



# The Home Extension Line

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*Family and Consumer Sciences Department  
University of Florida Extension  
for Sarasota County*



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## Don't Be in the Dark About Tanning

Some think turning light skin darker gives off an aura of good health. But a suntan actually signals skin damage. When exposed to the sun's ultraviolet radiation, the skin produces a pigment called melanin to protect itself from burning. And while indoor or "sunless" tanning may seem like convenient alternatives, especially during the winter months, these practices may not be risk-free. Before stepping into a tanning booth or buying over-the-counter (OTC) tanning products, consider these facts.

**Indoor tanning can be as harmful as outdoor tanning.** More than 1 million people visit tanning salons on an average day, according to the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD). But many don't know that indoor tanning devices, such as tanning beds and sunlamps, emit ultraviolet (UV) radiation that's similar to and sometimes more powerful than the sun. The Food and Drug Administration discourages the use of tanning beds and sunlamps.

Be wary of claims about "safe rays" because there is no such thing. Both types of ultraviolet light, UVB and UVA, can cause wrinkling and other signs of premature skin aging, skin cancer, and damage to the eyes and the immune system.

The FDA enforces regulations related to the labeling and use of these products, while the Federal Trade Commission focuses on false, misleading, and deceptive advertising claims.

Also remember that some medical conditions such as lupus and diabetes can make skin more sensitive to light, as can some drugs such as birth control pills and medications such as the antibiotic tetracycline.

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## Don't Be in the Dark About Tanning (cont'd)

**Some suntanning products don't contain sunscreen.** It only takes a few bad sunburns to raise the risk of skin cancer, and skin damage builds up over years even when no burning occurs. This is why sunscreen, which blocks UVA and UVB, is recommended. The FDA has expressed concern about suntanning products without sunscreen, and encourages consumers to check the labels. Tanning products without sunscreen must display a warning that the product does not protect against sunburn.

Sunscreen is regulated by the FDA as an OTC drug. Cosmetics that make sun-protection claims are regulated as both drugs and cosmetics. Look for products with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or more. The higher the number, the better the protection. Sunscreen should be liberally applied to skin 30 minutes before going out in the sun, and then every two hours after that.

**DHA-containing sunless spray is approved only for external use.** During the last few years, some companies have offered a sunless option that involves spraying customers in a tanning booth with the color additive dihydroxyacetone (DHA). DHA interacts with the dead surface cells in the outermost layer of the skin to darken skin color.

DHA has been approved by the FDA for use as a tanner since 1977, and has typically been used in OTC lotions and creams. Its use is restricted to external application, which means that it shouldn't be sprayed in or on the mouth, eyes, or nose, says Linda Katz, M.D., director of the FDA's Office of Cosmetics and Colors in the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. "DHA should not be inhaled, ingested, or used in such a way that the eyes and eye area are exposed to it because the risks, if any, are unknown," Katz says. For consumers who choose to get DHA spray in tanning booths, the FDA recommends protective measures for the eyes, nose, and mucous membranes.

**There are no tanning pills approved by the FDA.** Some companies have marketed tanning pills that contain the color additive canthaxanthin. When large amounts of canthaxanthin are ingested, the substance can turn the skin a range of colors, from orange to brown. The additive is not listed for use in tanning pills in the United States, but rather is approved for use as a food color additive, and only in small amounts. Imported tanning pills that contain canthaxanthin may be refused entry into the United States because they contain non-permitted color additives.

Tanning pills have been associated with health problems, including an eye disorder called canthaxanthin retinopathy, which is the formation of yellow deposits on the eye's retina. Canthaxanthin has also been reported to cause liver injury and a severe itching condition called urticaria, according to the AAD.

**Source: FDA Consumer magazine November-December 2003 Issue**

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# Food Waste Composting Project

## Recycles Nutrients and Reduces Waste

Experimental home gardeners everywhere can attest to the ease of food waste composting – piling up some kitchen scraps and yard clippings in a shady spot outdoors, and in just a few months you'll find a heap of decomposed organic humus in its place. However, the majority of food in our local waste stream doesn't come from our dinner plates, but instead from commercial operations such as grocery stores and food distributors that dispose of large quantities of spoiled foods on a regular basis.

In 2003, Sarasota County collaborated with Resource Management Group to take composting a step further and research the possibilities for recycling food waste at the municipal level. The "Food Waste Recovery Pilot Project," funded through an Innovative Recycling grant from Florida Department of Environmental Protection, was an exciting research experiment in industrial-scale organic waste management.

