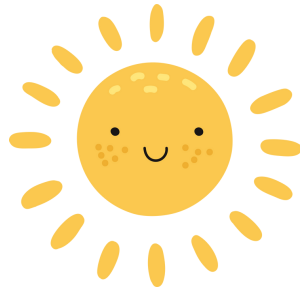


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COOPERATIVE EXTENSIONUK MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT
KSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY AND THE SCIENCES**Laura-Grace Vincent**Family & Consumer Sciences/4-H Youth
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Redefining "Healthy": The FDA's new standards for food labels

Published on Mar. 13, 2025

Source: Anna Cason, Senior Extension Associate for Food and Nutrition

When grocery shopping, you may notice food packages labeled as "healthy." This term is meant to help buyers easily identify options that can support their health. To use "healthy" on the label, foods must meet standards set by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). When enjoyed within a balanced diet, these foods can contribute to overall well-being.

At the end of 2024, the FDA announced it would update its definition of "healthy," which was originally developed in the 1990s. Because nutrition science has changed significantly since then, the new definition is intended to align with current federal dietary guidance and support better health. According to the updated criteria, foods labeled "healthy" must include a certain amount of at least one food group—fruits, vegetables, dairy, grains or protein—and contain limited amounts of saturated fat, sodium and added sugars. These modifications reflect the emphasis on a balanced, varied diet rather than a focus on individual nutrients.

Under the original definition, products like yogurt, breakfast cereals, fruit snacks, snack bars high in added sugar, fortified white bread and fruit punch not containing 100% juice qualified as "healthy." However, these no longer meet the updated requirements as they either contain too much added sugar or do not include specific amounts of certain food groups.

Foods that now qualify for the "healthy" label include fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables (as long as they contain limited saturated fat, sodium and added sugar), fatty fish such as salmon, trail mix with dried fruit (with limited sodium and added sugar), plain low-fat or fat-free yogurt (with limited added sugar), eggs, water and 100% olive oil.

While food manufacturers may choose to include "healthy" on the label if their products meet these standards, not all nutritious options will necessarily carry this claim. Ultimately, the new definition can guide consumers toward foods that can support good health but does not encompass every food that can fit into a balanced diet.

To learn more about healthy food choices, Edmonson Extension office.

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Lexington, KY 40506

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with prior notification.



Edmonson County Homemakers



Reminders



- ◆ We still have pecan pieces at the office to sell/purchase, \$10 per bag!
- ◆ Keep your volunteer and reading logs up to date!
- ◆ Save the Date: KEHA May 6-8, Lexington, KY
- ◆ Download the "Remind" app and stay in the know with Homemaker activities/news.
- ◆ Send a text to: 81010 Send this message:@echomem



Happy Birthday!

March

Cathy Joiner March 10th
Cassie Larson March 28th

April

Angie Hughes April 13th
Elaine Yates April 21st
Amy Hennion April 28th

May

Paula Dupree May 8th
Nancy Sanders May 9th
Janis Simon May 18th
Sherry Vincent May 19th
Barbara Spillman May 26th
Kori Webb May 28th
Elizabeth Dupree May 31st

Monthly Club Meetings

Brownsville

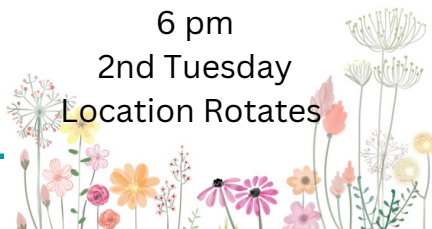
11am
2nd Monday
Edmonson County Kentucky
Farm Bureau Office

Capitol Hill

1 pm
3rd Thursday
Edmonson County Extension Office

Chalybeate

6 pm
2nd Tuesday
Location Rotates



Mark Your Calendar

- **April 10-** 10am-2pm-Spring into Health, health fair
- **April 22-** Earth Day
- **April 24-** Derby Event 10 am at Extension Office
- **April 26-** Spring fling/ Bake Sale @ Edmonson County Library
- **June 9-** Susie Vincent proclamation & reception @ EC Fiscal court 4pm
- **June 10-** Susie Vincent day
- **June 12-** Annual Day Heritage Center

