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Geary County

K-State Research and Extension News

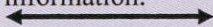
Knowledge for Life

Ask the Agent

Q: Are fresh tomatoes better for you than canned tomatoes?



A: Canned tomato products have the same nutritional values as fresh tomatoes. However, when purchasing canned pasta sauce, pizza sauce, ketchup, or salsa you still need to look at the label. Many of these types of convenience tomato products have added sodium, sugar, and fat. See the inside story for more information.



For more information call the Geary County K-State Research and Extension office at:

785-238-4161



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Walk Kansas Countdown Begins!

February 2016

Last year, nearly 350 individuals comprising 47 teams participated in the Geary County Extension Walk Kansas Program. This 8-week program focuses on improving individual health with a focus on increasing physical activity, eating more servings of fruits and vegetables, and incorporating strength building activity into our lifestyle. Teams of 6 individuals, led by their team captain, set a goal they want to achieve through the program. Do they want to walk across Kansas east to west? Do they want to walk around the perimeter of the state, or (new this year) from one corner of the state to the other. Once their team goal is set, they track their progress by recording the minutes of activity and their servings of fruits and vegetables consumed each day. Totals are recorded weekly to help chart their success over the 8-week program. By taking on this challenge as a team, each member has 5 other people who are encouraging them and perhaps helping hold them accountable to their commitment.



The Wellness Council of America has published a book "Waking 4 Wellness"* that helps individuals create a plan for making walking a habit. In this book, the authors share that developing and participating in a walking plan can help you:

- ◆ Rev up your energy
- ◆ Break through stress
- ◆ Melt off body fat, lose weight and keep it off
- ◆ Boost your mood
- ◆ Improve your creativity
- ◆ Increase your earning potential
- ◆ Enhance your love life
- ◆ Tone and tighten your entire body

The Walking 4 Wellness* book also outlines specific positive benefits to your body such as:

- ◆ Improves eye health – reducing risk of glaucoma
- ◆ Keeps skin young and supple – look and feel years younger
- ◆ Improves lung capacity
- ◆ Strengthens bones
- ◆ Reduces risk of cancer
- ◆ Helps with arthritis – relieves stiffness and improves range of motion in joints
- ◆ Improves balance and coordination
- ◆ Reduces risk of diabetes and strengthens immune system

If you want to experience one or more of these benefits, consider building a Walk Kansas team. You have almost 6 weeks to find five other friends, co-workers, or family members to join you in this fun program. The cost, \$8 per participant, is minimal and you will receive weekly newsletters that give you encouragement and a variety of resources to help you reach your goal – both personally and as a team. There will be weekly team and individual drawings for prizes. The program runs from April 3 thru May 28, so start building your 6-member team today!

***Jump start your Walk Kansas experience**—A copy of the Walking 4 Wellness can be purchased for \$12 at the Geary County Extension office at 119 E. 9th, Junction City, KS.

It Takes a Village....

...to raise a child. Most of us have heard this phrase. Many have witnessed this attitude in our family, neighborhoods, and communities. But what does that really mean here in Geary County. What are the challenges and opportunities our children face?

Each year, Kansas Action for Children collects information from across the state and from each county to get a snap-shot picture of the social, physical, economic, and environmental conditions in which our Kansas children live. The report that is the product of that collection of information is published in the form of KIDS COUNT.

This information is used by social services, schools, community initiatives, and community education and service agencies such as my own to determine the direction we should take in our work with children.

Our county is defined as semi-urban which means we have between 10 and 149.9 residents per square mile. As of the 2010 Census, there are only 10 counties in Kansas that have this designation. Only 6 counties (5 in the Kansas City metropolitan area) in Kansas are considered urban.

Look at Geary Co. in comparison to Kansas as a whole and think about what you can do to help make a positive impact on the children in our community.

KIDS COUNT INFORMATION	GEARY	KANSAS
Median Household Income	\$41,048	\$50,892
Poverty— percent of children under 18 living below 100% poverty	24.22%	18.40%
Health Insurance— percent of children under 18 without health insurance	5.28%	6.17%
Free & Reduced Lunch—percent of public school children participating in the free and reduced lunch program	62.48%	49.97%

This is just a quick look at our local demographics More information can be found by county at: <http://kac.org/data-and-research/kidscount/county-fact-sheets/>

Knowing this kind of information makes each of us stronger advocates for Geary County families. After all... it takes a village!

The IRS has again this year come out with a warning for consumers related to tax preparation. Many people across the United States call upon the skill and expertise of paid tax preparation professionals to help with this annual burden.

The IRS asks that you take the task of finding a person to prepare your tax return very seriously. Even though this individual is preparing your tax form, YOU are ultimately responsible for the information it contains.

