



Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

geary.k-state.edu

December 2018

Ask the Agent

Q: Can I change my Medicare Supplement plan from a Plan F to a Plan G?

A: You need to check with your current supplement plan's customer service. Some companies will let you move from a Plan F to a Plan G without going through underwriting. When you call, ask them if you can make the change without any cost or change in coverage other than paying for the Part B deductible. Changing supplemental plan companies is risky. I suggest you make an appointment with me for us to discuss the risks involved in such a decision.

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

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Going Green for the Holidays—Part 2

December 2018

Last month I shared statistics about the significant amount of waste that is generated between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve—an increase of 25% over the other three quarters of the year.

In a recent news release from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) feature online article, several suggestions were offered to help us Go Green! for the holiday season and reduce the amount of waste we generate. If you want to incorporate sustainability into your holiday celebrations consider implementing some of these ideas from the CDC:



Decorate with items that are energy-efficient and durable.

- Buy an artificial tree that you can use for years to come; make the most energy efficient choice. Safety and energy-efficiency should always be considered first.
- Buy a living tree you can plant outside or keep as a houseplant after the holidays.
- Dispose of your tree at a chipping facility or return it to the environment in other eco-friendly ways.

Use energy efficiently.

- Consider using few or no lights in your holiday decorations.
- Decorate with more energy efficient LED strings.
- Plug your decorative indoor and outdoor lights into a timer to save electricity.
- Decorate creatively and inexpensively with natural materials from your yard or with items you already own.
- Save money and resources by making your own gifts.

Use fewer resources when you shop, give presents, and wrap gifts.

- Shop online. Take your own bags on shopping trips. Keep them in the car so they're always available.
- Conserve energy when shopping by combining several trips in one, using mass transit, or carpooling.
- Give gifts that are durable, energy-efficient, recyclable, or made of natural products. Purchase gifts that are fair-trade, locally made or grown, or organically grown.
- Support your local economy by buying from local merchants, craft shows, or antique shops.
- Make your own gifts: knit, sew, bake, build, or create art; make calendars using your own photographs or a recipe book with favorite recipes.
- Give in ways that also support your community: tickets to local theater performances, concerts, sports events, local attractions; museum memberships; gift certificates for a massage at a local spa, horseback riding, or a rock climbing lesson.
- Give your time and skill—coupons for household chores, meals, gardening, cleaning, window washing, car detailing, scheduled dog walks, or lessons in computer or smartphone use for senior citizens.
- Donate to a charity or service organization in the name of a friend of relative who supports that cause.
- Reuse the fronts of old cards as holiday postcards or gift tags.
- Give cards that are eco-friendly.
- Consider alternatives to battery-powered toys. If you must provide batteries for a gift, be sure to buy rechargeable ones. If you are giving electronics, choose energy-saving items.

(continued inside...)

Going Green for the Holidays—Part 2

- Use creative materials for gift wrap:
 - Scarves, fabric, handkerchiefs
 - Old maps, sheet music, advertisements
 - Reusable tins, baking pans, or other home or garden items.
 - Send email cards or make your own.
 - Buy cards made from “post-consumer” content and printed in non-toxic inks.



Eat sustainable food and avoid disposable containers and extra packaging.

- Research sustainable food choices in your area, and buy locally if possible.
- Buy snacks and beverages in bulk to avoid extra packaging.
- Serve food with washable utensils, plates, and glasses, rather than disposable items.
- Make homemade eggnog, hot chocolate* or iced tea in large quantities. (*see recipe on the right)

Why not choose a few of these ideas that will be easy for you to incorporate into your holiday celebration? Not only will you contribute to sustainability and health, but chances are you will also simplify your life. And you may get more of what we all need at this time of year—time to enjoy family and friends and to focus on the joys of the season.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/greenholidays/index.html>
Extracted 11/23/2018



Hot Cocoa Gift Mix

Ingredients:

- 6 1/2 cups non-fat milk powder
- 1 (5 ounce) package non-instant chocolate pudding mix
- 1 cup powdered chocolate drink mix
- 1/2 cup powdered non-dairy creamer
- 1/2 cup SLENDA® No Calorie Sweetener, Granulated
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

Preparation:

In a large bowl, combine powdered milk, chocolate pudding mix, chocolate drink mix powder, creamer, SLENDA® Granulated Sweetener, and cocoa. Divide the mixture between two 1-quart jars. Seal, and decorate as desired. These can be stored in a dry area for up to 3 months.

Giftng:

Attach a tag to the sealed jar with the following instructions: Hot Cocoa: Dissolve 1/3 cup cocoa mix in 1 cup boiling water.

NUTRITION INFO PER SERVING	
28 servings, Serving Size: 1/3 cup dry hot cocoa mix	
Calories	140
Calories From Fat	10
Total Fat	1 g
Saturated Fat	1 g
Cholesterol	5 mg
Sodium	180 mg
Total Carbs	24 g
Dietary Fiber	1 g
Sugars	21 g
Protein	11 g

Source: <https://www.splenda.com/recipes/hot-cocoa-gift-mix-recipe>



'Tis the Season for Slow Cookers

Many home chefs use slow cookers that cook foods at low temperatures between 170 °F and 280 °F. The direct heat from the pot, longer cooking times, and steam created within the tightly-covered container destroy bacteria and make the slow cooker a convenient and safe option for many families.

