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Extension District**

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JUNE 2014

Food Preservation Workshop

There's still time to sign up for Central Kansas District's Food Preservation Workshop. If you have ever had an interest in home canning, but don't know where to start, or if you've been canning for years, this class is for you.

Date: Tuesday, June 24

Time: Noon – 4 p.m.

Place: Christ the King Lutheran Church
111 W. Magnolia Rd., Salina

Cost: \$15 per person

Pre-registration and payment due: June 17



This workshop is a hands-on class that will focus on the basics of pressure canning. With guidance from K-State experts, participants will have the opportunity to safely experience canning first-hand.

We'll explore the science and safety behind properly preserved food. Topics of discussion will include: boiling water (water bath) and pressure canning methods, plus freezing and drying food preservation. All participants will have the opportunity to can and take home an item.

Registrations will be accepted in the Salina extension office, 785-309-5850. Class size is limited and often fills quickly. To reserve your seat, payment must be received to the Salina office by June 17. For more information, contact Leah Robinson, 785-392-2147.

Ottawa County Fair - Minneapolis

Fair Theme: "American Flare at the County Fair"

Dates: July 15-19

Fair paper will be in the local newspaper late June and also available at the extension office in Minneapolis. Special baking contest this year is: Bar Cookie. Participants must be residents of Ottawa County.

Choosing the Right Sunglasses

Sunlight, specifically ultraviolet (UV) radiation, has been linked to several eye conditions, including cataracts and early onset age-related macular degeneration. It's hard to avoid the sun, but it is easy to protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses. Sunglasses need not bear a designer label or cost hundreds of dollars to do their job.

Sunglasses are labeled according to guidelines for UV protection established by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The two forms of UV light that affect health include:

- UVA, which is responsible for skin tanning and aging.
- UVB, which is linked to sunburn and skin cancer; a large portion is absorbed by the atmosphere's ozone layer.

Before buying sunglasses, look at the ANSI label; even inexpensive sunglasses can be effective.

- Cosmetic: Lightly tinted lenses, good for daily wear. Blocks 70% of UVB rays, 20% of UVA, and 60% of visible light.
- General purpose: Medium to dark lenses, fine for most outdoor recreation. Blocks 95% of UVB, 60% of UVA, and 60% to 90% of visible light. Most sunglasses fall into this category.
- Special purpose: Extremely dark lenses with UV blockers, recommended for places with very bright conditions such as beaches and ski slopes. Blocks 99% of UVB, 60% of UVA, and 97% of visible light.

A darker looking lens may not provide better UV protection than a lighter lens.

If you aren't sure what kind of sunglasses to buy, or think you may be at high risk for eye disease, check with your eye doctor.

Summer Time Thirst - Water Please!

With all the summertime activities kids will be thirsty. That means they will need more water. The American Association of Pediatrics has recommended that children and teens drink water for hydration. They have also recommended staying away from drinks that have sugar and/or caffeine like energy drinks, sports drinks, and sodas.

A lot of children will think they are hungry but they may be confusing hunger with thirst (adults frequently mistake hunger for thirst too). Water has zero calories and is the perfect drink to keep your child hydrated during the hot summer months.

Promote Water As The Main Drink For Summer

- Keep the refrigerator stocked with bottles of water or have water bottles available to fill up with cold water.
- Send children to summer camp with a filled water bottle.
- If your child is doing outdoor sports during summer time, teach them to drink a few sips of water every 15-20 minutes.
- Teach children to drink water before they are thirsty.
- Juices, fruit punch, and sodas can have a lot of added sugar and empty calories – keep these drinks for a special occasion.
- Be a great role model and drink lots of water.



