



Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

geary.k-state.edu

February 2022

Ask the Agent

Q: I ran out of time to get all my tomatoes canned last fall so I put them in the freezer to process later. Does this change the acidity of my tomatoes and do I need to adjust my canning recipe for that?

A: If you picked them before the first freeze, their acidity will not change. However, if you picked them after they had frozen on the vine, it is not safe to use them at all. See the inside article for more information about canning previously frozen tomatoes.

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

The Heart of the Matter

February 2022

I was 19 when my dad died from heart disease. He was overweight, smoked, and had high blood pressure. His first diagnosed heart attack had happened 13 years prior to that, but our family is certain he had had at least one heart attack before that where he didn't go to the doctor or ER. He was only 54.



As the youngest of four children, I am glad to report that we have all made it past the age of 54 without having a heart attack. Genetically speaking, we certainly have the predisposition for heart problems but have been able to stave off the cardiovascular disease, so far. I often think that it is because of my dad's heart issues and early death that each of us are more conscientious of our eating and lifestyle habits that contributed to his health issues. We learned our lessons about heart disease the hard way.

February is American Heart Month, a time when my family and I, as well as you, can focus on cardiovascular health. Because heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, it impacts ALL of us – either directly, or through a close family member or friend. Each year in the U.S., one in four deaths is caused by heart disease.

But these statistics can change if each of us change. A fact sheet developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute shares how this change can happen: *Studies show that if you join forces with people at home or online, you have a better chance of staying motivated (for change.) Best of all, you don't have to make big changes all at once. Small steps can get you where you want to go. Gather your friends and family and make a commitment to your heart health, together.*

Here's how to get started:

- ◆ Get moving! Make it a goal to get at least 2½ hours of physical activity a week – which figures to 30 minutes each day, 5 days a week. Add in muscle strengthening exercises at least 2 days a week. If this seems like too much time, break it down into smaller chunks. Try 5, 10, or 15 minutes several times each day. Start small and work your way up if you need to. Regardless, simply getting started is a great first step.
- ◆ Commit to eating healthy! Reduce your sodium and saturated fat intake. This is key to preventing heart disease. Take a good look at the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan.
- ◆ Focus on a healthy weight! Being overweight makes the heart need to work harder to pump blood. This increases your risk of having heart disease, a stroke, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Choosing heart-healthy foods and getting regular exercise will help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight!
- ◆ Chill! Keep your stress level down to keep high blood pressure at bay and strive to get adequate quality sleep. Adults should aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night, while youth need as much as 10 hours. Developing a bedtime routine is important for children but it also should be part of our adult routine, as well. *(continued on page 2.)*

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- ◆ Don't smoke! No doubt, smoking is a hard habit to break, but many people have succeeded and so can you. Rally your family and friends to help you. Set a quit date and let them know what your goal is. The chemicals in tobacco smoke harm your heart and blood vessels in many ways. The sooner you quit, the sooner your heart damage from smoking will stop.
- ◆ Know your health numbers! Keep a log of your exercise routine, keep a running record of your blood pressure, and talk to your doctor about your cholesterol numbers. All of these health numbers impact your heart health and can help your doctor know how you are doing.

Take a stand against heart disease by standing up for your health. The steps you take starting today, can improve your own health numbers and contribute to changing our national statistics on heart disease.

More about DASH....

Continuously ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as one of the best diets in America, the DASH diet earns high marks from both consumers and scientists alike for its practicality and reliable results.

DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. Its origins are based solely in scientific research. Developed by the National Institutes of Health and administered to participants in a controlled research study, the DASH way of eating proved to have a positive impact on participants' blood pressure and blood lipid levels, which can reduce one's risk for developing hypertension.

Why hypertension is a silent killer

Hypertension has no outward symptoms, can occur at any age, affects one in three adults in the United States, and usually goes undetected for years until a fatal heart attack or stroke occurs. If left untreated, hypertension can cause major damage to blood vessels, which can lead to kidney failure, impaired vision and other heart-related diseases.

The only way to know if you're at risk for hypertension is to have your blood pressure measured on a regular basis. Blood pressure is the force exerted on artery walls from blood flowing through the body. A blood pressure reading provides two measures, systolic pressure and diastolic pressure, which are expressed as millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). Systolic pressure is measured as the heart pumps. Diastolic pressure is measured between beats, as blood flows back into the heart. One's blood pressure is considered normal if it's at or below 120/80 mm Hg.

