

Kansas Currents

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

Central Kansas Extension District

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July/August 2019

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Ottawa County Fair

“Country Nights & Carnival Lights”

Dates: July 16-20, 2019

County fair season is quickly approaching. If you're looking for an enjoyable evening for the entire family, plan to spend an evening at the Ottawa County Fair in Minneapolis.

The county fair has room for everyone! Do you have something special you'd like to exhibit? Pick up a fair paper at the Minneapolis office for a listing of categories and events planned.

This year's special baking contest, will be Fruit or Nut Breads. Rules and entry information is listed in the fair paper.

Tri-Rivers Fair

“Country Nights & Carnival Lights”

Dates: August 7-11, 2019


For more information about the fair, visit www.tririversfair.org



5 Ways to Make the Most of your Doctor Visit

Being able to talk with your doctor is important, especially if you have health problems or concerns. Use these tips to make the most of your doctor visit.



1. Prepare for your visit. Be ready to ask three or four questions. Share your symptoms, medicines or vitamins, health habits, and any major life changes.
2. Take notes or ask for written materials. Don't be afraid to ask the doctor to repeat or clarify important information.
3. Make decisions with your doctor that meet your needs. Discuss risks, benefits, and costs of tests and treatments. Ask about other options and preventive things you can do.
4. Be sure you are getting the message. If you have trouble hearing, ask your doctor to face you when talking and to speak louder and more clearly. 
5. Tell the doctor if you feel rushed, worried, or uncomfortable. You can offer to return for a second visit or follow up by phone or email.

Learn more about communicating with your doctor at <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/doctor-patient-communication>



Medicare Corner: Traveling Abroad

Planning to travel abroad this summer? Before you go, remember that Medicare usually does not cover health care services or supplies while you are traveling outside the United States. There are some exceptions, including some cases where Medicare Part B may pay for services that you get on board a ship within the territorial waters adjoining the land areas of the U.S.



That doesn't mean you have to travel abroad without health coverage. Here are three ways you can get health coverage outside the U.S.:

1. If you have a Medicare Supplement insurance (Medigap) policy, check your policy to see if it includes coverage when traveling outside the U.S. Supplement plans C, D, F, G, M, and N all offer foreign travel emergency care if it begins during the first 60 days of your trip and Medicare doesn't otherwise cover the care. There is a \$250 annual deductible, and a \$50,000 lifetime limit.
2. If you have a Medicare Advantage or other Medicare health plan, instead of Original Medicare, check with your plan to see if they offer coverage outside the U.S.
3. Consider buying a travel insurance policy that includes health coverage.

If you are not yet on Medicare, check with your health plan to see whether or not you have coverage outside the U.S., and if not consider a travel insurance policy that includes health coverage.

Safe travels!

VA Benefits

Find VA benefits with a new tool at va.gov. This new site offers one place to access all VA benefits and health care services. You can sign in to your account to track your claims, refill your prescriptions, and more.

The site is a one-stop shop to check your disability claim and appeal status, find out how much money you have left to pay for school or training, refill your prescriptions and communicate with your health care team, and more.

In addition to these services, the site contains information on service and family member benefits, education and training opportunities, careers and employment, housing assistance, and records.

Computer Glitch Affects Social Security Recipients

Those who elected to have their Medicare Part D or Medicare Advantage premiums deducted from their Social Security checks may have gotten a surprise this month. A software glitch led to premiums for 250,000 not getting deducted from Social Security benefits. As a result many beneficiaries received bills for as much as five months of unpaid premiums.

Your prescription drug or Medicare Advantage plan may bill you for any premiums that were not yet taken out of your Social Security payment. Follow any instructions from your Medicare plan regarding your premiums. The systems issue has been corrected. Unless you told your plan you now want to pay your premiums in a different way, your plan premiums will be taken out properly

from your Social Security payment beginning in June or July 2019 through the rest of the year.

If you receive a bill from your plan, your plan must offer you a grace period to repay your premium payments that were missed. This period must last at least as long as the delay in billing. Contact your Medicare plan directly with any questions or concerns. If you aren't sure which Medicare plan you are enrolled in, check your plan card or materials.

The Funeral Rule

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is charged with enforcing the Funeral Rule. It describes your rights to choose the goods and services you want, allows you to compare prices, and to pay only for what you select. The FTC offers tips for shopping for funeral service.



- Shop in advance and compare prices from at least two funeral homes. While funeral providers may group goods and services, you have the right to buy them separately. You also have the right to supply your own casket or urn.
- Ask for a written price list. By law, funeral homes are required to provide a written price list stating their goods and services.
- Resist pressure to buy goods or services you do not want or need. Recognize and avoid potential emotional overspending in your desire to honor a loved one.
- Recognize your rights. Laws vary from state to state. In Kansas, a source for information is Kansas State Board of Mortuary Arts, www.accesskansas.org/ksbma or call 785-296-3980.

