



Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

geary.k-state.edu

October 2020

Ask the Agent

Q: My church is working on putting together a food drive for the holidays. Do you have a good resource available to help with our project?

A: Yes! [Donating Safe and Nutritious Food to Food Pantries \(MF3353\)](#) can be downloaded from the Geary County K-State Research & Extension website at: <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/>

Click on the Nutrition and Food Safety tab in the left column.

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

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Geary County Health—Where We Stand

October 2020

In my work as a Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, I use information from a variety of sources to determine where my programming priorities should lie. Sources of information I use include the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) as well as the Robert W. Wood Foundation's County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (CHRR).



In the area of Health Behaviors (tobacco use, diet & exercise, alcohol & drug use, and sexual activity) the data from these sources reveal some concerning information about the health status of Geary County residents that can be viewed as areas of opportunity.

Areas of Opportunity

Adult Obesity: With 39% of our adult county residents (age 20 and older) reported to have a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30kg/m², we are in the top quarter of the counties with the highest adult obesity rate. *"The County Health Rankings measure of obesity serves as a proxy metric for poor diet and limited physical activity and has been shown to have very high reliability. Obesity increases the risk for health conditions such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, hypertension, dyslipidemia, stroke, liver and gallbladder disease, sleep apnea and respiratory problems (such as asthma), osteoarthritis, and poor health status."* (CHRR)

Pregnancy Weight Gain: In a 2018 KDHE Vital Statistics report, it is noted that 50% of Geary County pregnant women gained more than the recommended amount of weight during pregnancy.

Adult Smoking: According to the report, Geary County has the highest percentage of adult smokers of the 104 reporting counties. The report shows that 22% of our adult county residents (age 18 and older) are smoking cigarettes. The data is self-reported based on responses to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS.) E-cigarette use is not measured in the survey but is a notable health concern for Geary County based on other state-generated reports. The average percentage of adults smoking in Kansas is 17%, with the lowest county percentage weighing in at 11% (Johnson County.) *"Cigarette smoking is identified as a cause of various cancers, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory conditions, as well as low birthweight and other adverse health outcomes."* (CHRR)

Smoking Related Deaths: The Annual Summary report generated by KDHE in 2018 reported that 15% of the 198 registered deaths in Geary County were related to tobacco use.

Why do these statistics matter? They matter because your health matters. Health behaviors are largely personal choices. According to CHRR, *"They (health behaviors) include actions that lead to improved health, such as eating well and being physically active, and actions that increase one's risk of disease, such as smoking, excessive alcohol intake, and risky sexual behavior."*

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Geary County Health—Where We Stand *(continued)*

Family & Community Health

In the United States, and in Geary County, many of the leading causes of death and diseases are caused by the unhealthy choices of individuals. Poor eating habits and low physical activity are linked to cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. Tobacco use is linked to heart disease, cancer, and poor pregnancy outcomes if the mom smokes during pregnancy.

Nobody really wants to be diagnosed with a chronic disease but people may not have the knowledge, skills, and/or financial means to make different choices. Recognizing these limitations is key in putting policies and programs in place to help individuals engage in healthy behaviors as well as providing them with access to nutritious food, safe places to be physically active, and supports to make healthy choices.

Examples of how an organization, community or county can put policies and programs into place to support healthy lifestyle choices can include:

- ◆ Building sidewalks, walking paths, and bicycle lanes to help provide safe access for physical activity.
- ◆ Modify or provide menu options at restaurants that give customers healthier meal options.

- ◆ Provide healthy options in public vending machines.
- ◆ Offer counter space for fresh fruit or vegetable options at convenience stores.
- ◆ Provide nutrition education across all ages.
- ◆ Offer classes on healthy food preparation skills.
- ◆ Make public places such as parks and schools smoke free zones.
- ◆ Provide public transportation options for people to access healthy food and physical activity opportunities.

By knowing our county's health statistics, organizations, agencies, and public officials can become advocates for healthy policies and programs. Geary County has been working to shift the health behavior trends for residents but change takes time – sometimes generations! Although each of the examples in the list provided above have gained traction in Geary County, we still have work to do. It takes innovation, initiative, individuals, and yes, income to make it happen. There are many organizations and committees you can volunteer for to help with the effort. I encourage you to explore how you can make a positive impact on the health of Geary County residents.

Annual Election

Each year in November, Geary County K-State Research and Extension holds its Annual Election for Extension Council Members. All citizens of voting age are eligible to vote in the election. The election offers residents the opportunity to choose members of the 24-member council that represents four areas of local extension programming:

- ⇒ Ag and Natural Resources
- ⇒ Family and Consumer Sciences
- ⇒ 4-H Youth Development
- ⇒ Community Development



Council members are grouped into one of the four areas of local extension programming — forming a Program Development Committee (PDC). Members of the council are asked to meet with Geary County Extension agents to plan the local extension educational programs in order to meet local needs. They are given the opportunity to volunteer with program implementation, as well.

This year, the Extension Council Election takes place from November 2 thru November 6, 2020. If you are a resident of Geary County, you are encouraged to stop by the Geary County K-State Research and Extension office during regular business hours to cast your vote. If you have questions about voting or the voting process, please call the office at 785-238-4161.

Hey, Hey, What's Cookin'?