Family Time Builds Strengths

John DeFrain and Nick Stinnett from University of Nebraska Extension acknowledge that one of the realities of modern life is that many activities and people compete for our attention and time. While strong families are not exempted from this shortage of time, they have learned some creative ways of carving out time to create memories together:

- **Share meals together on a regular basis.** Use this time to share triumphs and tribulations or just to keep up on current events. Use this time as a “family meeting” to plan upcoming events. Or simply use this time to enjoy each other. Enhance meal time by turning off the television and turning on the answering machine.
- **Play together.** Whether it’s indoors sitting by a fire, reading books aloud, playing board games or putting together a puzzle or outdoors summer activities, recreation time provides an excellent opportunity for interaction with family members.
- **Limit television time.** Many of the families surveyed by DeFrain and Stinnett felt television was an interruption that demanded too much attention, so they had strict limits on the use of TV in their homes. Others simply tried to improve the time spent watching television by using it as an opportunity to discuss issues presented through commercials and programming, alike.



Fathers are Important

Americans celebrate Father’s Day on the third Sunday of June, which is June 15 this year. This day has been observed to recognize the importance of fathers. Research on fathering shows that:

- Fathers are essential to the healthy growth and development of their children.
- Dads bring a unique perspective to the family and lives of their children.
- Mothers and fathers can love their children by supporting each other as parents.

What Exactly Are Dust Mites?



We’ve all heard of dust mites, but very few of us actually know what they are. Dust mites are microscopic relatives of spiders, found in more than 80 percent of U.S. households. They act as sort of a cleanup committee: They eat our discarded skin cells, as well as animal dander, pollen, fungi, bacteria, and other organic material in the domestic environment. They thrive in mattresses, pillows, carpets, and clothing. Thousands of mites can live in just one gram of dust.

Dust mites are harmless, except that their fecal pellets can trigger asthma, hay fever, and skin reactions. In fact, dust mites are probably the most common indoor allergen, especially in warm, humid climates.

If you have dust mite allergy, these steps should help reduce symptoms: Wash bed linens weekly in very hot water and use a hot dryer; wash blankets as well; use impermeable covers to encase mattresses and pillows; replace pillows periodically; keep household humidity low; and use a good vacuum.

Magnesium: The Forgotten Mineral

If you are at risk of developing diabetes, magnesium in your diet can reduce the onset of this disease. At least half of U.S. consumers eat enough magnesium each day. The recommendation is to consume 400-420 milligrams for adult men and 310-320 for adult women. So what foods are good sources of magnesium?

- Seeds – pumpkin, squash, sesame
- Ready-to-eat cereals such as bran and shredded wheat; whole grains
- Nuts and nut butters
- Dark chocolate – 70% or more cocoa content
- Beans – white beans, black beans, soybeans

Best Vacuum Cleaner for Those With Allergies

If you do happen to have an allergy towards dust mites (or animal dander and pollen) vacuuming is a necessary evil, since most vacuums stir up as many allergens as they capture.

The best option is a vacuum with a HEPA filter, the type found in the best air purifiers. Otherwise, consider getting special microfiltration bags, or electrostatic filters that fit over the exhaust. One source is www.allergycontrol.com.

Make sure your vacuum cleaner doesn't leak- for instance, through poorly fitting hoses and loose gasket seals. If your machine is old and leaky, replace it.

If your allergies are bad, wear an allergen-blocking mask while vacuuming. Or, better yet, get someone else to vacuum for you while you're out of the house!

What to Cook Now: Fresh Peas



Fresh peas at the market herald spring's arrival. Raw or cooked, shelled or whole, peas add flavor, texture, and color with their delicate, sweet taste, interesting shapes (crescent pods and round peas), and trademark green. Peas also provide essential nutrients and are an excellent source of vitamins K and B6 and folic acid, all crucial to bone strength and cardiovascular health.

In general, you'll find three types of fresh peas: English peas (also called shelling peas, green peas, or garden peas). Their pods are inedible, so the peas must be shelled before eating. *Petits pois* is the name given to very small English peas.

Sugar snap peas have a thicker, edible shell. As its name denotes, this particular variety is sweet like sugar and makes a distinctive sound when its shell is broken. Sugar snap peas can be eaten both raw and cooked.

Snow peas, seen often in Chinese cooking, are flatter, thinner, and more translucent than the others. They are consumed in their entirety, and no shelling is required.

Tips:

Enjoy Promptly – Time is of the essence when it comes to fresh peas, which are best right after they've been picked. As time passes, the sugar converts to starch and can result in hard, mealy peas. If you don't have plans to eat the peas right away, store the unshelled peas in a plastic bag in the fridge for up to three days.

