Stress and conflict seem to sprout up from time to time in all families, and this is normal. Families can learn to deal with conflict in healthy ways and actually grow stronger. Remember these tips when differences occur in your family: **Show acceptance and respect** even when you disagree.

**Try to put yourself in the other person’s shoes** and understand the situation from his or her perspective.

**Focus on how the other person feels** not on making your point and winning an argument.

Remember all the positive things about your loved one and the good times you have shared.

Avoid using “trigger words” which can push someone toward anger. These words include unfair generalizations like “always” and “never.” There may be other words which evoke strong emotion and should be avoided in a discussion.

**Own up to your personal thoughts and feelings** by speaking in first person. Use “I” messages instead of “you” messages which sound accusatory.

Allow for a difference of opinion. Listen carefully and show that you truly want to understand the other person’s point of view even if you disagree. Parents should realize that children are always watching how they deal with conflict. Hiding everyday conflict from children is neither realistic nor healthy. Use conflict as an opportunity to model patience and forgiveness to your children. Parents can teach their children the importance of making compromises in relationships and working out solutions that are acceptable to everyone involved in the disagreement. Avoid criticism, insults, defensiveness, and disrespectful actions. Using the silent treatment or ignoring one another will not bring a solution to the problem. Instead, listen and speak with gentleness and honesty. Make sure everyone has a turn to express how he feels and thinks. It takes time to work through conflict in a healthy way, but your family is worth every minute!

Food Safety for Hunters

By: Sylvia Davis, Baker/ Mitchell County

For many people, fall means hunting—the time to gather nature’s bounty and put food on their family’s table. Making sure that food is safe is an important part of a hunter’s skill.

It is easy for wild game to become contaminated with fecal matter and thus any bacteria that might be present. E. Coli O157:H7 and Salmonella are just two of several diseases-causing microorganisms that may be present. This is where the skill of the hunter can make a big difference. If the animal is wounded in such a way that the contents of its gut come in contact with the meat or the hunter’s hands while dressing the meat, fecal bacteria can contaminate the meat.

Here are some tips that can help you improve the safety of the wild game you serve to your family:
- Avoid using meat from gut shot animals to make products such as jerky. Instead, use this meat only for dishes that will be thoroughly cooked.
- Bacteria can multiply quickly in warm temperatures. Keep the carcass out of sunlight. Take along coolers of ice. For a safer product, chill the meat quickly. Carcasses need to be cooled rapidly to 40 degrees or below.
- Sanitation in the field is important. Take along soap and clean water or wet wipes and hand sanitizer for cleaning hands in the field before and after handling the meat. Wear disposable gloves while handling the meat. Use clean water, wet wipes or alcohol swabs to clean the knives frequently or between cuts to help prevent the spread of bacteria.
- If you take the animal to a processor, use only a licensed, reputable processor with refrigeration capabilities. Freeze any meat that will not be used within 2-3 days.
- Thaw meat completely in the refrigerator or in the microwave followed by immediate cooking. To ensure safety, **Do Not Leave Food On The Counter To Thaw**
Georgia is second in the nation in the number of children between the ages of 10 and 17 that are obese. Research shows that the earlier a family makes changes to promote a healthy weight in their children, the more successful they will be. However, it’s never too late for anyone to adopt better eating and activity habits. **Adults need to be role models for their children and grand children in living healthy lifestyles.**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends the following behaviors to promote healthy weights for American children and their families:

- **Every day eat the number of fruits and vegetables recommended by MyPlate.** Vegetables and fruits are low in energy density and high in nutritional value. Get a customized food plan for each member of your family by going to [http://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx)

- **Limit sweet drinks.** The average child consumes 400 calories per day from beverages. They do not eat fewer calories at the next meal to compensate for these liquid calories. Have water available all the time to drink at home and school. The AAP specifically does not recommend energy drinks for children and teens and only wants student athletes who exercise hard for over an hour to drink sports drinks during and immediately after their workouts.

- **Limit screen time.** For children less than 2 years of age, there should be NO screen time at all. After that age, less than 2 hours per day is best. This includes computer time, TV watching and phone use. No TV set or computer should be in a child or teen’s bedroom.

- **Eat breakfast daily.** This raises the metabolism and improves school performance. It also curbs overeating later in the day.

- **Limit eating out, especially at fast food restaurants.** This will help with portion control and fat, sodium and calorie intake.

- **Eat together as a family as much as possible.** Typically meals made at home and served to the family are higher in nutritional value than meals eaten alone or out. There are also psychological benefits.

- **Limit portions sizes.** Allow younger children to serve themselves. Often they will take less than an adult would put on their plates. Do not put serving dishes on the table so seconds are not automatic. Use smaller plates, bowls and cups.

