

YOUR QUARTERLY
BRAIN FOOD

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- **Fruit is Mother Nature's candy:** find a farmer's market near you to fill up on this season's goods
- **Sneeze allergies goodbye**
- **Put a hat on it:** avoiding direct sunlight can protect from skin cancer
- **Grill it safely** with BBQ tips

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

- Water Safety Tips** 2
- Skin Cancer** 3
- June Calendar** 3
- BBQ and Food Safety** 4
- July Calendar** 5
- August Calendar** 6

COG Health Quarterly

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

JUNE 2012

Farmer's Markets and Your Health

How farmer's markets are a better option for you and the planet

Spring is here and summer is soon approaching. That means that a large variety of produce is becoming available. The best venue for buying delicious seasonal foods is the farmer's market. Farmer's markets offer fresh, local, and more sustainable options than grocery stores. Below are some reasons to frequent a farmers market in your neighborhood:

Farmer's market produce is local. Why is local better? Fruits and vegetables at a supermarket are usually harvested weeks before they are

ripe, and are then gassed to encourage ripening before ending up on [supermarket shelves](#). Because farmer's



Strawberries from a local farmer's market

market produce doesn't have to travel across the country or around the world, it is

picked when it is ripe and at its healthiest. Produce that is ripe has more concentrated vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals than those picked before maturity. Additionally, produce at a farmer's market is usually picked the day before or even the same day that you purchase it, meaning it is fresher and more delicious. Local produce also requires less packaging and less distance to travel, meaning reduced carbon emissions from transport via ship, plane, or vehicle, and less waste. *Continued on page 2*

Allergy Season: Getting Over It

Tips on Preventing Symptoms

People who suffer from seasonal allergies are being hit harder than ever this spring. Due to an unusually warm winter, symptoms such as watery eyes, nasal congestion and sneezing made an early appearance. According to allergy specialist Talal Nsouli,

"pollen seasons are longer, the amount of pollen that plants produce is greater and the pollen elicit a stronger reaction among those who are susceptible." While the strength of the pollen particles has increased, so has the par-

tics adherence to allergy receptors.

Allergy, which is characterized by an overreaction of the human immune systems to a foreign protein substance (allergen),

Continued on page 5

Water Safety

10 tips for staying safe this summer

To stay safe in the water this summer, it's important to keep these tips in mind:

1. Know how and [when to call 9-1-1](#)
2. Understand the basics of life saving by taking First Aid and Water Safety Courses
3. Learn to perform CPR on children and adults, and update those skills regularly
4. Learn how to swim and teach your children how to swim
5. Be cautious around natural bodies of water including ocean shoreline, rivers, and lakes.
6. Keep children away from pool drains and other openings
7. Maintain constant supervision of children
8. Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards
9. Make sure appropriate safety equipment is available (i.e. personal flotation devices)
10. Avoid alcohol use while swimming or near water



Maintain constant supervision of children in the water

“Buying food at a grocery store has caused us to lose the connection we once had to our food producer.”



A snapshot of farmer's market offerings

Farmer's Market, cont'd

Farmer's markets provide healthier foods. Supermarkets generally offer rows of processed, packaged foods that are loaded with sugar, fat, preservatives, and salt. Foods at a farmer's market are generally made by the farmer, using ingredients grown by the farmer, with as little processing as possible. The meat and eggs are often grown free-range, are grass fed, and are antibiotic and added-hormone free. The eggs and dairy come from healthy and happy animals so

you are getting healthier products. Additionally, by shopping at the farmer's market, you will generally avoid junk foods that you would be more likely to buy at a grocery store.

Farmer's markets support the local economy and sustainable farming practices.

Vendors at farmers markets in this area are generally farmers from the Chesapeake area including MD, VA, and DC, as well as Delaware, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Buying from them sup-

ports local agriculture, and sustainable farming practices. Larger factory farms are often terrible to the environment because of unsustainable practices, and poor treatment of animals. By shopping at a farmers market you are supporting local small farms and not large agribusiness and GMO food conglomerates and [corporations](#).