Here are some tips to help you find a qualified tax preparer:

- 1) Check their qualifications. The IRS has a directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications: <http://irs.treasury.gov/rpo/rpo.jsf> At this website, you simply enter your zip code and the last name of the person you are considering to hire for this task. You will also have the ability to select the area of expertise you are needing this person to have.
- 2) Check the preparer's history. Ask the Better Business Bureau about the preparer by going to www.bbb.org and select to search by category. In the "category" field, type in **tax return preparation**. In the "city and state field", type in the **town and state** of your mailing address. The results of area tax preparers will be listed based on proximity to where you live. Even if the BBB has not accredited the preparer, you can look at their "grade" and what they are noted for (both good and bad.)



3) Ask about service fees. Avoid hiring preparers who base fees on the percentage of their client's refund. Avoid those who boast about obtaining bigger refunds than others working in the same field. Make sure the refund is set up to go directly to you and not to your preparer's bank account.

4) Ask to e-file your return. To ensure this happens you must ask them if they offer IRS e-file services. Paid preparers who do taxes for 10+ people generally are required to offer this service. You don't need to be unduly concerned about the e-filing process – IRS has safely processed over 1.5 billion (yes, BILLION) e-filed tax returns.

5) Plan ahead. Make sure your preparer is available when you need them and avoid waiting until the last minute to find someone. It is equally important that you avoid "fly-by-night" preparers.

6) Collect your records and receipts. It is important to use the services of your tax preparer in the most efficient way. Good preparers will ask to see your records and receipts. They will ask you questions about your total income, tax deductions, credits, etc. Do not use a preparer who will e-file your return using your last pay stub instead of your Form W-2. This is against IRS e-file rules.

7) Never sign a blank return. Don't use a tax preparer that asks you to sign a blank form. Remember, you are responsible for the information they put on your tax return.

Healthy Habits

It's February—Think RED!

February begs you to think of Valentine's Day and Women's Heart Health Month. It also makes you think of the color RED which is symbolic of both of these annual events. So let's talk about a very versatile and beneficial RED vegetable – the Tomato. Red fruits and vegetables contain many health-promoting phytochemicals including lycopene and anthocyanins. Some of the health effects of red fruits and vegetables promote include a lower risk of some cancer, a healthy heart, memory health, and urinary tract health. Whether you eat them fresh or opt for one of many canned options, tomatoes are packed with great nutritional value. They are rich in Vitamin A, Vitamin C, potassium, and iron.

In the US at least, common canned tomato products include:

- Paste—tomatoes cooked down, to the point where they can be scooped with a spoon but will not flow. Very thick, like peanut butter. Often sold in six or twelve ounce cans.
- Puree—cooked tomatoes that have been--well--pureed, but are mostly at their natural density; also called crushed tomatoes.
- Sauce—cooked down, strained tomatoes, a little thicker than tomato soup. May include herbs, spices, or some flavoring in addition to pure tomato product.
- Diced—solid chopped tomatoes, usually in tomato juice.
- Whole - whole cooked (usually peeled) tomatoes, usually packed in tomato juice. Will have the seeds.

To get the most nutritional value from the tomatoes you eat, check out the following variations you may already include in your dietary intake:

Tomato Product	Calories per serving	Fat (grams per serving)	Sodium (mg per serving)	Sugars (grams per serving)	Dietary Fiber (g/serving)
1 medium raw	15	0	0	2	1
Canned, diced, low-sodium	40	0	140	3	2
Brand-name canned spaghetti sauce	70	15	480	10	3



Italian Tomato Sauce

Ingredients

Serves: Makes 12 (1/2-cup) servings.

5 mins Prep time; 30 mins Cook time

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 2 cans (28 ounces each) crushed tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano leaves, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

Directions

Heat oil in 4-quart saucepot on medium heat. Add onion; cook and stir 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in tomatoes and remaining ingredients. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Great to top off your favorite pasta or incorporate into a Italian casserole!



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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

****Requires pre-registration.**

February

- 27 Freezer Workshop**—4-H Senior Citizens Building, 1025 S. Spring Valley Road, Junction City, KS. Pre-Registration is required. Registration is closed for this class.

March

- 10 Knowledge at Noon**— Valley View Estates, 1440 Pearl Drive, Junction City, KS. Topic: Aging 101 Series: Eating Smart and Healthy. This free program begins at noon and is open to the public. Call the Extension Office to reserve your seat at 785-238-4161. **Register by March 8, 2016.**
- 22 MPI Parenting Class**—Junction City YMCA, 1703 McFarland Road, Junction City, is a 6-session class open to any parents with children ages toddler to teen to help support and equip parents with the challenging task of raising children. Please call the Geary County Extension Office to register for the program—785-238-4161. The class consists of 6 consecutive sessions held from 5:30—7:30 p.m. on Tuesday evenings. A \$10/session registration fee is required before the class begins. The total cost for the class is \$60.00 per individual or \$90.00 for the parent and a partner/support person. The class continues through April 26.

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Geary County Office information: **<http://www.geary.ksu.edu/>**
or stop by the office at 119 E. 9th, Junction City, KS 66441

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