

Kansas Currents

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

Central Kansas Extension District

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June 2017

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Agents:*

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Management

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Nutrition, Food Safety
and Health



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Plan Now For Summer Canning

Prepare now for the upcoming canning season. It's frustrating to get fresh produce in the kitchen and then find out you will have to run to the store for new lids, or you forgot to get your pressure canner gauge checked. Make your to-do list early and be prepared when the produce is ready for picking and preserving.

Check your canning jars for nicks and cracks. Jars should be cleaned before canning. Make sure you have an adequate supply of canning lids. Canning lids should never be reused. The sealing compound or gasket is intended for one-time use only. Once purchased, the gasket in an unused lid should work for at least five years.

Get your pressure canner dial gauge checked for accuracy.

Pressure canners with a dial gauge should be checked for accuracy every year. This is very important as the safety of your canned foods depend on being processed at the correct amount of pressure. It is also important to time the canning process after venting the canner. You can have your dial gauge tested for free in Central Kansas Extension District's Salina or Minneapolis offices.

Use research-based canning recipes. Always follow an up-to-date tested recipe from a reliable source. This is perhaps the most important step in preparing for home food preservation. Research based recipes can be found by contacting Central Kansas Extension District, the National Center for Home Food Preservation, or the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning. Cookbooks and old family recipes are not reliable sources of tested recipes that meet current food safety recommendations. If you want to check the safety of a recipe you preserve with, contact Leah Robinson in the Minneapolis Office for more information.

Planning ahead, checking your equipment, and purchasing what you will need, will ensure you have a safe and successful canning season.



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

Who is at Risk for Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse is an intentional act, or failure to act, that causes or is likely to cause harm to an adult. The six most common categories of elder abuse are physical, emotional or psychological, sexual, neglect, abandonment, and financial/exploitation.

Often a silent problem, elder abuse can rob older adults of their dignity and security and leave them feeling fearful, depressed, and alone. Sadly, 10 percent of Americans over the age of 60 have experienced some form of elder abuse in the last year, and many researchers expect this number to rise with the growth of the aging population.

Elder abuse can happen to anyone — all individuals regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, income, or religion can be victims of abuse. However, those who are female, very elderly, socially isolated, have mental impairment (such as dementia), or are prior victims of abuse, particularly domestic abuse, are more likely to be victimized.

Download *Elder Abuse and Neglect: What You Should Know* from the K-State Research and Extension bookstore at <https://www.bookstore.ksre.k-state.edu/pubs/MF3343.pdf> to learn more.



Women, Work, and Social Security

The magic number is 35. That's how many years of earnings the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) uses to calculate every worker's pension benefit. This can be a tall order for many baby boomer women who took time off or cut back on their hours to raise children or care for aging parents. Nearly half of 62-year old working women today didn't make any money for at least one year in the earnings history on record with SSA.

There are two ways for women to beef up their earnings record to have a larger retirement benefit. The first is to work longer. Each additional year of work substitutes for a zero- or low-earning year during motherhood and caregiving years in the benefit calculation.



The second way to increase your retirement benefit is to delay claiming your benefit. Workers can begin drawing their Social Security retirement benefit at age 62, but doing so will reduce the monthly amount by 25-30% depending on your Full Retirement Age. Full Retirement Age for those born between 1943 and 1954 is age 66. That gradually increases to age 67 for those born in 1960 and later. Delaying benefits to age 70 will increase your retirement benefit by 8% per year (2/3 of 1% per month).

A combination of working longer and delaying the start of Social Security benefits can result in a substantial increase in the monthly benefit.

Healthy Homes

June is National Healthy Homes Month. Follow these basic principles and practices to protect your family from hazards in the home.



The principles are:

1. **Keep your home Dry.** Mold and moisture increase allergens and asthma triggers, and can cause deterioration of your home.
2. **Keep your home Clean.** Clean homes help reduce pest infestations, dust, and exposure to contaminants.
3. **Keep your home Pest-Free.** Many pest treatments pose risks for families with health problems or expose young children and pets to poisonous residue. Non-pesticide treatments are best for a first line of defense.
4. **Keep your home Safe.** A majority of injuries among children occur in the home. Falls are the most frequent cause of residential injuries to children, followed by injuries from objects in the home, burns, and poisonings.
5. **Keep your home Contaminant-Free.** Chemical exposures include lead, radon, pesticides, and environmental tobacco smoke. Exposures to radon gas, carbon monoxide, and second-hand tobacco smoke are far higher indoors than outside.
6. **Keep your home Ventilated.** Studies show that increasing the fresh air supply in a home improves respiratory health. Air filters in HVAC units collect and protect families from many particulates found in the air.

7. **Keep your home Maintained.** Poorly maintained homes increase the risk for deteriorated lead-based paint in older housing which is the primary cause of lead poisoning in children less than 6 years of age.

8. **Keep your home Temperature Controlled.** Houses that do not maintain adequate temperatures may place the safety of residents at increased risk from exposure to extreme cold or heat.