Protect Your Luggage

Before you head off on your summer vacation, take a good look at your luggage. Travel can be tough on your bags. Here are some simple strategies to help protect your luggage against damage and theft.



First pack carefully. Put anything liquid in a sealable plastic bag, keep the heaviest items at the bottom of your suitcase near the wheels to lower the risk of it tipping over, and secure or remove shoulder straps or other attachments that could jam a baggage conveyer belt or carousel.

Also watch for hazardous items, especially spare lithium batteries, which are prohibited in checked luggage because of fire risk. (They are allowed in carry-ons, however). Be aware that certain food items, like cheese, can trigger false positives in airport explosives detection machines.

Secure your bag with a TSA friendly lock if you plan to use a lock. A TSA-compatible lock will ensure that the agents can safely open your bag with a master key if it is picked for inspection.

Keep records of what you packed. Write it all down, store it in your mobile device, or simply photograph the contents. This will help if you have to confirm that an item is missing, or a claim is filed with the airline for a lost or damaged bag.

Save for Retirement

The sooner you set up a retirement savings account, the better, thanks to compounding interest. Check to see if your employer offers a 401(k) plan and take



advantage of any match they offer. If you are self-employed, talk to your bank, credit union, or financial advisor about an Individual Retirement Account (IRA).

Tips for Managing Your Time During Retirement

- Use a planner or online calendar to keep track of your commitments. Observe the week or month ahead and ask yourself, “Am I doing too much?”
- Schedule in downtime for yourself. Maybe your downtime will be relaxing and reading a book, or maybe you have to schedule time for exercise. Regardless, make sure you are taking time for yourself.
- Many people will have a list of things they want to accomplish once they retire. Try to spread them out over a period of time, rather than trying to conquer everything at once.
- Be sure to understand what is expected of you in volunteer opportunities before you agree to participate. Consider the role and decide if you will have enough time to fully participate.

How much are young college graduates getting paid?

AVERAGE WAGES
of college graduates
ages 21–24

\$20.74/hour
\$43,100/year for a full-time
worker

But the average masks important disparities by gender and race.

The gender wage gap for these young graduates is \$2.84—a 12.9% penalty.



The black–white wage gap is \$2.50—a 12.2% penalty.

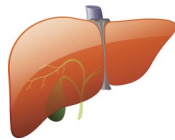


Source: Economic Policy Institute, Class of 2019: College Edition
Learn more at go.epi.org/classof2019

Economic
Policy
Institute

What is Hepatitis A?

A current recall of frozen blackberries is ongoing for possible Hepatitis A contamination.



Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that results from exposure to the Hepatitis A virus, including from food. It can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious illness lasting several months. Illness generally occurs within 15 to 50 days of exposure and includes fatigue, abdominal pain, jaundice, abnormal liver tests, dark urine and pale stool. Hepatitis A vaccination can prevent illness if given within two weeks of exposure to a contaminated food. In rare cases, particularly consumers who have a pre-existing severe illness or are immune compromised, Hepatitis A infection can progress to liver failure. Persons who may have consumed affected product should consult with their health care professional or local health department to determine if a vaccination is appropriate, and consumers with symptoms of Hepatitis A should contact their health care professional.

Freezing Foods for the Fair

To help save time and stress at county fairs, prepare food entries early and freeze them. Most baked goods freeze well and can still be blue ribbon quality. This includes cookies, yeast and quick breads, and cakes. Here are some tips:



- Bake the product as usual. Cool completely! This helps prevent condensation inside the wrapping and development of ice crystals.
- Use moisture-vapor resistant packaging. This includes freezer-safe plastic contain-

ers or bags, heavy-duty aluminum foil, and rigid containers.

- Separate layers of cookies with wax paper or parchment paper.
- If a cake or bread is to be frosted, freeze the product only and frost after it is thawed.
- Make pie crusts ahead of time and freeze. Freezing whole prepared pies can cause the filling to soak into the crust.
- Thaw all baked goods in the freezer packaging. They can be thawed at room temperature. Remove from the freezer the night before the fair. Once thawed, repackage into the proper packaging according to your fair rules.

The Silent Epidemic: A Real Story of Victory Over Severe Depression

The River Valley Extension District will be sponsoring two events on overcoming depression. Motivational speaker Mark Potter is a former head basketball coach, and he is also a teacher, husband, and father. You will have the opportunity to watch Mark share his moving, personal testimony that will stick with you forever. He will tell you about his season with depression, during the height of his basketball coaching career. Mark will also motivate, engage, and inspire you while providing practical ideas for wellness. Nanette, Mark's spouse, will also be joining him and she will share about her role as a caregiver and provide practical suggestions that you can do to help someone you love who may have similar struggles. The two of them together bring the battle of severe depression full circle. Their presentation will encourage and help provide new positive outlooks on circumstances you or your loved ones may be facing. Caregivers are encouraged to bring their family members and friends who may be dealing with depression.

