



## The Common Cold: A Quiz

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When a cold hits, the most common symptoms experienced are a sore throat, runny nose, coughing, sneezing, watery eyes, headaches and body aches. Common colds are the main reason that children miss school and adults miss work. Each year in the U.S., millions of people get the common cold. Adults have an average of 2-3 colds per year, and children have even more.

**Quiz: How much do you know about the common cold?** Respond to these **True/False** questions.

The correct answers are provided following the quiz.

1. Antibiotics will help you recover from a cold.
2. Rhinoviruses are the most common causes of colds.
3. Colds are never serious for anyone.
4. Colds are most common in the winter and spring.
5. You can get a cold from someone by shaking their hand.

### Answers:

1. **F** - Antibiotics do not work against viruses, and they may make it harder for your body to fight future bacterial

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infections if you take them unnecessarily. To feel better when you have a cold, you should get lots of rest and drink plenty of water.

2. **T** – Many different viruses can cause the common cold, but rhinoviruses are the most common. Rhinoviruses can also trigger asthma attacks and have been linked to sinus and ear infections. Other viruses that can cause colds include
  - respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) – a virus that infects the lungs and breathing passages. RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in children younger than 1 year of age in the U.S. and a significant cause of respiratory illness in older adults.
  - human parainfluenza viruses (HPIVs) – a group of viruses that cause different types of respiratory infections and are most common in children and babies. Most HPIVs usually cause infections of the upper airway, such as a common cold, ear infections, or sore throat.
  - human metapneumovirus (hMPVO) – a common virus that has been responsible for respiratory illnesses for at least 50 years worldwide.
3. **F** – See a doctor if you or your child has any of the following symptoms: temperature higher than 100.4 F, symptoms that last more than 10 days, symptoms that are severe or unusual. If your child is younger than three months of age and has a fever, it's important to call your doctor right away. Most people recover from colds within about 7-10 days. However, people with weakened immune systems, asthma, or conditions that affect the lungs and breathing passages may develop serious illness, such as pneumonia.
4. **T** – Most people get colds in the winter and spring, but it is possible to get a cold any time of the year.
5. **T** – Viruses that cause colds can spread from infected people to others through the air and close personal contact this can happen when you shake hands with someone who has a cold after they have sneezed or coughed into their hands, or touch a doorknob that has viruses on it, then touch your eyes, mouth, or nose.

Protect yourself and others. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Viruses that cause colds can survive on your hands, and regular handwashing can help protect you from getting sick.

Source. <http://www.cdc.gov/dotw/common-cold/index.html>

## Happiness is... Shiny Floors and Tidy Toilets?

Sonja Koukel, PhD  
Community & Environmental Specialist

*Shiny floors, a tidy toilet, and clean countertops make consumers the happiest.*  
~ Brian Sansoni, Soap and Detergent Association VP of Communication

### What Clean Surface Makes America Smile?

The first National Clean Surface Satisfaction Survey (Jan/Feb, 2008) asked 1,013 American adults (507 men and 506 women) which cleaning task makes them the happiest or gives them the most satisfaction.

See if you agree with these findings:

- Shiny floors (21%)
- A tidy toilet (21%)
- Clean countertops (20%)
- A sparkling shower (15%)
- Gleaming windows (12%)



- A spotless sink (7%)
- Clean mirrors (3%)

### **Tips for Keeping a Clean and Happy Home**

**Tread Lightly:** To prevent dirt and grime from building up on floors, start by placing rugs or mats at room entrances whenever possible. For a quick clean, use a dry, electrostatic dust sheet that picks up loose dust. If you have more time, use an all-in-one mop with moist, woven cloths that contain a cleaning solution to clean floors. Regularly clean wood floors with a proper wood cleaner that's tailor made for that type of surface.

**Counter Intuition:** For effortless on-the-spot cleaning, keep wipes on the kitchen counter for easy access. Don't forget – immediately after preparing raw meat, poultry or seafood, clean countertops with an antibacterial cleaner or wipe to kill unwanted germs that can make you sick.

**On the Surface:** For clean mirrors and windows without smudges, spray glass cleaner on a soft cotton cloth instead of directly on the surface. Or consider using a window wipe for an effortless clean.

**Scrub-A-Dub-Dub:** You can keep your toilet tidy and other bathroom surfaces clean rather easily. Flushable wipes (make sure you check the label) are handy for cleaning around toilet rims, tanks, faucets, sinks and basins. Because they disperse in water when agitated (like toilet paper), they're designed to be safe for plumbing and septic tanks and the environment. Other wipe products also get the job done. You just simply dispose of them when you're finished cleaning.

**It's Curtains for Germs:** Use a daily shower cleaner to keep shower and tub surfaces free of soap scum, mildew, and hard-water deposits. Mist the surfaces right after bathing, while surfaces are still wet. For tough grime, use a surface-appropriate abrasive cleaner. There are also specific products you can use to tackle soap scum and mold and mildew.

**To-Do List:** When choosing a cleaner for any job in the house, read and follow label directions for proper use, storage and disposal. Keep them in their original containers, with labels intact. Be sure to properly close all containers and put them away immediately, to limit accessibility to animals and children. Refer to NMSU Guide G-304, *Selection and Use of Home Cleaning Products*, for more information.

Source. [http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/happiness\\_is\\_shiny\\_floors\\_and\\_tidy\\_toilets/](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/happiness_is_shiny_floors_and_tidy_toilets/)

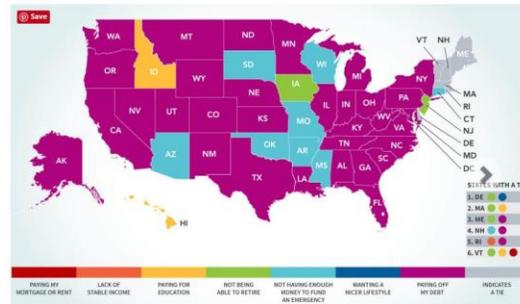
## **How to Reduce Debt and Live within Our Means**

**Bryce Jorgensen, PhD**  
**Family Resource Management Specialist**

Everyone wants to improve their quality of life. Quality of life improves as we have less negative stress and more peace in our life. One area of negative stress that most people have in their lives is debt and living paycheck to paycheck. In fact, the number 1 cause of financial stress in New Mexico is “paying off debt.” New Mexico has the third-highest unemployment rate in the nation, tied with Louisiana and Illinois, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Without a steady income, residents might be relying on credit more or having trouble coming up with the cash to pay the debts they have. Sometimes people find themselves in debt because they don't have enough income to meet the most basic needs. Most people, however, are in debt because they spend money they don't have on wants.

