future Prospects for Increasing Father Involvement in Child Rearing and Household Activities?* Presenters included W. Bradford Wilcox, James Levine, Scott Coltrane, and William Allen. A real eye opener for me was a plenary on *Is Parent and Child Well-being Getting Better or Worse Under Welfare Reform?* A panel of outstanding presenters included Greg Duncan, Greg Acs, Karen Seccombe, and Theodora Ooms. Steven Mintz presented a research update for practitioners entitled, *Beyond Sentimentality: The History and Future of Childhood*. Let us know if you would like to borrow any of these resources.



Current U.S. Home Canning: Many Don't Follow Safe Practices

Are consumers following safe home canning methods these days? To find out, the National Center for Home Food Preservation at the University of Georgia conducted a nationwide telephone survey with consumers who engage in some form of food preservation. Of the 5,259 numbers called, 1,244 households (24 percent) told interviewers that they had either canned or frozen food, other than food purchased at the grocery store, during 1999. Of these, 501 (40 percent) agreed to complete interviews. Here is a synopsis of the results:

- 135 of the 501 respondents canned food at home in 1999 (27 percent).
- Almost half of these respondents (48 percent) used canning instructions obtained from friends or relatives and 19 percent referred to a cookbook.
- Two-thirds said they used the canning instructions "as is," while 29 percent said they adapted them for use.
- Vegetables were the food item most commonly canned (71 percent of respondents), tomatoes and tomato products took a close second (60 percent of respondents), and fruit and fruit products were canned by 47 percent of respondents.
- The USDA advises using a boiling water or pressure canner for canning fruits and tomatoes; 58 percent of those canning these items reported using the boiling water method, 15.5 percent used a pressure canner, and 18 percent used a pressure cooker. A surprising num-



Food Safety

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ber (21 percent) reported using the "open-kettle" method (which has no processing after filling the jars), and almost 4 percent used the oven.

- The USDA advises using a pressure canner for vegetables other than tomatoes and for other low-acid foods. 30 percent of those who canned vegetables used a pressure canner and 29 percent used a pressure cooker. Unfortunately, many people reported using methods that put them at high risk for foodborne illness, such as botulism: 39 percent used the boiling water method, 15 percent used the open-kettle method, and 3 percent used the oven.
- 62 percent said they had no seal failures on jars, while 38 percent reported having some jars that did not seal properly.

The results of the survey also indicated that many people do not know how to properly handle food after it is canned. Almost 40 percent of participants reported that they kept canned food for more than a year, and only about half believed that food could be spoiled without showing signs of spoilage. Less than 40 percent of participants said they brought vegetables to a boil before serving them, and 13 percent served them without any heat treatment.

This survey demonstrates the need for education of home canners regarding appropriate and safe canning methods. Educational materials should address issues such as altitude adjustments, use of science-based canning instructions, and most importantly, use of pressure canners for low acid foods like vegetables.

Source: Bardsley, M. & Kendall, P., "Current U.S. Home Canning: Many Don't Follow Safe Practices," *Safe Food News* VI(4):2, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension; adapted from a poster session by Andress, EL, D'sa, EM, Harrison, MA, Kerr, WL, Harrison, JA, & Nummer, BA, "Current Home Canning Practices in the US." Departments of Food Science and Technology & Foods and Nutrition, University of Georgia.

Key words: consumer, food preservation, food safety.



Update on Irradiation of Meat

The USDA approved the irradiation of ground beef in 1999, following earlier approval by the Food and Drug Administration. Although still only available in Idaho on a limited basis (through Schwann's home delivered frozen foods), irradiated ground beef, both fresh and frozen, is becoming increasingly available in the United States. The Minnesota Beef Council publishes a list of establishments offering irradiated ground beef at foodservice and retail. Some information from the list:

Grocery Stores. The Huskien Meat Company (Sauk Rapids, MN) began marketing frozen irradiated patties in May 2000 to an initial distribution of 84 stores in St. Paul and Minneapolis, MN (see *The Communicator*, July 2000, "What's Happening with Irradiation and Beef?"). Huskien and other meat irradiation companies are now distributing to thou-

sands of stores in 30+ states. Distribution is primarily in the Midwest (for example, SuperValue, Rainbow Foods, Kroger), southeast (e.g., Winn Dixie, Lowes Foods, Publix) and east (e.g., D'Agostino Supermarkets, Pathmark Supermarkets, Wegmans Food Markets, Price Chopper).

Mail Order and Home Delivery. All the ground beef sold by Omaha Steaks (mail order) and Schwann's (home delivery) is irradiated.

Foodservice. Sysco Foodservice Distribution Centers offers irradiated ground beef to foodservice customers. Sixty Dairy Queen stores in Minnesota are offering irradiated burgers; DQ offers quite a bit of point of sale information (tray liners, table tents and signage) on irradiation for its customers.

