

Kansas Currents

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

Central Kansas Extension District

centralkansas.ksu.edu

April 2020

*District Extension
Agents:*

Debra Wood

Family Resource
Management

Leah Robinson

Nutrition, Food Safety
and Health



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ksre.k-state.edu

We are certainly living in a historical time and things are changing daily, even hourly at times. While our office is closed to the public, all agents are working remotely and are still here to help you. Please contact Leah (lmrobins@ksu.edu or 785-392-6933) or Deb (dwood@ksu.edu or 785-833-5578) with any questions that you may have. Send your email address to either to be added to electronic newsletters and program announcements.

March 16, 2020

Dear Extension Friends,

To align with K-State Research and Extension (KSRE) recommendations for social distancing and help slow the spread of COVID-19 locally, the Central Kansas District (CKD) offices will be closed to the public until further notice.

While agents and staff work remotely during this time, they are still available to assist you Monday through Friday from 8AM to 5PM by calling (785) 309-5850 for Salina or (785) 392-2147 for Minneapolis. You may also choose to communicate via email. Please visit www.centralkansas.k-state.edu for staff contacts and answers to many of your questions.

All external Extension programs, meetings, events, and activities between now and May 16, 2020 have been cancelled, postponed or will be held using distance conferencing technology.

We appreciate your help with protecting the health, wellness and safety of our communities and families. We will provide the public with updates as recommendations change.

Our team is committed to continuing with limited operations in order to assist you with your needs. Please do not hesitate to contact either office if you have questions.

Please stay informed of university status at:

KSRE-CKD Facebook www.facebook.com/CentralKansasDistrict

KSRE Facebook www.facebook.com/KStateRE

KSRE Website www.ksre.k-state.edu

(link at the top to Extension COVID-19 resources)

KSU COVID-19 Updates www.k-state.edu/covid-19

Sincerely,
The Central Kansas Extension District Governing Board



You can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses with these actions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth.
- Wash hands often with soap & water for at least 20 seconds.

www.cdc.gov/COVID19

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What you Need to Know

Here are the important steps you should take to protect yourself from COVID-19. The CDC has several tips that all people can do to stay healthy.

The CDC recommends that you:

- Stay home if possible.
- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Avoid all cruise travel and non-essential air travel.
- Contact your healthcare professional if you have concerns about COVID-19 or if you are sick.

If you do need to see your doctor, please call them first. They may be able to use telehealth services for common office visits, mental health counseling, and preventive health screenings.

Source: Center for Disease Control (CDC)

Reporting Medicare Fraud

If you think there is something wrong with a bill for a Medicare service, call your doctor, provider, or the facility first to check if there was an error. You may want to speak to the billing department as well.

If you are still concerned and have Original Medicare, you can contact the Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC). The MAC is the company that processed your Medicare claim, and their information can be found on your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN). Alternatively, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227).

If you are still concerned and have a Medicare Advantage Plan, contact your plan directly. Your plan's phone number should be on the back of your benefit card and on your Explanation of Benefits (EOB).

To report fraud, contact 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227), or the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) at (877-808-2468).

Protecting Yourself Financially from the Impact of the Coronavirus

As communities across the country are dealing with an increase in the number of reported cases, many areas may be impacted by the temporary closure of businesses, schools and other public facilities or events, and in some cases, quarantines. While these actions are necessary steps to help reduce exposures, it may bring financial uncertainty for many people who could experience a loss of income due to illness or workplace closures.

If you have never been on a budget, now is the time. Making every dollar stretch requires knowing just where the money is going. If your income has been impacted, now is not the time to buy those 'wants', focus on the 'needs'. Highest priority should be given to food and shelter, next utilities and transportation if you have a car loan. You will need that transportation to get to work when this is all over.

If you have trouble paying your bills, or loans, or paying on time, there may be a number of options to help, especially if you reach out early to your lenders or creditors. Credit card companies and lenders may be able to offer a number of options to help you. This could include waiving certain fees as well as allowing you to delay, adjust, or skip some payments.

If you are working with lenders on payment assistance programs or forbearance, routinely check your credit reports to make sure the statements are accurate and that any delinquencies have not been improperly reported. Your credit report and scores play an important role in your future financial opportunities.

If you are not working or working reduced hours due to COVID-19, you may be eligible for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. More

information can be found on the Kansas Department of Labor website at <https://www.getkansasbenefits.gov/> including the ability to electronically file claims.

The UI program was established as a means to protect those who are involuntarily unemployed from the financial burdens and dangers that come with being unemployed. It is designed to be a short-term assistance program and may be able to help those whose employment has been adversely impacted by COVID-19. The waiting week requirement for those unemployed due to COVID-19 is waived. Remember these benefits are taxable income. Ask for taxes to be withheld from your UI check to prevent a large tax bill next year.

2020 Census

The 2020 Census has been mailed. If you have not received yours yet, you should soon.

There are bound to be scams with the census like there is with so many other government functions such as the IRS and Social Security scams. If you submit your census data online, make sure you are using a .gov address.