## The No. 1 Cause of Financial Stress in Every State

By Cameron Huddleston / August 22, 2016



George Clason once said, “*That which each of us calls our ‘necessary expenses’ will always grow to equal our income unless we protest to the contrary.*” In other words, our expenses grow as our income grows because we believe we can spend more. Most of us look at our income and think, “If I could only make \$xxx more each month, then I would be fine.” But, what we find out is that once we get the raise and have the extra money, we are STILL living paycheck to paycheck and barely making ends meet. Why??? Because we don’t control our spending! Improving our financial situation is usually more about decreased spending than increased income.

### The Growth of Consumer Debt

The debt problem in the United States has grown dramatically over the past few decades. Between 1970 and 2010, the median family income in America increased 10 percent in *real* (or purchasing power) terms. During the same time period, total consumer debt per capita increased 119 percent in *real* terms. If you want a sobering picture of debt in the United States, go to [www.usdebtclock.org](http://www.usdebtclock.org), which projects debt in the United States in real time. Don’t go there if you are susceptible to heart problems, because what you will see is truly heart-stopping! I visited the site on October 5, 2016 at about 3:00 PM, and this is what I saw:

- **Total Student Loan Debt: \$1,386,074,261,657**
- **Total Credit Card Debt: \$975,127,632,454**
- **Total Mortgage Debt: \$14,108,106,892,145**
- **Total Personal Debt: \$17,807,638,322,093**

As I viewed this continually updating screen, I saw the total personal debt increase by thousands of dollars every second. Personal debt is rapidly exceeding 17 trillion dollars (a trillion is a million millions). That’s a lot! This amount translates into \$54,021 of personal debt for each of the 323,281,052 people living in the United States.

The United States national debt is also growing to astronomical proportions. As of October 5, 2016, it was \$19,539,926,482,257, which translates into \$59,486 for each person in the United States. If you want to better understand how much debt \$19 Trillion is, visit the following two sites: 1) US debt graphically depicted - [http://demonocracy.info/infographics/usa/us\\_debt/us\\_debt.html](http://demonocracy.info/infographics/usa/us_debt/us_debt.html) and 2) How much is a trillion dollars? - <https://ihtd.org/festivalguide/resources/how-much-is-a-trillion-dollars/>. Here it gives multiple examples to help you understand the value of a trillion dollars. For example:

- If a person’s salary is \$40,000 per year it would take:
  - 25 years to earn \$1 Million
  - 25 Thousand years to earn \$1 Billion
  - 25 Million years to earn \$1 Trillion

So if you combine personal debt with the national debt, there is enough debt for more than \$113,000 for each person in the United States. We are truly a nation of debtors—both in Washington, DC and in our own homes. **So what can we do??** We discuss various solutions next.



### Needs vs. Wants

Dave Ramsey said, *“It is human nature to want it and want it now; it is also a sign of immaturity. Being willing to delay pleasure for a greater result is a sign of maturity. However, our culture teaches us to live for the now. “I want it!” we scream, and we can get it, if we are willing to go into debt. Debt is a means to obtain the “I want its” before we can afford them.”* What should we do? We need to distinguish between needs and wants. What are our basic needs? Basic needs are food, shelter, and clothing. But within these basic needs, we need to be modest.

- **Food IS a necessity, but** going out to eat every day or eating expensive food is NOT a necessity. We should buy healthy, inexpensive food at the grocery store to make at home and refrain from going out to eat until we are debt free and can add the extra food cost to our budget.
- **Clothing IS a necessity, but** expensive outfits or additional outfits when we have enough clothing is NOT a necessity. Can we get by with the clothing we have until we are out of consumer debt and can save and pay cash? If we do need an item of clothing, can we purchase a good quality item at a location that is inexpensive (e.g., Walmart, Target, etc.)? When in debt we should go by the mantra *“Fix it up, wear it out, make it do or do without.”*
- **Shelter IS a necessity, but** it should be a modest shelter that fits easily within our budget. Whether renting or owning, limiting the amount of our income that goes toward housing will allow us to use our finances to accomplish other financial goals. Having a home that stretches the limits of our income, restricts our choices and ability to accomplish other worthwhile financial goals.

If we can live frugally now while we become debt free and build a reserve, later we can increase our standard of living while spending less than we earn. Research, and common sense, shows that minimizing our expenses while attacking our consumer debt until we are debt free brings peace of mind. We should do all we can to decrease our expenses and increase our income while becoming debt free.

### Spending Leaks

What is a spending leak? A spending leak is when we spend money on wants rather than needs. We each have multiple spending leaks every month, week, and possibly each day. Similar to how a continual drop in a bucket will fill the bucket with water over time, spending leaks will add up to an extremely large amount over time. Spending leaks can be candy, cigarettes, chips, soda, alcohol, vending machines, coffee (e.g., buying Starbucks vs. making it at home), newspapers, magazines, going out to eat (fast food or restaurants), unintended fees (e.g., late fees, overdraft fees, etc.), spending too much on cable, dish, cell phone, etc. (especially when we don't use all the channels, data, etc. to the fullest), gas (when driving more than needed), and many other ways. Spending leaks are the things that add up over time but when looking back we aren't sure where our money went. These leaks are severely limiting our ability to accomplish our financial goals; goals like getting out of debt, building an emergency fund, and saving to pay cash for a vacation, car, or other goal.

The only way to find out where your spending leaks are so you can redirect the money towards getting out of debt and accomplishing your other goals is to **TRACK** every expense over a month. You can track your expenses by only using your checking account (debit card or checks) and/or a credit card and using the statements, you can write everything down as you spend, or you can use a tool like Mint.com. The important thing is to track every expense, especially those expenses that are considered spending leaks. If you are like my students (who also get to track every expense for a month), you will be **AMAZED** at how much you spend on going out to eat and other spending leaks. Most of the time

spending leaks add up to thousands of dollars per year!! If you were to LIMIT (not even eliminate) your spending on these leaks, you would find the money you need to get out of debt. Until you do this, you cannot use the excuse, “I don’t have enough money.”

