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Geary County

K-State Research and Extension News

Knowledge for Life

Ask the Agent

Q: Are nutrition supplements safe to take?

A: Yes and No— Nutrition supplements (aka dietary supplements) are products designed to supplement the diet. If you are eating a balanced, nutritious diet, and have no food allergies your food intake should provide more than enough nutrients for what your body needs. An exception is when you are receiving certain medications or are under treatment for other health issues. Sometimes those treatments can create a loss of calcium or rob your body of its stores of iron, for example. You should do your research before you just randomly start taking supplements of any kind. Supplements are not as heavily regulated by the Food and Drug Administration as prescription medications so approach with caution. Don't decide to take dietary supplements to treat a health condition that you have diagnosed yourself, without consulting a health care provider.



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

785-238-4161



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Beware—Scammers on the Prowl

April 2017



Even though the deadline for submitting income tax forms has come and gone, the efforts criminals are making to con you out of money continues. Scammers use a variety of ways to get money out of you – anything from email to social media.

With the recent change in IRS practices regarding the collection of delinquent taxes, it has become even more important that you are aware of how the scammers work.

This year's tax season marks the first time in history that IRS has contracted outside of their agency for the purpose of collecting on delinquent taxes. The purpose of this effort is to go after taxpayer accounts that the IRS has been unable to collect on.

Four collection companies AND the IRS will be reaching out to people who they have been unable to contact through multiple previous attempts. This makes it a bit tricky for taxpayers to know who is calling legitimately and who is calling to take advantage of this new method to collect back taxes.

IRS Commissioner, John Koschiner explains that you won't get a call from a private collection firm unless you have unpaid taxes going back several years and you've already heard from the IRS multiple times.

In other words, if you have been taking care of your tax commitments each year, you WILL NOT get a call. If you do, it is likely a scam and you should report it. The private collection agencies are authorized to collect payment but only to the IRS or U.S. Treasury – in other words NEVER make a payment to an individual or company!

The IRS is contracting with CBE Group, Conserve, Performant or Pioneer collection agencies to collect from accounts that have been deemed "inactive." An "inactive" account is one that is no longer being pursued by government personnel. This change is the result of a law passed by Congress in 2015. Supporters of this policy change cite that industry could more effectively bring in the delinquent taxes.

As a consumer, be aware that scammers will use this change in policy to steal money from unsuspecting tax payers. "Aggressive and threatening phone calls by criminals impersonating IRS agents remain a major threat to taxpayers, but variations of the IRS impersonation scam continue year-round and they tend to peak when scammers find prime opportunities to strike.

The IRS will never contact a taxpayer via e-mail, text or social media. Any e-mail that appears to be from the IRS about a refund or tax problem is probably an attempt by scammers to steal information. Forward the e-mail to phishing@irs.gov. The first IRS contact with taxpayers on a tax issue will be by mail."

The new policy for using outside private collection agencies will effect only those taxpayers who are delinquent and have not responded to previous efforts by IRS to collect payment. If you feel you have received a fraudulent communication about paying past taxes, you can find out how to report it at:

<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/how-do-you-report-suspected-tax-fraud-activity>

Source: *Scams Targeting Taxpayers. IRS Consumer Alerts.* www.IRS.gov/uac/tax-scams-consumer-alerts

Is It a Cold or An Allergy?

By definition, an allergy is a reaction by your immune system to something that does not bother most other people. A common cold is more difficult to define. Instead, we simply list the symptoms of a cold rather than define it. The problem is that airborne allergies and colds have many of the same symptoms. How do you know which one you are afflicted with? The National Institutes of Health offer these comparisons to help you determine the difference:

Symptoms	Cold	Airborne Allergy	
Cough	Common	Sometimes	<p>Although many of the symptoms and treatments are the same, the duration is what makes allergies a challenge.</p> <p>Ongoing exposure to the allergens that your body is trying to fight can lead to sinus infection and/or asthma.</p> <p>If you have had any of the symptoms listed above continue for more than three weeks, it is likely you are suffering from an allergy.</p> <p>Knowing exactly what you are allergic to can help you lesson or prevent exposure and offer better direction in treatment.</p>
General Aches, Pains	Slight	Never	
Fatigue, Weakness	Sometimes	Sometimes	
Itchy Eyes	Rare or Never	Common	
Sneezing	Usual	Usual	
Sore Throat	Common	Sometimes	
Runny Nose	Common	Common	
Stuffy Nose	Common	Common	
Fever	Rare	Never	
Duration	3-14 days	Weeks (for example, 6 weeks for ragweed or grass pollen seasons)	
Treatment	-Antihistamines -Decongestants -Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines	-Antihistamines -Nasal steroids -Decongestants	

