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Geary County

K-State Research and Extension News

Knowledge
for Life

Ask the Agent

Q: Is there a difference between a baking pumpkin and a carving pumpkin?

A: Yes—there are different varieties of pumpkins and the difference lies in the quality and size.

“**Jack-O-Lantern**” or carving pumpkins are usually bred for their larger size and are not eating quality. The varieties used for decorating usually are coarse-grained or have a watery texture and can also taste pretty flat.

Pie pumpkins are best to use for cooking and baking. They are small, sweet, and meatier and have less stringy fiber than carving pumpkins.

Nutritional Information:
1 cup of cooked, boiled, drained, and unsalted pumpkin contains 49 Calories, 2g of protein, 12g or carbohydrate, 3g of dietary fiber.

For more information call the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office at: 785-238-4161



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How to Avoid Falls—Even Though Fall is Here **September 2017**

It's no mistake that the National Council on Aging (NCOA) has historically chosen the first day of the fall season to observe Falls Prevention Awareness Day. This year's observation is on September 22, 2017 and carries the theme “10 Years Standing Together to Prevent Falls.” The purpose of this designated day is to raise awareness about how to prevent fall-related injuries among older adults.



One in four older Americans falls every year. According to the NCOA, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for people aged 65+. They can result in hip fractures, broken bones, and head injuries, not to mention the lack of confidence and fear that one has in their balance following a serious fall. With the emotional reaction to a fall, a senior often finds it difficult to have the courage to remain active.



There are several factors that lead to a fall:

Balance and gait: There is no doubt that our coordination deteriorates as you get older—along with our balance and flexibility. The less active you are the more progressed this deterioration becomes.

Vision: Less light reaches your retina as your eye ages. This makes making contrasting edges, tripping hazards and obstacles harder to see.

Medications: Some medications, both prescriptions and over the counter options can cause dizziness, dehydration, and/or undesired interactions.

Environment: Although living in your home as you age is preferred by most, you may not have adapted your home to your needs as you have aged. What used to work for you 35 year old body, most likely does not work for your 65 year old body.

Chronic conditions: NCOA reports that more than 80% of older adults have at least one chronic condition like diabetes, stroke, or arthritis. Often, these increase the risk of falling because they result in lost function, inactivity, depression, pain, or multiple medications.

Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors. The more risk factors a person has, the greater their chances of falling. Prevention is a key to reducing the risk of falls as we get older. Check out the article on the inside cover that outlines six steps you can take today to reduce the risk of falls as you age.

Picture source: www.NCOA.org; Asbury Harris Epworth Towers/Wesley Woods Senior Living; Atlanta, GA

Its Time to Register for the October 7 Freezer Meal Class

Morris, Riley, Pottawatomie, Wabaunsee, and Geary County FCS agents are offering this multi-county program for people who want to save time and money. Preparing a month of meals in a single day seems like a daunting task, but it can be done. This class will teach individuals the basics of this method of preparing meals, providing them with the tools they need to provide healthy, home-cooked meals for their families. Once people learn this method of cooking, they will begin to see the many benefits it can provide. This regional program is being offered in Council Grove on Saturday, October 7 at the Council Grove High School from 9 a.m.—1 p.m. Bring a cooler and some ice packs to take prepared entrees home in. All equipment and supplies will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own “favorites” - knives, peelers, apron, etc. Hope you can join us!

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION AND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

6 Steps to Reducing Falls

Here are six easy steps you can take today to help your older loved one reduce their risk of a fall:

1. Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe.

Ask your older loved one if they're concerned about falling. Many older adults recognize that falling is a risk, but they believe it won't happen to them or they won't get hurt—even if they've already fallen in the past. A good place to start is by sharing NCOA's [Debunking the Myths of Older Adult Falls](#). If they're concerned about falling, dizziness, or balance, suggest that they discuss it with their health care provider who can assess their risk and suggest programs or services that could help.

2. Discuss their current health conditions.

Find out if your older loved one is experiencing any problems with managing their own health. Are they having trouble remembering to take their medications—or are they experiencing side effects? Is it getting more difficult for them to do things they used to do easily?