### Debt-Elimination Calendar

In order to accomplish your family’s financial goals, debt elimination is imperative. What if your family is already in debt? Is there a process that can help you get out at an accelerated rate? Thankfully, there is. The following process is essential for debt-reduction:

1. Recognize and accept that you have a debt problem.
2. Stop incurring debt. Don’t buy anything else on credit. Be especially careful about using home equity to pay down debts until you have your spending under control. In the words of Will Rogers, “If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.”
3. Make a list of all your debts.
4. Look for many different ways of reducing debt, not just one. Examples might include consolidating balances to a lower interest rate credit card, having a yard sale to earn money to pay down debt, taking a second or third job for a short time, or using savings to reduce debt.
5. Organize a repayment or debt-reduction strategy, such as a debt-elimination calendar, and follow it.

Many financial planners suggest organizing debts, then paying off either the most expensive debt first or your smallest balance owed first (my preference). With the smallest balance first approach, you see success as smaller debts are eliminated, which gives you more motivation to continue repaying your debts. Either of these methods can be helpful in eliminating debt. Most of the time, the difference is not significant, and either method will accomplish the same objective.

### The key is to act now!

I recommend that you set up a spreadsheet or ledger with a row for every month you will be making payments on your debts and a column for each creditor. You pay the minimum amount to all other debts and attack the first debt with the lowest balance with all extra money you have until it is paid off. Once one debt is paid off, move that money to the next debt until it is paid off, and so on until all debts are gone. The key is to continue applying the same total amount of money to your debts until all debts are gone. In other words, if you were paying \$1400 toward your total debt, you would continue paying \$1400 toward your debt even as credit cards, cars, personal loans, student loans, etc. were paid off until your last debt is gone (yes, include your home mortgage!). See the example below.

	Credit Card	Auto Loan	Student Loan	Total Payment
Interest Rate	18%	8%	5%	
Amount Owed	\$2,000	\$4,400	\$3,600	\$10,000
Minimum Payment	\$20	\$200	\$100	\$320
July	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$600
August	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$600
September	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$600
October	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$600
November	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$600
December	\$300	\$200	\$100	\$600
January	\$200 (paid off)	\$300	\$100	\$600
February		\$500	\$100	\$600
March		\$500	\$100	\$600
April		\$500	\$100	\$600
May		\$500	\$100	\$600
June		\$500	\$100	\$600
July		\$400 (paid off)	\$200	\$600
August			\$600	\$600
September			\$600	\$600
October			\$600	\$600
November			\$400 (paid off)	\$400
December				\$600 (invested)



An excellent tool to help accomplish either debt elimination strategy is <https://powerpay.org/>. This website is an easy tool that creates the elimination calendar for you and will calculate how long it will take to eliminate your debt and the overall cost savings of eliminating the debt. For most people, it saves years of debt and thousands of dollars saved in interest.

### **How this Applies to YOU...**

Although the United States is in over 19 Trillion dollars of national debt and its citizens are in 17 Trillion dollars of personal debt, **YOU CAN BE DIFFERENT!!**

- Distinguish between needs and wants and identify where you can cut spending.
- Show greater maturity by delaying gratification by saving and paying cash or not making the purchase.
- Live within your means by not spending more than you earn.
- Track your spending and minimize your spending leaks.
- Create a debt-elimination calendar (use <https://powerpay.org/> to help), attack your debt, and be debt free years earlier while saving thousands of dollars in interest payments.

### **The Bottom Line –**

New Mexico, along with most other states, has “paying off debt” as the number 1 cause of financial stress. We can relieve that stress by tracking our spending, identifying and plugging (reducing) our spending leaks, spend less than we earn and live within a budget, and attack our debt with the debt-reduction calendar. As we see our debt decreasing and that we are winning financially, instead of missing the spending leaks, our financial stress will go down and we’ll feel in control of our finances! We’ll feel great that we are making progress towards our financial goals. This will bring more peace into our lives and into our relationships and our quality of life will increase

To learn more about these topics, visit [www.mymoney.nmsu.edu](http://www.mymoney.nmsu.edu) and/or contact your local extension office to talk with a Family and Consumer Science extension agent.

## **Using Credit Cards Wisely**

**Bryce Jorgensen, PhD**  
**Family Resource Management Specialist**

Obtaining and appropriately using credit cards is an important part of building credit. Generally, the interest rate is comparably high because the loan is unsecured by collateral. Most credit cards have a grace period. If you pay the balance in full within the grace period, the interest is forgiven. If you do not pay back within the grace period, you are liable for all the interest charged from the moment you made the purchase. The key principle to make credit cards useful for your family is to pay them off before the grace period expires, every month without fail. In fact, **I encourage you to pay your credit card bill the day you get it.** This helps you avoid interest and actually helps your credit score.

Before applying for a credit card, it is recommended that you conduct your own honest self-assessment to gauge whether or not you consider yourself qualified to be a responsible credit card holder. Credit card debt can be devastating to your family’s financial health. Remember that although buying on credit means a delayed payment, you still have to pay it off. Furthermore, if you do not pay off your cards on time, you will have to pay the full amount plus large amounts of interest. It is almost always unwise to purchase anything with a credit card that you cannot pay off before the grace period expires. If you need to borrow money, it is better to get a loan with collateral so that you are saved from the high interest rates of credit cards. Think of your credit card as a more convenient version of cash: don’t spend money you don’t have. Pay it off regularly, perhaps the day you get the bill. Keep track of your spending to ensure you stay within your family budget. Using a financial app like mint.com can help you track credit card expenditures in real time. Those who cannot use a credit card in a responsible way should delay obtaining one until they can live by these principles.

## Evaluating Credit Cards

If you carry a balance on your credit card (meaning that you *do not* pay off the balance due each month), you should select a credit card with the lowest possible annual percentage rate. Whether or not the card has a grace period is irrelevant because a grace period only applies if you pay the full balance each month. If you pay your credit card bill in full each month, you should choose a card with a grace period and a low annual fee. The APR is irrelevant because you never carry a balance. Financial websites like [creditkarma.com](http://creditkarma.com) and [mint.com](http://mint.com) provide great resources for evaluating credit cards. [Creditcards.com](http://Creditcards.com) also provides useful information.