You get to know your farmer and butcher. Buying food at a grocery store has caused us to

Continued on page 7

Skin Cancer: Making a mountain out of a mole

Skin cancer, the uncontrolled growth of abnormal skin cells, is caused when unreparable DNA damage is done to skin cells. The damage triggers genetic defects leading to rapid multiplication of skin cells and tumor formation. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States with over 2 million people diagnosed annually and 1 in 5 Americans developing skin cancer during a lifetime. Statistics also show that between 40 and 50 percent of people in the United States who live to age 65 will have skin cancer at least once. Major risk factors for skin cancer include ultraviolet radiation (sunlight, tanning lamps and booths), people with less melanin in their skin, older

age, weakened immune systems, and genetics. Skin cancers are divided into two types; melanoma and non-melanoma. About 800,000 Americans are living with a history of melanoma while 13 million are living with a history of non-melanoma skin cancers. Non-melanoma skin cancers include basil cell carcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas. Basil cell carcinomas (BCCs) are abnormal growths in the skins basil cells, the cells which line the deepest layer of the epidermis (outermost layer of skin). BCC is the most common form of skin cancer with approximately 2.8 million people being diagnosed annually in the United States. BCCs may appear as open sores, red

patches, pink growths, shiny bumps or scars. BCCs do not usually metastasize but can cause severe disfiguration if not treated. Basal cell skin cancer is commonly found in those 40 years of age and older. Increased risk is also present in those with light-colored skin, blue or green eyes, blonde or red hair. The third form of skin cancer, Melanoma, is the most dangerous form of skin cancer. While melanoma is not the most common form of skin cancer, it is the leading cause of skin cancer deaths resulting in approximately 8,790 deaths annually. Melanoma begins in the melanocytes, the cells that produce the pigment melanin that colors the skin, hair,

eyes, and forms moles. According to the American Cancer Society's *Cancer Facts and Figures 2012*, an estimated 76,520 new cases of melanoma will occur in the US this year, an increase of 6,020 cases from 2011. Deaths from Melanoma are also expected to increase by approximately 400 cases from 2011. Increased risk of melanoma is present when living in sunny climates or at high altitudes, having light colored skin, blue or green eyes, or blond or red hair, as well as having multiple birth marks or moles. In order to prevent skin cancer it is imperative to protect your skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Protecting your skin from UV rays must occur all year round, although UV rays from sunlight are the strongest during late spring and early summer.

Continued on page 7

JUNE 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 1-July 4: fireworks safety month	2
3 3: Natl Cancer Survivors Day 3-9: Natl Rip Crt	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 11-17: Men's Health Week	12 COG Health Seminar	13	14	15	16
17 Father's Day	18	19	20 First Day of Summer	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 National HIV Testing Day	28	29	30

Calendar of Events

June 1—July 4 Fireworks Safety Month: fireworks related incidents, especially those involving illegal fireworks, can be fatal. Visit www.fireworksafety.com for information

June 3 National Cancer Survivors Day: visit www.ncsdf.org for more information

June 3—9: National Rip Current Awareness Week: get information about beach safety at www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov

June 11-17 Men's Health Week: meant to heighten awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment men and boys. For more information www.menshealthmonth.org

June 12 COG Health Seminar "Fitting Fitness into your Busy Day": a free, 1 hour seminar on identifying ways to incorporate physical fitness into a daily schedule. Training Center 12—1pm. RSVP at health@mwco.org

June 27 National HIV Testing Day: To find a testing site near you visit www.hivtest.org

Summer Barbeques and Food Safety

A guide to healthy barbequing

It's barbeque season! Although barbequing is a fun and delicious method of cooking food, it is important to follow the USDA's food safety guidelines to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying and causing food-borne illness.

At the Store: When shopping, buy cold food like meat and poultry right before checkout. Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart. Put packages of raw meat and poultry into plastic bags.

Thaw Safely: Completely thaw meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water. For quicker thawing, microwave defrost if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

Marinating: Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. If some of the marinade will be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade before putting raw meat and poultry in it. If reusing the marinade used on raw meat or poultry, make sure to let it come to a boil first to destroy any harmful bacteria.

Keep Everything Clean: Be sure there are plenty of clean utensils and platters. Do not use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry.

Cook Thoroughly: Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature. Let meat rest for 3-5 minutes. During rest time, internal meat temperature rises, which destroys harmful germs

Reheating: When reheating fully cooked meats like hot dogs, grill to 165 °F or until steaming hot.

Serving Food: When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter. Do not put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. In weather above 90 °F, food should never sit out for more than 1 hour.