From May through September of 2003, the food recovery team collected discarded, rotten and half-eaten food from three Publix grocery stores, two Venice restaurants, a hospital, and All Faiths Food Bank. The food waste, which consisted mainly of fruits and vegetables, was mixed with yard waste materials and composted within the experimental Ag-Bag eco POD system. The result of this process is a dark earthy humus prime for application as a fertilizer for farm crops or landscaping.

Besides producing a nutrient-rich compost for Sarasota County residents, food waste recycling has serious potential for reducing our municipal waste stream. In Sarasota County, food waste constitutes 17 percent of our waste stream, compared with the state average of 10 percent. By recovering this waste and recycling it into a useful, value-added product, Sarasota County is completing the nutrient cycle and producing a renewable resource. With an abundance of local restaurants plus proximity to prime regions for agricultural and horticultural operations, food waste composting could well be the next frontier in waste management for Sarasota County.

**Source: Office of Sustainability, Sarasota County, Sarasota, FL**

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## Ceiling Fans

Fans circulate the air in your home and can also help reduce your A/C costs. That's because they allow you to set your thermostat higher and still feel cool. Tips for efficiency include:

- Turn off your ceiling fan when you leave the room. A fan that runs all the time costs about \$7 a month.
- When buying a fan, choose the right size for the room. For example:
  - 10 x 10-foot room or smaller = 36-inch fan
  - 15 x 20-foot room = 52-inch fan
  - rooms larger than 15 x 20 feet = two 52-inch fans

**Source: [www.fpl.com](http://www.fpl.com), Energy Saving Tips**

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# Lunch Bag Safety

Whether it's off to school or work we go, millions of Americans carry "bag" lunches. Food brought from home can be kept safe if it is first handled and cooked safely. Then, perishable food must be kept cold while commuting via bus, bicycle, on foot, in a car, or on the subway. After arriving at school or work, perishable food must be kept cold until lunchtime.

Why keep food cold? Harmful bacteria multiply rapidly in the "danger zone" – the temperatures between 40 and 140°F. So, perishable food transported without an ice source won't stay safe long. Here are safe handling recommendations to prevent foodborne illness from "bag" lunches.

## Begin with Safe Food

Perishable food, such as raw or cooked meat and poultry, must be kept cold or frozen at the store and at home. Eggs should be purchased cold at the store and kept cold at home. In between, transport perishable food as fast as possible when no ice source is available. At the destination, it must be kept cold. Food should not be left out at room temperature more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is above 90°F). Prepackaged combos that contain luncheon meats along with crackers, cheese, and condiments must also be kept refrigerated. This includes luncheon meats and smoked ham which are cured or contain preservatives.

## Keep Everything Clean

Wash your hands before you prepare or eat food. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next item. A solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach in 1 quart of water may be used to sanitize surfaces and utensils. Keep family pets away from kitchen counters.

## Don't Cross-Contaminate

Harmful bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, and countertops. Always use a clean cutting board. When using a cutting board for food that will not be cooked, such as bread, lettuce, and tomatoes, be sure to wash the board after using it to cut raw meat and poultry. Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for meat and poultry. At lunchtime, discard all used food packaging and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food and cause foodborne illness.

## Packing Lunches

Pack just the amount of perishable food that can be eaten at lunch. That way, there won't be a problem about the storage or safety of leftovers.

It is fine to prepare the food the night before and store the packed lunch in the refrigerator. Freezing sandwiches helps them stay cold. However, for best quality, don't freeze sandwiches containing mayonnaise, lettuce, or tomatoes. Add these later. Insulated, soft-sided lunch boxes or bags are best for keeping food cold, but metal or plastic lunch boxes and paper bags can also

## Lunch Bag Safety (continued)

be used. If using paper lunch bags, create layers by double bagging to help insulate the food. An ice source should be packed with perishable food in any type of lunch bag or box.

### Keeping Cold Lunches Cold

Prepare cooked food, such as turkey, ham, chicken, and vegetable or pasta salads, ahead of time to allow for thorough chilling in the refrigerator. Divide large amounts of food into shallow containers for fast chilling and easier use. Keep cooked food refrigerated until time to leave home.

To keep lunches cold away from home, include a small frozen gel pack or frozen juice box. Of course, if there's a refrigerator available, store perishable items there upon arrival.

