Michael Eure Show Podcast – Episode 27: Healthy Meals and Snacks

INTRODUCTION: Hello, this is Michael Eure and I'd like to invite you to the Michael Eure Show featuring student hosts and very special guests talking about a variety of interesting topics. You can find us on the Eagle Stream YouTube channel.

MICHAEL EURE: Good afternoon and welcome to the Michael Eure show. Today we are very, very lucky, fortunate, whatever we want to call it to have Miss Paula Norris, she is one of these people that can cook up something and I've seen her do it.

So, I'm gonna let her introduce herself.

And then we're going to talk about some of the things she does to help people prepare fast, tasty, and just some wonderful food.

So, Paula tell us a little bit about yourself and get into this business of showing people about healthy eating?

PAULA NORRIS: Thank you for inviting me first of all. It's a pleasure to be here with you. And I never thought that cooking could be a job, so cooking is actually my hobby.

And then I found this job that I actually do what I love the most is helping people and helping them to eat healthier. Make better choices when it comes to food and the recipes that I usually teach, they are very budget friendly, easy to make.

So, as a combination of the passion of what I always had and the, umm, you know, helping people.

So, that is the, what motivates me in brought me to do this work.

EURE: And you do a lot of things with colleges and universities. Are you are you based at NS State or are you…

NORRIS: Yes.

EURE: In another totally different world.

NORRIS: Yes. So, we are… I work for the extension, NC Cooperative Extension which is, the way I explain to the people, it's basically NC State outside our campus, right? So, it's NC State available to the community.

So, we bring research-based knowledge to the community. And these, this program in particular, which is Expanded Food and Nutrition Education program. It does exactly that.

So, we bring research that NC State have done around the food, saving money around food, food safety, grocery shopping.

We bring all this [undecipherable] research. We bring this [undecipherable.]

So, I this program is throughout North Carolina. I am based in Wake County.

EURE: So, if people really wanted to and I know that we talked a little earlier that you might that you do some food demonstrations and I think that you can talk a little bit about that unless you're gonna talk more about this Expanded Food and Nutrition Education program.

How do people, I know we're in a pandemic, but if people wanted people do, for example, a virtual cooking class, could you do that?

NORRIS: Yes, absolutely.

So, normally you know prior COVID we and this is how we met. We, I used to go to very different communities to in Wake County and like, gather a group of family. And then we learn, you know, concepts about healthy eating. And then we develop a recipe and cook it together and try it together.

Of course things change with the 2020 pandemic. So, now we are continue reaching out to the people bringing out this knowledge again to them. And of course, now we're doing that through virtual, right?

So, we use different platforms to do that. One of them is we do some, I do some Facebook Live, so you can become my friend on Facebook.

This is my Facebook page and I will you know every so often I go and do like a recipe or do some tips for saving money on a grocery store or some tips for a how to proper cook you steak or your chicken.

So, everything around food safety, food management. And we also do private groups.

So, we book classes, so you have to register for these classes.

And you can contact me and we're having some classes to be open soon and it's gonna be all about the holidays, right? How you can keep a healthy weight throughout the holidays, which is not that easy.

And so you can still eating your comfort foods, your regular, you know, food that you really enjoy but without gaining weight. Because we are going to use better ingredients to to bake to, to make or sometimes not using the same ingredients, just change in the way. You know instead of deep fry we going to pan fry instead of, cook in the different way.

we so just by changing the way you prepare the food makes a big difference. How your body, you know how much more or less calories you intake.

So, we have this class coming up and that's gonna be through Zoom. So, if you or your family are interested in participating, contact me and I will register you.

The classes are free the only, uh, qualifications that are needed to participate, is that either someone in your family is like a Wake recipient or Medicare Medicaid recipient or you or you or your child is free or reduced lunch in school.

Or, you know if you are going through, I know the unemployment is super high right now and if you are like, hey, I don't participate in any these programs, but at the moment I really need help planning the meals, and to be healthier, to save money because I am unemployed. So, we will sign you up for the classes too.

So, we here to help the community and but it we're especially here to help the ones that are, umm, less fortunate.