Also make sure they're taking advantage of all the preventive benefits now offered under Medicare, such as the Annual Wellness visit. Encourage them to speak openly with their health care provider about all of their concerns.

3. Ask about their last eye checkup.

If your older loved one wears glasses, make sure they have a current prescription and they're using the glasses as advised by their eye doctor.

Remember that using tint-changing lenses can be hazardous when going from bright sun into darkened buildings and homes. A simple strategy is to change glasses upon entry or stop until their lenses adjust.

Bifocals also can be problematic on stairs, so it's important to be cautious. For those already struggling with low vision, consult with a low-vision specialist for ways to make the most of their eyesight.

4. Notice if they're holding onto walls, furniture, or someone else when walking or if they appear to have difficulty walking or arising from a chair.

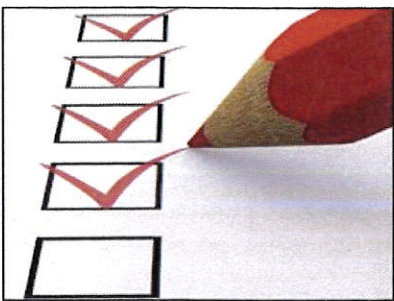
These are all signs that it might be time to see a physical therapist. A trained physical therapist can help your older loved one improve their balance, strength, and gait through exercise. They might also suggest a cane or walker—and provide guidance on how to use these aids. Make sure to follow their advice. Poorly fit aids actually can increase the risk of falling.

5. Talk about their medications.

If your older loved one is having a hard time keeping track of medicines or is experiencing side effects, encourage them to discuss their concerns with their doctor and pharmacist. Suggest that they have their medications reviewed each time they get a new prescription.

My mom had an elaborate spreadsheet to keep track of her medications and schedules. Adding a timed medication dispenser that my sister refilled each month promoted her peace of mind and allowed us to ensure her adherence to the prescribed regime.

Also, beware of non-prescription medications that contain sleep aids—including painkillers with "PM" in their names. These can lead to balance issues and dizziness. If your older loved one is having sleeping problems, encourage them to talk to their doctor or pharmacist about safer alternatives.



6. Do a walk-through safety assessment of their home.

There are many simple and inexpensive ways to make a home safer. For professional assistance, consult an Occupational Therapist. Here are some examples:

- **Lighting:** Increase lighting throughout the house, especially at the top and bottom of stairs. Ensure that lighting is readily available when getting up in the middle of the night.
- **Stairs:** Make sure there are two secure rails on all stairs.
- **Bathrooms:** Install grab bars in the tub/shower and near the toilet. Make sure they're installed where your older loved one would actually use them. For even greater safety, consider using a shower chair and hand-held shower.

For more ideas on how to make the home safer, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offers a *home assessment checklist* in multiple languages at: <https://www.cdc.gov/steady/patient.html>

Source: NCOA: *6 Steps for Preventing Falls Among Your Older Loved Ones*

FACT: Over 800,000 patients a year are hospitalized because of a fall injury, most often because of a head injury or hip fracture.

FACT: Each year, 2.8 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall injuries.

Many who read my newsletter may not realize that I grew up with Extension. My dad began his Extension career in Rice County and was cut short of retiring from Shawnee County Extension as a result of premature death from a chronic disease. However, the majority of his career was spent serving the people of Marshall County from 1968—1984. For most of his time there, he worked alongside Gloria Gaston, Extension Home Economist (as we were titled until around 1995). A friend of mine shared a publication she authored titled "Pumpkin Pleasures." So, I reviewed the information to make sure it fits with today's food safety guidelines. In honor of my dad's and Gloria's positive influence on me, I thought I would share some timeless tips from...

PUMPKIN PLEASURES

NOT-JUST-PIE**



Pumpkins make more than just pies and great jack-o'-lanterns. This tasty, brightly colored garden vegetable is delicious in soups, breads, as a side dish and more.

For cooking, choose smaller pumpkins as they are more tender and have less waste. The skin should be smooth, hard and unblemished with a good color.

To cook pumpkin, wash it well and cut in half; scrape out seeds and stringy fibers (save seeds). Cut fruit into large portions and peel if you wish; however, the flesh will be a richer shade of orange if the shell is left on during cooking.