Some food is safe without a cold source. Items that don't require refrigeration include fruits, vegetables, hard cheese, canned meat and fish, chips, breads, crackers, peanut butter, jelly, mustard, and pickles.

### Keeping Hot Lunches Hot

Use an insulated container to keep food like soup, chili, and stew hot. Fill the container with boiling water, let stand for a few minutes, empty, and then put in the piping hot food. Keep the insulated container closed until lunchtime to keep the food hot -- 140°F or above.

### Microwave Cooking/Reheating

When using the microwave oven to reheat lunches, cover food to hold in moisture and promote safe, even heating. Reheat leftovers to at least 165°F. Food should be steaming hot. Cook frozen convenience meals according to package instructions.

**Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture**

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## The Super-Efficient Refrigerator

Refrigerators commonly account for as much as 20% of household electricity use. That's why a coalition of electric utilities and environmental organizations recently challenged American manufacturers to design a super efficient refrigerator that minimized the use of ozone-depleting CFCs. They succeeded. That means if you're in the market for a new refrigerator in the next few years, you may be able to choose one that uses as much as 30% less energy than competing models and contains 90% fewer ozone-depleting materials.

**Source: Natural Resources Defense Council, Guide to Greener Living**

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## Facts About Vitamin A

### Why do we need vitamin A?

Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin that is essential to our health. It helps you see normally in the dark. Vitamin A also promotes normal growth and health of body cells, and keeps skin healthy.

There are animal sources (retinol) and vegetable sources (carotenoids) of vitamin A in foods. Only a few of the carotenoids in foods are converted to vitamin A in the body. Beta-carotene is the most familiar carotenoid.

Beta-carotene, and several other carotenoids, act as antioxidants. Antioxidants help slow down or prevent cell damage. By protecting cells from damage, antioxidants may reduce risk for certain cancers and heart disease.

### What happens if we don't get enough vitamin A?

Inadequate intake of vitamin A can cause night blindness, dry scaly skin, increased risk for infections, and poor growth.

### How much vitamin A do we need?

The following table lists recommended daily intakes of vitamin A:

Life Stage	Amount (ug/day as RAE)
Men, ages 19+	900
Women, ages 19+	700
Pregnancy	770
Breastfeeding	1300
Ug = micrograms RAE = Retinol Activity equivalents	

Recommended intakes for vitamin A are given as "Retinol Activity Equivalents. This helps to account for the differences between carotenoids and retinol. It takes about 12 units of beta-carotene and 24 units of other carotenoids to make 1 unit of retinol in the body.

### How can we get enough vitamin A?

We get vitamin A by eating a variety of fruits and vegetables that contain carotenoids, and from dairy products fortified with vitamin A. Vitamin A is also found in liver and egg yolks.

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## Vitamin A (continued)

Here are some food sources of vitamin A and carotenoids:

Food	RAE* Per serving
Sweet potato, cooked 1 medium	1240
Carrot, raw, 1 medium	1010
Pumpkin, cooked, ¼ cup	660
Cantaloupe, cubed, 1 cup	260
Apricots, 3 medium	140
Egg yolk, 1 large	100
Cheese, cheddar, 1 oz	90
Milk, 1 cup	80
Broccoli pieces, 1 cup	70
<b>*Retinol Activity Equivalents</b>	

### What about supplements?

We don't need supplements since vitamin A is so widely available in foods and easily stored in the body. Pregnant women especially should avoid taking retinol supplements. High doses during pregnancy can cause birth defects. Look for beta-carotene as the vitamin A source in prenatal supplements.

### How much is too much?

Taking large doses of retinol can cause severe health problems. These include vomiting, bone and joint pain, dry scaly skin, and liver damage. Vitamin A toxicity can kill you! **Keep your total vitamin A intake less than 3,000 ug/day from retinol.**

### Where can I get more information?

The Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agent at your county Extension office may have written information and nutrition classes for you to attend. Also, a registered dietitian (RD) can provide reliable information to you. Reliable nutrition information may be found on the internet at the following sites: <http://www.nutrition.gov> and <http://www.eatright.org>.

**Source: Nan C. Jensen and Linda B. Bobroff, Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611**

## Educating Children on Personal Safety

www.SROalert.com is listing personal safety guidelines that School Resource Officers may provide to parents at their schools. These guidelines may educate both parents and children on personal safety, and may also prevent tragedy. The guidelines are provided by Deputy Nancy Burns from the Leon County, Florida Sheriff's Department, Crime Prevention Unit.