EURE: So, tell us a little bit. Well, when we were at Washington Terrace when you did that workshop, which I was very fortunate to attend, because Deirdre Clark is somebody that I've known for a long time.

So, I volunteered there for Wake Tech and I went to the class to see if it would be something useful for my students, which it was. In fact, the guy in the middle with the hat, he is a Wake Tech Student.

And I think that, there were, there's a few people at Washington Terrace that go to Wake Tech.

But tell us about that episode where we did the spinach because people talk about that and you talked about the pot licker and all that, and it wasn't healthy.

But you cook some spinach up in like 15 minutes. Tell us how you did that. With [undecipherable.]

NORRIS: Yeah.

Well, was actually kale, right?

EURE: Collard green.

NORRIS: Yeah, collard greens, yeah.

So, that again, what I was telling you earlier, sometimes you don't have to change the ingredients is all you have to do is change how you prepare your recipe in order to be

healthier so that that recipe it was, I know collard greens is a south thing, right? And I grew up eating collard greens too.

So, what I did is modify how I prepare the collard greens and bless her heart on how our grandmothers used to do the collard greens all day. Put it on the stove and then they add the pig and all the pig fat and the bacon and all that, which completely kill the nutrients of the collard greens.

So, collard greens is an excellent vegetable because it's a dark green vegetable, so therefore contains a ton of nutrients that our body needs every day.

But if you do that process of cooking it all day, it will definitely spoil all those good nutrients, especially when you add all the fat in and all the other in ingredients that you add to those collard greens is going to completely devalue what you could have.

So, I do a very simple, I'll be glad to do one on Facebook Live soon, showing you how to make your collard greens and which is almost like instantly and you will get all the ingredients and all the nutrients that the collard greens has to offer.

So, again, it's just about how you prepare, not necessarily need to change because my goal here is not to make you all your gonna have to completely scratch your culture and the way you always ate, and we're gonna have to change now. You're gonna have to eat completely ingredients that you are unfamiliar with. That is not my goal, you know.

It's just like trick a little bit how you prepare your ingredients that you already familiar with, but just the way you prepare sometimes make a big difference.

EURE: Another thing that you did is you involved the children, you know, so it was intergenerational. So, give us some tips on how to involve little kids and help them prepare food.

NORRIS: Yes. So, that is one main thing.

Why that when kids parents assuming that they they don't wanna eat this or that, because sometimes the parent was raised that way and they don't they don't like that particular ingredient like a vegetable or fruit.

So, like right here, you have a child preparing a brussels sprout, which is like a vegetable, that it's, many adults say that, you know, it's too healthy and I'm not gonna eat it.

So, what I do and it works every time when I teach parents, is that you have to involve on the food preparation, that is the main thing.

So, you never assume that the child doesn't like that, either a vegetable or fruit. Let the child decided if he likes or she likes or not.

So, involving your children on the food preparation is one of the main key, you know, and there are several things that child can do when you prepare a meal.

Umm and a child can help you wash the vegetables. He can help you, umm,

[undecipherable] the vegetables and he can help you stir whatever you making.

And children, they are like, you know, I compare them like when they do draw you a picture, right? So, when they go to school, when they just start learning how to use a crayon, and yeah, the picture looks horrible.

But you what do you tell your child? Ohh, it looks beautiful and you stick it on your refrigerator and you all proud it.

So, that same concept we need to do with our children when it comes to food, right? To create that good relationship with food and just let them participated.

So, once they like in my family, always like to make, like a homemade pizza and let the kids play with the ingredients, with the toppings. Now what are you gonna put on the topping?

And believe it or not, they usually choose like a variety of things that you never thought that child was gonna eat before. And because he's so proud of what he made, you know they would end up eating.

So, don't assume that your child is not gonna like this or that because you didn't like it or you never try it.

You know, just offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, especially to your child constantly.

EURE: And another thing that you did is you integrated exercise and we also did some little fun quizzes, we can't do all of that right now.

But, tell us a little bit about how one can go shopping and pick out healthy juices instead of sodas and what kind of exercise can be incorporated?

Maybe the little kids or even seniors or regular middle-aged adults. After you cook it, get ready to eat, and do some exercise, right?

NORRIS: Yes.

