

SIMPLY GOOD FOOD

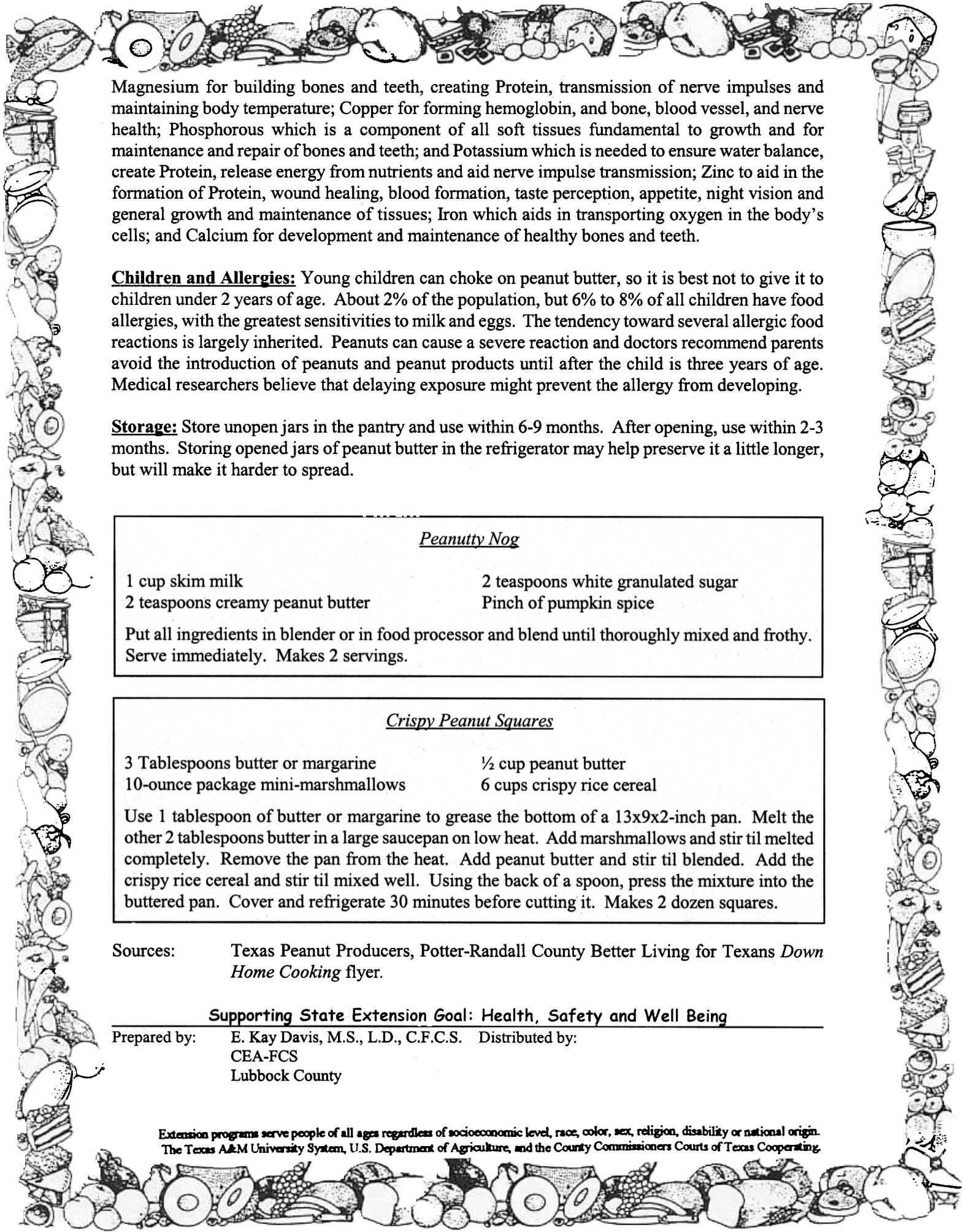
Peanut Butter

Peanut Butter is one of America's most popular foods and a tasty, nutritious and economical way to provide for your family's nutritional needs. Peanuts and peanut butter are a protein powerhouse and are excellent for "stretching" favorite dishes that contain more costly ingredients. It is available all year long and many grocery stores and health food stores have machines for shoppers to make their own fresh peanut butter, although it can be made at home in a food processor.