1. Rehearse with your children their full name, address and telephone number. Teach them how to make emergency calls.
2. Have children avoid hanging out around lonely parks, woods, parking lots or even school yards late after school. Work out the best route to school or other places they go to often and then have them stick with this route.
3. Teach your children to pay attention to what is going on around them at all times.
4. Play games such as "What if" to help a child think about dangerous situations. Design role plays using situations that might be tempting or confusing to help him/her decide the best protective action. (example: someone looking for a lost puppy in the park) (example: being touched on private parts by anyone)
5. Teach your children to never accept a ride from anyone they don't know.
6. Do not approach a vehicle to talk to the occupants. Stay back away from the vehicle. If an occupant gets out, immediately run to a safe place. Run the opposite way if possible.
7. Make sure your child knows their neighborhood and knows where to go if there is an emergency.
8. When personalizing clothing or backpacks, make sure your child's name is not visible to strangers who could use the information to confuse your child and lure them away.
9. Monitor your child's computer use. Make sure the areas they are going into are safe for children. If they use chat programs learn who they are communicating with. Advise them to never give out personal information online. Also, tell them to never arrange to meet with anyone they meet online.
10. If someone appears interested in your child — or too good to be true — they probably are. Remember child predators are good at the art of coercion. They will attempt to befriend your child and win their confidence.
11. Teach them to say "No" if someone they don't know asks them to go anywhere with them. Let your children know that it is okay to say "no" to an adult, especially in a dangerous situation.
12. If they are grabbed by someone trying to abduct them, instruct them to yell, scream, kick, scratch, bite, fall to the ground, do anything to draw attention from bystanders. Yell "This is not my mommy (or Daddy)" and keep yelling.
13. NEVER GIVE UP! Keep fighting to get away.

## How to Stop the Pop-Up

Are you sick and tired of pop-up spam advertisements? Are you annoyed that many pop-up spammers are advertising software to block the exact type of messages they're sending? Beware of this classic scam: Pop-up spammers want your money to fix the very problem they created.

Pop-up spam also is an indication that your home computer is vulnerable to hackers. They can take over your computer and install new programs; view, change, or delete data; or create new accounts that give them access to your machine.

According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), you can block unwanted pop-up messages by two simple ways — turning off the Microsoft Windows feature that allows pop-up messages or installing and running a firewall.

Get more information on stopping pop-up spam at:  
<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/alerts/popalrt.htm>

**Source: Federal Trade Commission, Washington, D.C.**

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## www.Recalls.gov

The new [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov) website provides links to all federal agencies with statutory authority to issue recalls, including the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Visitors can easily find information about all federal government recalls -- regardless of the jurisdiction of the agency or the nature of the recall.

Recalls.gov is a convenient portal to important safety information covering consumer goods, automobiles, boats, drugs, cosmetics and environmental products. Consumers can get the latest recall information, report a dangerous product, or learn important safety tips.

To get more information, visit <http://www.recalls.gov>

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## Portion Distortion

Portions have ballooned ten-fold in the past 30 years, both inside and outside the home, with the greatest increases in calorie-packed fast food. These bigger portions mean extra calories per serving. Portion distortion is everywhere. Serving sizes in restaurants are twice as large as typical servings 20 years ago. Restaurants use larger plates, cars have larger cup holders, and fast food restaurants package drinks and french fries in bigger containers. American portions are up to a third bigger than in other countries.

Bigger portions lead to bigger waistlines for several reasons:

- 1) We are dining out more than ever, and restaurant meals are huge,
- 2) We are eating more fast food,
- 3) We duplicate those supersized restaurant meals at home,
- 4) We underestimate how much we are eating by up to 700 calories a day,
- 5) Food is everywhere, and we eat when food is in front of us. You don't have to eat less to downsize those portions, just eat better. Help yourself to vegetables, broth-based soups, fruits, whole grains, soymilk, and other real foods high in water and fiber and you will fill up before you fill out.

A few portion survival skills also come in handy:

- At restaurants, split an entrée, request half orders, bag half the food for tomorrow's lunch, or get used to leaving food on your plate.
- At fast food restaurants, order grilled chicken breast sandwiches with no mayo, or split a burger and bring baby carrots from home to accompany the meal.
- At home, measure and weigh your food for a week to hone your portion awareness skills, and/or eat meals on salad plates to adjust to smaller platefuls of food.
- To stay honest about how much you are eating, keep a food journal, then add at least a third more calories to the daily total.

