



Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

geary.k-state.edu

January 2021

Ask the Agent

Q: How long can you safely store eggs?

A: The safest way to store eggs is to keep them in their original carton in a cold refrigerator. This protects and prevents them from absorbing strong odors and flavors from the other food stored in your refrigerator.

If your eggs were purchased from the store, follow the “best before” date printed on the top or end of the carton.

If you are using farm fresh eggs, the National Center for Home Food Preservation states that they can be stored for at least a month.

However, Extension Poultry Specialists share that if safely handled, washed, and stored in a 45-degree or cooler refrigerator, farm fresh eggs can be stored for up to 15 weeks (or 3 1/2 months!)

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

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Welcome to a New Year!

January 2021

No doubt, 2020 was a year to remember— or perhaps a year to forget for some. With the new year, we have a new start. While I have heard a wide variety of opinions on how people anticipate 2021 will go, I choose to look forward to the year with optimism and a positive attitude.



A positive attitude can impact mental health and physical functioning, including the ability to fight disease and infection. Attitude can also affect relationships, social networks, and help make success in life more likely. The bottom line: being more positive across the lifespan causes less stress and enables people to live healthier, happy lives.

Attitude affects:

How successful you are in achieving your academic, work, and personal goals;

How you feel and look mentally and physically; and
What you do and say.

How do you know if you have a positive attitude? Here are some questions you can ask yourself to gauge your positive outlook:

Are you optimistic, easygoing, or extroverted?

Are you willing to learn, no matter how difficult it is?

Do you laugh a lot or have a sense of humor by not taking yourself too seriously?

Do you express your emotions rather than bottle them up?

Do you do your best when studying or working and try to improve how you do your work?

Do you demonstrate enthusiasm in whatever you say and do?

Do you welcome challenges, experiments, or try new ideas?

How did you do? The more times you answered yes to the questions above, the more positive attitude you have. Of course, some questions may not apply to you as much as others. Regardless, having a positive attitude is a choice. Your 2021 will be a better experience if you decide that a positive attitude is your priority.

Join me in celebrating the new year with a smile and a positive attitude!
Welcome 2021!

Source: *Keys to Embracing Aging: Positive Attitude*, Dr. Erin Yelland, K-State Research and Extension Specialist, Adult Development and Aging, bulletin #MF3256

On January 1, 2021, Governor Laura Kelly declared January 2021 Kansas Radon Action Month (KRAM).

Winter is an excellent time to test your home for radon gas. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends actively reducing indoor radon levels when homes are confirmed with 4.0 pCi/L of radon gas or higher. The Geary County Kansas State Research and Extension office keeps a small inventory of test kits from the Kansas Radon Program (KRP) for a small fee.

Why is it important to test your home for radon? Chronic, long-term radon gas exposure in homes increases the long-term risk of developing lung cancer. Residential radon gas exposure is the number one leading cause of lung cancer death in the U.S. for non-smokers.

Where does radon come from?

Radon comes from the natural radioactive decay of radium and uranium found in the soil beneath the house. The amount of radon in the soil depends on soil chemistry, which varies from one house to the next. Radon levels in the soil range from a few hundred to several thousands of pCi/L. The amount of radon that escapes from the soil to enter the house depends on the weather, soil porosity, soil moisture, and the suction within the house.

How does radon get into the house?

Houses act like large chimneys. As the air in the house warms, it rises to leak out the attic openings and around the upper floor windows. This creates a small suction at the lowest level of the house, pulling the radon out of the soil and into the house. You can test this on a cold day by opening a top floor window an inch. You will notice warm air from the house rushing out that opening; yet, if you open a basement window an inch, you will feel the cold outside air rushing in. This suction is what pulls the radon out of the soil and into the house. You might think caulking the cracks and the openings in the basement floor will stop the radon from entering the house. It is unlikely that caulking the accessible cracks and joints will permanently seal the openings radon needs to enter the house. The radon levels will still likely remain unchanged. Fortunately, there are other extremely effective means of keeping radon out of your home. Throughout the country, several million people have already tested for radon. Some houses tested as high as 2,000-3,000 pCi/L; yet, there hasn't been one house that could not mitigate to an acceptable level. Mitigation usually costs between \$800-\$2500.

There is risk of potential increase in radon exposure from radon levels in a home due to increased time at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, which makes testing even more important. Stop by the Geary County K-State Research and Extension office to purchase your test kit up. For more information about addressing radon exposure and testing, check out our website at <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/radon.html>.

