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## Spotting Credit Trouble

Weekly Educational Update – October 16, 2019

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Americans aged 45 to 54, who have credit card balances, carry an average debt of \$9,096 per individual.<sup>1</sup>

The wise use of credit is a critical skill in today's world. Used unwisely, however, credit can rapidly turn from a useful tool to a crippling burden. There are a number of warning signs that you may be approaching credit problems:

Have you used one credit card to pay off another?

Have you used credit card advances to pay bills?

Do you regularly use a charge card because you are short on cash?

Do you charge items you might not buy if you were paying cash?

Do you need to use your credit card to buy groceries?

Are you reluctant to open monthly statements from creditors?

Do you regularly charge more each month than you pay off?

Do you write checks today on funds to be deposited tomorrow?

Do you apply for new credit cards, so you can increase borrowing?

Are you receiving late and over-limit credit card charges?

It is important to recognize the warning signs of potential credit problems. The quicker corrective action is taken the better. Procrastinating is almost a sure way to guarantee that you may face financial difficulty down the road.



### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to get leisure."*

*- Benjamin Franklin*



## Pretty-in-Pink Deviled Eggs to Celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month



These pretty pink deviled eggs are the perfect appetizer to celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Bring them to a local fundraiser or just enjoy them on your own. Either way, they're sure to be delicious.

[12 servings]

### Ingredients:

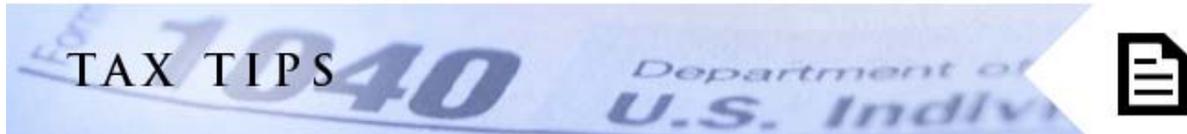
- 6 hardboiled eggs
- 1 jar of pickled beets (you'll use the beets and the juice)
- 3 Tbsp. mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- ½ cups pickled beets, grated
- 1 Tbsp. onion, grated
- 1 Tbsp. celery, finely chopped
- A sprinkle of salt and pepper

### Directions:

1. Peel the eggs.
2. Place the eggs in the beet juice and add water until the eggs are covered. Let them soak for 2 to 4 hours or until pink.
3. Halve the eggs and take out the yolks.

4. Mix the yolks with the mustard, grated beets, grated onion, and finely chopped celery. Salt and pepper to taste.
5. Use a pastry bag to squeeze out the mixture into the halved eggs.

Recipe adapted from Eclectic Recipes<sup>2</sup>



### **Do a Paycheck Checkup**

Every year, the IRS recommends doing what they call a “Paycheck Checkup.” This includes checking your withholding status to make sure enough taxes are being taken out of your paycheck. You should do a Paycheck Checkup in the beginning of the year, but it can be done in any season.

Check your withholding status if you have:

- Gotten married or divorced
- Had or adopted a child
- Bought a house
- Retired
- Filed for bankruptcy
- Got a new job or lost a job

The IRS also recommends checking on any streams of taxable income that are not subject to withholding, such as interest, dividends, capital gains, self-employment income, or IRA distributions. You should also check your withholding if you’ve experienced changes to your medical expenses, taxes, charitable gifts, education credits, dependent care expenses, and more. These life changes might affect your deductions or tax credits. These Paycheck Checkups will help make sure you’re in a good place when it’s time to file taxes.

\* This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific individualized tax advice. We suggest that you discuss your specific tax issues with a qualified tax professional.

Tip adapted from IRS.gov<sup>3</sup>



### **The Towel Drill Can Help with Longer Drives**

Many golfers already know that the key to hitting long, straight drives is to strike the ball on your upswing. But for many, this is easier said than done. Most of the clubs in your bag require you to hit down on the ball, but not your driver. Too often, we hit the ball as the club is going down, which results in shorter, pop-up drives.

This towel drill is surprisingly simple, but can work, for many golfers. Next time you tee up at the driving range or during your practice shots, place a rolled-up towel a few inches in front of the ball. The obstacle will help you keep your swing up to avoid hitting the towel. When you hit higher up on the ball, you'll notice more distance and better flight path. Increasing where you hit the ball, by even a few degrees, improves your angle of attack.

Tip adapted from Golf Tips Magazine<sup>4</sup>



### **What's the Spoonful on Artificial Sweeteners?**

Artificial sweeteners are chemical compounds designed to taste like sugar, and many people choose them because they are sweeter and have little to no calories. But the debate on these sugar substitutes isn't so sweet. Some health professionals claim that they can increase a person's risk of cancer, while others say they are completely safe and can aid in weight loss. So, what's the truth?

There's no answer to whether these sweeteners are "good" or "bad" because, ultimately, it depends on your personal health goals and concerns. Some important notes, though, are:

- More than 30 studies have found no links between artificial sweeteners and cancer
- Artificial sweeteners can be a smart choice for people with diabetes because they don't spike your blood sugar

- Artificial sweeteners are less likely to cause tooth decay than natural sugar
- Artificial sweeteners may actually increase appetite
- Artificial sweeteners can cause digestive issues in some people

Tip adapted from Healthline<sup>5</sup>



### **How to Fight the Palm Oil Problem**

Palm oil is in countless household items, from margarine and prepared foods to beauty products and cleaners. It's a cheap, attainable oil and is used for both industrial and residential necessities. But there's a dark side to this worldwide oil.

Palm oil plantations are one of the biggest contributors to deforestation, which leads to the loss of natural habitats, animals, and trees that have stood for centuries. But how can we give up palm oil if it's in nearly everything? For right now, we can't, so the next best thing is to only buy products made with Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO). The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil has developed a set of environmental and social criteria that help minimize the negative impact of palm oil cultivation on the environment and communities in palm oil-producing regions.

Look for the CSPO designation next time you are shopping for products that contain palm oil, which might help encourage the industry to shift toward more-sustainable production.

Tip adapted from Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thestreet.com/personal-finance/credit-cards/average-credit-card-debt-14863601>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eclecticrecipes.com/beet-deviled-eggs-and-cook-for-the-cure-with-kitchenaid>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/all-taxpayers-should-check-their-withholding-asap>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.golftipsmag.com/instruction/driving/try-towel-drill-for-longer-drives/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/artificial-sweeteners-good-or-bad#section7>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rspo.org/about>