



University of Nevada  
Cooperative Extension

December 2013

Community Connection

# University of Nevada Clark County Cooperative Extension

## Happy Holidays from Cooperative Extension



*Have a very safe holiday season  
and a happy, healthy new year!  
--from the faculty and staff  
at Cooperative Extension*

## All I Want for Christmas is my two front teeth!

Really? That's it? Two? What about 32! I prefer *all* my teeth. Is that too much to ask?

Oral diseases and conditions are common among older adults for several reasons. Some grew up without the benefit of community water fluoridation and other fluoride products. Many older Americans do not have dental insurance or their benefits were lost when they retired. Even Medicare, which provides health insurance for people over age 65, was not designed

to provide routine dental care.

The two most common oral problems are gum disease and tooth decay, also called cavities. In fact, older adults may have new tooth decay at higher rates than children since the severity of gum disease increases as we age. Both gum disease and tooth decay frequently result in tooth loss. About 25 percent of adults over 60 years of age

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Unfortunately gum disease, oral

health problems and dentures which are not as efficient for

chewing food as natural teeth, often cause older adults to choose soft foods and avoid crunchy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables. Because these nutritious foods are harder to chew, they are often replaced with softer foods which may be higher in sugar. Or they may just choose to eat less food altogether. Since these problems can be long-term, older adults with gum and



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### We're on the Web

[www.unce.unr.edu](http://www.unce.unr.edu)

[www.unce.unr.edu/blogs/southernarea](http://www.unce.unr.edu/blogs/southernarea)

[www.YouTube.com/UNRextension](http://www.YouTube.com/UNRextension)

## Two front teeth

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dental problems should seek professional support to improve dietary intake and allow for greater food choices.



There are some things you can do to minimize oral health problems. Visit your dentist on a regular basis and report any problems with painful teeth, ulcers lasting more than two weeks, gum abscess, bleeding gums, loose teeth, swelling and soreness or cracks in the corner of the mouth. Ideally, teeth should be cleaned and flossed twice daily. The aim is to remove the plaque and food debris from in-between the teeth and around the gum margins. Brush all surfaces of

the teeth and gums working on two teeth at a time. Brush any loose teeth with care and be sure to notify your dentist about these.

Besides brushing and flossing, also:

- Drink fluoridated water and use fluoride toothpaste as it provides protection against dental decay at all ages.
- Limit alcohol and avoid tobacco in any form—cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and chew as these increase the risk for cavities and many cancers.
- Report any *sudden* changes in taste and smell to your doctor.
- Chew sugarless gum.
- Drink plenty of water.

Finally, don't buy into the myth that tooth loss is an inevitable part of aging. Just take better care of your teeth. You don't have to brush all your teeth – just the ones you want to keep!

***“Gee, if I only had my two front teeth, then I couldn't wish you Merry Christmas!”***

~ [Anne Lindsay](#), Exercise Physiologist

Source: Oral Health for Older Adults – Center for Disease Control & Prevention  
[http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/factsheets/adult\\_older.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/factsheets/adult_older.htm)

## The Bone Buster

**O**steoporosis is a painful and crippling bone disease characterized by structural deterioration of bone tissue.

Bones become weak and are more likely to break. Osteoporosis is often called the “silent disease” because bone loss occurs without symptoms. It usually goes unnoticed until it has reached an advanced stage. Until a sudden strain, fall, or bump causes a fracture or a vertebra to collapse, many people do not know that they have osteoporosis. In the United States, more than 40 million people either have or are at high risk for osteoporosis due to low bone mass. Osteoporosis can occur at any age and in both men and women. It is most common in older women.

***It's never too early or too late to start a prevention program.***

Certain people are more likely to develop osteoporosis than others. Risk factors include being female; having a thin or small frame; having advanced age; having a family history of osteoporosis; being postmenopausal; eating a diet low in

calcium and vitamin D; having low testosterone levels in men; having an inactive lifestyle; smoking; using alcohol excessively; and being Caucasian or Asian, although other ethnicities are at risk as well.

By about the age of 20 the average woman has acquired 98 percent of her bone mass. The teenage years are particularly critical for building bone mass because sex hormones released during puberty increase the rate at which bones are built. Getting extra calcium during the teen years may help lower the risk of fractures from bone loss in old age by adding to mineral stores while bone is still forming. Unfortunately, the teen years are when many girls and boys

start to limit their intake of foods that are rich in calcium. To keep your bones and those of your children healthy you can:

- ♦ eat a balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D-containing foods (low-fat dairy products, dark green leafy vegetables,



broccoli, almonds, foods with added calcium);

- ♦ get plenty of weight-bearing exercise;
- ♦ a healthy lifestyle with no smoking or excessive alcohol

It's never too early or too late to start a prevention program. Although there is no cure for osteoporosis, there are medications that help slow or stop bone loss, increase bone density, and reduce fracture risk. If you are at risk for osteoporosis, speak with your doctor about a treatment plan.

~[Susan Lednicky](#), Nutritionist

## Cooperative Extension blog

For weekly updates on what's happening at Cooperative Extension, visit the Southern Area blog at [www.unce.unr.edu/blogs/southernarea](http://www.unce.unr.edu/blogs/southernarea). For more information, call 702-257-5516 or email [southern.news@unce.unr.edu](mailto:southern.news@unce.unr.edu).