Winter weather can lead to power outages. So, before the snow and ice arrives, have a plan in mind to handle your food supply. Here are some suggested resources:

- 1) Ready.gov provides a wide variety of resources to help you prepare for the unexpected, including a electricity outage. You can learn more about how to prepare for a disaster and how to handle refrigerated and frozen food when the electricity goes out: <https://www.ready.gov/food>.
- 2) US Department of Agriculture provides specific guidelines about steps to take in advance of bad weather. You will also find a chart of specific foods often found in your refrigerator that gives guidance on how long the food is safe and at what point the food should be discarded. You can find this tool and more at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov>
- 3) Have you ever wondered if your food is safe when storing it outside in a cold garage or in your car parked outside in the winter months? Doing so is strongly discouraged. One reason is that you can't regulate temperature in a safe way. You will find additional research-based reasons you shouldn't store food outdoors in cold weather at: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/can-you-safely-store-perishable-food-outside-during-winter-months>; or <http://bit.ly/2KA4nDdfoodsafety>





There is a popular game that my boys enjoy playing called This or That. The game is a simple talking game where players can express their preferences. It's ideal for a small group with as few as two players.

The premise of the game is to choose between two different objects, activities, food, etc. It's a fun way for participants to get to know more about each other. I thought it might be fun to ask my readers to try their hand at it.

So, take a minute to look down the list below and grab a pencil to circle your preferences:

THIS	Or	THAT
Prepare your taxes	Or	Go for a walk – even if it's raining
Prepare a homemade meal	Or	Clean out a closet
Plan a vacation	Or	Purchase a car
Ride a bike	Or	Take a community education class
Create a Family Budget	Or	Spend your tax return
December 20	Or	July 4
Winter	Or	Summer
Age 5	Or	Age 65
Annual Physical	Or	Shopping

You may wonder what this game or the list has to do with a Family and Consumer Sciences newsletter. Each one of these topics or items is part of my professional role as a Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent.

What is Family & Consumer Science?

The field of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) is an ever-evolving profession as our culture, society, work force, and families change to meet new demands and adapt new strategies for successful living. Formerly known as Home Economics, the field changed its name in 1994 to reflect these changes and move the public's perception past what had been the focus of previous generations – domestic knowledge and skills.

The mission of K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences is to link education with life experiences to help people improve their lives, their families, and their communities. The tenants at the core of our work are rooted in essential living skills including healthy relationships, healthy living choices, financial well-being, and strong communities. The benefit of work by FCS Extension agents to individuals, families, and communities is:

1. Improved or enhanced quality of life
2. Personal growth
3. Improved or strengthened families
4. Healthy communities
5. Being prepared for the future
6. Successful and sustainable society
7. Help individuals and families reach or realize their potential
8. Empowering individuals and families across the life span and make positive contributions to their community
9. Help individuals and families to live and work in a diverse society



Now look back at your circled list above. What you circled is likely different than what your neighbor would have circled, or your boss, or your adult child, or your own parent. Regardless, the selections are all something we can relate to and would likely impact how we live our lives. Compare your list of circled items against the list of how the mission of K-State Research and Extension Family & Consumer Science professionals can help individuals, families, and communities by linking education with life experiences. FCS is much more than this or that—rather, we are this AND that. FCS Extension agents focus on all aspects of the individual and family from pre-natal to senior living and end of life planning.

There are several successful signature programs implemented in Geary County throughout the year that cover the breadth of the profession including:

Strengthening Families Parenting Classes
Medicare Counseling
SNAP-Ed Nutrition Classes
Modern Parenting Initiative

Walk Kansas Geary County
Quick Meals for Busy Families
Families Matter Radio Program
Culture of Health Programs

Contact Deb Andres at the Geary County K-State Research and Extension office at 785-238-4161 if you have any questions regarding the programs and initiatives shared in this article.

Geary County

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

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

In following the Kansas State University's COVID-19 protocols, all Geary County K-State Research and Extension face-to-face meetings and programs have been suspended through March, 2021. However, online learning opportunities continue to expand.

February, 2021

- 2 Quick Meals for Busy Families—a healthy meal preparation series that will show participants how to prepare healthy menu options using their slow cooker. Recipes and resources will be provided to each household that registers. Online registration closes January 25. Look for more information on the Geary County K-State Research and Extension website and Facebook page. Space is limited to 25 households. The class is free.
- 3 Eat Smart Move More Online Class—Join us every Wednesday from 4-5pm! These classes will be held on Zoom and are FREE if you and your family qualify for FDIAP, Free and Reduced Lunch Program, Head Start, Medicaid/Kancare, SNAP, TANF, TEFAP, or WIC. If you would like to start the new year learning new skills from this series, contact Courtney Angelo and Ann Katt at snap-edgearycounty@ksu.edu.

March, 2021

28 MARK YOUR Calendar: Walk Kansas 2021 begins!



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