Be Prepared for Kansas Storms

It's storm season in Kansas. With that comes the occasional power outage due to lightning strikes or other storm-related effects. Here are some things you should do BEFORE you lose power at your house:

- Build your emergency kit and make a family communications plan.
- Keep your car tank at least half full.
- Know where the manual release lever of your electric garage opener is located and how to operate it. Will you need help lifting it?
- Keep a key to your house with you if you regularly use the garage as the primary means of entering your home.
- Keep an extra propane tank if you have a gas grill. Never use the gas grill indoors.
- Call your power company if you use a battery-operated wheelchair, life-support system, or other power-dependent medical equipment to learn what options are available to you.
- Keep a battery-operated talking or Braille clock or oversized timepiece with extra batteries if you have visual disability.
- Consider a small portable battery-operated television set if you are deaf or have a hearing loss. Emergency broadcasts may give information in American Sign Language (ASL) or open captioning.
- Plan alternate ways to evacuate if you live in a multi-story apartment building or condominium. Elevators will not work if the power is out.

It has quickly become garden season and now is the perfect time to think about planting an herb garden. There's almost nothing more satisfying than picking your own fresh grown herbs to spice up your culinary tasks. Most herbs are easy to grow and provide wonderful flavors and aromas.

Would you like to breath a fresh and tasteful life into your "go to" recipes, here are some suggestions to get you started:

Consider what types of herbs you want to incorporate into your cooking. In addition to beef, I like to grill chicken and pork during the summer months. My own herb garden typically contains Oregano, Sage, Rosemary and Basil. If I have room, I like to include Thyme and Parsley to dry for later use in my winter-time soups, stems and casseroles.

Identify a sunny spot close to your kitchen door to place your garden. Most herbs need six hours of full midday sun for optimum growth. You will need four hours of sun for adequate growth.

Determine how much room you have for your plants. If you are restricted on space, herbs can be successfully grown in pots that can be moved for optimum growth.

For in-ground herb gardens, make sure your soil is loose and moderately fertile. For container gardens, use high quality planting mix and fertilize with a 7-5-7 blend over the growing season. Herbs do not like soggy soil, so make sure you only water them when the soil is dry and be careful not to over water.

Enjoy the fresh herbs from your garden from spring through fall and dry the excess for your winter cooking.

Check out this tasty herb chicken recipe I have adapted from a Betty Crocker online recipe:

Grilled Three-Herb Chicken

¼ c. vegetable oil (or Tuscan-flavored olive oil)

¼ c. lime juice

2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or 2 teaspoons dried basil leaves

2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano or 2 teaspoons dried oregano leaves

2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme or 2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves

1 teaspoon onion powder

Salt and pepper to taste

4-6 boneless skinless chicken breasts (you can also use thighs or legs)



- 1) In a shallow glass or plastic dish or heavy-duty resealable food-storage plastic bag, mix all ingredients except chicken. Add chicken breasts; turn to coat with marinade. Cover dish or seal bag; refrigerate, turning chicken occasionally, at least 30 minutes but no longer than 24 hours.
- 2) Heat gas or charcoal grill. Remove chicken from marinade; reserve marinade. Place chicken on grill over medium heat. Cover grill and let cook 15 minutes. Turn chicken; brush with marinade. Cover grill; cook another 15 minutes. Brush with marinade and allow chicken to cook 5 – 15 minutes longer or until juice of chicken runs clear when thickest part is cut to bone (165°F).
- 3) To ensure chicken is thoroughly cooked, use a meat thermometer. Serve hot and refrigerate leftovers immediately after serving.



Geary County
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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

**Requires pre-registration.

May 2017

- 4 **Hands-On Nutrition****—Eat Smart, Move More program incorporates nutrition education with a hands-on application. Come learn how to make your meal preparation healthier and more economical. This program is FREE and open to the public. Call the Geary County WIC office to reserve your seat at 785-762-5682.
- 4 **Knowledge at Noon****— Keys to Embracing Aging: Session #12: Taking Time for Yourself, Valley View Estates, 1440 Pearl Drive, Junction City, KS. This free program begins at noon and is open to the public. Call the Extension Office by May 1, 2017 to reserve your seat. 785-238-4161.
- 9 **Knowledge at Noon**— Keys to Embracing Aging: Session \$ - Brain Activity, Expanding to a second location at the 4-H/Senior Citizen's Building 1025 S. Spring Valley Road, Junction City, this program is part of a series of 12 lessons about how to approach retirement with positive optimism. For a nominal cost, feel free to stay for the senior meal. Meal reservations can be made by calling the Senior Citizen's office at 785-238-5545.

June 2017

Farmer's Market and Summer Picnic Parties begin!

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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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