

Kansas Currents

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

Central Kansas Extension District

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Sept. - Oct. 2026

District Extension Agent:

Lisa Newman
Family & Community
Wellness

Melissa Schrag
Adult Development
and Aging



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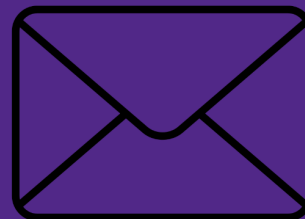


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K-State aging expert shares tips for preventing falls

Included in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control's sobering statistics on injuries and death in older adults due to falls are four very important words. *Falls can be prevented.*

In fact, Kansas State University aging specialist Erin Martinez says that the Sunflower State's extension service invests a great deal of its resources on programs that help older adults increase their confidence in staying upright. "Preventing falls is something that we want to be talking about routinely and raising awareness because statistics show that 1 in 4 older adults report falling each year," Martinez said. "In Kansas, it's even higher – 29.9% of adults experience at least one fall every single year."

National statistics bear out the fact that an older adult is seen in an emergency room every 11 seconds due to a fall. "It's just mind boggling the (number) of falls that we experience in this country," Martinez said.

The National Council on Aging recognizes September as National Falls Prevention Month in the United States, including Sept. 22 as a single day to raise awareness, and Sept. 21-25 as an entire week to do so.

Martinez said that 1 in 5 older adults who fall will experience a serious injury, such as broken bones or a traumatic brain injury. She notes that 88% of emergency room visits for hip fractures are due to a fall. "Often, we are seeing things contributing to falls that we can address ourselves," Martinez said. "If we're feeling dizzy or not right, then we need to go to the doctor and perhaps review our medications and possible side effects. Or maybe we're losing body strength or balance, and then there are things around your house that you can change."

Around the home, Martinez says older adults and their loved ones should consider such tripping hazards as throw rugs, furniture, dark areas around the yard, uneven cement, extension cords and more. "It's a good idea to do a home safety checklist," she said. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a list available online, as do other organizations.

Martinez said grip bars to aid in getting in and out of the shower are among the assistive equipment available. Solar-powered lighting in the yard is also a benefit when needing to be outside after dark.

But, she adds, one of the best fall prevention ideas is a good balance and exercise program. "K-State Extension offers many classes around the state," Martinez said. "One of the key programs is called A Matter of Balance, which looks at fall prevention and teaches the participants exercises, tips and tricks on how not to fall around your home and community." Two other programs, she notes, are the Stay Strong, Stay Healthy program, and Walk With Ease. "There are a lot of options for education and engagement in Kansas, as well as beyond our state," Martinez said.

If you'd like more information about Falls Prevention or to find out about upcoming Falls Prevention classes, please contact Melissa Schrag, Adult Development and Aging Extension agent, 785-309-5850.

Build a Kit

Have enough food, water and other supplies to support your needs for several days.



The illustration shows a disaster kit organized on three wooden shelves and in a bag. The top shelf contains a green first aid kit with a white cross, a black power bank, a black mobile phone with a green screen showing a house icon and the word 'CALL', a box of orange soup, a box of instant noodle cups, and two blue water jugs. The middle shelf features a folded map with red location pins, a green portable radio, a green wallet with a white dollar sign, and a green flashlight. The bottom shelf holds a 'MEDICATION LIST' card, a green first aid kit, a green container with white polka dots holding toothbrushes and toothpaste, a white box of tissues, and a green box labeled 'FIRST AID'. In the foreground, a green and black backpack is open, revealing a green bag with the word 'Ready' and a green checkmark.

To assemble your kit store items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers such as plastic bins or a duffel bag.

A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items:

- Water (one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation)
- Food (at least a several-day supply of non-perishable food)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting, scissors and duct tape (to shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

Additional Emergency Supplies

Consider adding the following items to your emergency supply kit based on your individual needs:

- Soap, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes to disinfect surfaces

- Prescription medications. An emergency can make it difficult to refill your prescription or to find an open pharmacy. Organize and protect your prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, and vitamins to prepare for an emergency.
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives
- Prescription eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container.
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children



Maintaining Your Kit

After assembling your kit remember to maintain it so it's ready when needed:

- Keep canned food in a cool, dry place.
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers.
- Replace expired items as needed.
- Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family's needs change.

