

NEWS ARTICLE

Jean A. Ince

County Extension Agent-

Staff Chair

March 17, 2022

MARCH IS LIVING WELL MONTH

Cooperative Extension Service Family and Consumer Science (FCS) agents have been providing educational services to improve the lives of individuals and families in their communities for over 100 years. Yet, I still get asked, “What exactly do you do?” In a few words, Extension FCS agents provide educational programs that support local and state initiatives in nutrition, healthy lifestyles, food safety, financial management, parenting and environmental health to help citizens gain knowledge and skills to lead full and productive lives.

When you think about living well, it is a lot more than how one looks and feels. Living well has eight dimensions or areas of wellness – mental, social, emotional, spiritual, financial, occupational, environmental, and intellectual. That’s the focus of Living Well Month. While March has been set aside as Living Well Month, every month should be considered a month to live well.

According to research-based information, there are some things everyone should be doing to get the most out of every day and month to live well.

- Engage in physical activity every day. Children should have at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Adults need at least 30 minutes of physical activity.

There are lots of ways to include physical activity in your day. Play sports, take a walk, ride a bike, clean house. All movement counts as physical activity. Just do it!

- Now is the time to start planning your summer garden. Gardening is great physical activity. Getting outside and getting your hands in dirt helps nurture your mental and environmental wellness.
- Rethink your drink. The average adult human body is approximately 60 percent water. Water regulates every living cell's process and chemical reactions. It transports nutrients and oxygen. Water also helps to maintain normal bowel habits and prevent constipation. Think about what you are drinking and reduce the amount of sodas and increase water intake.
- Eat a variety of nutritional foods. Eat colorful fruits and vegetables every day. Most people do not eat enough fruits and vegetables daily. Try new fruits and vegetables or prepare them in a different way. www.choosemyplate.gov is a great website to help unravel the mystery of what to eat.
- Read, read, read. Go to the library and check out books. Keep the mental stimulation going all year long. Reading stimulates your intellectual health.
- Talk to a friend or start a journal to get your thoughts and feelings off your chest. Staying in check with emotional health can be hard to do, but it's important.
- Check out all the educational programs Extension has to offer. Classes on parenting, finance, nutrition and/or food preparation classes are offered on a regular basis. Call the Extension Office at 870-845-7517 and ask to be added to my newsletter mailing list.
- Maintain a healthy home. Check that your smoke detector is working correctly and test for the presence of Radon. Help manage allergies and/or asthma by cleaning and vacuuming regularly to reduce allergy triggers in the home. Avoid accidental

poisonings by keeping medications locked up, and cleaning agents and other poisons out of reach of children.

- Keep your family finances in check. Track your expenses and update your budget regularly. Eating at home can help save money and can help improve overall health. Plan your menus and use coupons as a planning tool. Creating and sticking to a budget, along with paying of debt are great first steps to financial wellness.

All eight of the areas of wellness are connected and support each other. Family Consumer Science agents help families achieve wellness through educational programs. Programs are offered on a regular basis. It has been said, “FCS agents teach Adulting 101!”

For more information on any of the areas mentioned above or to be added to my monthly newsletter which advertises most of the programs being conducted throughout the month, contact the Howard County Extension Office at 870-845-7517 and ask to be added to the EHC Newsletter Mailing list. Cooperative Extension Service is part of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. Most of our programs are free of charge or only charge enough to cover expenses. Our fact sheets and other publications are free of charge.

Recipe of the Week

This recipe was a hit at the recent Chocolate Affair. Thank you to everyone who attended and made the day great! Make these scones for an extra special weekend breakfast or brunch.

Chocolate Scones

2 cups all-purpose flour
¼ cup sugar
1 ¼ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp. salt

½ c. unsalted butter, cold
1 c. mini chocolate chips
¾ c. buttermilk
1 tsp. vanilla
¼ c. heavy cream

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl.
3. Cut butter into small cubes.
4. Blend the butter in with the flour mixture using a pastry cutter or 2 knives. The mixture should be clumpy and look like course crumbs.
5. Mix in the mini chocolate chips.
6. In a small measuring cup, mix together the buttermilk and vanilla.
7. Mix into the flour mixture until JUST incorporated. DO NOT overmix, this will make the scones too dense.
8. Put a small amount of flour onto a clean surface and knead the dough briefly.
9. Shape the dough into a circle that is about 1 ½ inches thick and cut into wedges.
10. Put scones on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper.
11. Brush the tops with a little bit of cream.
12. Bake for 15-18 minutes until tops are golden brown and toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool on wire rack.
13. Melt ½ c. chocolate chips and drizzle on top for more of a chocolate taste.