School Lunch Program. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a long-standing policy of not buying irradiated ground beef for the federal school lunch program, due to consumer resistance to the product, but that may change. (USDA buys about 20 percent of the ground beef used in school lunch programs; the rest is bought with local funds.) In the farm bill passed in May of this year, Congress ordered the USDA not to exclude the use of any federally approved food safety technology when buying food. However, for actual inclusion of irradiated beef to occur in the school lunch program, USDA must issue rules, allow for public comments, and approve the final rule. USDA asked for public comments in November 2002, and will be making an announcement about this issue in early 2003.

Sources: Roos, R., "USDA may include irradiated ground beef in school lunch program soon," Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) News, University of Minnesota, <http://www1.umn.edu/cidrap/content/fs/irradiation/news/irradpolicy.html>; Minnesota Beef Council-Food Irradiation Update, "Updated list of restaurants and retailers marketing irradiated ground beef," as reported in *FSNet*, October 25, 2002.

Key words: irradiation, food safety, school meals.



Party Food and Foodborne Disease In the Home

A recent research report suggests that when people prepare food at home, they are more apt to make food safety mistakes when larger quantities of food are prepared.

A study reported last fall in the *British Medical Journal* analyzed outbreaks of infectious intestinal diseases in private households in England and Wales over a 7-year period. Food was found to be the cause of most infectious intestinal disease originating at home. The authors further noted that food as a source of illness occurred somewhat more frequently when people fixed food for larger groups than their usual practice—such as for barbecues and dinner parties.

The most frequently reported pathogen was *Salmonella*. Poultry, desserts containing raw egg, and egg dishes were commonly implicated. The most common faults in food hygiene were inappropriate storage, inadequate cooking, and cross contamination.

This study suggests that we should remind people that special care is needed when preparing food for dinner parties and barbecues to avoid giving friends and neighbors a foodborne illness. When planning a large function, people should think ahead to provide adequate refrigeration space, iced or heated serving dishes, a thermometer for checking endpoint temperatures and careful planning to insure kitchen hygiene when handling larger quantities of food.

Source: *British Medical Journal* press release November 8, 2001 regarding article Gillespie, IA, O'Brien, SJ & Adak, G K. 2001 "General outbreaks of infectious intestinal diseases linked with private residences in England and Wales, 1992-9: questionnaire study," *British Medical Journal* 323: 1097-1098. *FSNet*, November 9, 2001.

Key words: food safety, foodborne disease, cooking.



"Doggie Bags:" Food Safety and Restaurant Leftovers

Nationwide, 858,000 locations offer foodservice—up from 491,000 in 1972, according to a 2002 report by the National Restaurant Association. Carolyn O'Neil, registered dietitian and national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association (ADA)/ConAgra Foods Foundation Home Food Safety program, describes Americans as becoming a "...culture of 'diners-out' and 'takers-out.'" The potential for a food-related illness from improperly handled leftovers may be increasing.

It's hard to leave extra food behind at restaurants. An April 2002 survey by ADA and ConAgra Foods Foundation found 91 percent of Americans take leftovers home occasionally and 32 percent do so on a regular basis.

How safely are these leftovers handled by consumers? The ADA/ConAgra survey found consumers are still playing a guessing game as to proper temperatures for leftover storage and reheating, and determining if food is still edible. For example, the survey indicated:

- Fewer than 1 in 5 used a refrigerator thermometer to assure their refrigerator is at a safe temperature; 43 percent didn't know the correct temperature for refrigerator storage.
- 51 percent didn't know the proper temperature for reheating leftovers; 85 percent never used a meat thermometer.
- While food may spoil before it looks, smells or tastes bad, 48 percent relied on one or more of their senses to judge food safety.

- O'Neil also warned against leaving leftovers out on the counter or under your desk for several hours. To handle leftovers safely, two hours is the maximum time perishable foods should be at room temperature, one hour if the temperature is 90°F or above. For best quality and safety, eat leftovers in a day or two or freeze them for longer storage. Keep your refrigerator running at 40°F or below. Reheat leftovers until they're steaming hot throughout, 165°F.

If you're concerned about leftovers and don't feel you'll be able to refrigerate or eat them in a timely manner, ask about portion sizes before you order. USDA's publication "How Much Are You Eating," advises "If main dish portions are larger than you want, order an appetizer or side dish instead, or share a main dish with a friend."

Bottom Line: If you feel you won't be able eat all of a food at a restaurant, you don't want to leave it behind and you can't refrigerate it within two hours, don't order it!

Source: Henneman, A., "Don't Forget Food Safety," Food Reflections Newsletter, October 2002, <http://lanaster.unl.edu/food/ftoct02.htm>.

Key words: food safety, food service, storage.

Botox—A Benign Use for *Clostridium botulinum* Toxin

The July-August 2002 issue of *FDA Consumer* ran an article about the use of Botox Cosmetic. This is not a food safety topic, but it relates to food safety issues in that Botox Cosmetic is purified Botulinum Toxin Type A, the same toxin that causes food poisoning produced by *Clostridium botulinum*.