Kit Storage Locations

Since you do not know where you will be when an emergency occurs, prepare supplies for home, work, and cars.

- Home: Keep this kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.
- Work: Be prepared to shelter at work for at least 24 hours. Your work kit should include food, water and other necessities like medicines, as well as comfortable walking shoes, stored in a "grab and go" case.
- Car: In case you are stranded, keep a kit of emergency supplies in your car.

Child Passenger Safety Week

Child Passenger Safety Week in 2026 will be observed from September 20-26. This week is dedicated to promoting the correct use of car seats, booster seats, and seat belts for children. As part of Child Passenger Safety week, we encourage you to reach out to either of our Extension offices to schedule a 1:1 with Lisa to ensure your car seat is installed correctly.



Simply Produce

Simply Produce is a produce bundle program between Central Kansas District and Gene's Heartland Foods in Minneapolis.

Community members can purchase produce bundles containing fresh fruits and vegetables for \$15+tax at any register located at Gene's in Minneapolis. Contents in the monthly bundles do vary from month to month.

September purchase dates: Sept 10-15. Pick-up date and time: Friday, Sept 18, 12-12:30 p.m.

October purchase dates: Oct 8-13. Pick-up date and time: Friday, Oct 16, 12-12:30 p.m.

Purchasing location: Gene's Heartland Foods located at 218 W 3rd, Minneapolis.

Pick up location: Community Bible Church located at 929 N. Rothsay, Minneapolis.



National Food Safety Education Month

September is National Food Safety Education Month (FSEM)! Each year, there are an estimated 1 in 6 people in the United States (or 48 million people) that get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 die from eating contaminated food a year.

Safe steps in food handling, cooking, and storage are essential in preventing foodborne illness. You can't see, smell, or taste harmful bacteria that may cause illness. In every step of food preparation, follow the four guidelines to keep food safe:

- **Clean**—Wash hands and surfaces often.
- **Separate**—Separate raw meat from other foods.
- **Cook**—Cook to the right temperature.
- **Chill**—Refrigerate food promptly.



Cook all food to these minimum internal temperatures as measured with a food thermometer before removing food from the heat source. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook food to higher temperatures.

Choosing Safe Treats for Halloween

Halloween is almost here! When deciding what treats to buy to hand out to neighborhood goblins, keep in mind those who have food allergies. Always read the ingredient statements on treat wrappers and packaging to identify food allergens and to identify other suspicious problems.

Here is a list of non-food ideas from the Food Allergy Research & Education program.

- Glow sticks, bracelets, or necklaces
- Pencils, pens, crayons or markers
- Bubbles
- Halloween erasers or pencil toppers
- Mini Slinkies
- Whistles, kazoos, or noisemakers
- Bouncy balls
- Finger puppets or novelty toys
- Coins
- Spider rings
- Vampire fangs
- Mini notepads
- Playing cards
- Bookmarks
- Stickers
- Stencils



Help trick-or-treaters identify your home as food allergy friendly by using a teal-colored bucket or pumpkin.

Learn more about Halloween Food Safety from the Partnership for Food Safety Education. <https://fightbac.org/halloween-food-safety-how-to/>



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

The magic of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is open to any Kansas child from birth to their 5th birthday. Children receive free, age-appropriate books mailed directly to their home every month. The goal is for every Kansas child to receive high-quality books that will nurture a love for reading and continue to enrich their lives throughout school and beyond!

For more information and to enroll online visit: <https://tinyurl.com/mvjyd72e>



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Central Kansas Extension District

K-State Salina
2218 K-State Road North
Salina, KS 67401

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.

Salina Office

K-State Salina
2218 K-State Road North
Salina, KS 67401-8196
785-309-5850
Fax: 785-309-5851

Minneapolis Office

315 W. 3rd Street
Minneapolis, KS 67467-2140
785-392-2147
Fax: 785-392-3605