The **Healthy Homes Basics** app offers practical how-to guidance on how to have a safe and healthy home, right at your fingertips. The app offers introductory information and guidance for consumers by teaching the “Principles of a Healthy Home”. The app features detailed information by topic and is available on iTunes and in the Google Play store.

Short- v.s. Long-Term Capital Gains

If you are thinking of selling an investment, how long you have owned it will determine how much tax you will pay on any profit. Gains on investments held for less than one year are taxed at ordinary income rates of up to 39.6%. Hold the investment for longer than one year before selling and your profit will qualify as a long-term capital gain, which is taxed at the lower capital-gains tax rates. Those rates go as low as 0%, if you are in the 10% or 15% federal tax bracket, and top out at 20% at the top tax bracket.

Storm precautions, preparations encouraged

As I write this, we are coming off a week of severe storms here in the area. Below is a checklist of storm season insurance precautions and preparations



- **Check your homeowner and vehicle policies** to make sure you have proper coverage for hail and windstorm damage. Review your homeowner's policy with your insurance agent to check for current coverage and adequate protection.
- **Take inventory of your personal property**, including model and serial numbers when available. The Kansas Insurance Department has a good Personal Home Inventory booklet that can be downloaded at www.ksinsurance.org. Hard copies are also available in the extension office.
- **If possible, take photos or make a videotape of personal items** to give to insurance adjusters in the event of loss. Store this information, along with receipts, in a safe deposit box or somewhere other than in your house.
- **See that trees or branches are not in danger of falling** on your house. Closely inspect your trees, and remove weak branches that could fall in high winds.
- **Check your roof** for leaks or damage to gutters.
- **Be sure to use a generator wisely if your power goes off.** Make sure it is connected properly, and ventilation is adequate.

- **Have plenty** of fresh batteries for radios and flashlights, as well as a supply of bottled water, blankets, dried foods and canned goods, in case of a power outage. Also, *regarding food spoiling in your refrigerator or freezer, a homeowners or renters policy often allows for compensation for food losses, but only up to a certain (usually fairly low) dollar amount.*
- **Be aware of the latest forecasts** from television or radio news and smartphone applications. Severe weather warnings are activated to protect you and your property.
- **If you have time to act** in a severe storm warning, move vehicles into a safe structure.

Source: Kansas Insurance Department

National Kitchen Klutzes of America Day

Are you a klutz in the kitchen? There is a special day just for you! June 13 is designated as "Kitchen Klutzes of America Day."

While there is no record of the origin or purpose of this day, it is a fun way to recognize that we all have bad days in the kitchen. It doesn't matter how much experience you have in the kitchen, problems and accidents happen to all of us.

So celebrate! Give yourself a break and laugh at yourself. Don't be afraid to share your funny stories. Those struggles can help someone else be a better cook in the kitchen. Just remember to keep a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher handy in case of an emergency!

Three Ways to Save Money on Prescription Drugs

Total spending on prescription drugs grew more than 16% in 2016 and is expected to do the same this year, according to a study by the Department of Health and Human Services. In fact, prescription drugs today account for the largest share of your health plan premium, edging out even physician services.

To manage these escalating costs, health plans and employers are looking for ways to negotiate lower rates, including tightening their lists of covered drugs (formularies) and requiring patients to shoulder more of the cost through copayments and coinsurance. According to Kaiser Family Foundation, one in four people who takes a prescription finds it hard to afford the cost. If you are among that group, or you simply want to keep your drug costs down, here are some tips:

- 1. Understand the details of your plan's coverage.** A key question to ask is whether you have to meet a deductible before your coverage begins. Next, check the plan's formulary, or list of covered drugs, to make sure it covers your current medications and how much of the cost it covers. Many plans group the medications they cover into price categories called tiers. If your medication is in a higher tier, you will pay a much larger share of the cost. Another critical question is does your plan have preferred pharmacies where you will be charged a smaller copayment.
- 2. Speak frankly with your doctors about cost.** When doctors prescribe a drug they may choose from several options, but they do not know which ones are covered by



your plan, or how much each option will cost. Sometimes one drug is clearly the best option, but other times there may be less expensive alternatives that will work equally well. Generic drugs typically cost 80 to 85% less than brand-name drugs, but even among generics, drugs designed to treat the same condition may vary greatly in price.

- 3. Make your pharmacist a member of your team.** Instead of simply handing over your insurance card when you fill your prescription, take a few minutes to ask if there is a way you can save money. For instance, pharmacists can suggest such cost-reducing options as changing from a liquid to a capsule, taking two different prescriptions rather than one combination drug, or getting a higher-dose pill and splitting it. Pharmacists can also help you determine if it would be better to use your insurance, pay cash, or if a discount card might be a better alternative. Keep in mind a discount card will not count toward your plan deductible.

Using a tax-advantaged plan, such as a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or Health Savings Account (HSA) to pay for your prescriptions is a way to use pre-tax money which can also help consumers save money on the cost of their medications.



