

Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

geary.k-state.edu

January 2020

Ask the Agent

Q: I received my Medicare Part D prescription plan premium bill this month. The rate nearly tripled! How can I change plans so that I am not paying so much each month?

A: If you are concerned about how much the premium is, you don't have a lot of options once the open enrollment period closed December 7, 2019. You could call the company with whom you have your policy to see if they can change you to another plan within the same company.

However, if your concern is about the plan not covering a medication you are on, you have the right to appeal. Watch a brief video about the appeal process at: <http://bit.ly/MCAppeals>
You can also download the official Medicare Appeals publication found on the Geary County Extension website at: <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/>

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

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New Year, New Start

January 2020

For many people, the beginning of a new year offers a reason to make a new start. Perhaps finances or eating habits are your target. Those are the most common areas people focus on to make a new start. If you haven't made a New Year's Resolution and neither of the most common ones spark your interest, I suggest this alternative: "In 2020, my New Year's Resolution is to build stronger relationships with those I love."



Whether you have been too busy to stay in touch with a sibling or have been married for many years, building stronger relationships will improve your daily outlook, create meaningful memories, and ensure the longevity of those important relationships.

As part of my programming in Geary County, I regularly offer a community program; "Strengthening Families 7-17." This 11-session class teaches evidence-based parenting skills, children's social skills, and family life skills. Although it is designed for high-risk families, it provides a fresh look at proven parenting and relationship skills necessary to develop and maintain a healthy and happy family in a variety of areas. Here are some of the key messages from the program:

Good Relationship Skills

- 1) Notice and compliment the good in others; accept and appreciate differences.
- 2) Use effective communication skills including active listening and respectful, assertive I-messages. Avoid communication barriers.
- 3) Treat others with kindness, unselfishness, and affection. Express love often; notice needs and give service.
- 4) Practice good problem solving and negotiation skills.
- 5) Use good anger management and conflict resolution skills.
* Evaluate your behavior often: "Are my attitudes or actions helping or harming family relationships? What do I need to change?"

Positive Health Practices

- 1) Appreciate your body. Cultivate a positive mental attitude and avoid all addicting substances.
- 2) Plan and eat nutritious meals with whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and low-fat protein.
- 3) Maintain a healthy weight: eat normal portion sizes, healthy foods, mindfully enjoy each bite, and stop when you begin to feel full.
- 4) Get physical exercise five days a week. Include aerobic, strength-building, and stretching exercises.
- 5) Try to get 8 hours of sleep each night. Maintain a consistent bedtime.

One-on-One Time

- 1) Find time to talk to your partner every day without interruption from children or other distractions
- 2) Commit to spending at least 10 minutes of exclusive time with each child. Let them decide what they want to do together during that 10 minutes.

Take notice of how you intentionally work to keep your family relationships strong. Life gets busy and it becomes all too easy to put this important work on the "back burner." Making a fresh start with your family relationships is sure to make 2020 a great year for you and those you love.

A recent report released by the Pew Research Center reveals that "A majority of U.S. adults can answer fewer than half the questions correctly on a digital knowledge quiz, and many struggle with certain cybersecurity and privacy questions."

This statement reflects the deep chasm of the digital divide in America. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines digital divide as "the economic, educational, and social inequalities between those who have computers and online access and those who do not."

While most Americans understand the concept of phishing scams and website cookies, the Pew report shares that only 28% of those surveyed know the purpose of two-factor authentication. (one of the most important way to protect your personal information on sensitive accounts.)

If you find yourself trying to climb out of the digital divide due to lack of knowledge or access, perhaps 2020 would be a great year to sharpen your focus on becoming digitally literate.