Leftovers: Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers. Discard any food left out more than 2 hours (1 hour if temperatures are above 90 °F).

Does Grilling Pose a Cancer Risk? Some studies suggest there may be a cancer risk related to eating food cooked by high-heat cooking techniques as grilling, frying, and broiling. Based on present research findings, eating moderate amounts of grilled meats like fish, meat, and poultry cooked — without charring — to a safe temperature does not pose a problem. To prevent charring, remove visible fat that can cause a flare-up. Cook food in the center of the grill and move coals to the side to prevent fat and juices from dripping on them. Cut charred portions off the meat.

Source: [USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service](#)



Hamburger's cooking on the grill

“Completely thaw meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more evenly”

SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

- Whole poultry: 165 °F
- Poultry breasts: 165 °F
- Ground poultry: 165 °F
- Ground meats: 160 °F
- Beef, pork, lamb, and veal: 145 °F and allow to rest at least 3 minutes.

JULY 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Month of July: UV Safety Month	2	3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 World Hepatitis Day
29	30	31				

Schedule of Events

July UV Safety Month: July is UV safety month. Keep your skin and eyes protected with sunblock, wide brimmed hats, and sunglasses.

July 28 World Hepatitis Day: hepatitis is inflammation of the liver, and refers to a group of viral infections that affect the liver. Viral hepatitis is the leading cause of viral cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation. An estimated 4.4 million people in the US are living with chronic hepatitis; most don't know they are infected. For more information on hepatitis visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis

Allergies, cont'd

“Allergy ... is the 5th leading chronic disease in the U.S among all ages, affecting over 50million Americans

**Image of mixed pollen
Photo Cit: Wikipedia**

is the 5th leading chronic disease in the U.S. among all ages affecting over 50 million (or 1 in 5) Americans. Approximately 40 million Americans have indoor/outdoor allergies. Seasonal allergens account for more than half of the 7 million outpatient office visits, and are a major cause of work absenteeism, and presenteeism resulting in nearly 4 million missed or lost work-days each year.

While there is no cure for allergies, there are several ways to prevent and/or relieve allergy symptoms:

Medicinal Treatments – Oral Antihistamines (i.e. Clarinex, Claritin), Diphenhydramine (decongestants), Nasal Sprays, Allergy Shots/ Immunotherapy, and Eye Drops are some prescription and over the counter medications available for the treatment of seasonal allergies.

Shift Morning Walks or Outdoor Activity – Pollen counts are usually highest between 5 and 10AM, so try to go outside only in the afternoons or evenings. Pollen counts are also highest on dry, windy days, so stay indoors as much as you possible on those days.

Check Daily Counts - Be sure to check daily pollen and mold counts before leaving the house. Most local news and radio stations will report pollen counts during peak pollen season. Daily counts can also be found on the [Weather Channel](http://www.weatherchannel.com) website.

Keep Pollen Out – Keep windows and doors closed when the pollen count is high. When driving, run the air conditioner and turn on the air recirculation button to avoid pollen and reduce exposure to outside air.

Continued on page 6

AUGUST 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <small>Natl Immunization Awards Mth 1-7: World Breastfeeding Wk</small>	2	3	4
5	6	7 <small>COG Health Seminar</small>	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Schedule of Events

August National Immunization Awareness Month: get information on immunization side effects and safety, immunizations schedules, and recommendations at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/

August 1—7 World Breastfeeding Week: for information on, visit www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org

August 7 COG Health Seminar “Natural Energy Boosters” a free 1 hour seminar that looks at strategies to increase energy using healthy eating practices. Training Center 12-1pm. RSVP at health@mwkog.org

Allergies, cont'd

Avoid Allergy Hot Spots – When traveling try to avoid locations known for high pollen counts. If vacationing during pollen season, shoot for low-pollen areas such as the beach.

Avoid Freshly Cut Grass. Don't mow the lawn, or walk through freshly cut grass. If you must mow, wear a mask with a HEPA filter that can reduce some of

your pollen exposure. When you are done mowing, take a shower and shampoo to remove any pollen and change to fresh clothes.

Information from this article is intended for personal information only. Any medical treatment should only be taken under the guidance of a trained medical professional.

Flowers can cause sneezing and allergy symptoms.

Farmer's Market, cont'd



Baby arugula ready for picking

“Buying from a [farmer's market] support local agriculture, and sustainable farming practices”

lose the connection we once had to our food producer. It also gives the provider anonymity and less accountability for their product.