When sterilized and injected in tiny amounts, botulinum toxin blocks the release of acetylcholine, the chemical that nerve cells use to signal muscle contraction. Botox was first approved by FDA in 1989 to treat two eye muscle disorders—uncontrollable blinking and misaligned eyes. In 2000, it was approved to treat a neurological disorder that causes severe neck and shoulder contractions. During medical uses, doctors noted a side effect of Botox administration: it softened frown

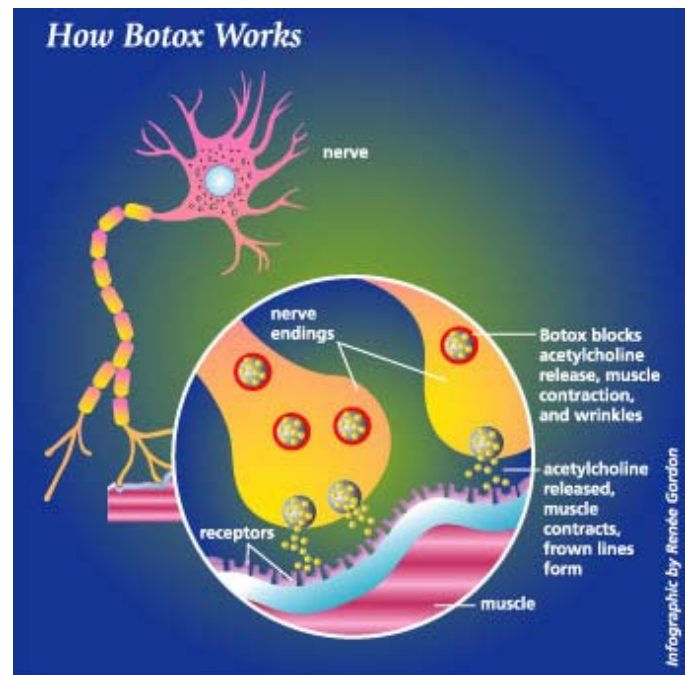
lines between the eyebrows that tend to make people look tired, angry or displeased. In April 2002, after efficacy was demonstrated in clinical studies, FDA granted approval for cosmetic use of Botox.

Botox injections are the fastest-growing cosmetic procedure in the industry according to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, in spite of the fact that the wrinkle-free effects only lasts 4 to 6 months.

While there is no chance of contracting botulism from Botox injections, the FDA is concerned about the potential for abuse. Botox must be injected by a qualified doctor to avoid risks of improper amount or placement of the injections. Side effects are possible and must be monitored by a qualified physician.

Source: Lewis, C. "Botox Cosmetic: A Look at Looking Good," *FDA Consumer* 36(4): 11-13, July-August 2002.

Key words: bacteria, new products.



Early Childhood Poverty— A Statistical Profile

Compelling research over the last several years demonstrates that the first years of life are more important than had been thought for children's emotional and intellectual development. This research significantly increases the urgency of addressing one of the most important risk factors that can impede young children's development: poverty. Unfortunately, almost one in five children (18 percent in 2000) in the United States lives in poverty during the early years that are so important to future life chances. The 2.1 million children under age three who are poor face a greater likelihood of impaired development because of their increased exposure to a number of factors associated with poverty. These risk factors include:

- Inadequate nutrition
- Environmental toxins
- Diminished interaction due to maternal depression
- Trauma and abuse
- Lower quality child care
- Parental substance abuse

For a more detailed description of the effects of poverty on brain development, see NCCP's fact sheet, *Poverty and Brain Development in Early Childhood*, at <http://www.nccp.org>.

Each of the risk factors listed above can have a particularly negative impact on brain development during early childhood. As children in poverty grow into adolescence and adulthood, they are more likely to drop out of school, have children out of wedlock, and be unemployed.

As Americans pay greater attention to the needs of children during their first years of life, it is critical that poverty be recognized as perhaps the single most powerful factor that can negatively influence brain development. It is also necessary for Americans to recognize that poverty is still prevalent among young children, despite declines since 1993. In 2000, the number and percent of children under age three living in poverty in the United

Family Development

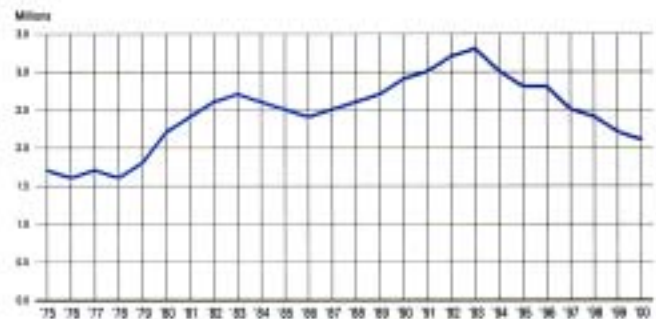
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States reached the lowest level since 1980. Compared with the highest level in 1993, the number and percent of children under age three living in poverty dropped from 3.3 to 2.1 million, and from 27 to 18 percent—a 33 percent decrease.