A good rule of thumb to maximize your credit score is to not apply for more than one credit card per year. Generally, we recommend having about two or three credit cards in active use at a time. When you stop using a card it is usually better to leave the account open because even though you don't use it, having the credit line open will strengthen your credit score. However, if your card has a large annual fee, it may be better to cancel the card and take a small hit to your credit score. It is often difficult to obtain your first credit card. If you are denied, you could have a parent cosign for you. You could also get a secured credit card. With this option, you have a low credit limit and make a security deposit for the amount of the limit. After you establish a history of paying off your loans, the security deposit is refunded.

### Evaluating Credit Cards

The following should be considered when evaluating credit cards:

- Annual fee (ranging from zero to about \$95)
- Perks (frequent flyer miles, cash back, etc.)
- Grace period (no interest is charged on new purchases if you pay your bill in full on time each month)
- APR (Interest rate charged on outstanding balances expressed as an annual percentage rate)
- Method of determining the interest rate (i.e. discount rate plus five percentage points, prime rate + 3.75 points, etc.)
- Minimum payment required

## Appropriate Card Uses (Benefits and Drawbacks)

Although some popular financial advisors advocate not having a credit card at all, there are several **benefits** for having at least one credit card.

- *Emergencies*: Credit cards can be useful when you don't have cash on hand and need to pay for something immediately, such as an auto repair or an insurance co-payment.
- *Reservations*: Credit cards can be used to guarantee hotel rooms, rental cars, and other rental items. This is especially important if you travel frequently.
- *Convenience*: With a credit card, you can buy things over the phone or on the Internet. Credit cards make purchasing things very easy. They also provide you with a record of everything you spend, an important bookkeeping benefit.
- *Cash flow and timing*: If something is on sale and you know you have the cash coming in a week, you can actually buy the item before you pay for it. In this way, you can take advantage of sales. (But remember, you do not save money by spending money.)
- *Free services*: Often, credit cards offer rewards such as extended warranties, travel insurance, airplane miles, gasoline rebates, and cash rebates, which can reduce the overall cost of some items.
- *Credit score*: As mentioned previously, buying on credit and paying off your credit cards regularly is important to building a strong credit score. It demonstrates to lenders that you are responsible and capable of paying off loans. Even if you do not have a large budget, making your purchases (groceries, clothing, textbooks, etc.) via credit card will build your credit over time. Then when you go to get a mortgage loan, you will have a lower interest rate because of your good credit score.

There are also some important **drawbacks** to be aware of when using credit cards.

- *Increased spending:* You may not take as much time to think about how much you are spending when you use a credit card. Research has shown that, on average, people spend more with a credit card than they do with cash—sometimes as much as 100 percent more.
- *Losing track of spending:* It's easy to lose track of what you spend with your credit card. It requires discipline to track the charges you make.
- *Interest and other costs:* Interest charges can range anywhere from 8 percent to 25 percent. In addition to these interest charges, you must take into account compounding periods, annual fees, and other miscellaneous fees, such as cash advance fees and balance transfer fees. Because of these fees, the cost of using credit cards is often double or triple the cost of using other types of loans.
- *Obligations on future income:* Most importantly, when you use credit cards, you put obligations on future income. As you take on more debt, you not only obligate future income but you also limit future flexibility you may need if emergencies arise.

### **Danger Ahead**

It is vital to handle credit appropriately because credit abuse can very quickly get out of hand. An alcoholic or smoker may think that one drink or one cigarette will not hurt. But soon it is two, then three, then a pack. Should any of the following danger signals occur, get your financial life together so that you can again be an effective household.

1. Are total consumer credit payments over 20 percent of your monthly budget?
2. Is an increasing portion of your income going to debt repayment?
3. Are your credit cards at or near their limit?
4. Are you always late on one or more bills?
5. Are you borrowing to pay for things you used to pay for with cash?
6. Have you taken out a new loan to repay an old loan?
7. Is your net worth decreasing?
8. If you lost your job, would you make it for 3–6 months?
9. Are creditors threatening to repossess?

If you responded “yes” to any of the above danger signals, take a moment to consider what you could do today to help yourself get back on track. If not corrected, credit-holic symptoms can quickly spiral out of control, resulting in serious financial consequences for you and your family. As an additional suggestion, review the above checklist with your spouse and discuss and resolve any problems together. If done in a spirit of kindness, this will strengthen your relationship as well as your finances!

If you find yourself becoming addicted to the lure of buying on credit but still want to build your credit score, don't cancel your accounts. Perform “plastic surgery” on your credit cards by cutting them up with scissors or running them through the shredder. That way, you won't be using the cards anymore, and keeping your account open will still build your credit score slowly over time.



### **What do I do if I Lose my Credit Card?**

You have probably heard horror stories about credit card fraud. Here is some critical information to limit the damage in case your credit cards are lost or stolen.

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1. First, inform your credit card company of the loss or theft immediately. You will then have no liability for fraudulent use. It is a good idea to have the toll-free number handy so you know whom to call. They will immediately cancel the cards you have and re-issue new cards, often sending the replacement cards the next day.
  2. If your credit cards were stolen, immediately file a police report in the jurisdiction where the theft occurred. This proves to credit providers that you were diligent, and it is a first step toward a possible investigation.
  3. Most importantly, call the three national credit reporting organizations (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion) immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and social security number. This alert notifies any company checking your credit that your credit cards were stolen, and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

### **What is the Difference Between a Credit Card and a Debit Card?**

When you use a credit card you create a loan that will be paid off later, preferably before the grace period expires. Money actually leaves your account weeks after you make credit card purchases. When you use a debit card the money for the transaction is withdrawn immediately from your bank account. In this way, debit cards are like checks—you must have sufficient money in your account when you use a debit card, or else the transaction may be declined. Debit cards can also be used to withdraw cash at network ATMs without fees (in the United States). When you use a credit card to withdraw cash out of an ATM you may incur substantial fees. Debit cards offer less protection in case of fraud than credit cards and usually do not offer reward points.

### **How this Applies to YOU...**

When obtaining a credit card you should evaluate different cards and make an informed decision which card would work best for you (see <http://www.creditcards.com/> or other sites to compare cards). Never get a card just to earn miles or points, especially if it has high annual and other fees. Never get a store card (e.g., Kohls, Dillards, Best Buy) just to get 10%-20% off your purchase! This will hurt your credit and these cards almost never have good terms. Make sure you aren't spending more using credit than you would with cash or check. Be careful of the warning signs, and know the symptoms, that you are becoming a credit-holic. If you are spiraling out of control, take a step back to correct the spending and get back on track financially (which may include "plastic surgery"). If you lose your credit card, follow the three steps above: 1) inform your credit card company, 2) file a police report, and 3) contact the three credit reporting agencies. If you fail to act when you realize a credit card is stolen, you may be liable for unauthorized purchases.