Buying at a farmers market allows us to know who produced our food and to ask questions about its production. Farmers want your business and will work hard to provide you with the highest quality food they can. Additionally, if something you bought from them was not satisfactory, they will often try to make it better for you.

Farmer's markets provide a large variety and assortment of produce. Although supermarkets can provide a large array of off-season foods, like blueberries in January from Chile, farmers markets provide a large variety of seasonal foods, such

as red, orange, yellow, and purple heirloom tomatoes. They sell assortments of greens such as sorrel, purslane, dinosaur kale, and red kale. Additionally, farmers markets also provide produce you wouldn't normally find in a grocery store such as artichoke hearts, kohlrabi, elk and buffalo meat. Adding variety to your diet is the best way to maximize consumption of various nutrients.

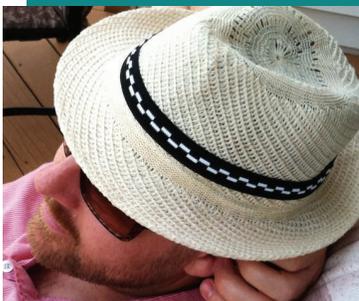
Farmer's markets are better for your health. Buying from a farmers market allows you to shop outdoors in the fresh air and sunshine. You are able to walk around, chat with farmers and growers, and meet your neighbors.

Most farmer's markets offer SNAP/WIC. Most farmers markets offer payment

with SNAP and/or WIC coupons. This is an added incentive that allows everyone to buy healthy, fresh, and delicious foods near you.

The next time you are at your farmer's market, challenge yourself to try a new fruit or vegetable. You will be able to taste the freshness, and will be doing a service to your body, to the environment and to the local community.

A great resource for locating a **farmers market** near you is the USDA. Their website generates a current list of farmer's markets based on your zip code:
<http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>



A hat and sunglasses can protect from the sun's rays while outdoors

Cancer, cont'd

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends several options for protection from UV radiation including:

- Seek shade, especially during midday hours
- Wear clothing to protect exposed skin
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to

shade the face, head, ears, and neck

- Wear sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100% of both UVA and UVB rays as possible
- Use sunscreen with sun protective factor (SPF) 15 or higher, with both UVA and UVB protection.
- Avoid indoor tanning

Call for Recipes

We want to share your healthy recipes in the COG Health Newsletter!

Please send your recipes for delicious healthy snacks, drinks, and meals to health@mwcoq.org.

Each newsletter will highlight one of your healthy recipes!

Sautéed Chicken with Spinach, Garlic, and Pine Nuts

Ingredients

1 cup brown rice
3 tablespoons Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Four (6 ounce) boneless, skinless, chicken breast pounded 1/2 inch thick
Coarse salt
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
Pinch of red-pepper flakes
1 bunch spinach leaves, trimmed and rinsed
2 tablespoons of pine nuts, toasted
2 tablespoons of fresh goats cheese
1/2 Lemon



Directions

1. Cook rice according to package directions. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large saute pan over medium-high heat. Season chicken with salt and saute in batches, adding another tablespoon oil, until golden brown and cooked through, about 3 minutes per side. Set aside.
2. Add remaining tablespoon oil, garlic, and pepper flakes to pan. Cook spinach in batches, stirring, until just wilted, about 2 minutes. Season with salt.
3. To serve, top chicken with spinach and sprinkle with pine nuts and dollops of goat cheese. Squeeze with lemon and serve with rice.

Recipe courtesy of *Whole Living Magazine June 2012*



June is Men's Health Month

On average, men live about 5 years less than their female counterparts • Men have a higher death rate for most of the leading causes of death, including cancer, heart disease, diabetes and suicide • 1 in 2 men will develop cancer in their lifetime • Men make 1/2 as many physician visits for prevention as women

**WANT TO SEE THESE STATS CHANGE?
SCHEDULE A CHECKUP TODAY!**

Do it for yourself and for those who count on you.

Learn more at
www.menshealthmonth.com
or call 1-866-543-6461 ext. 101



Welcome to the first COG Health newsletter. In our newsletters we aim to provide COG employees with essential health information and tips, which will be distributed quarterly.

We would love to get feedback and suggestions on what you'd like to see in the newsletter. Please email health@mwcoq.org.



Thank You!