So, the program that I teach [undecipherable]. So you have to always incorporate physical, you know, diet nutrician and physical activity goes side by side.

Whatever you eat, you have to burn and how you burn is through exercise.

So, and when I talk about exercise, don't necessarily means to run and go get a membership in the gym.

There is several several things that you can do actually at the comfort of your home and in classes.

I always assure we know these very simple but effective exercise that you can do on your kitchen counter and I'll just push apps on your kitchen countertop and just umm do some squats on the kitchen chair. Nothing prohibits you to do that.

So, when goes to the grocery shopping with your children, try to teach your children at very young age, how to read the labels, the food labels and so that is a very, very important.

Uh, and at the same time when you were doing this, you teaching your child a good concept about food.

You are also in a way enforcing what they learn in school, with math and reading.

So, teaching them, so, what I do is like very simple and works instead of make it so complicated and too much information, umm when I have time.

So, for instance, you're gonna go shop for cereal and you get to the grocery store and your kids go and pick up the cereal they want.

So, what I tell my kids is like, you can pick whatever you want, which cereal are you want. However, it needs to be less than 9 grams of sugar per serving.

17:10

So, you can tell like, I still remember my son, now he's older, but when he was little and I was teaching him this concept, he will go and see like the cute cartoon boxes with the cereal. And then he grabs it, and then he goes right to the nutrition facts, right?

And then he goes, ohh, I know my mom is not gonna buy that because it has 10 or 11 grams of sugar. Because he had the concept, you know, no more than 9 grams of sugar.

So, the same thing. You can keep, teach your child for other. You know, for juices and teach them about that they can understand first what goes in your body, what is going in before they make the option. So, always choose a low sugar, low salt.

Those are very simple strategies that you can teach your child are very young age while they help you shopping in grocery store. And go down to check them to the vegetable aisle, fruit aisle and let them pick a different vegetable, you know?

Sometimes it's that's how they become curious about it. Wow, look at this pepper. And it has three different colors or different shape tomato or some, you know, something that excites that brings that excitement around food.

Always a good strategy to help your child make better choices.

EURE: And you talked about fruits right there. So, tell us a little bit about stuff that maybe we don't think about doing with fruits and incorporating it into desserts or replacements. And can they be integrated into breakfast in other ways than cereal?

NORRIS: Absolutely, yes.

So, I ways tell, you know my participants are my classes that we always get confused about the serving size in cereal right?

So, and, but we also wanna see our cereal bowl full.

So, the best way for you to fill your cereal bowl in the morning is like adding a little bit of cereal in the bottom and fill on the top with fresh fruits, right? You know, berries are excellent food for the morning.

Uh, bananas are excellent foods for the morning and also it's [undecipherable], right?

So, you can buy a frozen fruit, or you can buy the fruit like a North Carolina that has a variety of berries in spring and summer, but then they become very expensive during the winter times, because then they have to come from overseas or from California.

So, just take advantage when North Carolina is harvesting strawberries and blueberries and all the berries. Buy in bulk, clean wash them you know can and freeze them and you can freeze them like just in a small Ziplock, so, you have just enough to in the morning.

Umm, Add them to your smoothie and add some and playing with your smoothie, there’s so many things that you can do, you know, adding a handful of spinach. Believe me, it will not change the taste at all.

Spinach is a very, uh, you know, has a lot of things that you can do with a spinach, but that doesn't necessarily change the taste of what you're doing.

So, you add in add a handful of spinach, half a banana, half cup of blueberries, and there you go. You have a super packed with the nutrients for two nutrient your body in the morning.

Instead of eating just a donut or something that is doesn't really bring you what your body is striving for.

EURE: And for the audience, you can ask any questions in the chat.

Also, I'm just asking all the stuff I'm liking, but y'all can add in please.

Umm and do tell your friends that might have missed this, that it'll be available on YouTube and they could just type in the Michael Eure Show and it will come up.

Finally, for me right now you did some hot and spicy stuff. I like hot spicy. And I mean burritos could be hot and spicy.

Tell us about some of those, wonderful… I'm gonna call them ethnic groups. Things like burritos or umm.

Or is it possible to make chicken this healthy? Or, or, or, tell me.