### **The Bottom Line –**

Appropriately using credit cards can help you build credit. If using a credit card, be sure you can pay it off in FULL every month. Be honest with yourself and if you can't use it as a tool to build credit but want it to purchase "wants," don't get a credit card. First learn how to minimize your spending to live within your means and then get a credit card. A credit card should only be used to make purchases you would make anyway via cash or check.

To learn more about these topics, visit [www.mymoney.nmsu.edu](http://www.mymoney.nmsu.edu) and/or contact your local extension office to talk with a Family and Consumer Science extension agent.

## Preparing for Holiday Meals

Adapted from **Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety (FSIS USDA.GOV)**



Nancy Flores, PhD  
Food Technology Extension Specialist



The fall season is the time for tailgates, family gatherings and office parties leading into the holidays. Many of us see interesting recipes in social media, magazines or online blogs that we may consider making for a social gathering. First checkout or compare the recipe against other recipes from a reliable source like extension publications or USDA food preparation guides. Purchase all needed the ingredients and practice making the recipe before the big event so that you are comfortable with all the steps and handling procedures.

Some no-bake or no-cook recipes are a combination of various pre-made ingredients. These may be convenient but have a potential or risk for food born illness. For example, confections made from cookie crumbles combined with cream cheese covered in chocolate or almond bark must be refrigerated once assembled. Fruit dipped or covered in chocolate have a limited time before they loose quality and can be susceptible to microbial contamination and should also be refrigerated or kept cold during service. Additionally proper hand washing and cleanliness will help reduce the chance of microbial contamination during handling and assembling of ingredients.

One in six Americans will get sick from food poisoning every year. You can protect your families and friends and keep your food safe by following four simple steps:

**Clean**—Wash hands and surfaces often.

**Separate**—Separate raw meats from other foods.

**Cook**—Cook to the right temperature.

**Chill**—Refrigerate food promptly.

Large group meals for friends and family can be overwhelming and should be planned carefully. Some events if used as fund-raisers may need to contact local health department for a special permit. If the event is in a multi-use facility such a school or church cafeteria, ensure that the facility food preparation and serving areas are cleaned before and after use. Some facilities may allow use of small equipment such as mixers, blenders, coffee makers etc. but most often users must provide their own equipment, including cutting boards, utensils, food thermometers, cookware; shallow containers for storage, soap, and paper towels. Sanitize food contact surfaces and serving utensils before use with a bleach solution (1 tablespoon per gallon water). Events held outdoors might require source of clean water for cleaning of hands, utensils, and food thermometers. Also a catch pan or bucket should be used to capture dirty used water and disposed in area away from the food preparation and service areas. Plan ahead to have a safe meal and fun event.

It's time to eat! Serve food in clean containers with sanitized utensils ensuring that food is consumed within a short period of time and held at appropriate temperatures. Keep cold foods cold by using shallow dishes placed inside a deeper container partially filled with ice. Drain off melted ice water and replace ice often. Hot dishes should be kept above 140°F. Shallow dishes can be kept hot by using steam tables, chafing pans, warming trays or slow cookers. Ensure that slow cookers will maintain foods at above 140°F. Check temperatures often with a thermometer. Any dishes served at room temperatures (85°F) for over 2 hours should be discarded. Perishable foods containing meat, eggs, cut fruit, should also be discarded. Safe leftovers can be placed into smaller containers or plastic sealable bags to refrigerate or freeze quickly to be enjoyed again at another time. Plan to enjoy a safe meal with family and friends.

# Happy Holidays!

## Strategies to Enjoy the Holidays by Eating Less Calories

Sylvia “Gaby” Phillips, MS, RD, LD  
Program Specialist

The fall has arrived and the Holidays are just around the corner. Every year through different Extension Programs, I observed many participants struggle to make healthy decisions during the Holidays. As a Registered Dietitian, I took the time in my class to explain some of these strategies to my participants to incorporate into their Holidays and their traditional dishes.

From location to different cultural heritage, our Holiday meals differ in the types of dishes, such as pozole, traditional Thanksgiving dinner, etc. However, some of this strategies can easily be adapted to any traditional Holiday meal. Some of the strategies include:



- **Aim to cook and eat smaller portions**

Cooking adequate portions for the guests is a way to reduce the amount of left overs and the temptation to have multiple helpings.

Many grocery stores will sell half of portions of turkey. Do not hesitate to ask them. You can save up calories and money.

Serve on small plates, fill up half of your plate with fruits and vegetables first, and then be selective about the dishes that you would like to try. Eat slowly and enjoy your meal!

If you have left overs share them with your guests or take a meal to an elderly neighbor.

- **Check all the desserts and make a decision**

All those delicious desserts are tempting. Skip the pie crust, or eat less of the crust of those great pies. Trying a new crust less pie recipe is another way to go. Bake a cake and substitute the amount of butter with applesauce. Share a portion with your spouse, friend, or relative.

- **Skip the extra calories**

A gram of carbohydrates provides 4 calories

A gram of protein provides 4 calories

A gram of fat provides 9 calories

That’s right! The concentration of calories is higher in fat, actually more than double. By reducing the amount of fat in your meal, you’ll trim back the amount of calories.

As an example:

A tablespoon of butter provides 12 g of total fat and 108 calories.

A teaspoon of butter provides 4 g of total fat and 36 calories.

By switching from a tablespoon to a teaspoon of butter, 8 g of total fat and 72 calories will be reduced in the meal.

### How to trim the calories from fat?

Trim the visible fat from the meat, switch to non-fat Greek yogurt instead of sour cream in your recipes, use less oil and butter to cook any dish, and switch from dark meat to white meat.

The following chart presents how small changes can reduce the calorie intake of a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. Take a look and enjoy the Holidays!

