

Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

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Ask the Agent

Q: Osteoporosis runs in my family. What can I do to prevent this for myself and my children?

A: Preventative steps to reduce your risk for osteoporosis include making sure you and your family are eating a healthy diet. This will help ensure that you are consuming the various minerals and vitamins that help your bones stay strong. Specifically, calcium intake is a key factor. A well balanced diet based on the USDA MyPlate Plan is your best guide to a healthy diet. For more information on MyPlate go to: <https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-plan>

See inside for more information on your diet and osteoporosis.

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

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Dog Days of Summer

August 2021

As a kid growing up in rural Kansas, I remember our community's Dog Days Sidewalk Sale as a great opportunity to get some good deals on summer clothes and outdoor games. Tables and shelves would line up along the store fronts on our brick main street and people of all ages would peruse the sale racks.



I also remember how HOT is often was. The heat off our brick street could penetrate the soles of my flip flops and often they would even stick a bit to the bricks as they softened in the extreme heat. I thought the phrase "Dog Days of Summer" was all about the annual clearance sale!

It was only as I grew and learned more about our Kansas weather that I had a more realistic understanding of what that "Dog Days of Summer" really means. We call it the "dog days of summer" not because our dogs are noticeably lazy and lethargic, but because of the star Sirius. Harry Potter fans will find the connection that Sirius is often referred to as the Dog Star due to its location within the constellation Canis Major, the Greater Dog.

Sirius is the brightest star visible from any part of the earth and in summer, between July 3 and Aug. 11, the sun will occupy the same area of the sky as Sirius. During this period, Sirius will rise and set with the sun. The ancient Romans saw how bright the star was and believed during these 40 summer days of alignment Sirius was giving off excess heat, increasing the intensity of the warmth on earth during these "dog days."

So now we are in the hottest part of the summer and our bodies respond to that heat by wanting to slow down a bit and seek out shade in our outdoor activities. To expose ourselves to this intense heat for any length of time can be very dangerous.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, high temperatures kill hundreds of people every year in the United States. Heat-related deaths and illness are preventable, yet more than 700 people die from extreme heat every year in America.

It is especially important during the dog days of summer to take measures to stay cool, remain hydrated, and keep informed. Getting too hot will make you sick. If you get too hot, your body won't be able to compensate for it and will become incapable of cooling off.

The main contributors to your body's inability to cool itself during extreme hot weather include:

- 1) **High humidity.** When the humidity is high, sweat won't evaporate as quickly. This keeps your body from releasing heat as fast as it may need to.
- 2) **Personal factors.** Age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug and alcohol use can all play a role in whether a person can cool off enough in very hot weather.

If you are age 65 or older, you are at a higher risk of heat intolerance, as are children younger than two and those with chronic diseases and mental illness. Even with these high risk populations in mind, it is important for EVERYONE to take some preventative steps in this season of extreme heat coined as "dog days of summer." See page 2 to for suggestions to minimize your risk of becoming ill from excessive heat.

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Family & Consumer
Sciences

Family Conversations

Author: Dr. Bradford Wiles, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Early Childhood Development
Kansas State University
School of Family Studies and Human Services

Talk to children before they head back to school, expert says

K-State child development expert says it's okay for parents to express their own anxiety.

The transition back to school during the past year's pandemic was tough on a lot of people, but just in case you think last year's challenges are behind us, we have some bad news.

They're not.

In fact, this year's transition could be equally demanding, even in cases where mask mandates, social distancing and hybrid learning are not in play.

For starters, Kansas State University child development specialist Bradford Wiles notes that more children than normal could be experiencing in-class school for the first time. Whereas in most years, it's the preschoolers and kindergarteners heading off to their first day in a strange place, this year creates that same challenge for first graders – some of whom may have spent last year learning entirely from home.

"There's going to be differences when children return to school," Wiles said. "They already have this generalized, underlying anxiety about going back to school. We all had that when we were young. It's new. It's different.