HELLO SPRING

HOMEMAKER HIGHLIGHT

Follow the Edmonson County Homemakers on Facebook



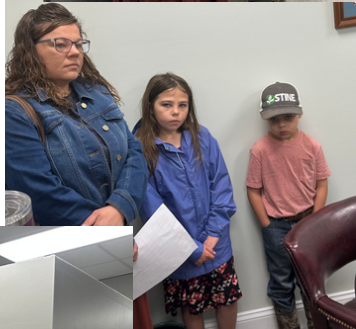
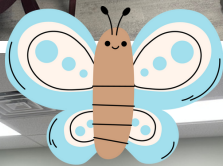
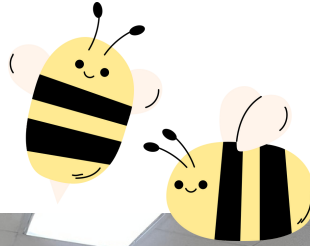
Above: A few pictures from EC Homemakers activities in the past few months.

If your club has participated in an outing, event, or activity and you would like to highlight in our newsletter, please let me know!

Be on the lookout for some new Homemaker clubs starting soon!

homeschoolers happenings

homeschoolers had a great time learning about civics in Edmonson County!
Here are some highlights from the trip



Seats are limited!



4-H Fair Project Day: Art of Weaving

Ages 9 and Up

Sat., May 10, 2025

9 am

**EC Extension Office, 116 Mohawk Street
Brownsville KY, 42210**

Call EC Extension Office at 270-597-3628
to reserve your spot.

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Home Freezing Basics

Annhall Norris, Family and Consumer Sciences.



Are you interested in saving time on meal preparation?

money by extending the harvest from your garden, prolonging the use of leftovers, or stretching out the shelf life of sale items from the store? If the answer to any or all these questions is “yes,” consider preserving these foods by freezing. Freezing is one of the easiest, most convenient, and least time-consuming methods of preserving foods. Using your home freezer, basic containers, and research-based preparation techniques, you can extend the shelf life of most foods.

Freshness and quality at the time of freezing will affect the condition of frozen foods. When starting with peak-quality fruits and vegetables, meats, or leftovers, freezing allows you to preserve their vitamin content, natural color, flavor, and texture. Let’s look at the science of freezing so you can enjoy year-round freshness of your favorite foods.

Understanding the Freezing Process

Freezing at a temperature of 0°F or below preserves food for extended periods by preventing the growth of microorganisms (bacteria, yeasts, and molds) that cause both food spoilage and foodborne illnesses. For example, *Clostridium botulinum*, the microorganism that causes botulism and is of greatest concern in canning, does not grow or produce toxins at 0°F. For this reason, freezing can provide a safe and easy alternative to pressure canning low-acid foods. The freezing process itself does not destroy microorganisms; it slows their growth. After thawing, however, microbes that may be present can become active under the right conditions and multiply

to levels that can lead to foodborne illness. Because of the risk of contamination, handle thawed foods like any perishable product. Thorough cooking will kill most microorganisms.

In addition to the food safety aspects of freezing, the process also affects enzymes naturally present in fruits and vegetables that promote the chemical reactions that cause ripening. Freezing slows down enzyme activity but does not stop these chemical and physical reactions that can lead to spoilage and deterioration. Blanching is a brief cooking technique using boiling water to inactivate enzymes that can affect the flavor, color, and texture of produce. A quick cooling in ice water stops the cooking process and aids in freezing. Most vegetables should be blanched before freezing for the best quality.

Fruits are not blanched like vegetables; they are pre-treated with an acid or packed in liquid for best quality. The exposure of cut fruit to oxygen results in enzymatic browning. Soaking fruit in a dilute solution of ascorbic acid (vitamin C), sugar, or lemon juice can prevent this naturally occurring process. For more information on freezing fruits and vegetables, refer to the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service publications *Freezing Fresh Fruits* (FCS3-336) and *Freezing Vegetables* (FCS3-335).

Over time, chemical and physical reactions in meat reduce the shelf life of meat products. The fat in meats becomes rancid and may develop off-flavors more quickly if exposed to air, light, moisture, or bacterial contamination. Controlling these factors by freezing these foods within a few days of purchase and using airtight containers or wrapping can improve the quality of frozen meat.