- **Consume foods rich in calcium.** Low fat or reduced fat dairy foods tend to promote a feeling of satiety. Also other calcium-rich foods like soy milk and breakfast cereals fortified with calcium and greens are good for kids.

- **Promote moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day.** Include both structured activity like sports, dance class or martial arts and unstructured play like jump rope, tag, skating, swimming or just walking or biking to school.

- **Limit calorie-dense foods and select foods that are balanced in carbohydrates, protein and fat.** Offer more vegetables and fruits, whole grains, lean meat, poultry and fish, and low fat or non-fat dairy foods while limiting the calorie-dense foods like candy, pizza, fried foods, desserts and salty, high fat snacks.

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**A Healthy Home**

By: Roxie Price, Tift County

We all wish we could wave a magic wand and our house would stay clean. Even if it does not stay perfectly clean, there are a few area that we need to focus on for the health of our home and family.

**Moisture Control** - This can lead to mold and mildew and even entice critters to stay in your home because they will have a water source. Keep your home properly sealed and dry.

**Clutter** - Preventing falls and accidents can be accomplished by removing clutter from the home. Paper products being stored close to a light or a faulty electrical outlet could cause a fire. Clutter also helps pests to hide.

**Clean Air** - Making sure the furnace filter is replaced on a regular basis will help everyone in the home breath better and keep pollutants out of the air.

**Controlling Insects** - Controlling moisture and removing clutter will help you keep pests from wanting to visit your home. Eliminate their food, water, and shelter. Make sure you use safe techniques when you are trying to eliminate a pest problem.

**Safe Product Storage** - Keep all cleaners, chemicals, and pesticides away from areas that may be accessible to children. Store these items far away from foods and keep them in their original containers.
Gift cards make great gifts. They are convenient, easy-to-use, and readily available online and in person. But to avoid giving a gift that keeps on taking, make sure you read and understand the disclosures that come with the card.

According to Michael Rupured, Consumer Economics Specialist for UGA, Gift cards are a type of stored value card. They look like a credit card with a magnetic strip that stores information about how much the card is worth. Some cards can only be used at one retailer or only at stores in a particular mall or shopping center. Others can be used anywhere major credit cards are accepted.

The Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009 makes giving gift cards a better idea than was the case before the law. The Act established rules to protect consumers from excessive fees some retailers and banks charged.

Money on gift cards must now be good for at least five years from the date the card is purchased. Value added to a gift card must be good for five years from the date the money was added. If the five years runs out and you have unspent money on the card, you can request a replacement card at no charge.

The law requires clear disclosure of any fees at the time of purchase. Be sure to read the terms and conditions before making your purchase and send them along with the gift card to the recipient. Include the receipt in case the card is lost or stolen.

The law restricts maintenance and usage fees. You cannot be charged a fee for using the gift card, not using the gift card, card maintenance, or adding value to the card unless the card has not been used for more than twelve months.

Whether giving or receiving gift cards, be sure you understand how they work. Consumer advocates recommend cards from specific retailers over cards offered by banks. Bank cards can be redeemed wherever credit cards are accepted, but tend to come with more and higher fees.

Watch for hidden fees. You may be charged to check your balance even in the first twelve months, so be sure to keep track of how much you spend. Watch for delayed fees that kick in if the card has not been used for twelve consecutive months.

Do not lose your gift card! If a gift card is lost or stolen you may not be able to replace it. Some retailers charge a replacement fee, provided you have proof of purchase (such as a sales receipt) and the ID number of the card. Registering your gift card with the issuer often provides extra protections.

If you receive a gift card, register it with the issuing bank or retailer. Information about how to register your card should be included with other card details. If not, check the web site of the issuer for information about how to register your gift card. Some issuers will not replace lost or stolen gift cards unless they are registered.

Use the card promptly. About ten percent of gift cards are never redeemed.

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**Delicious Apple Salad**

4 large apples, diced, not peeled
1 large can pineapple tidbits, drained
1 10oz. jar maraschino cherries, halved
1 cup walnuts or pecans, chopped
½ cup mayonnaise
2 cups Cool Whip

Combine apples, pineapple, cherries and walnuts. Mix in mayonnaise and Cool Whip. Garnish with cherries and nuts.
The Balancing Act

Dear Friends,

The Balancing Act is a quarterly publication sent to you by Family and Consumer Sciences Agents serving all Southwest Georgia. All information in this newsletter is written by Specialists at the University of Georgia and FACS agents, and is backed by research from the University of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This newsletter brings you the latest information, please contact the agent in your county.

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