

# Family & Consumer Sciences

## HAPPY APRIL!

I'm thrilled to say that our first educational programs have been held in the new Florence location (7111 Dixie Highway, Florence)! It was an exciting evening when a group gathered in our new cooking lab for the first of three "Savor the Flavor" sessions. We talked about vinegars and oils. We also had our first of six "Wits Workout" sessions with a large group focusing on brain health and discussing memory and tips for recalling daily tasks.



Boone County Extension Florence, 7111 Dixie Highway, Florence



Learning about oils and vinegars as part of the Savor the Flavor series.



Adults in the "Savor the Flavor" series in the new Florence Extension cooking lab

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month and Extension, as a whole, relies heavily on volunteers in a number of roles. From our Master Clothing Volunteers to those who help with cooking classes, our Family and Consumer Sciences programs would not be as successful without the helpers we have.

I hope you find time to enjoy the renewal of our earth as the grass turns green and our flowers begin to bloom. It is a great month to meet the challenge of moving every day – getting out to enjoy our surroundings can help our physical and mental health. This is also the month when we observe Arbor Day; plant a tree or find one to appreciate!

We are working on our plan of work for the coming year (July – June). If you have ideas for areas on which Family and Consumer Sciences should focus, let me know through e-mail ([diane.mason@uky.edu](mailto:diane.mason@uky.edu)) or a phone call (859-586-6101).

If you are interested in receiving specific newsletters via e-mail, please let us know (by email) which one(s) and we'll place you on the distribution list.

Monthly newsletters available:

- Moneywise
- Adult Health Bulletin
- Family Caregiver Bulletin
- Parent Health Bulletin
- Youth Health Bulletin
- Healthy Choices for Healthy Bodies (English Edition)
- Opciones Saludables para Familias Saludables (Healthy Choices for Healthy Bodies) (Spanish Edition)

Wishing you all the best,  
Diane Mason,  
County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences

## ASIAN ASPARAGUS SALAD

*Yield: 4, 1/2 cup servings*

### Ingredients

1 pound fresh asparagus  
 1½ tablespoons low -sodium soy sauce  
 2 teaspoons granulated sugar or equivalent artificial sweetener  
 1 tablespoon olive oil  
 2 teaspoons sesame seeds, toasted if desired

### Directions

1. Snap off and discard the root ends of the asparagus. Rinse remaining stalks thoroughly under cool, running water. Slice stalks, on the diagonal, into 1½ inch lengths.
2. Blanch asparagus pieces for 1-3 minutes in boiling water, until bright green in color. Cool immediately under cold water and drain, well.
3. In a bowl, combine soy sauce, sugar, olive oil, and sesame seeds. Mix until sugar is dissolved.
4. Add blanched asparagus to the dressing. Gently toss to coat; chill in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. Gently stir and toss again; return to the refrigerator for 15 minutes or until ready to serve.

*Approximate nutrition per 1/2 cup serving: 70 calories, 4.5 g fat, .5 g sat. fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 250 mg sodium, 7 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 3 g protein*

**Source:** Plate it up Kentucky Proud

*Nothing says spring like asparagus! This delicate vegetable is often described as being sweet, nutty and grassy. The name comes from the Greek word meaning "sprout" or "shoot." It's believed that man began cultivating asparagus over 2,000 years ago in the eastern Mediterranean region. It was appreciated by the Greeks and Romans for its unique flavor, texture, and alleged medicinal qualities-some felt it was an aphrodisiac! Asparagus was first planted in California during the 1860s, and it continues to be one of our top producing states. It may take 2 to 3 years to establish an asparagus patch, but many people say it is worth it!*



## SPRING INTO WELLNESS

Replace sedentary activities such as watching TV or reading a book, with more intentional activity such as walking, gardening, or other favorite movements (golfing, biking, running, tossing a ball, and more).

Make it a habit (when possible) to:

- Walk to the mailbox
- Go inside a store instead of using the drive-thru
- Take the stairs at every opportunity instead of the elevator or escalator
- Reach up high and bend down low
- Walk the dog (even if you don't have a dog!)

Do what you can and work toward adding just a little more as you are able. Even just standing more than sitting will help your overall health, digestion, and mood!





## UNDERSTANDING ULTRAPROCESSED FOODS A LITTLE BETTER

Ultraprocessed foods are on the news, featured in headlines, and throughout the media. So, what are they? How do you identify them? Should you eat them?

Almost every food and drink you find in the grocery store has gone through some form of processing. Sometimes it's simple, like packaging strawberries in a container. Other times it's more involved, like a ready-made meal you heat in the microwave. There are different levels of processing, ranging from unprocessed to ultraprocessed.