DASH Diet: Sustainable. Healthy. Proven. written by Crystal Futrell, former Johnson County K-State Research & Extension FCS Agent.

DASH Diet takes the cake

But why is this darling of the diet world embraced by health professionals yet understood so little by the public? It is one of the few diets on the market that actually has scientific research backing its results.

The DASH diet can

- reduce high blood pressure,
- manage or prevent diabetes,
- improve heart health,
- help with weight loss, and improve overall health in general.

Health professionals love the DASH Diet not only because it's effective but also because it's manageable, does not exclude any food group, and does not require esoteric ingredients. In fact, everything needed to start consuming the DASH Diet is accessible and affordable. Side note here: The DASH Diet places a heavy emphasis on consuming fruits and vegetables, which, if bought fresh, can be pricey. The options of canned and frozen produce IS a healthy option. An easy way to utilize canned and frozen options is to only buy fresh produce when you know you're going to consume it raw. If you're making soups, stews, casseroles, smoothies, etc., purchase the low sodium canned or frozen options. It's more affordable and the nutrition loss, if any, is minuscule.

Diet and high blood pressure

Many control their high blood pressure with medication, but lifestyle changes can have a tremendous effect naturally on both preventing and reducing hypertension risks.

These behaviors include:

- maintaining a healthy weight,
- avoiding tobacco,
- limiting alcohol (no more than 2 drinks per day for men, and 1 drink per day for women),
- moderate physical activity for 30-45 minutes on most days, and
- enjoying a heart-healthy, nutrient-dense diet.

Here's where the DASH diet comes into play.

The DASH diet is a specific but easy to follow eating plan that emphasizes a high intake of vegetables, fruits, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, whole grains, fish, poultry, beans, seeds, nuts and vegetable oils while limiting intake of sodium, sweets, sugary beverages and red meats. It's low in saturated and trans fats but rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fiber and protein. Based on the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the DASH diet has also been used to help individuals lose weight, manage diabetes and learn about healthy eating habits. But the nicest thing about the diet is it's been proven safe and effective for all ages and stages, and does not require special purchases of tools, ingredients or supplements.



QUICK MEALS 2022

Quick Meals for Busy Families is a FREE community education class that teaches healthy food choices by learning new recipes.

4

4 bi-weekly learning sessions

February 21

March 7

March 21

April 4

Bi-weekly Monday night sessions begin at 5:30PM at the Larry Dixon Center, 920 W. 6th Street, Junction City.

75

75 minutes of hands-on fun!

Participants will learn about nutrition and make a healthy recipe to taste. Those attending all four learning sessions will receive a slow cooker or electric skillet along with a kitchen tool kit (1 per family.)



\$



Learning how to shop for and prepare healthy meals can save you money! A healthy diet and moderate exercise reduces risk of chronic disease like heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers.

Space is limited so register today at <https://bit.ly/QM4BF2022>

Or scan the QR code to access the online registration system!



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28 Days Toward a Healthy Heart

#OurHearts
are healthier together

Try one of these tips each day for a month, then keep up the momentum and make your favorites part of your regular routine.

Day 1

Call a friend and join the [#OurHearts](#) movement.



Day 2

Make a heart-healthy snack.

Day 3

Schedule your annual physical. Discuss your heart health goals with your doctor.



Day 4

Sport red today for National Wear Red Day.

Day 5

Squat it out. Do 1 minute of squats.



Day 6

Make today a salt-free day. Use herbs for flavor instead of salt.



Day 7

Visit [Smokefree.gov](#) to take the first step to quitting smoking.



Day 8

Get your blood pressure checked.



Day 9

Walk an extra 15 minutes today.



Day 10

Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity today.



Day 11

Plan your menu for the week with [heart-healthy recipes](#).



Day 12

Reduce stress using [relaxation techniques](#).



Day 13

Give the elevator a day off and take the stairs.



Day 14

Protect your sweetheart's heart: Plan a heart-healthy date.

Day 15

Swap the sweets for a piece of fruit for dessert.



Day 16

Stress less. Practice mindful meditation for 10 minutes.

Day 17

Head to bed with enough time to get a full 7-8 hours of sleep.



Day 18

Add a stretch break to your calendar to increase your flexibility.



Day 19

Eat vegetarian for a day.



Day 20

Share a funny video or joke that makes you laugh.

Day 21

Dance for 15 minutes to your favorite music.