The census is conducted every ten years and the data gathered is used in the appropriation of federal dollars, as well as the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives. It is important that each household fill this out.



Look for Ways to Help Children Cope During Crisis

Children and adults experience and react differently in times of crisis.



“We sometimes only think of disasters as weather-related events, but we know that anything that disrupts daily life and community well-being on a large scale is a disaster,” said Bradford Wiles, associate professor and extension specialist with Kansas State University’s College of Health and Human Services. “Thinking about and being compassionate in how we all feel and process our emotions is crucial to our own, our families’, and our communities’ resilience in the face of the current pandemic.”

The K-State publication, *Disasters: Children’s Responses and Helping Them Recover*, is available online from the K-State Research and Extension bookstore at <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3196.pdf>. It includes information that can help communities recognize the negative effects that tough times have on the mental well-being of children.

Suggestions from the publication outline ways parents can help children cope during hard times:

- Reassure the child that you are still together and that you will be there to help as long as you can.
- Return to pre-disaster routines to the extent possible, including bedtime, bath time, meal time and waking up times.
- Make sure you are taking care of yourself. It can be difficult to take care of a child if you are not feeling well.
- Talk with your child about your feelings.

- Encourage children to draw, write or tell stories about their experiences. Talking about how the disaster or tough time has changed them can be beneficial.

The publication also includes signs to look for in children and how to emerge in a positive direction from times of crisis

Protect Yourself from Scammers

Scammers look for opportunities to take advantage of the vulnerable, especially during times of emergencies or natural disasters. Be cautious of emails, texts, or social media posts that may be selling fake products or information about emerging coronavirus cases.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) offers tips to protect yourself from possible coronavirus related scams. Don’t click on links from sources you do not know. Watch for emails claiming to be from the CDC or experts saying they have information about the virus. Instead, check the CDC website for the latest information. Ignore online offers for vaccinations. Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowdfunding sites.

The FTC and Food and Drug Administration have also cautioned consumers to be on the lookout for sellers of unapproved and misbranded products claiming they can treat or prevent coronavirus. They have jointly issued warning letters to several sellers of unapproved products including teas, essential oils, and colloidal silver, saying the companies have no evidence to back up their claims. As of this writing, there are no approved vaccines, drugs, or investigational products currently available to treat or prevent the virus.

COVID-19 Preventive Measures: Cleaning and Disinfection

Current evidence suggests that novel coronavirus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces. Cleaning followed by disinfection is recommended by the CDC as a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in households and community settings.

Steps for cleaning and sanitizing properly include:

Step 1: Wear disposable gloves. If using reusable gloves, only use them for cleaning and disinfecting and no other purpose. If no gloves are available, when cleaning is complete, wash hands thoroughly with warm water and soap for 20 seconds and dry them with a towel or paper towel.

Step 2: Wash, then sanitize. Clean frequently touched surfaces using a detergent or soap and water first before sanitizing. Any soap or detergent will remove viruses and wash them away. The soap will not immediately kill the virus, but will remove it from surfaces. For example, think of cleaning floors—it works best to sweep before mopping.

Step 3: Use disinfectant appropriately. Disinfectant products are now in demand, and in many cases, sanitizing products are sold out in stores. Bleach is one option for sanitizing, but others include cleaners with at least 70% alcohol and other common EPA-registered household disinfectants (look for the EPA-registered number on the product label).

When using bleach, never mix it with ammonia or any other cleaner. This can be very dangerous. Follow manufacturer's instructions, including using in a well-ventilated area. According to a 2020 CDC report, using unexpired bleach properly diluted with water can ensure effectiveness against coronavirus.

Prepare a bleach solution in a spray bottle, bucket or sink by mixing:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart (4 cups) of water

Step 4: Allow surfaces to air dry and discard cleaning towel properly. Wipe frequently touched surfaces with the disinfectant and allow to air dry to destroy the microorganisms effectively. Throw away the used paper towel or place cleaning cloth in the laundry.

The Electronic Cigarette Epidemic

E-cigarettes are surging in popularity, especially among younger adults. But when it comes to safety and health concerns, what are the facts ?

Addiction to electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, has reached epidemic status, according to the National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), administered by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The survey showed e-cigarette use has grown over 78% for high-school students from 2017 to 2018. Much is unknown on the long-term health effects of e-cigarette use, also known as “vaping.”

Several myths about e-cigarettes likely contribute to an increase in use, including that e-cigarettes are not harmful for your health, they are not addictive and they are helpful for smoking cessation. A recent Surgeon General report concluded e-cigarettes are marketed toward youth and young adults by promoting flavored products and using a wide variety of media channels and approaches that have been used in the past for marketing conventional tobacco products.

What are e-cigarettes?

An electronic cigarette is a battery-powered device that heats nicotine (extracted from tobacco), flavorings and other chemicals to create an aerosol that is inhaled. While nicotine is the common drug used in e-cigarettes, marijuana and other drug products can also be used in the device.

Why are e-cigarettes popular among youth?