Some processing of food and drinks is helpful. For example, fresh foods like fruits, vegetables, beans, peas, meat, fish, and dairy can be processed and sold in cans or jars. These options are often more affordable, may be easier to find, and offer similar nutrients to fresh ones. Canned and jarred foods remove or minimize some of the preparation required to enjoy these foods.

Other processing of foods involves the addition of beneficial nutrients to foods. For example, breakfast cereals, juices, milk, bread, and flour are often fortified with vitamins and minerals. This means nutrients are added to them to help improve your diet. This helps to prevent common nutrient deficiencies and promote overall health.

Ultraprocessed foods (UPFs) are highly processed to make them more convenient, longer lasting, and tastier. These foods are often affordable and accessible, found on many different store shelves. They may come in ready-to-eat forms or require very little preparation to enjoy. These foods are usually shelf stable or long lasting in the refrigerator or freezer because of some additives. Other additives commonly found in these UPFs enhance the flavor and texture of the item which makes them particularly enjoyable to eat. These additives include fats, sugar, and sodium, which in excess, are linked to disease risk. These foods are often high in calories and low in nutrients that promote health.

To spot UPFs, check the ingredients list. UPFs include ingredients you often would not use in homemade recipes like high-fructose corn syrup or artificial additives. Examples include processed meats (salami, hot dogs, bologna, deli meats), sugar-sweetened beverages, packaged snacks, candies, pastries, breakfast cereals, sweetened and flavored yogurts, ice cream, and ready-made foods and meals.



On the other hand, just because a food is not categorized as “ultraprocessed” does not mean you should eat it all the time. For example, a diet high in red meat over time has been linked to chronic disease. Red meat naturally has saturated fat in it. And just because chocolate chip cookies are homemade and do not contain these ingredients does not mean they are nutritious. You can enjoy them with a balanced diet, but they cannot provide you with all the nutrients you need by themselves.

A diet that includes a variety of fruits and vegetables, protein, dairy products, and grains helps you to get the nutrients you need. Many of these items may be processed in a variety of ways including fresh, frozen, canned, jarred, and dried. Some processed foods are nutritious, like oatmeal, whole-grain bread and pasta, canned vegetables, fruits, and beans. When looking at packaged food products, choose ones with low amounts of added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium.

**References:** Hu, G., Flexner, N., Tiscornia, M. V., & L'Abbé, M. R. (2023). Accelerating the Classification of NOVA Food Processing Levels Using a Fine-Tuned Language Model: A Multi-Country Study. *Nutrients*, 15(19), 4167. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15194167> Monteiro, C. A., Cannon, G., Levy, R. B., Moubarac, J. C., Louzada, M. L., Rauber, F., Khandpur, N., Cediel, G., Neri, D., Martinez-Steele, E., Baraldi, L. G., & Jaime, P. C. (2019). Ultra-processed foods: what they are and how to identify them. *Public health nutrition*, 22(5), 936–941. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980018003762> Macmillan, C. (2024, July 10). Ultraprocessed Foods: Are They Bad for You? *Yale Medicine*. <https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/ultraprocessed-foods-bad-for-you>  
**Source:** Anna Cason, Senior Extension Associate for Food and Nutrition

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Register for any or all programs by calling 859.586.6101 or visiting [boone.ca.uky.edu/online-registration](http://boone.ca.uky.edu/online-registration)

**4/24/2025**

### Diabetes Basics

1:00-4:00pm — Florence location

Learn from two Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialists in this NO COST class! Open to all adults.

**4/25/2025**

### Do Pigs Fly? The Story of Porkopolis

10:00am-1:00pm — Enrichment Center

Please register.

**4/30/2025**

### Prepare, Respond, Recover: Disaster Preparedness

9:00am-3:00pm — Enrichment Center, lower level

Lunch provided.

**5/17/2025**

### Grand opening celebration for our Florence location.

Watch for details!

**6/23-28/2025**

### Boone County Fair

5819 Idlewild Road, Burlington, KY 41005

visit [boonecountyfair.org](http://boonecountyfair.org) for details.



Planning and organizing can help with a sense of calm. Take time for yourself.

## CARING FOR YOURSELF


Treat your fun commitments as seriously as you treat your business commitments. Put them on your calendar and don't cancel unless absolutely necessary. It's important to nurture yourself as much as those you love and care for.

*Today is a great day  
to smile and be happy!*

For more information or if you have questions, please reach out!

**Diane Mason, Boone County Extension Agent for Family & Consumer Sciences**

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### Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Community and Economic Development

### MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.