Holidays and Diabetic Health

While the holiday offers an opportunity for gathering with friends and family, the focus is often on food. For those with diabetes, big meals can present big problems.

Of Geary County’s 35,934 population (2021), 27% have been diagnosed with diabetes (2022). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is estimated that 1 in 3 Americans are pre-diabetic and likely do not know it. Why is that information important? Being aware and knowledgeable about a health diagnosis that impacts such a significant proportion of our population can guide some of your holiday menu options and provide better choices for those with diabetes.

The Association for Diabetes Care and Education Specialists offer the following suggestions on how to eat healthier during the holidays:

• Make sure to eat breakfast and continue eating meals and snacks regularly throughout the day. Fasting before a big meal can affect your blood glucose levels in a negative way.

• Keep track of how many servings of starchy foods you eat. Bread, rice, potatoes and corn are examples of foods that fit into this category.

• Make sure to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your diet. Raw, grilled or steamed fruits and vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals, are low in fat, and high in fiber and may help you feel full longer on fewer calories.

• Avoid high-calorie drinks. Instead, choose water, diet soda, and coffee and/or tea without cream or sugar. Hydration is not only good for your body, it makes you feel fuller, too!

• Physical activity is an important part of diabetes management and can help keep your blood sugar levels within a normal range. It’s also a fun and healthy activity you can do with family and friends.

The American Diabetes Association shares that the most important thing about managing diabetes during the holiday season is to plan ahead. Take a look at your schedule and plan accordingly. By being intentional with your menu choices and schedule, you can navigate holiday meals while keeping your health in mind.
Martinson Named 2023 Appreciation Award Winner

Kyler Langvardt, Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent

This year, we honor a staple of Geary County K-State Research and Extension, Donna Martinson. Donna began her Extension career as the Elk County Extension Home Economist. Ten years later, she accepted the position of Geary County Extension Home Economist, with her title later changing to Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Agent.

Throughout her time as an agent, Geary County experienced many changes, but she implemented programs such as Walk Kansas, LifeSmarts for 4-Hers, Kansas Saves, and countless more experiences for residents of Geary County. Donna retired in 2009 after 28 years with our office.

Equally impressive to Donna’s accomplishments in her career, she continues to remain active in the greater Geary County community, having served as the coordinator for the Central Flint Hills Area Quilts of Valor organization, gifting handmade quilts to service members or veterans who have been touched by war. She also assists with the Geary County Free Fair, helping with the Open Class portion of the event, encouraging all county citizens to show off their talents with the community.

Donna and her husband Gail live near Milford Lake, and now enjoy supporting their many grandchildren in their activities, including 4-H. Her impact on Geary County is still felt in Extension and in our communities, and we are honored to recognize Donna Martinson as the 2023 Geary County Extension Appreciation Award Winner.

Medicare Minute

Deb Andres, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

Make sure you look at your current Medicare prescription plan closely. In addition to a possible change in premium, these plans will change what medications they will cover, how they classify them (by Tiers), and what pharmacies they contract with. If your pharmacy is out of network with the plan (which can also change each year), then you will likely want to change either your pharmacy or your plan. Getting medications filled at a pharmacy that is out of network can cost you thousands of dollars more than what you would pay at a preferred pharmacy. If you don’t change your prescription plan, then your 2023 plan will remain in effect for 2024.

THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO DONATED TO THE GEARY CO. 4-H FOUNDATION THIS PAST FALL
My dad was a cook for the U.S. Army during the Korean War. When we got together for family events and seasonal holidays, you would find him in the kitchen as early as 4AM banging around getting equipment together to make a big meal. Since the kitchen was right off my bedroom, as a teenager I would find myself joining in the preparation. Although dad has been gone for nearly 40 years, the stories he would share while we prepared meals together are forever held in my heart.