NORRIS: Absolutely. So, I love to play with the spices so because we need to, we are in a society that we eat too much salt. And salt is not good for you, right?

So, salt will raise your blood pressure and therefore all kind of complications.

So, how you make your food taste better is by playing with the spices. So, peppers and different kind of peppers, you can add the less or more depends on your taste.

Also, herbs, right? So, oregano, rosemary and there's an endless of different type of herbs that you can. And here was such, we have such a great spring and summer and fall.

So, you can grow, if you live in apartment then you won't have that much room. You can grow herbs on your on your porch, on a little container, and that will be a great addition to your food and you're going to prevent using too much salt because that is the one of the mistakes that people think that is salt is what's gonna give flavor to the food. But not really it’s spices and like a garlic, ginger and all the spices.

That's what's gonna give the flavor to your to your food. So, you can save on your salt intake.

Umm, so, yeah, so play with the spices and… one of my things, so you're talking about ethnic foods.

One of my things that I like to do is go to, you know, the restaurants. See what they the ingredients that they use and then when I come home I try to mimic the same dish that I ate.

Like for instance, I love Indian food, right? I love with the smell of the curry and all the coconut milk and all that.

I love that, but it's too spicy for me at the restaurant. So, I can’t eat the at the restaurant. So, what I do I cook it at home and I use the same spices.

So, you should, I know some of the spices are very expensive. If you buy on a, you know the regular grocery stores. So, I buy my spices on ethnic stores.

So, you can go to, there's several neighborhoods where they have, you know, culture-based grocery stores.

So, just go to this grocery stores and you can buy, you know, a bigger amount of spices that are otherwise at a regular grocery store you pay weight more.

So, and that's a great way for you to also, you know, get discover different foods and different tastes when you go to those cultural-based grocery stores. And we have plenty in our area.

EURE: Now talking about costs. Are those inexpensive or and what about going to stores that are discounted stores for people to get spices or would you recommend fresh always?

NORRIS: Yeah. So, spices, like herbs, they do not have to be fresh.

Now you can, they can be dry and they have, of course, when you're using dry, you may have to use a little bit more than when you use fresh. Umm, but, and herbs take a long time to expire.

So, you if you buy in a discount store, so you can always look the expiration date in there to see when if that food still good or not and you just make sure that the container is not open or is not by any means a damaged like food has been contaminated.

So, that's the, but as far as quality, you should fine you know if the container is closed and the expiration date is still good.

You should find the same quality as buying in a regular grocery store.

EURE: So I know we're wind it down, but give us a couple of examples of some very healthy maybe spices or peppers, or fruits. While people are out shopping.

NORRIS: Yeah. Yeah. So, I don't know about you, but my taste changed through as as I get older, my taste change, right?

So, I can handle a little bit more pepper and I like to play with the different spices.

So, one spices that I just recently I acquire a taste for is ginger, right? So, you buy the ginger, the root of the ginger. They also sell them dry, but I like the fresh and you can, umm, and it is very inexpensive, you know?

EURE: I have some, so I know it's inexpensive.

NORRIS: Yeah, and you can have in so many things, right? On your chicken and believe it or not, you can add on your smoothie and it taste very good because it gives that you know that spiciness to the smoothie.

So, you can add a little bit of ginger chopped and blended on the smoothie and gives a very young interesting flavor to it.

EURE: Well, I'm gonna let you close it a little bit, but I'm gonna ask you about umm health and nutrition.

We talked about that together and you did some interesting things when we experimented with the germs that we can see how many germs we had picked up in our hands.

Can you talk a little bit about how people can be careful with that too?

NORRIS: Absolutely.

So, again, because we are research-based program, we work at from the university, and we have a wonderful team at NC State University.

That's all they do. They play with germs all day and find ways how we can eliminate them, right?

So, preparing food at home is, can be dangerous. Because sometimes you don't take the precautions that restaurants take.

But we take for granted right? And we don't necessarily wash your hands properly or the hands of our children before they eat or mothers and fathers are gonna prepare food, and sometimes they don't, umm wash their hands before preparing food.