Trivia:

- There are more than 30,000 peanut butter sandwiches in an acre of peanuts.
- There are about 540 peanuts in a 12-ounce jar of peanut butter.
- Americans annually consume enough peanut butter to cover the entire floor of the Grand Canyon.
- By the time the average American school child finishes high school, he or she will have eaten 1,500 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.
- Peanut butter was invented in 1890 by a St. Louis physician seeking a nutritious, easily digested, high protein food for some of his patients.
- Arachibutyrophobia (pronounced A-RA-KID-BU-TI-RO-POHO-BIA) is the fear of getting peanut butter stuck to the roof of your mouth.

Nutrition: A 2 tablespoon serving (about the size of a Ping-Pong ball) contains over 10% of the U.S. recommended daily intake (RDI) of Protein. It is a less expensive source of Protein than some other foods and is popular with vegetarians. Peanut Butter is also a good source of many essential vitamins and minerals, contains as much fiber as ½ cup of broccoli which helps control blood sugar levels, reduces the risk of some types of cancer, may help reduce the level of cholesterol in the blood, and increases the sense of fullness. While peanuts are naturally low in sodium, commercial peanut butter may have sodium and sugar added, so reading labels is important. Peanut butter is cholesterol-free and nearly 80% of the fat is unsaturated fat, which has been shown to lower LDL-cholesterol levels and possibly reduce the risk of heart attack. Fat is the most concentrated energy source and is vital for essential fatty acids, to carry fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K) and for maintaining healthy skin. Peanuts and peanut butter contain 6 of the 13 essential vitamins. It is a good source of folic acid which is important in preventing neural tube defect in the earliest weeks of pregnancy and may have an effect in preventing heart disease. Peanut butter also contains Vitamin E, and antioxidant that protects the body's cells and tissues from damage; Niacin is important for energy and healthy skin, the nervous system and digestive tract; Thiamin (B1) for normal nervous system, appetite and digestion; B6 which produces and breaks down proteins and makes red blood cells to transport oxygen; and Riboflavin (B2) which is needed for energy, healthy skin and eye function. Minerals are essential nutrients, just like vitamins, for normal growth and maintenance. Peanuts and peanut butter contain 35% of the 20 essential minerals including:



Magnesium for building bones and teeth, creating Protein, transmission of nerve impulses and maintaining body temperature; Copper for forming hemoglobin, and bone, blood vessel, and nerve health; Phosphorous which is a component of all soft tissues fundamental to growth and for maintenance and repair of bones and teeth; and Potassium which is needed to ensure water balance, create Protein, release energy from nutrients and aid nerve impulse transmission; Zinc to aid in the formation of Protein, wound healing, blood formation, taste perception, appetite, night vision and general growth and maintenance of tissues; Iron which aids in transporting oxygen in the body's cells; and Calcium for development and maintenance of healthy bones and teeth.

Children and Allergies: Young children can choke on peanut butter, so it is best not to give it to children under 2 years of age. About 2% of the population, but 6% to 8% of all children have food allergies, with the greatest sensitivities to milk and eggs. The tendency toward several allergic food reactions is largely inherited. Peanuts can cause a severe reaction and doctors recommend parents avoid the introduction of peanuts and peanut products until after the child is three years of age. Medical researchers believe that delaying exposure might prevent the allergy from developing.

Storage: Store unopen jars in the pantry and use within 6-9 months. After opening, use within 2-3 months. Storing opened jars of peanut butter in the refrigerator may help preserve it a little longer, but will make it harder to spread.

Peanutty Nog

1 cup skim milk

2 teaspoons creamy peanut butter

2 teaspoons white granulated sugar

Pinch of pumpkin spice

Put all ingredients in blender or in food processor and blend until thoroughly mixed and frothy. Serve immediately. Makes 2 servings.

Crispy Peanut Squares

3 Tablespoons butter or margarine

10-ounce package mini-marshmallows

½ cup peanut butter

6 cups crispy rice cereal

Use 1 tablespoon of butter or margarine to grease the bottom of a 13x9x2-inch pan. Melt the other 2 tablespoons butter in a large saucepan on low heat. Add marshmallows and stir til melted completely. Remove the pan from the heat. Add peanut butter and stir til blended. Add the crispy rice cereal and stir til mixed well. Using the back of a spoon, press the mixture into the buttered pan. Cover and refrigerate 30 minutes before cutting it. Makes 2 dozen squares.

Sources: Texas Peanut Producers, Potter-Randall County Better Living for Texans *Down Home Cooking* flyer.

Supporting State Extension Goal: Health, Safety and Well Being

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