Day 22

Call a relative and ask about your family health history.



Day 23

March in place during commercial breaks to get your heart going.



Day 24

Get a tape measure and find out the size of your waist.



Day 25

Ask a family member or neighbor to join you for a walk.



Day 26

Fill half of your lunch and dinner plates with vegetables.



Day 27

See how many push-ups you can do in 1 minute.

Day 28

Pay it forward and tell a friend about [The Heart Truth](#).



Food Safety

Canning Previously Frozen Tomatoes

So you saved your tomato crop in the freezer. Can those frozen tomatoes be canned?

It is not recommended to can tomatoes that froze on the vine. This is because the acid content changes too much making them unsafe for canning. But tomatoes harvested prior to a fall freeze, then frozen, do not change in acidity. What does change is their texture and how they measure.

The best choice for canning previously frozen tomatoes is to make a well cooked product such as a stewed or crushed tomato product, or made into tomato juice or sauce.

It is not recommended to can them whole or quartered. They will pack into the jars differently, absorb moisture differently, and the heat transfers through the jars differently. This could lead to underprocessing and spoilage. Tomato canning recipes are based on fresh tomatoes.

Source: University of Georgia; [You Asked It! Food Safety publication posted on November 13, 2017](#) by Karen Blakeslee



General Recommendations for Canning Tomatoes

Tomatoes for many years were considered high acid. However, new varieties, over-mature fruits, and tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines may have a pH greater than 4.6. The USDA and University-based researchers have determined that to ensure a safe acid level for boiling water canning of whole, crushed, or juiced tomatoes, add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or ½ teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomatoes. For pints, use 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice or ¼ teaspoon of citric acid. Acid can be added directly to the jars before filling the jars with product. Add sugar to offset acid taste, if desired. Four tablespoons of 5-percent-acidity vinegar per quart may be used instead of lemon juice or citric acid. However, vinegar may cause undesirable flavor changes.

Source: University of Georgia, [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#)

Photo Credit: Photo by Engin Akyurt on Unsplash

Chicken Salad—a DASH friendly recipe!

Recipe Source: Stay Young at Heart

Prep Time	Cook Time	Yields	Serving Size
10 minutes	20 minutes	5 servings	¾ cup

Ingredients

3 ¼ cup boneless, skinless chicken breast
¼ cup chopped celery
1 Tbsp lemon juice
½ tsp onion powder
1/8 tsp salt
3 Tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise

Directions

1. Bake chicken to an internal temperature of 165°F, cut into cubes, and refrigerate.
2. In a large bowl, combine celery, lemon juice, onion powder, salt, and mayonnaise.
3. Add chilled chicken and mix well.

Tip: To reduce sodium, omit the ¼ tsp of added salt. New sodium content for each serving is 120mg.

calories	176
Total fat	6 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Cholesterol	77 mg
Sodium	179 mg
Total fiber	0 g
Protein	27 g
Carbohydrates	2 g
Potassium	236 mg
Calcium	16 mg
Magnesium	25 mg

Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Geary County

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

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

February 2022

- 14, 21, 28 Healthy Together Meals—Hosted by Live Well Geary County at the Larry Dixon Center, 920 W. 6th, Junction City from 5:30 –6:30pm. Free hot and healthy meals offered to seniors. For more information on this communal meal site and others, go to: <https://www.livewellgearycounty.org/community-meals>. *Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases in Geary County, we have suspended in-person dining. We are offering drive-thru "to go" meals at the front door of the center. Send an email to livewellgearycounty@gmail.com to reserve your meal(s) each Monday by noon. Advance reservations are encouraged but not required.*
- 21 Quick Meals for Busy Families III—Back by demand! We are offering a free 4-session nutrition and food preparation class beginning in February. Sessions will meet bi-weekly through April 4 at the Larry Dixon Center. To register, follow this link: <https://bit.ly/QM4BF2022>

March 2022

- 7, 21 Quick Meals for Busy Families III—sessions 2 & 3
- 7, 14, 21, 28 Healthy Together Meals—Hosted by Live Well Geary County at the Larry Dixon Center, 920 W. 6th, Junction City from 5:30 –6:30pm. Free hot and healthy meals offered to seniors.
- 27 Walk Kansas 2022 begins! Registration will open up on March 1. Watch our Walk Kansas Facebook page for more details! Like us on Facebook at Geary County Walk Kansas. Start building your 6-member team today!



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