**Source: Nutrition Alert, Jan./Feb. 2004**

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## Why Does My Ice Smell Bad?

Ice tends to absorb odor compounds from other items in your refrigerator or freezer. Also, older pieces of ice can have a stale taste. There are many ways to correct either of these problems:

- Clean up any food spills.
- Discard spoiled food.
- Be sure all food stored in the refrigerator or freezer is properly wrapped or stored in a container.
- Discard older, unused ice.
- Clean your ice bin by washing any removable parts and by using a solution of two tablespoons of baking soda with one quart of water to clean the walls.
- Avoid storing foods with strong odors, such as fish, garlic, or onion, for long periods of time.
- If your ice has a metallic taste, discontinue storing cans in the refrigerator.
- Poor water quality, or hard water, may be the source. It is recommended to use softened water for ice, but not to connect the icemaker to a water softener, as it may damage the device.
- Check the plumbing used for water hookup to make sure everything is correct (this is a rare problem).

**Source: Whirlpool. “Odor in Ice: Reasons & Remedies” pamphlet**

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## Reflector Bowls

Although called by many names, reflector bowls are the bowl-shaped pieces located under each burner on an electric range or stovetop. In addition to catching spills, these pieces help provide even cooking and conserve energy by reflecting the heat back towards the cooking pan. Overheating the reflector bowls can result in blue or gold stains, which are not removable. Here are some ways to care for your reflector bowls:

- Only use pots and pans that are smaller than the burner and have a flat bottom
- Do not overfill pans.
- Start cooking food on a high setting, but finish cooking on a lower setting.
  - High settings create more heat than needed to cook most foods.
  - Lower temperatures reduce splatters and boil-overs.
- Wipe splatters and spills soon after they occur — do not let them bake onto the reflector bowl.
- Clean your reflector bowls often.

**Source: Whirlpool. “Electric Ranges Reflector Bowls Dirty and Damaged: Reasons and Remedies” pamphlet**

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# Florida Food Fare

*By Mary King  
Cooperative Extension for Sarasota County*

## Banana goes from hand to mouth

Bananas were introduced in Florida during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and grew long before that in Southeast Asia. They have been grown commercially in limited production since the late 1800s.

Florida's subtropical climate is considered marginally suitable for commercial production because of occasional freezes. Bananas mature in approximately 15 months. Each stem produces fruit only once. The exotic purple flower on the end of the stem opens into clusters of tiny blossoms. Every blossom grows into a single banana. Each bunch of bananas is made of about 25 hands, each consisting of approximately 10 to 12 bananas or fingers, so the entire bouquet produces a stem of about 250 to 300 bananas.

Bananas are available year-round in the grocery store. Unlike most other fruit, they are best harvested green and allowed to ripen in the supermarket or at home. Choose bananas that are plump and free from bruises. Keep them at room temperature to ripen. For speedy ripening, enclose them in a perforated brown paper bag. To store bananas for a longer time, keep them in the refrigerator. The peel will darken, but the fruit inside will remain ripe and fresh. Bananas will keep longer in the freezer. Just mash the fruit with a little lemon juice and freeze in an airtight container. Use within six months. Banana slices can also be dehydrated and stored for later consumption.

Bananas are the perfect snack food. They are low in sodium and fat and rich in potassium and contain small amounts of other necessary vitamins and minerals. One small banana, approximately 100 grams, contains 92 calories, 23 grams carbohydrates, 2.4 grams dietary fiber and 1 gram sodium. It also yields 400 milligrams potassium, 1 gram protein, 9 milligrams vitamin C, 6 milligrams calcium, 19 micrograms folate, and 29 milligrams magnesium

### Recipe:

#### **Banana Waldorf Salad**

1 red apple, unpared  
½ cup celery, diced  
¼ cup walnuts, chopped  
¼ cup reduced fat mayonnaise

2 ripe bananas  
1 tablespoon orange juice  
Salad greens, as desired

Wash, core and dice unpared apple. Combine with celery, nuts, mayonnaise and orange juice. Peel bananas and slice about 1/8 to ¼ inch thick. Fold bananas carefully into apple mixture. Serve on crisp lettuce or other salad greens.

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