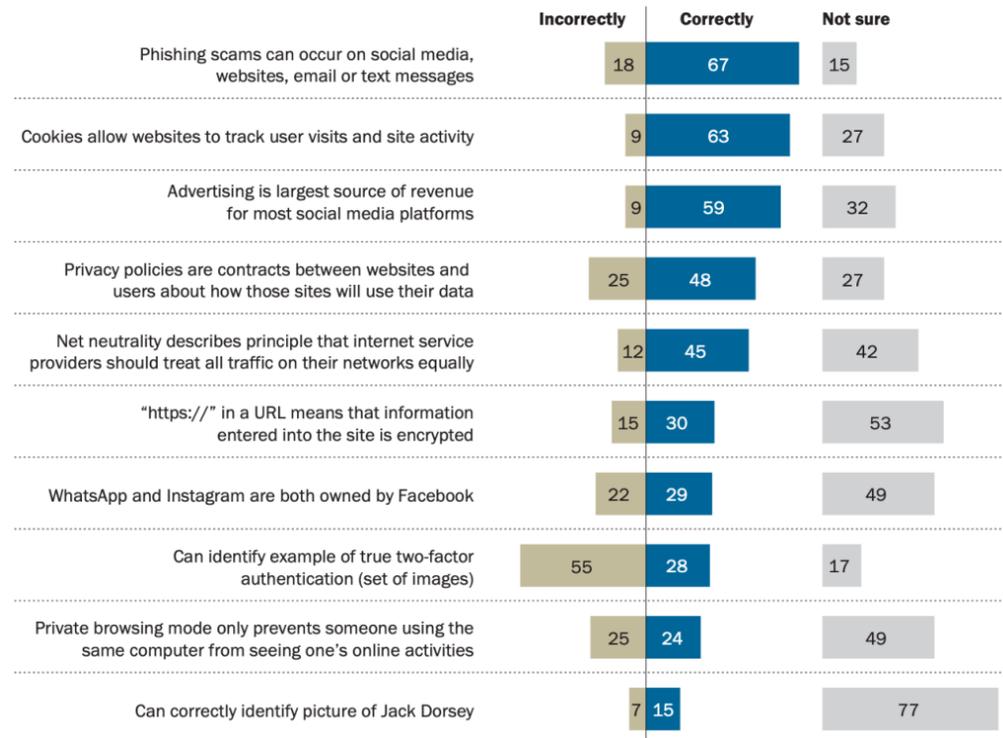
The American Library Association (ALA) defines **digital literacy** as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical **skills**."

Basic digital literacy skills include:

- Using a Computer or Mobile Device
- Using Software and Applications

Many Americans are unsure about a number of digital topics

% of U.S. adults answering each question ...



Note: Those who did not give an answer are not shown. All questions are multiple choice; for full question wording, see topline. Source: Survey conducted June 3-17, 2019.

"Americans and Digital Knowledge"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

- Using the Internet Safely
- Communicating on the Web
- Awareness of Child Online Protection

You can learn these skills and more by contacting the Dorothy Bramlage Public Library at 785-238-4311. The library offers free one-on-one instruction in basic computer skills, Microsoft Office, tablets, and mobile devices. Reference staff members are able to assist you with your digital literacy needs as well as walk you through the many digital resources the library provides.

If you don't have internet access of your own, the library has computer stations you can use to learn the basic digital

literacy skills necessary to lifelong learning.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration also offers a wide variety of online resources to help you improve your digital literacy at <https://digitalliteracy.gov>.

Technology touches every aspect of our lives. Digital literacy is a lifelong skill needed to live, work, and stay connected in contemporary society. It is also changing and evolving faster than we know.

By polishing your digital skills, you can learn more about the world around you while staying connected with the people and community in which you live.

Are you making a fresh start in 2020 with your food choices? One way to get a jump start is by making healthy food ingredient substitutions. Check out these simple options:

Original Ingredient	Healthy Substitution
1 cup oil	1 cup applesauce, pureed pumpkin or sweet potato
1 cup sour cream, mayonnaise, or cream cheese	1 cup nonfat plain yogurt
1 cup cheddar cheese	1/2 cup sharp cheddar cheese