Quality Freezing

The amounts of water, sugar, muscle tissue, and air influence the freezing process of specific foods. As the temperature is lowered, the water molecules in food form ice crystals. Rapid freezing allows small ice crystal formation, improving the quality of the freezing process. Slow freezing results in large crystal formation, which can rupture the cell walls of the food, resulting in deterioration of the product. Then during thawing, products will drip and lose their moisture. This loss of moisture is known as freezer burn. Freezer burn occurs when frozen food is exposed to air. It is primarily caused by food not being properly wrapped or packaged in air-tight containers. Damage from crystal growth or freezer burn results in a loss of color (gray or brown), change in texture (tough or dry), difference in aroma, and modification to flavor. While the appearance of freezer burn indicates a loss of food quality, it is not a food safety issue. Cut away any freezer-burned portions of the food before or after cooking. Food with a large amount of freezer burn should be discarded for quality reasons.

If freezing is your preferred method of food preservation, a vacuum sealer is a good investment. Here are a few additional tips to improve the quality of your home-frozen foods.

- Cool all food before packaging.
- Pack or wrap food tightly to remove as much air as possible. If freezing in glass jars or containers with press-on lids, leave a headspace between the packed food and the lid of the container to allow for expansion of the food as it freezes. If using freezer paper, follow the directions on the package.
- Freeze food immediately after it is packaged to retain its nutritional value, natural color, flavor, and texture.

- Ideally, food should be quick-frozen within two hours and stored at 0°F or lower.
- Allow space between the packages in the freezer for air circulation. If the packages are stacked in several layers, those in the middle may freeze too slowly and result in a lesser-quality product. Once food is frozen, you can store the packages close together.

Foods That Don't Freeze Well

Certain foods may become soft and mushy, waterlogged, tough, or soggy when frozen, or their ingredients may separate. Some produce or combinations of food do not freeze well. Vegetables that do not freeze well include cabbage, celery, radishes, cucumbers, salad greens, and herbs.

Fruits with a high water content, such as watermelon, grapes, and citrus fruit, do not freeze well. However, if you are not concerned with texture, they work well in smoothies. Fresh tomatoes will separate, but if you plan to use them in chili or vegetable soup, they will work fine. If any of these foods are used in sauces, be warned that once these foods thaw, they may be mushy or cause a thinner sauce. This is true of foods made with eggs, milk, or mayonnaise as well; they may separate, causing less than a quality product.

Many baked casseroles or dishes that contain rice or pasta may not reheat well either. Fried foods also fall into this category. While many fried foods do not freeze well, the advent of the air fryer has allowed us to reclaim the original crispy texture when reheated. Remember, if your dinner wasn't your favorite, maybe wasting the electricity, time, and container required for freezing isn't a good idea.



Proper Packaging and Labeling

Proper packaging helps in preventing freezer burn and maintaining flavor, moisture content, and nutritive value in the dry climate of the freezer. The selection of containers depends on the type of food to be frozen, personal preference, and the container types that are available for purchase. Containers specially labeled “made for freezer storage” or marked with a snowflake symbol are available in most stores. In general, freezer containers should be • moisture-vapor resistant; durable and leakproof;

- strong and pliable, yet crack-resistant at very low temperatures;
- resistant to oil;
- able to protect foods from absorption of unpleasant odors; and
- easy to seal and label.

All frozen products should include a label on the container.

Include the name of the product, the date it was frozen, and the weight or number of servings. Good freezer management is essential to avoid wasting the food you have so carefully frozen. Keeping a record of the foods in your freezer will help you use your freezer wisely. Write down everything you put in or take out of the freezer, and use the “first in, first out” or FIFO method so you can use up older frozen food first.

Color changes can occur in frozen foods. Follow recommended storage times for optimum quality results for specific foods. For more information, refer to the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service publication Recommended Food Storage Times (FCS3-595).

Thawing Food Safely

There are only three ways to safely thaw food: in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. Do not thaw foods at room temperature or outside. Doing so may lead to foodborne illness. Refrigerator thawing is the preferred method, as the internal temperature of the food does not rise above 40°F. Unfortunately, this is also the slowest method, so you need to plan ahead when defrosting large food items. Small food items may defrost overnight in the refrigerator, but most foods require a day or two. For example, a ten-pound turkey would take around two days to be ready to cook.

Cold-water thawing is much faster than refrigerator thawing, but it requires more attention. More importantly, this method should only be used for food that will thaw in less than four hours. Food should be placed in a leakproof plastic bag under cold running water or submerged in cold water. A leaking bag may allow bacteria from the air or the sink to contaminate the food. Also, food tissue absorbs water, resulting in watery, less-than-high-quality food. If the water isn't running, change the water every 30 minutes to keep the food cool. After thawing, refrigerate the food until ready for use or cook it immediately.