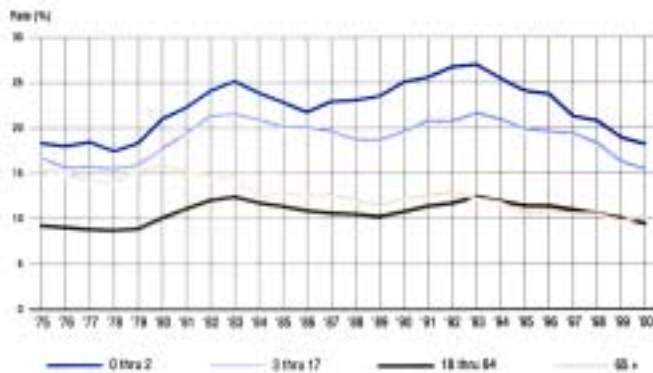
Number of poor children under age three, 1975-2000



Since 1983, the number of children living in poverty has been reduced by one-third, but the current economic downturn could bring back the sharp increases in child poverty the U.S. experienced in the recessions of the early 1980s and 1990s.

- *Young children are still more likely to be poor than any other age group, despite the recent large decrease in the poverty rate for children under age three.* The poverty rate for children under age three was about 80 percent higher than the rate for adults or the elderly in 2000. The poverty rate for young children is also significantly higher than the poverty rates for older children and continues to represent a disturbing picture of young child poverty in the United States.

Poverty rates by age, 1975-2000



Very young children are more likely to be poor than any other age group.

- *Two out of every five young children in the United States run the risk of living in poor or low-income ("near poor") families.* Nearly 40 percent of all children under age three lived in poor or nearly poor families in 2000. In addition to the 2.1 million young children who lived in poverty in 2000, another 2.6 million children under age three lived in near poverty (in families with incomes below 200 percent of the poverty line—the threshold for eligibility for the Medicaid and State Child Health Insurance [SCHIP] programs in many states).
- *Young children living with their mothers only are about five times as likely to be poor as those living with married parents despite recent declines in young child poverty.* The poverty rate for children under age three living with only their mother decreased from 63 percent in 1993 to 45 percent in 2000, while the poverty rate for children under age three living with married parents decreased from 14 percent in 1993 to 9 percent in 2000. In 2000, there were 1,288,000 poor children living in single-parent families and 751,000 poor children living with married parents.

Minority young children continue to have significantly higher poverty rates than White children. And these poverty rates have substantially varied for minority children over the last three decades and also by the type of family they live in.

- *The poverty rate for young Black and Hispanic children under age three is still three times higher than that of White children.* The poverty

rate among Black children under age three decreased to 35 percent in 2000, from 57 percent in 1992. The poverty rate among Hispanic children under age three also decreased, from 44 percent in 1992 to 30 percent in 2000. These rates, however, are still higher than the poverty rate among White children under age three—10 percent in 2000.

- *Over half of all young Black children and nearly half of all Hispanic young children living in single-mother families are poor.* Among children under age three living with only their mother, the poverty rate among Black children was 52 percent, and the poverty rate among Hispanic children was 45 percent in 2000.
- *Hispanic young children living in a two-parent family are three times as likely to be poor as Black children, and the gap is increasing.* Among children under age three living with married parents, Hispanic children (24 percent) were three times as likely to be poor as Black children (8 percent), and almost five times more likely to be poor as White children (5 percent) in 2000. In fact, among children under age three living with married parents, Hispanic children consistently have a higher poverty rate than Black children, and the gap has been increasing dramatically since the mid 1970s.

The long economic expansionary period in the 1990s and the welfare reform legislation of 1996 have provided more employment opportunities to parents. Parents' employment, however, does not necessarily guarantee escape from poverty.

- *The majority of poor young children live in working families.* The percent of all poor children under age three living in families relying exclusively on earnings increased to 59 percent in 2000, the highest level since 1975. When those receiving public assistance as well are included, 75 percent of all poor children under age three lived with at least one parent or relative who earned money to support family needs, a 23 percent increase from 61 percent in 1993.
- *Only 11 percent of poor children under age three live in families relying exclusively on public assistance.* In 2000, the number of poor children under age three living in families relying

exclusively on public assistance decreased to 232,000 from a recent peak of 1 million in 1991—a 68 percent decrease from its highest level of 34 percent in 1991. During the same period, the number of poor children under age three living in families relying exclusively on earnings increased to 1.3 million in 2000 from 1.1 million in 1991.

Despite the unprecedented economic boom in the 1990s, there are still 2.1 million children under age three living in poverty. Parents' employment does not necessarily guarantee escape from poverty. Among these young children in poverty, more are from working families than ever before. The welfare reform of the 1990s has removed much of the safety net of public assistance for poor children. The changing economic environment and increasing unemployment in the current recession pose new challenges for young children in poverty.

In addition to the human costs of child poverty, there are large economic costs to the nation as a whole. If millions of children continue to grow up in poverty, enormous constraints will be placed on the productivity and competitiveness of America's future labor force. Child poverty rates are intertwined with income inequality.

The problem of young child poverty cuts across racial and geographic boundaries. It is highly probable that continuing to postpone a national debate about how best to reduce the rate of young child poverty in the United States will only allow the problem of young child poverty to touch more families and communities and increase the ultimate costs of corrective action. Other nations with fewer resources than the United States have been able to do a far better job of preventing poverty among their young children. The United States can learn from these nations and from its own dramatic success in reducing the poverty rate for elderly Americans. It is certainly possible to develop and implement strategies to reduce the poverty rate for young children in the United States that would be consistent with American values.