"But then layering on top of that is the uncertainty of what school is going to look like, who's going to be there, who's not. That can really cause some difficulties for children to process what's going on."

This is the time for parents to continue being diligent about talking with their children, Wiles said. "Of all the times that we need parents to be really responsive and really invested in what their children are feeling, it's right now," he said.

"As adults, we tend to think about thoughts as opposed to emotions, a little bit more. But now is the time when, as parents, we need to have conversations with our children about their feelings."

'Anxiety' appropriately describes what children may be feeling as the first day of school approaches, "but we don't want to call it anxieties" when talking with children, Wiles said.

"You want to ask, 'what are you afraid of,' or 'is there something I can do to help you understand what's going on,'" he said.

Parents who feel anxious don't need to hide those emotions. Wiles said it's okay for parents to admit that they, too, feel anxiety or have certain fears in sending their children back to school.

"You don't want to go overboard, of course," Wiles said. "You want to talk about how you're feeling, but not so much show that anxiety. If that happens and your child notices that you're running around the kitchen re-organizing everything because you're feeling anxious, then fine, you can address that.

"But really children can learn a ton through age-appropriate conversations. Being able to tell your three-year-old that you're a little scared too is okay. It's okay to be scared, but then what do we do when we're scared? Well, we try to take deep breaths, we try to think of things that aren't scary; we try to work through and talk through the things that are making us scared and figure out what we'll do when we get to those things."

"The best response if you're scared (as a parent) is to say, 'I'm scared too. We'll get through this together.'"

Wiles adds that children take very seriously the things that their parents or primary caregiver tell them: "If you say it's going to be okay, then it's going to be okay," he said.

"For parents of younger children, you don't want to burden them with your own emotional state, but I would recommend that you offer the recognition of a shared understanding."

Once school begins, Wiles said a good strategy for parents is to ask open-ended questions of children, such as "What was your favorite part of school today?" And, perhaps also share with your child what your favorite part of the day has been.

"You're connecting," Wiles said. "And if we approach this new school year that way, we're going to be in really good shape."

Dog Days (continued)

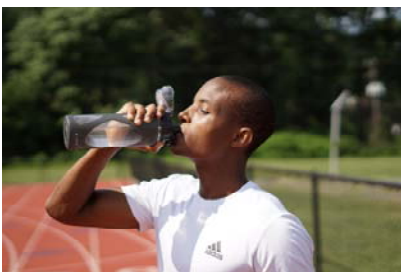


Photo by [Nigel Msipa](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Everyone should take these steps to prevent heat-related illnesses, injuries, and death during hot weather:

- Stay in an air-conditioned indoor location as much as you can.
- Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Schedule outdoor activities carefully.
 - Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing and sunscreen.
 - Pace yourself.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.
- Never leave children or pets in cars.
- Check the local news for health and safety updates.

There is good news for those who may be worried about the onset of Alzheimer's disease. A recent study has shown that teas and berries are among the foods that can help delay the onset of that malady.

Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee said a study conducted at Tuft's University by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is further evidence that a healthy diet can be beneficial in preventing Alzheimer's disease.

The study followed 2,809 people over 20 years to determine the effects of a healthy diet on memory loss. The results were very positive.

"The study provides more proof of how the power of plants and produce is so important in our daily diets, and how it can be beneficial nutritionally and possibly protect your mental health," Blakeslee said.

Study participants who consumed more plant foods containing plant nutrients called flavonoids were 50% less likely to develop symptoms of Alzheimer's. Tea, berries, dark chocolate and other flavonoid-rich foods are well-known for their antioxidant, antiviral and anti-cancer properties.

Blakeslee said the Tufts study indicated that all types of tea may help delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease. Berries also got a good grade; blueberries and strawberries are the top contributing foods for total flavonoids, "but apples, pears and oranges are also beneficial," according to Blakeslee.