And also, cross contamination is a big factor that happens in our homes and by cross contamination I mean you use the same place where you prepare, you cut your chicken. Raw chicken.

You use that same container or that same cutting board to prepare your vegetable your salad, so that juice left from the chicken can, a bacteria can grow in there and then you eat that salad that you prepare together that, you know, so, you can introduce bacterias to your guts and it's gonna make you very sick.

So, we need to be very cautious when preparing food in our home.

And we need to practice a very standard by hygiene of especially washing hands and sanitizing the surfaces where we prepare our food.

And, another tool that every family should have at home is a thermometer. So, the thermometer will indicate it if the food is a temperature is high enough that there will be no more bacteria in there, because bacteria only can live in a certain temperature, right?

Especially the bacterias that are common found in the food like Salmonella and E.coli.

These bacterias will die as the heat goes up and also they will die with acids like bleach and soap.

So, that's why it's important to wash your hands with soap and disinfect the areas that we prepare food with bleach and use the thermometer to test the heat of the meat that we are cooking.

Those are very simple, but the three steps that we have to ensure we are offering our family safe food.

EURE: Someone in the audience wants to know, how do they get in contact with you, which is what's gonna be my closing thing for you. Give us some contact. Maybe more than one way to contact you.

NORRIS: Absolutely.

So, I'm going to type here my email address.

EURE: And then we'll get Sarah to put up on the screen.

NORRIS: Yes. I'm just getting it for Sarah.

And I also, so, again, Sarah can also put it back, my Facebook page. So, become friends with me and then you can send me private message through my Facebook and I promise I don't, I don't promise to respond them like right away, but I will get it back to you and I'll be very happy to do so.

So, either if you wanna sign up for classes or you want any tips for how to prepare food and how to save money in a grocery store, there are several things that we strive to help families do it.

EURE: And the people contacting you, will you send out some kind of information

Like when classes are coming up or what people need to do to join if they just don't know what they wanna do, but you got things coming up.

NORRIS: Absolutely yes. So, and Sarah, you can also put our website.

There you will find information such as; recipes, tips, how to save in a grocery store, tips for exercise.

So, you can go on our website and find a very trustworthy information that can, you know , can help you.

Especially now that you are home, that you are cooking more and that that will give you some ideas for new recipes and how to, umm, teach your children to eat better.

EURE: Thank you, Sarah. I mean, not Sarah… I need to say congratulations to Sarah, because she goes got married on October 17th.

NORRIS: Yes.

EURE: She is back here working this technology. We appreciate her so much and congratulations.

But, um, Paula. I thank you and hopefully we'll have to come back again and maybe we can get you together with some of our students and do some workshops? Okay?

NORRIS: Absolutely.

And just for the last, we, I am part of the Wake County, food relief. So, at this time, when many families are having so much difficulty putting food on their table, so right there there's some resources where you can find either free food or discounted where you can get ready-to-eat meals.

And a list of food hubs nearby you.

So, please go to the site and see how we can help you go through these tough times.

EURE: So, is there a sign-up process for that or do they just need to show up?

NORRIS: No, there is not at the moment there's no signing in, you just go and go on our website and see which day because some of those hubs they're not open every day.

So, can see which days they are open and you can see their hours and how you get the food that you need.

And so just go to the website and you most likely, all your answers, you'll find all the answers there for how to access food more for your family during the pandemic.

EURE: Again, I thank you, and the audience, we'll see you on the 1st and r3d Thursday every month from 12 until 12:30 and we love it.

And see Josie George said it went by so quickly, but said thanks for the great tips and especially the sanitary information.

NORRIS: Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity and I hope we connect with everybody.

EURE: When the pandemic is over, we definitely want you to come and do some things.

But while we're in this virtual environment we might as well, you know, share information virtually.

So, I thank you for your willingness to share with Wake Tech faculty, staff and students and the community.

NORRIS: Thank you.

EURE: Everybody have a great day and it's since it's Thursday, I always do tip-off Thursdays, and that's enjoy your weekend.

You gotta still find the way to enjoy yourself.

Thank you.

You got any closing words, Paula?

NORRIS: Again, so, just let's get connected and let's help each other through this tough time.

We all going through together, so let's get together.