



Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

geary.k-state.edu

August 2020

Ask the Agent

Q: I have an old pressure canner that was handed down to me from a family member. How do I know if it is safe to use?

A: Pressure canners for use in the home were extensively redesigned beginning in the 1970's. Models made before the 1970's were heavy-walled kettles with clamp-on or turn-on lids. They were fitted with a dial gauge, a vent pipe in the form of a petcock or covered with a counterweight, and a safety fuse. Most modern pressure canners are lightweight, thin-walled kettles; most have turn-on lids fitted with gaskets.

K-State Research & Extension recommends getting your dial gauge tested yearly for accuracy. The Geary County office offers this service free of charge by appointment.

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

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The Garden Consumer

August 2020

A **consumer** is defined as a person or thing that eats or uses something. If you eat garden produce, then you are a garden consumer. Another common definition of **consumer** is a person who purchases goods and services for personal use. If you eat garden produce, you are a consumer by this economic focused definition, as well.



You've probably never thought of yourself as a garden consumer from the economic standpoint, but the reality is—all of us are garden consumers in this context!

We are in what I call "garden bounty season" for many home gardeners and commercial producers. Meaning that our gardens in this area of Kansas are starting to produce in volume beyond our household consumption. The "garden consumer" is overwhelmed with an abundance of cucumbers, summer squash, and tomatoes.

Even if you don't garden yourself, the Geary County Farmer's Market has more vine-ripe luscious tomatoes and cool refreshing cucumbers available and our local grocers will offer great prices on seasonal fruits and vegetables. But how can you make this bounty last the **consumer** throughout the year?

Growing or buying fruits and vegetables in season is an unfailing way to save money on your grocery bill. Too often we end up with more than we can realistically consume before the produce quality starts to decline. To reduce food lost to spoilage, consider home preservation as a way to enjoy produce later. Whether you are a seasoned food preservationist or a rookie at home preservation, the National Center for Home Food Preservation's website can help you preserve the bounty of seasonal produce.

The Center was established with funding from the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (CSREES-USDA) to address food safety concerns for those who practice and teach home food preservation and processing methods.

The Center offers information and recipes for a variety of safe food preservation methods including: Canning, Freezing, Curing & Smoking, Drying, Pickling, and Fermenting. It also offers the equipment needed and processing recipes for jams and jellies!

Our current health pandemic has motivated many people to consider home preservation as a way to ensure they have access to the fruits and vegetables they enjoy during the summer throughout the year. Home food preservation has become more popular this year prompting an increased need for information on safe, research-proven processing methods. For more information on packing your pantry with home preserved foods, go to the Geary County K-State Research & Extension website to learn more about the National Center for Home Preservation at <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/food-preservation.html>.

Family Relationships

Since 2014, Geary County K-State Research and Extension has been involved with a community coalition known as The Modern Parenting Initiative, or MPI.

Our goal is to support families through education, outreach, and resource networking. We have trained community volunteers and human service agency staff to help implement parent support programs for Geary County residents as well as parents from surrounding counties.

One of the programs we offer to the community is Strengthening Families 7-17 (SFP7-17). This 11-session class is for any family who is raising children within the age range of 7-17. Even families with toddlers and infants will proactively learn skills that will result in positive outcomes for their children.

These outcomes include increased family strengths and resilience and reduced risk factors for problem behaviors in high risk children, including behavioral problems, emotional, academic and social problems.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES GOES VIRTUAL

This video-based program will be offered in a virtual format this fall using the Zoom platform. The program will include two facilitators leading the discussion and activities that are tied to the video content and vignettes of common family relationship skills, challenges and solutions. The videos teach research-proven skills including material on bonding, setting boundaries, and monitoring behaviors as well as anger management, the harmful impact of alcohol and drugs on the developing teen brain, and mindfulness.

The videos and accompanying resources are available in both English and Spanish for parents and youth ages 7-17 to watch together. The cost of the program is \$40 which includes a copy of all the resources and the SFP7-17 DVD.

If you are interested in registering for this program, contact Deb Andres at 785-238-4161 or check out the information posted on our website at: <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/parenting.html>

PANDEMICS CAN BE STRESSFUL

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. **Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.**

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can sometimes cause the following:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, and/or alcohol and other substances.



TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

You may experience increased stress during this pandemic. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions.

Family Safety

Get immediate help in a crisis

- Call 911
- [Disaster Distress Helpline](#): 1-800-985-5990 (press 2 for Spanish), or text TalkWithUs for English or Hablanos for Spanish to 66746. Spanish speakers from Puerto Rico can text Hablanos to 1-787-339-2663.
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or [Lifeline Crisis Chat](#).
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#): 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522
- [National Child Abuse Hotline](#): 1-800-4AChild (1-800-422-4453) or text 1-800-422-4453
- [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#): 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or [Online Chat](#)
- [The Eldercare Locator](#): 1-800-677-1116 TTY Instructions
- [Veteran's Crisis Line](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or [Crisis Chat](#) or text: 8388255

Find a health care provider or treatment for substance use disorder and mental health

- [SAMHSA's National Helpline](#): 1-800-662-HELP (4357) and TTY 1-800-487-4889
- [Treatment Services Locator Website](#)
- [Interactive Map of Selected Federally Qualified Health Centers](#)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

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

Food and Your Family

Why is it important to eat vegetables?

Eating vegetables provides health benefits — people who eat more vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Vegetables provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body.

Nutrients

- Most vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. None have cholesterol. (Sauces or seasonings may add fat, calories, and/or cholesterol.)
- Vegetables are important sources of many nutrients, including potassium, dietary fiber, folate (folic acid), vitamin A, and vitamin C.
- Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Vegetable sources of potassium include sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products (paste, sauce, and juice), beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, spinach, lentils, and kidney beans.
- Dietary fiber from vegetables, as part of an overall healthy diet, helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease. Fiber is important for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis. Fiber-containing foods such as vegetables help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories.

- Folate (folic acid) helps the body form red blood cells. Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant should consume adequate folate from foods, and in addition 400 mcg of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods or supplements. This reduces the risk of neural tube defects, spina bifida, and anencephaly during fetal development.
- Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections. Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy. Vitamin C aids in iron absorption.

Health benefits

- As part of an overall healthy diet, eating foods such as vegetables that are lower in calories per cup instead of some other higher-calorie food may be useful in helping to lower calorie intake.
- Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce risk for heart disease, including heart attack and stroke.
- Eating a diet rich in some vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may protect against certain types of cancers. Adding vegetables can help increase intake of fiber and potassium, which are important nutrients that many Americans do not get enough of in their diet.

Freezing Summer Vegetables

Tomatoes

Preparation – Select firm, ripe tomatoes with deep red color.



Raw – Wash and dip in boiling water for 30 seconds to loosen skins. Core and peel. Freeze whole or in pieces. Pack into containers, leaving 1-inch headspace. Seal and freeze. Use only for cooking or seasoning as tomatoes will not be solid when thawed.

Juice – Wash, sort and trim firm, vine-ripened tomatoes. Cut in quarters or eighths. Simmer 5 to 10 minutes. Press through a sieve. If desired, season with 1 teaspoon salt to each quart of juice. Pour into containers, leaving headspace. Seal and freeze.

Stewed – Remove stem ends, peel and quarter ripe tomatoes. Cover and cook until tender (10 to 20 minutes). Place pan containing tomatoes in cold water to cool. Pack into containers, leaving headspace. Seal and freeze.

Summer Squash

(Cocozelle, Crookneck, Pattypan, Straightneck, White Scallop, Zucchini)

Preparation – Choose young squash with tender skin. Wash and cut in 1/2-inch slices. Water blanch 3 minutes. Cool promptly, drain and package, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Grated Zucchini (for Baking) – Choose young tender zucchini. Wash and grate. Steam blanch in small quantities 1 to 2 minutes until translucent. Pack in measured amounts into containers, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Cool by placing the containers in cold water. Seal and freeze.

If watery when thawed, discard the liquid before using the zucchini.

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

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

September—November

****Strengthening Families 7-17—Zooming weekly on Thursdays from 4:45—6:00pm September 10 thru November 19, 2020. 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. 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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