In a 2021 report titled Race, Ethnicity and Alzheimer's in America, the Alzheimer's Association estimates 6.2 million people in the United States age 65 and older are living with the disease. That number is estimated to grow to 12.7 million by 2050.

"If it is possible to reduce risks of chronic illness with food, why not add these to our diet?" Blakeslee said.

She added that late summer is a good time to start, with a bounty of fresh produce in grocery stores, farmers markets, or growing in home gardens. "These foods," Blakeslee said, "can be part of a healthful diet at each meal or even as a snack."

Blakeslee also suggests freezing summer fruits to enjoy later in the year. When certain produce is not in season, use frozen, canned or dried forms since all are beneficial.

Blakeslee, who is also coordinator of K-State's Rapid Response Center for food science, publishes a monthly newsletter, called You Asked It!, that addresses many issues related to food science and safety.

More information on food safety is also available online from Geary County K-State Research and Extension at <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/nutrition-food-safety.html>.

Author: Karen Blakeslee, M.S.; Extension Associate Coordinator, Rapid Response Center and Co-Director, Kansas Value Added Foods Lab Kansas State University

Osteoporosis: Eating for Strong Bones

An article excerpt from the Mayo Clinic Health Letter; Vol. 39 No. 8 August 2021.

You probably already know the name of the game: calcium intake. If you're under age 50, aim for 1,000 milligrams (mg) of calcium every day. Women over 50 or men over 70 should increase that intake to 1,200 mg. To make sure you get adequate calcium daily, try the following:

- ⇒ Drink a cup of skim milk at breakfast, lunch and dinner. This adds up to about 900 mg of calcium.
- ⇒ Add 1 ounce (oz.) - a slice or two—of cheddar cheese to your sandwich for an extra 200 mg.
- ⇒ Make tomato soup with milk instead of water. A 2-cup portion can provide about 340 mg of calcium.
- ⇒ Stock up on low-fat or fat-free yogurt. You can eat it by itself or with fruit and granola, or use it to make veggie dip, fruit dip, or a smoothie. A 6-oz. cup of low-fat plain yogurt may contain over 300 mg. of calcium.
- ⇒ Remember that dark, leafy greens and calcium-fortified orange juice and cereals provide some calcium. This may be particularly beneficial if you're vegan or lactose intolerant. In addition, there is a growing selection of lactose-free dairy products and calcium-fortified plant-based beverages such as soy, almond, rice, and oat milks.

Nutrition information per serving (1 cup):

Milk Type	Fat	Calories	Sugar	Calcium
Skim milk	0 grams	80	12 grams	30%
1%	2.5 grams	110	12 grams	30%
2%	3 grams	130	12 grams	30%
Whole	8 grams	150	11 grams	30%
Chocolate	8 grams	220	36 grams	30%
1% Strawberry	2.5 grams	160	28 grams	30%
Soymilk	5 grams	110	6 grams	35%

Nutrition Information
Source: Bone up on Your Calcium, MF3006, November 2013



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Geary County

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

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

August 2021

18 Create Better Health—K-State Research and Extension SNAP-Ed is offering these nutrition classes online every Wednesday at 4pm. The 4-session class series will last through September 22, 2021. The class is free. Contact Courtney Angelo and Ann Katt by emailing snap-edgearycounty@ksu.edu or call 785-579-4726 to register.

September 2021

1 Strengthening Families Online Class**—A new class will start Wednesday, September 1 at 3:30 and continues each Wednesday through November 10, 2021. The registration for the 11-session class is \$40. Contact Deb Andres if you are interested in taking this class at 785-238-4161.

10—19 Kansas State Fair, Hutchinson Kansas.

October 2021

15 Medicare Open Enrollment begins. Look for more information in the September and October newsletters. Open enrollment Medicare prescription plans concludes on December 7. Our office will start taking appointments on Monday, September 20. Our office professional, Traci Hockett, will be handling the scheduling again this year.



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