An April 2020 food study by Hunter, reveals that the coronavirus pandemic has driven Americans into their homes and into their kitchens:

54% are cooking more

46% are baking more

50% are more confident in the kitchen

73% are enjoying cooking as much or more than ever

26% are learning more about cooking

With many restaurants having modified services and hours available, Americans are changing their meal patterns and eating habits. When you combine that with the need for many high-risk individuals to stay away from public venues like restaurants, it is no wonder why more people are cooking at home. Keep an eye out for the November FCS connection newsletter to learn about an upcoming online healthy meals class.

K-State Research and Extension has developed a designated website to assist Kansas individuals, families, ag producers, and agencies during these unprecedented times with the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/about-us/covid-19-extension.html>

To reach Geary County K-State Research and Extension, call our office at 785-238-4161 or by email at ge@listserv.ksu.edu

Family Safety

FOUR STEPS FOR FALL PREVENTION

Featuring Erin Yelland, Adult Development and Aging Specialist for K-State Research and Extension.

The Falling Less in Kansas program is a collaborative research effort to serve local communities in promoting fall prevention with senior citizens. The program centers around four main items to consider:

1. Identify vision problems.

Dr. Yelland advises seniors to see their eye doctor at least once a year to make sure prescriptions are up to date, and to monitor for eye diseases or other problems.

"If your glasses are not the correct prescription, your vision is going to be off," she said. "You're not going to see as well as you normally would, which can lead to falls."

2. Make your home safer.

Installing devices in the home, such as grab bars, is a great safety precaution to prevent falls, Yelland said. These could be installed anywhere—along the walls of hallways, in the bathroom or next to the bed.

"When older adults start to lose their balance and grow wary of falling, they tend to lean toward the wall and walk along the wall," she said. "If you're in that stage, or you know someone who is, recommend that they install grab bars. So if they would fall, they could try their best to grab onto that bar and pull themselves back up to get to a telephone or to safety. The bars can also be a source of stability."

3. Assess your medications.

As people age, Dr. Yelland said, their doctors could place them on multiple medications. Seniors should visit their doctor and pharmacist to discuss their medicines and side effects.

"If a side effect is dizziness or disorientation, perhaps there's a different drug you can take that has the same

benefits but has less side effects," she said. "Also, just being aware of what medicines you're on and the side effects can prevent a lot of issues, including fall prevention, as older adults age."

4. Exercise to improve your strength, balance and mobility.

Dr. Yelland said exercise is a huge component of fall prevention: "Inactivity leads to weakness and an increased risk of falling. Through exercise that improves strength, balance and flexibility, we can increase the likelihood that our bodies are physically able to withstand a fall, help us recover from a fall, and more importantly, prevent falling. Also, with exercise often comes confidence and less fear of falling."

She said Tai Chi, a low-impact martial arts, is a great way for seniors to exercise. Free instructional videos featuring this form of exercise are available online.

Using light weights, between 1 and 5 pounds, is also recommended to help build strength. If weights aren't available, Yelland said seniors can do arm curls, wrist curls and arm lifts using canned goods from the pantry to build strength.

Falling is the number one cause of injuries and death from injury in older adults. Falls and the fear of falls can be controlled by taking intentional steps toward maintaining physical stability. If you are an older adult wanting to work on this area of your health, as always, check with your physician to determine what your body is able to do. Download and read the Physical Activity publication that is part of the Keys to Embracing Aging program offered by Geary County K-State Research & Extension at www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/health-wellness.html.

Know Before You OWE



Over the past months, many people have lost their jobs. If you receive income from unemployment benefits, the income is taxable.

Avoid surprises at tax time. Complete form K-BEN 233 to have state and federal income tax withheld directly from your unemployment benefits.

To learn more, visit:
<https://www.getkansasbenefits.gov/FAQs/StateWithhold.aspx>

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Paying income taxes may be the last thing on your mind in October. However, we are only a few weeks away from the end of the 2020 tax year.

If you received unemployment compensation during the year, you must include it in gross income. The Internal Revenue Service offers a free interactive tool to help you determine your tax responsibility for various forms of income throughout the year.

You can find this resource at: <https://www.irs.gov/help/ita/are-payments-i-receive-for-being-unemployed-taxable>

For more family resource management resources, go to the Geary County K-State Research & Extension website at: <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/family-resource-management.html>



FINANCIALLY \$PEAKING

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION FAMILY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Geary County

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

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

October 15—December 7

Medicare Open Enrollment —You should take a look at your Part D Prescription plan each year during open enrollment. You can evaluate your options to ensure you have the best and most economical coverage. Open enrollment runs from October 15 thru December 7. We are taking appointments now. Call soon to set your date and time!

Coming Soon

Quick Meals for Busy Families II—The original program was offered face to face in January and February 2020 with great success. After many requests for a reprise, the 4-session class will be offered again in a virtual format. Participation is FREE due to a grant awarded by the American Heart Association in partnership with the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences. Each family will receive great healthy recipes and some other tools to add to their kitchen inventory!

November 17—January 26

****Strengthening Families 7-17—Zooming weekly on Tuesdays from 4:45—6:00pm November 17, 2020 thru January 26, 2020. Families will be asked to make an appointment prior to the first class session to receive resources and the DVD needed for participating in the program. If you are interested in registering, call Deb Andres at 238- 4161 to make your appointment.**



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