

Ask the Agent

Q—How much lemon juice can I get from a whole lemon? What about other citrus fruits?

A—For an average sized lemon, you should get about 3 tablespoons. Limes yield less juice—2 tablespoons on average. One orange will yield about 2 fluid ounces or 1/4 cup. A medium sized grapefruit will yield about 8 fluid ounces or 1 cup.

Q—I have a recipe that calls for 1 pound of powdered sugar. How many cups does that equal to?

A—One pound of confectioner's sugar (i.e. powdered sugar) is equivalent to 3+3/4 cups.

For those who are canning jams and jellies:

The Quick & Easy Freezer Jam & Jelly Directions located on the printed insert of certain *Sure-Jell Premium Fruit Pectin* (yellow box) packages are incorrect. This can result in Freezer-Jam & Jelly that does not set properly.

If you want to access the correct directions, you can do so at their website:

<http://www.kraftbrands.com/SureJell/message.aspx>

Or stop by the Geary County K-State Research and Extension office for a printed copy of the correct instructions.

The website also shares information about how to remake jams and jellies that did not set correctly.

September is National Food Safety Month

When you ask someone to tell you what our basic human needs are, isn't it interesting that typically the first word out of their mouth is food? However, when you think about the other 2 words that follow, shelter and clothing, it would make sense that food takes priority. Although shelter and clothing are indeed critical, you can't live without food.

The United States is touted as having the safest food supply system in the world. We have tight regulations on food production, manufacturing, and food service. Yet we still have thousands of reports of illness and deaths reported each year that are food related. It can be due to food poisoning, food contamination or cross-contamination, or food allergies, to name a few. Even though we have a safe food supply, we can't take it for granted that we are automatically protected.

Knowing more about how to protect ourselves from food-related illness is our first defense in reducing our risks. There are some basic steps that every one of us can take each day to help.

- 1) **CLEAN:** Wash your hands regularly as well as anytime before or after you are handling food. Using soap with warm water and vigorous rubbing all over the hand and between fingers for 20 seconds is the best way to reduce germs, prevent cross-contamination, and stay healthy. Surfaces need clean and sanitized after every use. If you are unsure if these steps were taken the last time the kitchen was used, you'll need to start and finish with these steps before you begin to prepare a meal.
- 2) **SEPARATE:** Avoid cross-contamination. This happens when food and/or juices from food touch another food source. If you are making fajitas for example, the knife and cutting board you use on the raw vegetables needs cleaned and sanitized before you use it to cut up your raw chicken or steak. The pie chart found inside this newsletter will show you some of the most common food sources that cause illness—often through cross-contamination.
- 3) **COOK:** Cook to the right temperature. New cooking temperatures were released in May of 2011, so if you are using a chart that was printed before that time, you're temperatures are out of date. For example, many of my cookbooks at home were published before 2011, so those temperatures would be inaccurate to use.
- 4) **CHILL:** Refrigerate promptly rather than waiting for the food to cool. If it is a large quantity of food, put in in several smaller containers that shallow. This allows the food to cool faster. In order to avoid food poisoning, perishable food must be refrigerated within 2 hours. If it is a hot summer day (above 90 degrees) then you have only an hour in this safe zone.



Less is More

You might think that this article is referring to simplifying your life by down-sizing or reducing. To some extent that would be accurate in the sense that sometimes simplifying our homes can make it more safe for our visiting aging parent, for our older adult friends and even for ourselves!

Most of us know what it means to make a home "kid-friendly" where we put away breakables, make sure toys are within reach and keep sharp objects like knives and scissors out of their reach. However, I would like to introduce a new phrase that I came up with—"senior safe!"

I recently had my 86 year old uncle visiting my home and it didn't take long for me to realize that my home was not "senior safe!" If I had assessed my home before he arrived, perhaps I would not have been so anxious about his well-being.

Item #1—Shuffled shoes...

My kids had their shoes on the fringes of our mud room walking path. Uncle Karl's mobility is compromised in both his knees and his back so he has to take shallow steps and short strides. Moving the shoes away from the walkway would make it senior safe.

Item #2—Roughed up rugs...

We have a few throw rugs that do not have anti-slip backing on them (they've been washed too often!).

This presents a trip hazard for individuals who can't lift their feet up very high off the ground. It is best to have no throw rugs in a senior safe home.

Item #3—Empty arms...

The chairs that sit around my dinner table are made of beautiful oak with thick, rounded heavy legs. Not only are they a challenge to pull away from the table, they have no arms on them to help someone leverage themselves up from the seat. We have a bench by our table that would have been a better seating alternative for senior safe dining.

These are just 3 things that I can change to help make my home "senior safe."

Here are some additional ideas:

- ◆ Add handrails next to stairs or steps
- ◆ Increase lighting
- ◆ Remove clutter
- ◆ Replace doorknobs with lever-style handles
- ◆ Purchase easy-grip silverware
- ◆ Reduce furniture to ease traffic areas
- ◆ Install grab bars in bathrooms or provide a shower seat for support

For more information on making homes senior safe, stop by the Geary County Extension office and ask for bulletin #MF3058 "Simple Home Modification for Aging in Place."

Medicare Open Enrollment Season is Coming....

Are you approaching 65 or have you already become a Medicare beneficiary and need more information about how the Medicare system works? Join us for an informational program called "Medicare Basics" being offered at the Junction City Valley View Estates on September 25.