To BOIL pumpkin: Peel and cut into 1 ½ to 2 inch cubes. Add pumpkin pieces to one inch of boiling water in a saucepan. Over low heat, simmer covered 25 to 30 minutes, until tender.

To BAKE pumpkin: Place pieces, shell side up, in baking pan. Bake in a preheated 350° F oven for 40 to 60 minutes, until tender.

To MICROWAVE pumpkin: Cut pumpkin into 1 ½ to 2 inch chunks. Microwave 8 to 10 minutes in covered dish.

**Three pounds of cooked pumpkin, yields 3 cups of mashed pumpkin. Mashed cooked pumpkin can be substituted, cup for cup, for canned pumpkin.



BAKE YOUR OWN PUMPKINS

One of the easiest ways to prepare pumpkin is to wash and dry small to medium-sized pumpkins, pierce in several places for steam to escape and bake on a cookie sheet in a 325° oven until the stem can easily be popped out. This takes from one to three hours depending on the pumpkin's size.

This also could be done in the microwave oven and will take 6 to 7 minutes per pound to bake. Don't forget to pierce in several places or you'll have pumpkin all over!

When pumpkin is cool enough to handle, remove seeds and scoop out pulp or cut into quarters and peel off outer skin. When adequately cooked, the skin will be paper thin and easy to remove.

Freezing pumpkin results in a better product than canning pumpkin. If you decide to can pumpkin do not mash or puree it, but instead, leave it in chunks and pressure can it. Follow directions carefully when preserving your pumpkin by using research-based recipes such as those found at the *National Center for Home Food Preservation* and *So Easy to Preserve*. Call the Geary County K-State Research and Extension office for more information.

Freezing Pumpkin

Prepare: Select full-colored mature pumpkin with fine texture. Wash, cut into cooking-size sections and remove seeds. **Cook** until soft in boiling water, in steam, in a pressure cooker or in an oven. Remove pulp from rind and mash. To cool, place pan containing pumpkin in cold water and stir occasionally. Package, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.



Knowledge
forLife

Freezer Meals Class

October 7, 2017 9am-1pm

Cook Once, Eat for a Week!

Participants will receive:

Lunch

Recipes that are sized for both family quantity and cooking for two!

Food Safety Information

Basic Food prep experience

5 main entrees to take home & 3 sides

Class Location

Council Grove High School FACS Classroom
129 Hockaday St
Council Grove, KS 66834

Cost is \$50 per person. Registration due: September 29 by 5:00 pm at the Extension Office in Council Grove. For more information call 620-767-5136 or email Shandi at sdandres@ksu.edu

FREEZER MEALS—Cook Once, Eat for a Week!

Registration Due—September 29, 2017 by 5:00 pm

Please fill out the information requested below and mail form and payment to:

Flint Hills Extension District, 501 W Main, Council Grove, KS 66846

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

Food Allergies _____

Cost is \$50—includes lunch and 5 main entrees to take home.

Payment cash check



K-STATE
Research and Extension

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

****Requires pre-registration. Call 238-4161 to pre-register****

September

- 21 Health Pathways for Kansas BCBS Community Kickoff Party from 3:30—6:30 —hosted at the Geary Community Hospital Farmers Market at 1102 St. Mary's Road, Junction City. Join us for fresh fruits and vegetables and a basketful of free family fun and kids games. Sponsored by the community partners of Live Well Geary County.
- 29 Registration Due—Freezer Meal Class

October

- 12 Knowledge at Noon— Keys to Embracing Aging: Session 10 - Financial Affairs, 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.
- 13 EEU Fall Festival—2:00 p.m. at the 4-H/Senior Citizen's Building 1025 S. Spring Valley Road, Junction City
- 15 thru December 7 — Medicare Open Enrollment Season for Part D Prescription Plans. Please call Bailey in the office to make your appointment to review your Part D plan.

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K-State Research and Extension, including health, wellness, and financial tips.

www.facebook.com/gearycountyextension

Geary County Office information: <http://www.geary.ksu.edu/>



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