Regular option	Fat grams	Calories
1 Serving baked turkey (Dark meat -3 oz)	5	142
1/2 cup of corn soufflé or casserole	7	183
1 cup of fresh vegetables no dressing	0	33
1 Dinner Roll plain no butter added	3	108
1/2 cup mashed potatoes no butter added	0	78
1 Tablespoon of butter	12	102
Giblet gravy (1 oz or 1/8 cup)	2	22
1/4 cup of cranberry sauce	0	105
Pumpkin pie (1/8)	12.35	280
<b>Totals</b>	<b>41.35</b>	<b>1053</b>

Low-fat option	Fat grams	Calories
1 Serving baked turkey breast(3 oz)	1.3	98
1/2 cup of corn soufflé or casserole	7	183
1 cup of fresh vegetables no dressing	0	33
1 Dinner Roll plain no butter	3	108
1/2 cup mashed potatoes no butter	0	78
Giblet gravy lighten up(1 oz or 1/8 cup)	0.5	13
1/4 cup of cranberry sauce	0	105
Pumpkin pie (1/8) crust less recipe	2	110
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>728</b>
<i>This option will save you</i>	<i>27.55</i>	<i>g of fat</i>
	<i>Almost 250</i>	<i>calories</i>

References upon request.

### Begin to Manage Diabetes with Confidence

Cassandra Vanderpool, MS, RDN, LD  
Extension Diabetes Coordinator

*I'm afraid to eat because my blood sugar always goes too high. I can't eat anything I like anymore. What am I supposed to do at social gatherings that include food?*

These are common concerns from people who have been told they have diabetes. Fortunately, they do not have to give up favorite foods or fear eating. They can learn new skills to help them plan and prepare meals that are balanced for health. Here are some important steps:



**Learn how foods affect blood sugar.** Carbohydrates raise blood sugar but are also the primary source of fuel for the body. They need to be included in meals in the right amounts and in combination with foods that are low in carbohydrates. Foods that are high in carbohydrates: grains, fruits, beans, starchy vegetables (e.g., corn, peas, potatoes, winter squash), milk, sweets

Foods that are low in carbohydrates: non-starchy vegetables, meats and meat substitutes, fats

**Learn the serving sizes of foods.** For people with diabetes, serving sizes of foods that are high in carbohydrates are based on the amounts that contain about 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Sometimes recommended serving sizes for people with diabetes differ from those for the general population. For example, a serving size of cooked rice is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup for the general population but  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup for people with diabetes.

Here are the serving sizes of several low-carbohydrate foods:

1 serving:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cooked or 1 cup raw non-starchy vegetables, 2 ounces ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup shredded) cheese,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cottage cheese, 2-3 ounces cooked meat, poultry, fish, or shellfish  $\frac{1}{2}$  serving: 1 ounce nuts, 1 ounce peanuts or 2 tablespoons peanut butter, 1 egg, 4 ounces tofu

**Practice reading Nutrition Facts labels.** The American Diabetes Association has a webpage titled [Taking a Closer Look At Labels](#) that teaches what to look for when selecting foods. Those who do not have internet access may request information from the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES; available in Spanish and English.

**Balance high and low carbohydrate foods.** Health care providers usually recommend how many carbohydrate servings a person with diabetes should have at a meal. Every serving of a high carbohydrate food eaten should be balanced by at least one serving of a low carbohydrate food. Fruits, whole grains, beans, and low fat dairy are the healthier high carbohydrate options.

One of the healthiest steps a person with diabetes can take toward balancing meals is to eat two to three servings of low carbohydrate vegetables at lunch and dinner. There are many kinds and various ways to cook them or enjoy them raw. Remember to count all serving sizes, especially if eating multiple portions of foods. For example, a medium baked potato (5 to 6 ounces) counts as two servings of a high carbohydrate food. One cup of sautéed zucchini and yellow squash, with onions and green chile if desired, counts as two servings of low carbohydrate foods.

**Get Support.** Most people have lots of questions as they begin to learn about planning and preparing meals to manage diabetes. The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) Diabetes Prevention and Control Program is working in partnership with the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service and others to offer free programs that help people with diabetes.

One of these programs is a special cooking school called *Kitchen Creations* that helps adults with type 2 diabetes learn how to prepare delicious meals. This series of four classes covers the most important information for people with type 2 diabetes to know about food. Topics include meal planning, serving sizes, food safety, reading food labels, balancing carbohydrates, and more. Participants receive a manual of useful information and two cookbooks.

Another free resource is the *Manage Your Chronic Disease (MyCD) Programs*. MyCD is a series of interactive workshops for adults of all ages living with one or more chronic condition like diabetes, arthritis, chronic pain, asthma, high blood pressure, or heart disease which require daily self-management. Delivered in small-group settings, participants meet for two-and-a-half hours, once a week for six-weeks, and focus on building skills for improving pain management, nutrition, exercise, medication use, emotions, and communicating with doctors.

To make it easier for New Mexicans to get more information and to register for these programs, the NMDOH Diabetes Prevention and Control Program has established a referral center through the Consortium for Older Adult Wellness (COAW). Health care providers may refer patients, or people may self-refer by calling toll-free (888) 900-2629.

## Wearable Fitness Trackers...Does it really help us increase our activity?

Lourdes Olivas, MA  
Extension Associate I

We have all heard about Fitbits and the other fitness trackers out there, such as Jawbone, Garmin, Moov, Samsung, and Misfit. The very basic ones keep track of your movement and count your steps. The more high tech and advanced trackers can track your heart rate, distance, sleep, and steps, plus you can input your meals along with your height and weight to track your calorie input and output. Some research has shown that individuals are not reaping the benefits of wearing a trackable fitness device. In conclusion, the individual still has to work towards achieving their goals, which means breaking down the barriers that prevent us from being more physically active.



Now, how to increase your physical activity is by no other way than to get paid, right? What other motivator do we need? There are several sites out there that will reward you for being active and healthy, sometimes in cash. The top rated reward site is AchieveMint, which will pay you cash of \$50, now getting that will take lots of work. If you walk the recommended steps of 10,000 per day you will average about 25 points and you need to accumulate 50,000 points for the cash reward. However, it is possible

and what do you have to lose, instead you gain your health plus \$50, not bad in my opinion. Another site that I find would interesting and suitable for those with a competitive edge is Pact. The way this one works, is that you place a bet, for example \$10 that you will meet your fitness goal for the week. If you don't meet it, then you are out \$10, but if you do then you get to keep your \$10 plus a piece of the pie from those that didn't. Higi is one where you can work towards discounts at various retailers with your activity, plus they have higi stations where you can earn additional points by taking important health screenings. Walgreens and Dicks are two additional reward avenues that you can link your fitness tracker with your rewards account, if you have one, to reach those store cash coupons faster.