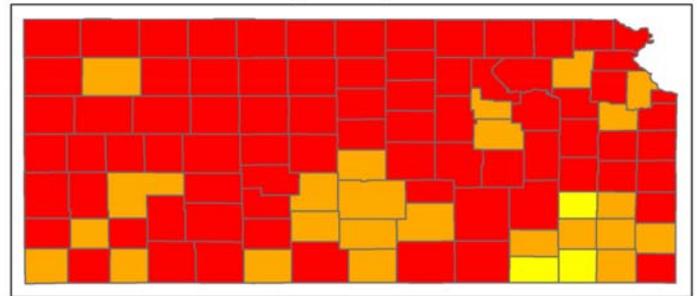
Family Safety

January is Radon Awareness Month

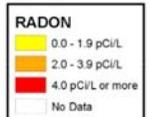
Radon Facts for Kansans

- 1) Radon is an odorless radioactive gas that results from the breakdown of uranium from soil and rock beneath and around the foundation, ground water wells, and some building materials. It can leak into your house through the basement or crawl space – through adjacent or exposed soil and rock – or through well water. Some building materials such as natural stone or rock can emit radon.
- 2) The primary concern associated with long-term exposure to elevated indoor radon levels is increased risk of developing lung cancer at some point in your life. Radon exposure in your home is the second overall cause of lung cancer death behind tobacco smoking in the United States, and the leading cause of lung cancer death for non-smokers. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) estimates that as many as 200 new cases of radon-related lung cancer occur each year in Kansas.
- 3) The U.S. Surgeon General recommends homes be tested for radon: "Indoor radon gas is a national health problem. Radon causes thousands of deaths each year. Millions of homes have elevated radon levels. Most homes should be tested for radon. When elevated radon levels are confirmed, the problem should be corrected."
- 4) A level of 4 picocuries per liter, pCi/L, or higher is considered unacceptable and pose the highest risk of radon gas poisoning. Radon levels below 4 pCi/L still pose a risk, so you may want to use a reduction system for homes with lower levels.

2019 Kansas Radon Average Values
by County



Average Radon Level	= 4.6
Maximum Reported Radon Level	= 1,121.6
Total Number of Measurements	= 161,690
Total Measurements 4 pCi/L or greater	= 62,555
Total Measurements 20 pCi/L or greater	= 3296
Total Est. Mitigations (2005-2018)	= 33,066



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- 5) Over 112,000 radon measurements have been reported according to KDHE records. The observed state-wide average indoor radon level in Kansas is 4.9 pCi/L; over 46,000 measurements (41%) have been reported at or above 4.0 pCi/L. Radon mitigation systems have been installed to lower radon in over 17,000 Kansas homes.
- 6) Contact the Geary County Extension office at 785-238-4161 for a test kit and testing guidance. The test kits available at the extension office (\$5.50/kit) will help you identify if there is radon gas present in your home and at what level.

Family Food

Looking for a fresh, colorful, and healthy snack for the big game on February 2? This **Crunchy Vegetable Wrap** will check all your boxes!

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons cream cheese, low-fat (whipped)
- 2 flour tortillas
- 1/2 teaspoon ranch seasoning mix
- 1/4 cup broccoli (washed and chopped)
- 1/4 cup carrot (peeled and grated)
- 1/4 cup zucchini (washed and cut into small strips)
- 1/4 cup summer squash (yellow, washed and cut into small strips)
- 1/2 tomato (diced)
- 1/8 cup green bell pepper (seeded and diced)
- 2 tablespoons chives (chopped fine)

Directions

1. In a small bowl, stir ranch seasoning into cream cheese, chill.
2. Wash and chop vegetables.
3. Steam broccoli in microwave for 1 minute with 1 tablespoon of water.
4. Spread cream cheese onto flour tortilla, staying one inch from edge. Sprinkle vegetables over cream cheese. Roll tortilla tightly.
5. Chill for 1-2 hours before serving (the wrap will hold its shape better). With a sharp knife slice into circles and serve.



Source: www.choosemyplate.gov

SAVE THE DATE!

Walk Kansas 2020 begins March 15, 2020. Walk Kansas is a team-based program that will help you and others lead a healthier life. It's time to start thinking about forming your 6-member team!
Watch for more information in the February FCS Connection Newsletter!

Geary County

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

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

February

****Strengthening Families 7-17—Meeting weekly on Tuesdays from 4:00—5:30pm January 21 thru March 31.** Class sessions focus on building communication, bonding and resiliency within a family. Promotes the use of bonding, boundaries, and monitoring to support family members in resisting the use of drugs and alcohol and teaches alternative positive coping skills. Registration and cost information can be found online at <http://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/>. Look for the link in the Upcoming Events section.

March

15 Walk Kansas 2020 Begins! Registration will open online in late February. Join the movement for a healthier you!



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