Source: <http://www.nccp.org>.

Key words: early childhood, poverty.

Welfare Sanctions Associated with Children's Hospitalization and Food Insecurity

Infants and toddlers in families whose welfare benefits were reduced or eliminated by 1996 welfare sanctions have higher rates of hospitalization and household food insecurity, according to a study published recently in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. This is the first empirical clinical evidence of associations between welfare reform and increased hospitalization and food insecurity for young children in sanctioned families.

Comparing children aged three years and younger in families whose welfare benefits were terminated or reduced to children in families whose benefits were not reduced, researchers found approximately 30 percent higher risk of hospitalization for children in sanctioned families. These children have approximately 90 percent higher risk of hospitalization at the time of an emergency room visit compared to children in non-sanctioned families.

Researchers also found that infants and toddlers in sanctioned families have approximately 50 percent higher risk of being food insecure than similar children in families whose benefits have not been reduced. Food insecurity, measured in the study by United States Department of Agriculture standards, is an important indicator of a household's health and well-being.

"These findings sound an urgent alarm about the unintended effects of welfare reform on the health of young children," said the study's Principal Investigator, Deborah A. Frank, MD, an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Boston University School of Medicine and director of the Grow Clinic at Boston Medical Center. As child health professionals we are deeply troubled. Modern science shows that poor nutrition weakens children's immune systems in the short term and impairs their developmental progress in years to come.

Study data were collected at six urban medical centers over three years on 2,718 children whose families reported currently receiving welfare, or having their benefits reduced or terminated since 1996. The medical centers, located in Baltimore, Boston,

Little Rock, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Washington, DC, are part of the Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program (C-SNAP), a multi-site consortium of senior child health professionals with particular interest and expertise in the impact of nutrition on children's health and development.

Researchers at study sites in Boston and Minneapolis also examined time trends in young children's health and food security. Looking at all children of US born parents interviewed for the study at these two sites regardless of welfare participation, researchers found 45 percent higher risk of food insecurity, 26 percent higher risk of being underweight, and 48 percent higher risk of being hospitalized during an ER visit in 2001 compared to 1999.

"The time trends are particularly disturbing in light of sophisticated medical care and relatively generous social safety nets for families with children in Boston and Minneapolis," said Dr. Frank. "We are very concerned about what may be happening in places where the local economy and social programs offer less support for low-income families."

Source: <http://dcc2.bumc.edu>.

Key words: children, poverty, food security.

Immigrant Children in the United States are Growing in Number and Facing Substantial Economic Hardship

The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that the foreign-born population in the United States has increased 57 percent since 1990 to a total of 30 million. In 2000, one out of every five children under age 18 in the United States was estimated to have at least one foreign-born parent, and one in four children had at least one foreign-born parent.

According to the report, empirical evidence on immigration and inequality suggests that many more recent immigrants will remain economically disadvantaged throughout their working lives, and this disadvantage may be partly transmitted to their children.

Findings from the report include:

- Immigrant children are twice as likely to be poor as native-born children.
- Among children whose parents work full time, immigrant children are at greater risk of living in poverty than native-born children.
- Among children whose parents have more than a high school education, immigrant children are twice as likely to be poor as native-born children.
- Among children living in two-parent families, immigrant children are almost four times as likely to be poor as native-born children.

"First-generation immigrant children are more likely to live with full-time working parents and two-parent families than third- or later-generation children," concludes Hsien-Hen Lu, PhD, one of the lead authors of the study. "Nonetheless, first-generation immigrant children are twice as likely to be poor as third- or later-generation children. For children living with full-time working parents or in two-parent families, first generation children are four times as likely to be poor as third- or later-generation children."

Source: <http://www.nccp.org>.

Key words: children, poverty.

Northwest Parenting Conference Coming Up

Mark your calendars for the 9th Annual Northwest Parenting Conference, *The Art and Science of Raising Competent Children*, on March 20-21, 2003 on the beautiful WSU campus in Vancouver, WA. Preconference workshops will be held on March 19. This year's conference features keynote speaker, **Dr. John Gottman**, from the University of Washington, presenting on the topic: *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*. This promises to be a great meeting for professionals who work with children and families, including teachers, parent educators, counselors, social workers, and childcare professionals. For more information, check out the website at <http://parenting.wsu.edu>. The meeting is jointly sponsored by Washington State University Cooperative Extension, Oregon State University Extension Service, and University of Idaho Extension.

Should the Atkins Diet Be Part of Your New Year's Resolution?

This is the time of year when people make their New Year's resolution to lose weight. And this year people might be thinking about going on the Atkins diet. That's because this past November, a research study presented at the American Heart Association conference indicated that people who followed the Atkins diet lost more weight than people on a low fat diet. But before you say, that's for me, let me present the rest of the facts from this study.

Weight Loss

FACT: People on the Atkins diet lost an average of 31 pounds while people on the low-fat diet group lost 20 pounds.