MY REWARD  
FITNESS—

If you don't have a fitness tracker and are looking at investing in one, you may be overwhelmed with which one to choose. Fitbit has a range, the two most popular are Fitbit Surge and Fitbit Charge 2. Garmin also has a variety to choose from, vivoactive, vivosmart, vivofit, and vivomove. Samsung, Polar, and Jawbone are other manufactures of fitness trackers that have a variety to choose from as well. Which one is best all depends on you, how much are you willing to spend and what features do you really want and will use. Some features to consider are the display, battery life, waterproof, and automatic activity tracker.

<https://www.achievemint.com/>

<http://www.gym-pact.com/>

<http://earndit.com/migrate/moved>

<https://www.walgreens.com/steps/appmarket.jsp>

<https://myscorecardaccount.com/?sr=1&origkw=rewards>

# The Future of the Nutrition Facts Label

Wendy Bricco-Meske  
Dietetic Intern

We are all used to seeing the Nutrition Facts label on our foods, and as educators, many of us are responsible for teaching our community members how to understand and utilize the information on that label. The Nutrition Facts label was introduced in 1993 after the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 was passed (Malik, Willett, & Hu, 2016). Since then, we have been able to find a standardized Nutrition Facts label on all packaged foods that are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (Malik et al., 2016). This includes breads, cereals, pastas, canned and frozen foods, desserts, snacks, and beverages, as well as many other foods. On May 20, 2016, the FDA announced that the Nutrition Facts label would be updated to reflect the scientific advances made in the past twenty years (Voelker, 2016).

While significant changes are being made to the Nutrition Facts label, the familiar design will still be present to help guide consumers in making healthy food choices (FDA, 2016). The changes made to the Nutrition Facts label will need to be implemented by July 26, 2018, except for businesses that make less than \$10 million annually, which will have an additional year (Malik, 2016). The new changes coincide with recommendations from the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) (FDA, 2016).

1. **Updated Design:** ‘Calories’, ‘serving size’ and ‘servings per container’ will be bolded and shown in an increased font size to draw consumer attention (FDA, 2016).
2. **Added Sugars:** The first new line to display on the food label since 2006, the added sugars line will support the DGA’s goal of encouraging Americans to eat more healthy (Sollid, 2016).
3. **Total Sugar:** This line will include the amounts of both added and natural sugars in a product. To calculate the natural sugars, subtract the added sugars from the total sugars (Sollid, 2016).
4. **Potassium and Vitamin D:** These nutrients will now be required on the label since deficiencies are becoming more common (FDA, 2016).
5. **Vitamins A & C:** These will no longer be required on the food label since deficiencies aren’t as common anymore (Malik et al., 2016). They may still be voluntarily included.
6. **Footnote:** the footnote will be changed to better explain what daily values mean, in order to help consumers better understand what they are eating (FDA, 2016).  
**Serving Sizes:** New laws state that serving sizes must reflect the amount of food that Americans actually eat. This amount has changed since the original food label was released in 1993 (FDA, 2016).
7. **Dual Columns:** For foods that contain multiple servings but are often consumed in 1 sitting, dual columns of nutrition information must be provided, one ‘per serving’ and one ‘per package’ FDA, 2016).
8. **Removal of Calories from Fat:** Total fat, trans fat, and saturated

**SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON**

Original Label	New Label																					
<p><b>Nutrition Facts</b> Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g) Servings Per Container About 8</p> <p><b>Amount Per Serving</b> Calories 230      Calories from Fat 72</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>% Daily Value*</b></p> <p><b>Total Fat</b> 8g      12% Saturated Fat 1g      5% Trans Fat 0g</p> <p><b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg      0% <b>Sodium</b> 160mg      7% <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g      12% Dietary Fiber 4g      16% Sugars 1g</p> <p><b>Protein</b> 3g</p> <p>Vitamin A 10% Vitamin C 8% Calcium 20% Iron 45%</p> <p><small>* Percent Daily Values are based on a diet of 2,000 calories. Your daily value may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.</small></p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>Calories</td><td>2,000</td><td>2,500</td></tr> <tr><td>Total Fat</td><td>Less than 65g</td><td>65g</td></tr> <tr><td>Sat Fat</td><td>Less than 20g</td><td>20g</td></tr> <tr><td>Cholesterol</td><td>Less than 300mg</td><td>300mg</td></tr> <tr><td>Sodium</td><td>Less than 2,400mg</td><td>2,400mg</td></tr> <tr><td>Total Carbohydrate</td><td>300g</td><td>375g</td></tr> <tr><td>Dietary Fiber</td><td>25g</td><td>30g</td></tr> </table>	Calories	2,000	2,500	Total Fat	Less than 65g	65g	Sat Fat	Less than 20g	20g	Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg	Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg	Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g	Dietary Fiber	25g	30g	<p><b>Nutrition Facts</b> 8 servings per container <b>Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)</b></p> <p><b>Amount per serving</b> <b>Calories 230</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>% Daily Value*</b></p> <p><b>Total Fat</b> 8g      10% Saturated Fat 1g      5% Trans Fat 0g</p> <p><b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg      0% <b>Sodium</b> 160mg      7% <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g      13% Dietary Fiber 4g      14% Total Sugars 12g Includes 10g Added Sugars      20%</p> <p><b>Protein</b> 3g</p> <p>Vitamin D 2mcg      10% Calcium 260mg      20% Iron 8mg      45% Potassium 235mg      6%</p> <p><small>* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small></p>
Calories	2,000	2,500																				
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**Note:** The images above are meant for illustrative purposes to show how the new Nutrition Facts label might look compared to the old label. Both labels represent fictional products. When the original hypothetical label was developed in 2014 (the image on the left-hand side), added sugars was not yet proposed so the “original” label shows 1g of sugar as an example. The image created for the “new” label (shown on the right-hand side) lists 12g total sugar and 10g added sugar to give an example of how added sugars would be broken out with a % Daily Value.

(FDA, 2016)

fat will still be included on the label (FDA, 2016) but new research shows that consumers should look at fat quality over fat quantity (Malik et al., 2016).