Mark and Nanette's inspirational presentation will be held Tuesday, August 13th, 7:00pm at the Clay Center Family Life Center and Monday, November 18th at 6:30pm at the Belleville Blair Theater. There is no cost to attend and no RSVP's required. For more information, contact: Sonia Cooper, River Valley District Extension Agent (785-325-2121) or Deanna Turner, River Valley District Extension Agent (785-632-5335).

Removing Odors from Refrigerators & Freezers

Refrigerators and freezers are two of the most important pieces of equipment in the kitchen for keeping food safe. We are instantly reminded of their importance when the power goes off, flooding occurs, or the unit fails, causing food to become unsafe and spoil. The odors that develop when food spoils can be difficult to remove. Use this information to learn how to remove odors from units or how to safely discard an affected unit.

To Remove Odors from Refrigerators and Freezers



If food has spoiled in a refrigerator or freezer and odors from the food remain, they may be difficult to remove. The following procedures may help but may have to be repeated several times.

- Dispose of any spoiled or questionable food.
- Remove shelves, crispers, and ice trays. Wash them thoroughly with hot water and detergent. Then rinse with a sanitizing solution (1 tablespoon unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water).
- Wash the interior of the refrigerator and freezer, including the door and gasket,

with hot water and baking soda. Rinse with sanitizing solution as above.

- Leave the door open for about 15 minutes to allow free air circulation.

If odors remain, try any or all of the following:

- Wipe inside of unit with equal parts vinegar and water. Vinegar provides acid which destroys mildew.
- Leave the door open and allow to air out or several days
- Stuff both the refrigerator and freezer with rolled newspapers. Close the door and leave for several days. Remove paper and clean with vinegar and water.
- Sprinkle fresh coffee grounds or baking soda loosely in a large, shallow container in the bottom of the refrigerator and freezer.
- Place a cotton swab soaked with vanilla inside the refrigerator and freezer. Close door for 24 hours. Check for odors.
- Use a commercial product available at hardware and housewares stores. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

If Odors Cannot Be Removed

If odors cannot be removed, then the refrigerator or freezer may need to be discarded. If you need to discard the refrigerator or freezer, discard it in a safe manner:

- "Childproof" old refrigerators or freezers so children do not get trapped inside. The surest way is to take the door off.
- If the door will not come off, chain and padlock the door permanently and close tightly, or remove or disable the latch completely so the door will no longer lock when closed.

Preserving Edible Pea Pods

Preserving spring peas has long been popular, but have you given thought to preserving edible pea pods?

Sugar snap peas are a cross between garden peas and edible pod peas. You can recognize them by their nonfibrous, plump, edible pod and fat, juicy peas. While the snow pea or Chinese edible pod was in the past found only in the finest Asian cookery, it is now used in a variety of tasty dishes. Gardeners can select from several varieties, recognizable by their broad, flat pods. The kidney-shaped peas inside the pod are much smaller than sugar snap peas.

You can use raw edible pea pods in many ways — in salads (raw or blanched), stir-fried dishes, casseroles or an other wise ordinary bowl of soup. Just heat and eat, or cook until soft, as you would green beans.

Freezing is the best way to preserve edible pea pods, as it provides the best quality product for later use. Take the extra time to blanch the pods, since unblanched vegetables will have an undesirable flavor and texture and lose vitamins during storage. Blanching stops enzymes from continuing the ripening process.

Follow these steps to blanch and preserve your pea pods:

1. Wash and trim ends of pods, removing any strings.
2. Place 2 cups of peas in a wire basket or cheesecloth bag and immerse in 1 gallon of boiling water. Cover and begin counting time immediately.
3. Boil 1 minute for thin snow peas, or 1½ - 2 minutes for thick sugar snap (until heated through).

4. Cool for 2 minutes in cold running water.
5. Drain and pack in moisture -and vapor-proof, sealed containers. Or freeze quickly on cookie sheets before packaging (great for stir-fry).

Not: Canning or drying edible pea pods is not recommended because both preservation methods will generate undesirable changes in texture.

Sautéed Sugar Snap Peas

Ingredients:

- 1½ pounds fresh or frozen sugar snap peas
- 1 tablespoon good olive oil
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- ¾ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

1. Remove and discard the stem end and string from each sugar snap pod.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat.
3. Add the sugar snap peas, salt and pepper and sauté, tossing occasionally for 3 to 5 minutes, until the sugar snap peas are crisp tender.
4. Place the sugar snap peas in a bowl for serving.



Central Kansas Extension District

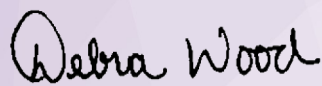
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Address Service Requested

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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