The 2-hour program is designed to help make sense of this complex, yet very beneficial system. Most people recognize that Medicare is health insurance for people 65 and older. But there are other folks who use Medicare, as well. For example, people who are under 65 with certain disabilities can qualify for Medicare. Additionally, people of any age with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant) can be on Medicare.

There are 4 parts to Medicare. Part A is the hospital insurance piece and part B is the medical insurance pieces. These two are often referred to as the "original Medicare". Part C refers to health plans run by Medicare-approved private insurance companies while Part D provides prescription drug coverage.

Any Medicare beneficiary that would like to enroll in a prescription drug plan will need to enroll during the open enrollment period—October 15—December 7. Anyone who is already on a Medicare prescription drug plan will want to review their current plan and look at other alternative plans during open enrollment. If they find a different prescrip-

tion drug plan that has better and/or more economical coverage than what they currently have, they can change plans for 2015 during the open enrollment period.

For Medicare beneficiaries, it is important to look at prescription plans EVERY YEAR. Companies will change their coverage, their premiums, and allowed medication allowances annually which can have a significant impact on your coverage and cost.

Call the Extension office at 238-4161 to register for the Medicare Basics program or to make an appointment to review prescription drug plans for next year. It could save you hundreds of dollars a year!

Characteristics of People on Medicare

Medicare covers a diverse population (Exhibit 1). In 2013, half of all people on Medicare had incomes below \$23,500 per person. In 2010 (the most recent year of data available), more than one quarter of all beneficiaries reported being in fair or poor health, and three in ten had a cognitive or mental impairment. Nearly 9 million beneficiaries (16%) are nonelderly people with disabilities and a growing share (13% in 2010) are age 85 or older. Two million beneficiaries (5%) lived in a long-term care facility in 2010.

*Source: The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
Sept. 2, 2014 Fact Sheet "Medicare At a Glance"*

Healthy Habits

More on Food Safety



Causes of illness in 1,565 single food commodity outbreaks, 2003–2008.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/cdc-and-food-safety.html>

Current food safety challenges

Challenges to food safety will continue to arise in unpredictable ways, largely due to:

- Changes in our food production and supply
- Changes in the environment leading to food contamination
- Rising number of [multistate outbreaks](#)
- New and emerging germs, toxins, and antibiotic resistance
- New and different contaminated foods, such as prepackaged raw cookie dough, bagged spinach, and peanut butter, causing illness

Each year, 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) gets sick from and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. Reducing foodborne illness by just 10% would keep 5 million Americans from getting sick each year. Preventing a single fatal case of [E. coli](#) O157 infection would save an estimated \$7 million.

Source: *Center for Disease Control and Food Safety*

Connecting with Kids

For some, involving their children or grandchildren in meal preparation can be a very scary thought. However, research shows that kids who are involved in meal preparation are more likely to try new foods and make better food choices. I would also contend that it is a great way to spend some quality time together while completing a necessary daily task.

The sooner you include children in meal preparation, the sooner they will become more skilled and confident in the kitchen. Even children as young as 3 and 4 can put their cups on the table or put out napkins for each plate.

Keep in mind that children cannot perform the tasks as well or as quickly as an adult. The first step to success in the kitchen with kids is in allowing enough time for everyone to complete their tasks safely. You may not want to include kids on a night when you have a school program to go to. Choose the menu carefully, as well. The age of the children will help guide you in knowing what tasks you may want them to be involved in.

Use this list as a starting point for including children in meal preparation in your home. The skills and interests of children vary so you may need to make adjustments.

Task	Recommended Age
Setting cups, silverware, napkins on table	3-4↑
Setting plates, glasses, or other breakable items	5↑
Shaping beef patties or meatballs	4-5↑
Mixing ingredients	4-5↑
Measuring ingredients	6-7↑
Using the microwave	7↑
Opening cans	7-8↑
Chopping fruit and vegetables	8-9↑

If you think the child is not ready to attempt some of these tasks, or you are rushed for time, you may want to help more. For example, if using a can opener is too difficult for your 8 year old, ask her/him to empty the can's contents once you have opened the can. Take time to share your culinary skills with children in your kitchen!

Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

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

September

25 — Medicare Basics, Valley View Estates, 1440 Pearl Drive, Junction City, KS. Program is free to the public. Please call the Extension Office to reserve your seat by September 24.

October

2 — Knowledge at Noon—”Deciphering Food Labels, Valley View Estates, 1440 Pearl Drive, Junction City, KS. Program is free to the public. Please call the Extension Office by October 1 to reserve your seat.

21 — Modern Parenting Initiative—Parenting Classes, Devin Education Center, 123 Eisenhower, Junction City, KS. This 6-session class is for parents of children ages 2—18. Call the Extension office for more information about time and registration costs. The class will meet for 6 consecutive Tuesday evenings.

30 — Open Enrollment Event, Valley View Estates, 1440 Pearl Drive, Junction City, KS. Program is free to the public. Please call the Extension Office by October 28 to make an appointment to visit with a SHICK Medicare Counselor.

November

6 — Knowledge at Noon—”Let’s Live a Little, Valley View Estates, 1440 Pearl Drive, Junction City, KS. Program is free to the public. Please call the Extension Office by November 5 to reserve your seat.

14 — Open Enrollment Event, First United Methodist Church, Junction City, KS. Program is free to the public. Please call the Extension Office by November 12 to make an appointment to visit with a SHICK Medicare Counselor.



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