Substitute with Frozen – Don't have fresh peas? Use frozen instead. To thaw quickly, place the peas in a colander in the sink and run them under water.

Pick Them Young – Buying bigger is not better. Look for medium-size pods that are verdant and pliant. These will be at their peak – tender and full of flavor.

How Do We Define Love?

The notion of love is often thought to be those powerful demonstrations of deep emotions, but a new understanding of love, biologically informed, is focusing on those "micromoments of positivity" in creating loving and long-lasting relationships. It is the importance of the little things in daily life that really matter – for instance, taking time to show appreciation and affection in small ways. Barbara Fredrickson from University of North Carolina focuses on the "small, casual, fleeting moments of positive connection in life as the key to resilience and health, rather than grand, intense, deeply passionate experiences." Often small acts of positive connection are overlooked. She has written the books *Positivity* and *Love 2.0*.

Source: Howes, R. (2014). Reexamining how we define love: An interview with Barbara Fredrickson. *Psychotherapy Networker*, 38(2), 61-63.



Effective Conflict Management Tips

Many of the principles and skills that make for healthy intimate relationships apply equally to workplace relationships. That means we can strengthen our work life, family life, and work-life balance all at once. Here are some conflict management tips that can be applied in many settings:

Tip #1: Use soft startups. To use a soft startup, describe the concern in a neutral, factual manner. Next, describe how the concern makes you feel. Be as specific as possible. Finally, state a positive need (e.g., I'd like to come up with a system for sharing the computer).

Tip #2: Use calming techniques. Unmanaged negative emotions can undermine healthy patterns of communication and can lead to poor relationship quality and individual health. Use self-soothing strategies such as humor, taking a time-out, and deep breathing.

Tip #3: Maintain a positive environment. Couples and colleagues can help prevent and lessen conflict by creating a culture of positivity - one where each person takes time often to notice small tokens of appreciation (and, for couples, of affection toward one another). This helps us to recall the positives, even during conflicts.

Adapted from National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families newsletter (Issue 11)

How to Help Stop the Abuse of Elders

Is there elder abuse in your neighborhood? Older people can be vulnerable to neglect, abuse and exploitation—even by relatives and others they trust. We can all do more to help. If you suspect someone is being mistreated or financially exploited, find help via the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) at www.napsa-now.org.

Aging Parents and Managing Self-Care

Most adult children find that when their parents occasionally need help, they can drop everything and do what's necessary. Many start running into trouble, however, when assistance is needed on an ongoing basis. The daily demands of caring for an elderly parent can be overwhelming, even in the best of circumstances. Often one of the greatest challenges for caregivers is practicing good self-care. *The Caregiver Helpbook* outlines several ways caregivers can manage their own self-care:

- Take responsibility.** Realize you are responsible for your personal well-being and for getting your needs met. This includes maintaining activities and relationships that are meaningful to you.
- Have realistic expectations.** Fully understand your family member's medical condition and be realistic about what your family member can and cannot do. (The more you know about your family member's medical condition, the better you will be able to plan successful caregiving strategies.)
- Focus on what we can do.** It's important to be clear about what you can and cannot change. For example, you will not be able to change a person who has always been demanding and inflexible, but you can control how you respond to that person's demands. Managing your self-care also means you seek solutions to what you can change.

If you are a caregiver and would like to acquire additional self-care tools, contact Lisa at the Salina extension office at 785-309-5850 or lmnewman@ksu.edu. The Central Kansas District plans to offer a *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* class and we can share information with you about how to register.

Remember, when you take care of yourself, everyone benefits.