## Raising relative's kids?

*Raising Your Relative's Kids: How to Find Help*, a collaboration by dozens of social service agencies, is a resource guide that will assist thousands of kinship families in Clark County.



The resource guide, *Raising Your Relative's Kids: How to Find Help*, is available online at <http://www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/cy/2009/sp0905.pdf> or for a CD copy, call YaeBin Kim, Ph.D. at 702-257-5521 or email [kimy@unce.unr.edu](mailto:kimy@unce.unr.edu).

## Give our community a gift, recycle your holiday tree



Holiday trees are one of the most recognized traditions of the holiday season. They make our homes smell lovely, we can decorate them and they provide a beautiful focal point for gifts. But what happens after the holiday season? Most people simply throw their holiday tree away, yet when they are chipped into mulch, they become a valuable resource. This mulch is used in public gardens and parks across the valley to help conserve soil moisture and keep plants healthy. Recycling your holiday tree is a gift that will keep on giving back to the community.

Cooperative Extension has been involved for 10 years with the Southern Nevada Christmas Tree Recycling Committee. The Committee, consisting of local government agencies, volunteers and business entities, is asking southern Nevadans to give their community a gift and recycle their holiday tree this year.

The community has been recycling trees in southern Nevada for over

10 years and every year, a few more are recycled. Last year, southern Nevada residents recycled 15,000 trees. Yet, as impressive as that is, that's a small percentage of the 250,000 trees sold in the community. Last year, over 235,000 trees went to the landfill. Make a difference this year and recycle your cut, holiday tree.

The process is very simple! There are no fees to participate in this community effort; just a short amount of your time is all that is required. Everyone—residents, businesses and organizations—are asked to take their

holiday tree to one of over 22 convenient drop sites between December 26 and January 15.

Before dropping off your tree, please remove all non-organic objects such as lights, wire, tinsel, ornaments and nails. Foreign objects contaminate the mulch and damage the chipper. Flocked trees cannot be recycled. For more information about the Christmas Tree Recycling Committee, drop-sites nearest you, and other ways that you can have sustainable holidays, visit [www.unce.unr.edu/areas/southern](http://www.unce.unr.edu/areas/southern) or [www.springspreserve.org](http://www.springspreserve.org). Give our community a gift...Recycle your holiday tree!

If you would like to speak to Cooperative Extension's holiday tree recycling committee member, please [email](mailto:) Dr. Angela O'Callaghan or call 702-257-5581.

**The community has been recycling trees in southern Nevada for over 10 years and every year, a few more are recycled.**

## Avoiding Post-holiday blues

That grumpy and lethargic feeling come January can be a sign that the holidays were disappointing, but letdown can follow picture-perfect festivities, too.

The holidays are filled with positive and negative stressors. From seeing an annoying relative, to shopping and wrapping, stressors can add up to a frenzied pace with no time for recovery.

This December keep stress in check. If you still experience post-holiday blues, take it as your body's plea for relaxation and recuperation.

- **Keep expectations realistic.** A Norman Rockwell Christmas is fiction.
- **Plan your time** and don't over-commit.
- **Stick to your budget.** A mailbox full of

bills in January is sure to deflate you.

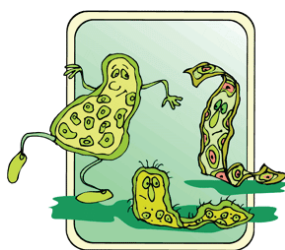
- **Don't drink excessively.** Stress is magnified by hangover exhaustion.
- **Avoid the urge to recreate** a childhood Christmas. Commit to a new tradition instead.
- **Take "me" time.** Your body is craving downtime.

Source: [www.Missourifamilies.org](http://www.Missourifamilies.org)

HopeHealth-No. 11510



## Spread joy—not germs—during the holiday season



The holiday season should be about sharing fun times with friends and family – not about spreading the flu virus and other illnesses. If you're planning a holiday party, keep your guests healthy by: having hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes available for guests to use after shaking hands; stocking up on antibacterial hand soap

and single-use, disposable hand towels in bathrooms; and not offering food or beverage from a communal bowl.

You don't want guests dipping their cups into the punch bowl or grabbing handfuls of chips or nuts from a bowl. For items such as these, use separate utensils such as ladles, spoons, or tongs for every dish. Replace the utensils often throughout the party. Another tip, serve as much of the food as possible in individual containers. Use mini muffin papers, cupcake papers, toothpicks, and skewers. You want to avoid having guests touch any food except what they intend to eat.

Germs are everywhere. Viruses last several hours on surfaces, while bacteria can last for weeks.

HopeHealth-No. 11761

### Cooperative Extension's mission:

*Discover:* by assessing community needs; understanding emerging issues; *Develop:* science-based programs to help resolve the needs of community residents; *Disseminate:* through evidence-based educational programs; classes and publications; *Preserve:* by publishing findings via curriculum and fact sheets and demonstrate knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of people.

Southern Area Cooperative Extension has offices and offers programming in Clark and Lincoln counties. Office locations and phone numbers are:

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