REST OF THE FACT: They study participants were only followed for 6 months and it is unknown if they kept the weight off or regained it.

FACT: People on the Atkins diet saw a greater decrease in their cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

REST OF THE FACT: Following any type of weight reduction diet will cause a decrease in serum lipid levels. Often once the weight stabilizes, then cholesterol level goes back to its original levels. In addition, over a period of years a high fat diet can be expected to raise cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease. Another factor was that subjects on the Atkins diet received omega-3 fat supplements, which may have played a role in decreasing the serum lipids.


Other concerns about the Atkins diet study:

- It was financed by the Atkins foundation.
- It had a small number of subjects.
- Side effects of a high protein diet include gout, constipation, and gall bladder problems.
- The low carbohydrate content of the diet—20gm—can result in muscle glycogen depletion, resulting in fatigue.
- Eliminating and/or restricting entire food groups such as fruits, vegetables, and grains can cause a deficiency of some nutrients.



Nutrition Education

January 2003



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And finally, this is not the type of diet a person can stick to for the rest of their lives.

Stay tuned: The National Institutes of Health is sponsoring a year-long study to test the Atkins diet on 360 patients. That should provide some additional answers whether or not the Atkins diet should be followed.

Source: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3006728>.

Key word: diet.

Make Eating Cereal at Breakfast a New Year's Resolution

Data published by the Nielsen's National Eating Trends showed that women who eat cereal at least seven times in a two-week period, weigh about eight pounds less than women who eat cereal less frequently or not at all. Men who ate cereal frequently weighed six pounds less than those who did not eat cereal on a regular basis. The cereal that kept people satisfied the longest was a whole-grain cereal.

Source: http://www.napsnet.com/pdf_archive/59/52673.pdf.

Key word: weight loss.

Make Exercise a New Year's Resolution

Many of you are familiar with the short-term benefits of exercising, but there are also long-term benefits, such as preventing a hip fracture. A study published in the November 13th 2002 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* followed a group of women for 13 years and found that those who walked an hour a day or jogged for three hours a week cut their risk of a hip fracture in half.

Hip fractures can result in serious health problems or even death. About 80 percent of the 300,000 hip fractures annually occur in women.

Women who walk an hour a day reduce their risk of hip fractures about the same amount as women who take hormone therapy.

Source: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v288n18/abs/joc20730.html>.

Key word: exercise.

What Are Kids Eating?

It turns out that mothers have a strong influence over what their child eats. According to a study published in the November 2002 issue of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, mothers influence the food preferences of their children as early as 2 years of age through their own food preferences. Foods that were disliked by the mothers were not likely to be offered to children, including nutrient-rich, low-fat foods such as legumes.

According to lead author Dr. Skinner, food preferences were mostly set by age 2-3 years and tastes changed little when the children were tested at 4 years and 8 years. The children were more likely to accept foods when they were introduced before the age of 8. The foods that children preferred were breads, deserts, snack foods, and meats available in fast-food restaurants. They tended to dislike vegetables, especially raw onions, mushrooms, summer squash, and tomatoes.

Source: *J Am Diet Assoc*, 2002;102:1638-1647.

Key word: children.

What's in Your Kid's Lunch Bag?

True or False: A lunch brought from home is low-fat and nutritious. According to a survey presented at the American Dietetic Association conference in October 2002, the answer is false.

The researchers examined 147 home-packed lunches of fourth-graders on 3 separate days. The majority of lunches contained sweets, chips, and deli meat sandwiches on white bread. Around one third of the home-packed meals contained fruit, and only 2 included a vegetable.

Why don't kids bring healthier lunches to school? According to lead researcher Allison Tucker, parents may feel they don't have the time to prepare something nutritious, relying instead on pre-packaged foods such as chips, juice boxes—which are often no more than sugar water—and sweets. In addition, she suggested that kids may experience peer pressure to eat certain foods and to refuse healthier choices such as fruits and vegetables. But if parents want their children to learn healthy eating habits, they may need to tell their child that one treat is fine, but a lunch full of treats is not.

Source: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_10013.html.

Key word: children.

Soy and Cavities

Numerous studies have been conducted that demonstrate the health benefits of consuming soy. What about adding soy to your toothpaste? It may be coming to a drugstore close to you. Researchers at the University of Rochester have found that there are some compounds in soy that inhibit the enzyme that makes plaque.

So, will soy toothpaste be expensive? It shouldn't be because just a small amount needs to be added to the toothpaste. And while you are looking for soy toothpaste, look for soy mouthwash in the future.

Source: <http://www.news14.com>.

Key word: soy.

Extension Offers AARP Legal Check-up

Everyone understands what physical health is all about. In contrast, very few people have a concept of "legal health" even though it's a subject that affects everyone. Many people have no idea they have a potential legal problem until it emerges as a crisis. Legal illnesses can create very serious emotional and financial problems for individuals and their families.