Summer Prop Box Ideas

Children are hands-on learners. This summer, consider creating several prop boxes to allow your child the opportunity to explore, play, and learn about specific topics. Use plastic bins or cardboard shoe boxes to fill with materials and props related to one topic. Here are four ideas:

1. **Blocks.** Store proportional wooden blocks or colorful pattern blocks in plastic tubs, along with clipboards, paper, and crayons. Children can create buildings and roads, and make signs to go with them.
2. **Pretend play.** Fill a box with clothes such as dresses, shirts, and suit jackets. Add accessories like hats, scarves, neckties, bags, and jewelry to make children's pretend play more exciting and elaborate. You could create separate prop boxes for different play themes—for example, a small briefcase, notebooks, paper, and pens for a prop box related to office play. Let the children's interests and imaginations guide their selection of clothes and props.
3. **Art.** Keep a box handy with different types of paper and drawing and painting materials. Add safety scissors and paste, so children can make collages or experiment with other art techniques.
4. **Cooking.** Store a child-size apron, a collection of favorite recipes, and unbreakable bowls and utensils in a kitchen drawer or bottom cupboard. Invite your children to join in while you prepare meals and snacks. Get them in the habit of washing their hands before and after handling foods.

<http://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/music-math-more/10-prop-boxes-learning-bringing-spirit-learning-centers>

Road Trip

If you will be hitting the open road this summer, a well planned trip could be your key to success. Is it cheaper?

Calculate the cost of flying versus driving. Don't forget to include the cost of a hotel room if the trip will be more than one day. Route your trip in advance. Locate your destination on the map and plot some scenic stops to stretch your legs and use restrooms. In addition, find the best hotel room rates available (look for free breakfast and free internet!) along the way so you can be aware of availability and avoid late night pull-ins with no rooms available.

Seek out the best gas prices. Gas prices continue to climb this summer. Check online to find the best value per mile, or use apps like GasBuddy along your route.

Bring meals. Pack a cooler with your favorite snacks, sandwiches, and beverages to save money, and time, by avoiding convenience store and restaurant stops.

Ready your vehicle. Double-check your spare tire, windshield wipers, fluids, and keep gas tank filled. Be sure to get an oil change before leaving and consider getting a car inspection to avoid running into any mechanical problems that could put a serious damper in your plans.



Tips for Women to Take Control of Their Retirement

Lower salaries and longer life expectancies are two of several factors that put women at a greater risk for not achieving a financially secure retirement. In fact, only 7% of women are "very confident" in their ability to retire comfortably, according to the 14th annual Transamerica Retirement Survey of Workers. The report includes seven tips to help female employees get ready for retirement. Tips include the same things any pre-retirement saver should know, such as having a backup plan if unable to work and considering retirement benefits as part of the total benefits package. Historically, women have been excluded from making these types of decisions, and are encouraged to think and behave proactively when planning for retirement.

- 1. Develop a retirement strategy and write it down.** Envision your future retirement. Formulate a goal for how much you will need to save each year, including in an employer-sponsored retirement plan and outside savings. Remember to factor in living expenses, health care needs, long-term care and government benefits. When facing a decision to reduce work hours or take time out of the workforce to be a parent or a caregiver, consider the financial trade-offs and options to help mitigate the impact on long-term security.
- 2. Calculate your retirement savings needs and save at a level to achieve those needs.**
- 3. Consider retirement benefits as part of your total compensation.**
- 4. If your employer offers a retirement plan, participate.** Be sure that your annual salary deferral takes full advantage of employer matching contribution, if available. Contribute as much as you can. Consider maximizing annual salary deferrals in the plan, and/or consider contributing to a Traditional or Roth IRA.

- 5. Get educated about retirement investing.** Seek professional assistance if needed. Learn about Social Security and Medicare. Learn about possible ways to help make savings last longer, including when to take withdrawals from retirement accounts to minimize taxes and penalties.
- 6. Have a backup plan.** Be sure to have a Plan B, in case you're unable to work until your planned retirement date. Identify potential cost-cutting lifestyle changes such as moving to a smaller home or taking on a roommate. Also, consider insurance products such as disability insurance, life insurance, and long-term care insurance.
- 7. Talk about retirement with family and close friends.** An open dialogue with trusted loved ones about expectations of either needing to provide or receive financial support should be part of every woman's retirement strategy.



CALENDAR

JUNE

- 24 Food Preservation Workshop
Christ the King Lutheran Church,
111 W. Magnolia Rd., Salina