Important slow cooker food safety tips:

Always thaw meat or poultry before putting it into a slow cooker.

Pay attention to temperature to ensure your slow cooker reaches a bacteria-killing temperature.

Use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked foods. See chart to the right or go to: <http://www.geary.k-state.edu/>. Look under the Health, Home and Family tab for a complete listing.

Source: Partnership for Food Safety Education at <http://www.fightbac.org/>

Product	Minimum Internal Temperature
All Poultry (breasts, whole bird, legs, thighs, wings, ground poultry, giblets, and stuffing)	165 °F (73.9 °C)
Eggs	160 °F (71.1 °C)
Fish & Shellfish	145 °F (62.8 °C)
Leftovers	165 °F (73.9 °C)
Casseroles	165 °F (73.9 °C)

Safety First for the Holidays!

- Buy toys suited to the age and abilities of the child. Use manufacturers' age recommendations to guide your purchases.
- Do not buy toys with small, detachable parts for young children. Manufacturers warn consumers when toys are not recommended for children under three. Choose non-toxic toys for young children, who will probably stick them in their mouths.
- Teach children how to use toys properly and safely. Examine toys periodically and repair or discard broken ones.
- Dispose of all plastic bags and other packaging that could be choking or suffocation hazards.
- Keep round, hard foods like candy cane pieces, mints, nuts and popcorn out of reach of young children.
- Examine toys for sharp edges, small parts or sharp points.



Family Holiday Traditions

The holiday season, from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day, is a time of celebrations and many family get-togethers. This can also be a time of mixed feelings for children who are being raised by grandparents or other relatives and for grandparents who are "parenting again." Others who may find the holidays difficult are families who are separated due to military deployment. Whatever the reasons for the change in family structure, holidays are still a good time for sharing celebrations, holiday traditions, and special memories.

The holidays are a time to think about and establish new traditions and make memories with the family as it is today. Remember to keep things simple and flexible, and talk about what makes the season special for each person. What traditions do you want to pass on to younger family members? Traditions can be customs or special activities that may be based on beliefs or customs and are often handed down by generations. These special activities are meaningful to family members and can help create a special bond.

Traditions can help strengthen families by helping them develop a sense of belonging, familiarity, and give routine to daily life. Traditions can also provide a sense of continuity, closeness, understanding, and love that can help families weather difficult times and create special memories.

Whether blending families and traditions or creating new ones, here are some things to keep in mind:

- ◆ Set aside time and involve family members and friends in the process.
- ◆ Invite and welcome ideas from each person.
- ◆ Be realistic and do not set expectations too high.
- ◆ Be honest about the other commitments, energy, time, money, and resources you and others bring.
- ◆ Remember it is okay to change family traditions as families and/or needs change.

- ◆ Be flexible and patient with yourself and each other.
- ◆ Honor daily needs. Remember adequate rest, exercise, sleep, and nutrition is important for all ages.
- ◆ Be sure to maintain medication schedules as prescribed.
- ◆ Think about the meaning and purpose of the celebration or tradition for your family. Avoid getting caught up in too much commercialism.

Here are some ideas for simple family activities or holiday traditions:

- ◆ Include children in special holiday baking and meal preparation.
- ◆ Bake special cookies to enjoy and share with others.
- ◆ Involve the children in preparing a special family recipe that has been handed down or is traditionally a part of the holiday meal.
- ◆ Set aside time to read a special holiday book, poetry, or story.
- ◆ Visit the library or bookstore to select something that has meaning to you and your family.
- ◆ Make a family-book with stories and pictures about special traditions and celebrations. Have each person write or draw one thing that made the day special for him or her. This family-book can be a good way to save and enjoy artwork, stories, clippings, autographs, family history, photographs, etc.



There are many ways for families to connect through the holidays with special traditions. Begin now to plan how you and your family will celebrate together with fun, laughter, sharing special times and memories this holiday season.

Geary County

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

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

January

- 8* Seniors Eating Well, SNAP-Ed sponsored class offered at the Bicentennial Manor, 1010 W. 8th St., Junction City. This 4-session series led by Nutrition Educator Anna Comer is designed to improve fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity among able-bodied, 55+ year olds participating in or eligible for Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) nutrition assistance programs. Session dates for the 4-part class are January 8, January 22, February 12, and February 28. The class is free and open to the public. Participants are asked to commit to all four 1-hour sessions. Classes begin at 11am.
For more information or to register by the December 21 deadline call Anna Comer at 785-579-4726!
- 9* Seniors Eating Well, SNAP-Ed sponsored class offered at the 12th Street Center, 1002 W. 12th, Junction City. This 4-session series led by Nutrition Educator Ann Katt is designed to improve fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity among able-bodied, 50+ year olds participating in or eligible for Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) nutrition assistance programs. Session dates for the 4-part class are January 9, January 16, January 23, and January 30. Each class begins at 12 noon. The class is free and open to the public. Participants are asked to commit to all four 45-minute sessions.
For more information or to register by the December 21 deadline call Ann Katt at 785-579-4726!



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