Flavored products are the top choice among most youth users. According to the 2018 NYTS, the evidence is clear that flavored e-cigarettes have fueled this epidemic—97% of youth e-cigarette users report using a flavored product in the past month, and 70% cite flavors as the reason for their use. The 2019 NYTS also showed that youth use of menthol and mint flavors in particular has skyrocketed. The percentage of high-school e-cigarette users who reported using mint and menthol flavors increased to 63.9% in 2019, from 42.3% in 2017 and 51.2% in 2018.

What do e-cigarettes look like?

E-cigarettes come in many shapes, sizes and forms. Some e-cigarettes are made to look like regular cigarettes, cigars or pipes, and some resemble pens and other everyday items.



E-cigarettes are known by many different names, such as “e-cigs,” “e-hookahs,” “vape pens,” and “electronic nicotine delivery systems” or “ENDS.” “Juuling” is another word in reference to e-cigarette use; “JUUL” is a specific brand name of an e-cigarette, and closely resembles a USB memory stick.

What are the health effects of e-cigarettes?

Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is addictive, may harm brain development and

could lead to tobacco use among youth. A dramatic increase in lung disease has caused alarm from parents, public health officials and community leaders statewide. In some cases, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has linked e-cigarette use to death. The cause is still unknown. The CDC reports people affected have reported the following symptoms:

- Cough, shortness of breath or chest pain
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Fatigue, fever or abdominal pain

Some people have reported that their symptoms developed over a few days, while others have reported that their symptoms developed over several weeks. In addition to nicotine, e-cigarette aerosol can contain chemicals that harm the body, such as cancer-causing chemicals and tiny particles that reach deep into the lungs and cause irreversible lung damage. These chemicals have been linked to lung disease that causes coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath similar to the symptoms of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or (COPD) and asthma, according to the American Lung Association. Increased rates of asthma have also been linked to e-cigarettes in part due to the aerosol irritation in the lungs.

Do e-cigarettes help people quit smoking?

Until we know more, the CDC recommends that people consider stopping using e-cigarette or vaping products; the CDC also doesn't recommend using e-cigarettes as a quitting method. Recommendations for those trying to quit tobacco use include:

- Contacting your healthcare provider if you need help quitting tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.
- Calling the Kansas Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)

Do Food Cues Really Have An Influence On Our Food Intake?

Food cues can have either a positive or negative impact on our eating habits, but if we identify them we have a chance at eliminating them or coming up with ways to which we can replace them with positive food cues.

Have you noticed that holidays, events, celebrations and even family and friends can have an influence on the food choices we make? Whether these choices are impacting our diets in positive or negative ways, we can always be more conscious about the influences that may be impacting us. Being able to identify these influences is the first step of reducing or eliminating them and making healthier food choices, however, it is also possible to create ways in which we can replace these influences with positive food cues. There is a way to build healthier food cues into our daily routine.

Some common food cues that may influence our food choices include the feeling of hunger, the sight or smell of food, certain activities, people eating or talking about food around you or emotions and feelings throughout the day.

Examples of these may include:

- Hotdogs or bratwursts with barbeques and outdoor parties
- Popcorn with movies
- Ice cream with baseball games
- S'mores with camping
- Chips with TV
- Pretzels with boredom
- Candy with fall holiday events
- Cookies, pies and other sweet treats with holidays

Tactics that may help you in eliminating or replacing food cues may include keeping the food item out of sight or building a new association with a certain activity. For example, if you eat lunch at your computer each day, you can make a rule that you cannot eat lunch at your computer and remind yourself with a note on your computer screen. If you have an afternoon craving for a snack at work, keep fruit or vegetable snacks available instead of purchasing high-fat and high-calorie foods. You can also replace a craving with a short walk around or outside of your building to shift your focus from food.

You can change a habit by making environmental changes to your environment. Using a smaller plate or bowl or a larger water glass or jug, and even placing an easy-access fruit bowl in your kitchen or other areas of your house can help you to make healthier choices throughout the day. Additionally, placing clean vegetables and fruits within eyesight on the front shelf in the refrigerator, and avoiding purchasing high-fat, high-calorie foods can also bring about changes in your food choice routine.

By recognizing food cues and making small changes to your food environment, you may have a greater, success with weight loss, weight maintenance and the adoption of overall healthier behaviors for you and our family.



Central Kansas Extension District

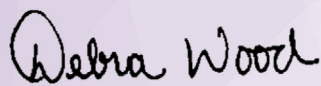
Salina Office

K-State Polytechnic
2218 Scanlan Ave
Salina, KS 67401-8196

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,



Debra Wood
District Extension Agent
Family Resource Management
dwood@ksu.edu

Salina Office
K-State Polytechnic
2218 Scanlan Ave.
Salina, KS 67401-8196
785-309-5850
Fax: 785-309-5851



Leah Robinson
District Extension Agent
Nutrition, Food Safety and Health
lmrobins@ksu.edu

Minneapolis Office
Courthouse
307 N. Concord, Suite 190
Minneapolis, KS 67467-2140
785-392-2147
Fax: 785-392-3605