That's why a "Legal Health Check-up" is so important. A comprehensive review of your legal affairs can expose hidden problems and allow you to correct them before they erupt into a crisis. To help Americans become legally healthy, the USDA "Financial Security in Later Life" Initiative is partnering with AARP to offer Legal Check-ups. They consist of two parts:

- A confidential, Idaho-specific Workbook, developed by AARP Legal Services, that a participant completes at home before attending the seminar. As a participant completes the workbook, they'll identify problems they might have, even some they may have been unaware of.
- A seminar conducted by an attorney. Participants bring their workbook (as a personal reference, not to share) and questions! By the end of the program, they'll have developed a personal plan, including a list of things to do in order to be "legally healthy."

What's included in legal health? Take this simple quiz. You should be able to answer **yes** to *all* of the following questions:

1. Do you have all of your important personal documents and records on hand and in a secure place, such as a desk, file cabinet, or safe deposit box? (These include birth, marriage, adoption, divorce, naturalization or immigration, and military discharge papers.)
2. Do you have a basic legal document, such as a will or a trust, which directs what happens to your assets when you die?

Family Economics

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3. Do you have the basic legal documents to designate who will make personal decisions and handle your financial affairs in the event you are unable to do this for yourself? (These include power of attorney and health care proxy.)
4. Do you have all of your financial records on hand, in some order, and up-to-date? (These include tax returns, deeds, insurance policies, investment records, pension records, and bank statements.)
5. Do you know how your assets are titled and why this is a crucial issue?
6. Are your insurance needs met to the extent practical?
7. Are you comfortable that your investments are both safe and productive?
8. Are you receiving all of the public or private benefits to which you are entitled, including Social Security, Medicare, and private pensions? If not, do you know when and where to apply for them?

9. Do you know which changes in your life will require a review of your "legal health" status?
10. Do you have a resource, such as an attorney or accountant, in the event you require professional advice or assistance?

Idaho's first Legal Check-up is scheduled in late January at the Ada County Extension office. A second seminar will be repeated in early February. The program costs a modest fee that pays for the participant's 73-page Workbook, mailed in advance of the seminar. If you'd like more information about the Legal Check-up, contact Marilyn or the Ada County Extension Educator, Beverly Healy, 208-377-2107.

Sources: AARP, www.aarp.org/lsn/checkup.html; Stover, J., December 2002, Idaho AARP letter to members.

Key word: law.

Stock Losses Lead to Delay in Retirement

So long early retirement! About one in five older Americans who lost money in the stock market during the past two years has postponed his retirement date, according to a new study and 10 percent of those already retired are at work again because of stock market losses.

The survey, published by AARP, helps quantify the toll that the economy has taken on older adults, their finances and their future. "What we're seeing in this post-stock-market decline era is that a lot more baby boomers are saying they're going to keep working because they need the funds," reports AARP's director of federal affairs. More than 75 percent of survey respondents, stockowners ages 50 to 70, say their stocks have dropped in value during the past two years. Thirty-seven percent lost between 10 and 25 percent of their investment value and 25 percent lost between a quarter and half of their holdings.

These losses have shaken up people's plans for their later years. At one time 72 percent of stockholders expected to retire *before* age 65. Now 67

percent expect to retire *after* age 65. In addition to the retirees who have gone back to work due to their losses, an additional 9 percent said they are looking for work or may need to do so in the future because of their losses. Overall two-thirds of investors with losses, including those who haven't retired at all, say they are making lifestyle adjustments—from budgeting more carefully (59 percent), to taking fewer vacations (34 percent), or postponing a major purchase (30 percent).

And 43 percent worry that, in the future, they will be less comfortable in retirement than they previously expected. One in five fear they may have trouble paying for health care and prescription drugs. These findings reiterate the need for investors to diversify their portfolios and for individuals to carefully assess their retirement income sources and expenses.

Source: Greene, K., December 17, 2002, Stock Losses Lead to Delay in Retirement. *Wall Street Journal*, p.D2.

Key words: retirement, investing.

Identity Theft: MINIMIZE YOUR RISK

I'm tired of the hours I've spent on the phone and all the faxing I've had to do. When will it be over?
From a consumer complaint to the FTC, March 13, 2001

Tomorrow is Sunday so we won't get any notices, but I'm not looking forward to Monday's mail.
From a consumer complaint to the FTC, November 13, 2001

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which operates the only national clearinghouse for identity theft complaints, logged 86,168 victim complaints in 2001. They report that while you probably can't prevent identity theft entirely, you can minimize your risk. By managing your personal information wisely, cautiously and with an awareness of the issue, you can help guard against identity theft. The FTC suggests the following actions to prevent identity theft.

Order a copy of your credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus once a year. By checking your report on a regular basis you can catch mistakes and fraud before they wreak havoc

on your personal finances. Don't underestimate the importance of this step. One of the most common ways that consumers find out that they're victims of identity theft is when they try to make a major purchase, like a house or a car. The deal can be lost or delayed while the credit report mess is straightened out. Knowing what's in your credit report allows you to fix problems before they jeopardize a major financial transaction. The law allows credit bureaus to charge up to \$9.00 for a copy of your credit report.

The three major credit bureaus are:

Equifax—www.equifax.com

To order your report, call: 1-800-685-1111 or write: PO Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241.

To report fraud, call: 1-800-525-6285 and write: PO Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241.