Grill with the Right Tools!

Grab the tongs, platters, spatulas, and don't forget a food thermometer!

Taking the temperature of food is the safest way to check for doneness.



The best types of thermometers for grilling are digital instant-read thermometers or the thermometer-fork combination. Both read temperature in less than 10 seconds. Insert it into the thickest part of the food, but they work well for thin foods too.

Learn more at www.fightbac.org/grill-master/

The Scoop on Kitchen Sponges

Kitchen sponges are notorious for trapping food particles which can lead to bacterial growth. This can lead to cross contamination and foodborne illness.



In recent study, researchers evaluated polyurethane foam sponges and cellulose sponges and different treatments to help clean and sanitize them. The polyurethane foam sponges disinfected with chlorine reduced pathogenic *E. coli* up to almost 90%. Cellulose sponges reduced chlorine levels by 24% after 30 minutes of soaking. This reduces the effectiveness of disinfection. Total numbers of bacteria and *E. coli* were less in both antimicrobial polyurethane sponges and regular polyurethane sponges.

Bottom line, if using sponges, try polyurethane types, keep them disinfected, and replace them often.

Electric Pressure Cooker Meals with Chef Alli

River Valley Extension District will be hosting an electric pressure cooking workshop with Chef Alli!



At first, Chef Alli was completely skeptical... UNTIL she quickly discovered how electric pressure coming could completely change the way she made dinner for her family (Yay! No more overcooked meals from the slow cooker!)

Gone are the days of Grandma's hissing, rattling stove top pressure cooker, and we no longer have to worry about food explosions that wind up covering the kitchen ceiling. Electric pressure cooking is making a huge comeback in popularity due to efficiency, health, flavor, and the reduction of cooking times by up to 70%. Dinner can be ready in as little as 20 minutes (prep time included!) and delicious meats, grains, legumes, pastas, and soups are right at fingertips. Though this method of cooking can be a little scary at first, it deserves some very serious consideration. Electric pressure cooking is life changing! Chef Alli will be giving an in depth pressure cooking class on Saturday, June 24 at Life's Finer Moments, 1285 16th Road, Clay Center at 2:00 p.m. Cost to attend the class will be \$30. For more information on how to register, contact the River Valley Extension District, Belleville office at 785-527-5084. Registration and payment is due by June 20th.

Menu Changes to Watch For

By May 5, 2017 restaurants with at least 20 locations must list calories on print menus and menu boards. Calories should appear next to the name or price of regularly offered foods and drinks and must be in matching type size. Use these tips to help you use this information when eating choices.

- Consider how a menu item fits into your daily calorie needs. If your entrée has 1,500 calories and you want to stick to 500 per meal, then you can ask your server to box up 2/3 of it before bringing you your plate.
- Understand the options. If an item has two variations, like Calories 350/425 is permitted. If there are three or more variations, then listing like Calories 400-600 is allowed. If you can't tell which options are at the low or high end, then ask your server. Different sizes of the same options must have separate listings as they will have different caloric amounts.
- Compare calories across restaurants. Tuft's University research showed that calories of similar items sometimes differed a lot among three fast-food chains. For example, a small order of French fries at one chain had 110 more calories than at another chain.
- Go beyond calories. Restaurants covered by the FDA calorie ruling have to provide additional nutrition information, such as saturated fat, sodium, and sugars upon request. Ask where to find these details at the restaurant.



Walk Kansas A Success!

Once again, Central Kansas District had exceptional participation in the Walk Kansas fitness program. Saline and Ottawa counties had 91 teams registered with 526 people. These teams walked a total of 87,798 miles and consumed 50,599 servings of fruits and vegetables!

Thanks again to everyone who participated this year in Walk Kansas. Walking tens of thousands of miles and eating many thousands of fruit and vegetables servings is a very significant step towards good health. Congratulations Saline and Ottawa County Walk Kansas participants. You've completed another phenomenal year!

Ottawa County Fair - Minneapolis

Fair Theme: Country Scene's & Children's Dreams

Dates: July 18 - 22

Be on the lookout for the Ottawa County Fair paper as a special edition in the Minneapolis Messenger mid June. The annual baking contest (renamed "Polly's Baking Contest" in memory of Polly Pearce) is chocolate chip cookies. The contest will begin at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 19th. Any resident of Ottawa County is eligible to enter!

Tri-Rivers Fair - Salina

Fair Theme: Capturing the Dream in 2017

Dates: August 9 - 13

The Tri-Rivers fair parade will kick off this event on Tuesday, August 8 at 7:00 p.m. Open class entries will be accepted on Wednesday, August 9. Visit the Tri-Rivers website www.tririversfair.org for more information on exhibits, rules and events.

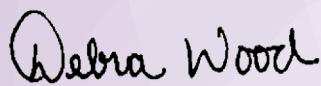
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Address Service Requested

The enclosed material is for your information. If we can be of further assistance, feel free to call or drop by the Extension Office.

Sincerely,



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