Prior to 2016, no changes or additions had been made to the Nutrition Facts label except for the addition of trans fat in 2006. This addition was made in response to emerging evidence that trans fat was linked to adverse heart health effects. Since added to the label, trans fat intake has reduced from 4.6 to 1.3g/d. The FDA has recently announced that by 2018, the US Food Industry must remove artificial trans fat from all products (Malik et al., 2016).

The addition of an 'added sugars' line is hoped to have the same effect on health as the addition of trans fat did. On average, American get between 13-17% of total calories from added sugars (Sollid, 2016). Research shows that getting enough fiber and other essential nutrients is more difficult if greater than 10% of total calories come from added sugars (Voelker, 2016).

With all of these changes comes an increased need for education (Sollid, 2016). Even prior to the update, any Americans were confused as to how to read a Nutrition Facts label. In order to provide accurate information to our communities, it is vital that we understand the changes first. Below is a comparison of the original Nutrition Facts label with the new version.

References upon request.

## **Introduction**

Haley Nohl  
Graduate Assistant  
Extension Family and Consumer Sciences

Hello all, my name is Haley Nohl! I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. I am a Graduate Assistant in the EFCS Department working with Dr. Koukel. I grew up in Southeastern Arizona but have made my home here in Las Cruces for the past three years. Upon completing a Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in Family and Child Science, I decided to continue my education at New Mexico State University in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. I am currently in the second year of my Graduate program in Marriage and Family Therapy. In addition to my GA position, I work as an elementary school counseling intern this semester.



What I enjoy best about working in Extension Family and Consumer Sciences is the connection I am able to make between overall health and well-being and mental health. I am able to apply health education, awareness and nutrition to my mental health studies and recognize how the two go hand in hand. Upon graduation in May 2017, I plan to reside in the Southwest while fulfilling a career in the mental health field, particularly working with youth and their families. I hope to combine my work experiences and education together to provide meaningful services to those in my community. My main interests include working with Military families and Adoption and Foster Care agencies. I thoroughly enjoy living in Las Cruces and attending New Mexico State University, especially being a part of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. I have been provided with many opportunities including building relationships with outstanding students, staff and professors. I am happy to continue those relationships and learn from all that Extension Family and Consumer Sciences has to offer.

## Detox Cleanses and Diets: Where is the Science?

Kirsten Hancock, MS, RD  
NMSU Dietetic Internship Alumna



We are in the middle of a fad diet craze of drinking our meals. Smoothies, meal replacements, juices, and detox tea diets have made actually eating our food a social faux pas. I know many fad diets have come and gone before. My mother can tell you all about her experience with the cabbage soup diet. However, I do not know of a fad diet that has led to more than a book or a few products on the shelves. So it raises some concern when there is so much social media attention and stores dedicated to these current fad diets. Amazon alone lists 11,097 detox and cleanse products. As an Extension Agent or Specialist, you are seen as the expert in your field for the community based on your experience and knowing the science. So what should your answer be to the dreaded question of “What do you think about detox diets and cleanses?”

Well, currently there are no randomized controlled trials on the effectiveness of detox diets (Klein & Kiat, 2014). Simply, there is no evidence that any of the claims of these detox diets are supported or even researched. Further research is needed to support individual food or nutritional components having detoxification properties at all. Actually, it has not been established that the human body has a need for detoxification (other than from drugs or alcohol abuse) (Klein & Kiat, 2014). These products and claims and diets are on the internet and use words like ‘detox then cleanse’ and ‘revamp’ so it makes it difficult to regulate. With little clarity of these detox diets it is hard to investigate their claims.

### Detoxification and Toxins

A ‘detox’ diet is a short-term intervention in an attempt to remove toxins from the body, with claimed benefits ranging from “improved health, energy, and digestion to decreased inflammation and weight loss” (Schaeffer, 2008) (Klein & Kiat, 2014). These detox diets rarely identify the toxins they aim to eliminate. The term toxin has been typically associated by these diets as pollutants, synthetic chemicals, heavy metals, or processed foods. However, the body does detoxify us naturally. According to Robin Foroutan, MS, RDN, detoxification is a process that the body performs around the clock utilizing important nutrients from our diet to transform molecules that need to be removed from the body, or toxins. There are endotoxins or molecules that are made in the body as byproducts of regular metabolism (lactic acid and urea) and exotoxins that come from outside the body and are introduced to the system by eating, drinking and breathing, or are absorbed through the skin (pesticides, mercury in seafood, lead from car exhaust). If you were to be exposed to a high amount of toxins that your body could not remove on its own, talking to your physician would be better than a commercial detox diet.

### What is the concern with detox diets?

Not only is there no evidence to prove any of the positive claims of these diets, there are evident dangers. Overall these detox diets are not well balanced. Typically the diets involved extreme calorie restriction and low to no protein and fat intake for up to a week or even longer. Many of the detox diets are juice based but juicing removes the fiber leaving them very high in sugar. This can lead to muscle mass loss, which could explain some of the initial weight loss seen. A reduction of muscle mass leads to fewer calories burned and that is counterproductive to the weight loss effort. Also the extreme reduction of calories and fasting might even lead to or exasperate eating disorders like anorexia nervosa or binge eating (Klein & Kiat, 2014). The high stress of these diets can elevate cortisol and make it even more difficult to lose weight. The diets are not sustainable for long periods of time and can be expensive.



## **Why are we still seeing the craze?**

I think these fad diets have simply received a lot of attention because it seems to be a quick and easy fix. How easy is it to drink sweet fruit and vegetable juices all day every day? If you were to ignore the fact that you will be starving the whole time due to the lack of protein and fiber. Then the main claim is something that you cannot see. You do not know if the juices or detox regimen has actually done any additional detoxification. Another appeal could be the human nature draw to something extreme in hopes to get fast results. There is no quick fix and long-term weight loss starts with gradual weight reduction and lifestyle change.

Nevertheless, someone might feel the need to aid our body's natural detoxification process. I would encourage them to maintain adequate hydration with clean water, gradually increase their fiber intake, perhaps try a probiotic (pills or yogurt drinks) for improving intestinal health, and/ or consider a diet high in antioxidants and phytochemical foods like fruits and vegetables (Foroutan, 2016). We know the healthiest diet for preventing chronic disease and for weight loss is a balanced diet with emphasis on a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, lean protein, low fat dairy, and whole grains. Dietitians and health professionals can only reach so many people. Extension agents reach a huge number of New Mexicans annually and I hope you are part of the effort of educating the community on the importance of science and research based information.