Experian—www.experian.com

To order your report, call: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742) or write: PO Box 2104, Allen, TX 75013.

To report fraud, call: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742) and write: PO Box 9532, Allen, TX 75013.

TransUnion—www.transunion.com

To order your report, call: 800-916-8800 or write: PO Box 1000, Chester, PA 19022.

To report fraud, call: 1-800-680-7289 and write: Fraud Victim Assistance Division, PO Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92634.

Place passwords on your credit card, bank, and phone accounts. Avoid using easily available information like your mother's maiden name, your birth date, the last four digits of your SSN or your phone number, or a series of consecutive numbers. When opening new accounts, you may find that many businesses still have a line on their applications for your mother's maiden name. Use a password instead.

Secure personal information in your home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help, or are having service work done in your home. Ask about information security procedures in your workplace. Find out who has access to your personal information and verify that records are kept in a secure location. Ask about the disposal procedures for those records as well.

Don't give out personal information on the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you've initiated the contact or are sure you know who you're dealing with. Identity thieves may pose as representatives of banks, Internet service providers (ISPs), and even government agencies to get you to reveal your SSN, mother's maiden name, account numbers, and other identifying information. Before you share any personal information, confirm that you are dealing with a legitimate organization.

You can check the organization's website as many companies post scam alerts when their name is used improperly, or you can call customer service using the number listed on your account statement or in the telephone book. Before revealing any personally identifying information (for example, on an application), find out how it will be used and secured, and whether it will be shared with others. Ask if you have a choice about the use of your information. Can you choose to have it kept confidential?

Guard your mail and trash from theft. Deposit outgoing mail in post office collection boxes or at your local post office, rather than in an unsecured mailbox. Promptly remove mail from your mailbox. If you're planning to be away from home and can't pick up your mail, call the US Postal Service at 1-800-275-8777 to request a vacation hold. The Postal Service will hold your mail at your local post office until you can pick it up or are home to receive it.

To thwart an identity thief who may pick through your trash or recycling bins to capture your personal information, tear or shred your charge receipts, copies of credit applications, insurance forms, physician statements, checks and bank statements, expired charge cards that you're discarding, and credit offers you get in the mail.

Don't carry your Social Security number card; leave it in a secure place. Give your SSN only when absolutely necessary. Ask to use other types of identifiers when possible. Carry only the identification information and the number of credit and debit cards that you'll actually need.

Pay attention to your billing cycles. Follow up with creditors if your bills don't arrive on time. A missing credit card bill could mean an identity thief has taken over your account and changed your billing address to cover his tracks.

Source: Federal Trade Commission, US Government Identity theft web site, www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

Key word: fraud.

Family Economics Resources

Changing Your Life Through Better Money Management

The National Endowment for Financial Education and the Community Action Partnership developed a web site to provide basic financial management information to low- and moderate-income families. Visitors to the site can learn about turning dreams into goals, managing money, employment ABCs, Individual Development Accounts, housing options, and more. Access the site at <http://www.managingmymoney.com>.

Know Your Score Web Site for College Students

Freddie Mac and the Consumer Federation of America have developed a web site about credit scoring targeted to college students entitled, "Know Your Score." The site features the "Credit Smart" and "Getting a Running Start on Good Credit" curricula and other credit information of interest to college students. Access the site at <http://www.freddiemac.com/knowyourscore>.

Financial Calculators

The American Savings Education Council's Choose to Save® program recently added over 100 online financial calculators to help you with a wide array of financial planning issues including budgeting, savings, credit, home mortgage, investment, and retirement. Access the calculators from www.choosetosave.org/tools/fincalcs.htm.

Money Math: Lessons for Life

The U.S. Treasury Department has released "Money Math: Lessons for Life." This middle school supplemental math curriculum teaches the importance of sound personal finance to students in grades 7 through 9 and works as a skills-building block to equip youth for a future in which they will be required to handle even more complex concepts. Money Math lesson topics include income, saving, taxes, and budgeting. All four lessons are available online at <http://www.savingsbonds.gov/sav/savlearn.htm>. Both the web-based lessons and print materials are available for free. To request a paper copy of Money Math, send an e-mail message to moneymath@bpd.treas.gov.

FTC Information Security Campaign

Commissioner Orson Swindle of the Federal Trade Commission invites Consumer educators to participate in the FTC's education campaign on consumer information security. A new web site, <http://www.ftc.gov/infosecurity> features tips for consumers and businesses on securing personal information online; links to free FTC publications on security, e-commerce, spam, privacy, and identity theft; links to external resources; and the information security mascot—Dewie the e-Turtle.

The FTC hopes to encourage individuals, small businesses, and other organizations to take appropriate precautions to protect personal information stored electronically; to provide guidance about practical steps to safeguard information; and to foster a "culture of security" in which individuals, small businesses, and other organizations recognize their responsibilities related to the security of personal information and make security part of their daily routine. If you have particular ideas for outreach, or you would like to use Dewie's image in your projects, please contact Nat Wood, Assistant Director for Consumer and Business Education, at 202-326-3407 or ncwood@ftc.gov.