Microwave thawing should be used to defrost food only if you plan to cook it immediately upon defrosting. For best results, use your microwave's defrost setting. If your microwave does not have a defrost setting, check your microwave manual for instructions. If you can stir or rotate the food frequently, it will heat evenly as it defrosts. Always use a microwave-safe container when thawing.

Food Safety During Power Outages

If power for your freezer is interrupted, or if the unit is not operating normally, do not open the freezer door. Food in a loaded freezer will usually stay frozen for two days, even in the summer-time. If repairs cannot be made or service restored within one to two days, you could use dry ice to keep the food frozen, if it is available. Discard any foods that have been warmer than 40°F for more than two hours. Discard any foods that have been contaminated by meat juices. Dispose of soft or melted ice cream, due to loss of quality.

If it is freezing outside or there is snow on the ground, you may be tempted to keep food frozen outside until the power is restored. However, food stored outside may be exposed to the sun or environmental contamination, such as animals, rodents, or birds. Sometimes, cans left in the car or garage may accidentally freeze and become swollen. If the cans are merely swollen (not rusted or bursting at the seams) and you are sure the swelling was caused by freezing, the cans may still be usable. Allow the unopened can to thaw in the refrigerator. Once opened, do not taste the food if you are unsure about its safety. If the contents of the can look or smell abnormal, throw the can away. When in doubt, throw it out! You may safely refreeze frozen food that has thawed, if the food still contains ice crystals or if its temperature is still below 40°F. In general, if food is still safe to eat, it is safe to refreeze. Partial thawing and refreezing will lower the quality of fruits and vegetables. Meats may be cooked and then frozen again with little loss of quality. Use refrozen foods as soon as possible to maintain an acceptable quality.

Cooking Frozen Foods

Frozen raw or cooked meat, poultry, casseroles, and leftovers can be cooked or reheated right out of the freezer. Remember to plan for cooking times to be about 50 percent longer than the usual recommended cooking times.

Conclusion

Freezing is a simple, quick, and reliable way to preserve foods. By following proper procedures for freezing, thawing, and preparing foods, you can enjoy safe, high-quality, nutritious foods straight from the freezer.



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USDA. (2020, July). Leftovers and food safety. USDA.gov. <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/leftovers-and-food-safety>

This publication is revised from Home Freezing Basics , originally written by Sandra Bastin.

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Revised 02-2025



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Fresh Fish Tacos

Servings:4Serving Size:2 tacos with 1/3 cup slaw eachRecipe Cost:\$6.52Cost per
Serving:\$1.63



You just can't go wrong with these fresh, flavorful, and healthy fish tacos. Added bonus? They can be ready in less than 30 minutes.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 pound mild fish filets (such as fresh water bass, catfish or tilapia)
1 teaspoon taco seasoning
3 tablespoons fresh or bottled lime juice, divided
3 tablespoons honey
½ cup low fat mayonnaise
2 cups coleslaw mix
½ medium onion, finely chopped
8 4.5-inch soft corn tortillas

Directions:

In a large skillet over medium heat, warm the vegetable oil. Add fish fillets and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon lime juice and taco seasoning.

Cook the fish until it begins to turn white around the edges. Flip and cook until the fish flakes easily with a fork. Remove to a platter and cover with aluminum foil to keep warm.

While the fish cooks, stir together remaining lime juice, honey and mayonnaise in a large bowl. Add the coleslaw mix and onion to the dressing and mix to coat. If desired, add about ½ cup chopped cilantro to the cabbage mixture.

Wrap tortillas in a damp paper towel and place on a microwave safe plate. Microwave for one minute, until warm and pliable.

Place 2 ounces fish and cup coleslaw mixture in each tortilla. Add toppings of choice if desired.

Notes

Optional toppings:

Fresh chopped cilantro, sliced avocado, shredded cheddar cheese and sliced bell pepper

You can use fresh or frozen fish for this recipe. Either catch your own or catch a bargain at the grocery store when fish is on sale.

Source: Jackie Walters, Extension Specialist for Kentucky Nutrition Education Program, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service

Nutrition facts per serving: 410 calories; 18g total fat; 1g saturated fat; 0g trans fat; 60mg cholesterol; 290mg sodium; 39g carbohydrate; 3g fiber; 16g sugar; 23g protein; 6% Daily Value of vitamin A; 40% Daily Value of vitamin C; 6% Daily Value of calcium; 4% Daily Value of iron