The Utah State University (USU) Extension Service recently shared the many benefits of sharing your family stories with each other. Extension staff member, Kari Ure offered this article about family stories:

How many family stories do you know? There may be stories of migration or comedies about great-grandma or uncle so-and-so that have been passed down. Family members may have survived natural disasters, served in the armed forces, or had a successful business. These shared stories can be influential in developing family and individual identity because stories are important for understanding the world. Sharing family stories is also a powerful way to strengthen and unite family members. Family stories that show examples of overcoming challenges can help younger generations find the strength to overcome their own struggles.

Research shows that when children know more about their family, they are more resilient, have higher self-esteem, better self-control, lower anxiety levels, fewer behavioral problems, and are more prepared to make good decisions when facing challenges. Family events such as holiday gatherings, mealtimes, and vacations are good times to share family stories. Sharing different people's perspectives of a story is also enjoyable as families gather and reminisce. Keeping a record of the stories is essential, but it doesn't have to be elaborate. It has been shown that writing them down or typing and printing them is more meaningful and preserves them better than digital recordings since formats and equipment change frequently. If preserved in a way that can be replayed, video and voice recordings can be fun for future generations.

Stories of both triumph and failure teach essential life lessons. Humorous anecdotes that include misunderstandings or coincidences, or just using humor to make life more enjoyable, also teach valuable skills. As you plan summer reunions and family time, be intentional about sharing family stories. Ideas include: playing ancestor bingo, visiting a place of significance to your family, celebrating birthdays for deceased family members, playing games family members enjoyed, and making a favorite family recipe book. Other ideas include showing photos of what family members looked like in their youth and determining who looks alike now, creating a family history time capsule, and doing family service projects.

Remember – the family activities and traditions you create now become family stories for future generations.
Join Us For Food and Learning

Kyler Langvardt, Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

with Chip Redmond, KSU Assistant Meterologist

JANUARY 18TH, 12 (NOON) TO 1 PM
GRANDVIEW PLAZA COMMUNITY CENTER
406 State Ave, Junction City, KS 6644

Join Geary County Farm Bureau and Geary County K-State Research and Extension over the noon hour for lunch and to learn more about Kansas weather, its impact on agricultural production and the CoCoRHS program with Christopher (Chip) Redmond, Kansas State University Assistant Meteorologist.

MEAL PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE BY GEARY COUNTY FARM BUREAU

Register by January 15th by calling the Geary County K-State Research and Extension Office at (785) 238-4161.
For the first time in 11 years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has updated its Plant Hardiness Zone Map, which is historically the standard that gardeners and growers use to determine the perennial plants most likely to thrive at a location. The update, said Kansas State University nursery crop production and marketing specialist Cheryl Boyer, is a big deal.

“It’s been a while since the maps have been updated because it’s a significant, coordinated effort,” said Boyer, noting that the maps are built based on data from 13,625 weather stations spanning 30 years.

“We use the plant hardiness zones for nearly all aspects of agriculture, horticulture and natural resources research and extension recommendations,” she said. “They influence our plant recommendations and production guidelines, both for crops and ornamental species.”

Boyer added that USDA’s Risk Management Agency uses the Plant Hardiness Zone Map to set some crop insurance standards for farmers. Other scientists use the data in models that might indicate the spread of weeds, insects or diseases.

“The USDA plant hardiness zone map is a critical tool for plant recommendations,” Boyer said. “In Kansas, most of the state shifted about a half zone warmer. We still have pockets of Zone 5 in the north, but the range of Zone 7 in the southern part of Kansas is significantly larger.

“We should continue to focus on recommending plants that can handle Zone 5 plant hardiness because we will continue to experience extreme weather events, but we can also begin to expand our plant palette with species that originate in slightly warmer climates. This will also be reflected in a longer season for some food crops.”

Boyer served on a USDA technical review team that helped to develop the new map. The group included 40 plant professionals from industry, academic and government as well as “a few consumer horticultural enthusiasts – gardeners – from across the United States.”

The experts in the group included horticulturalists, botanists, agricultural meteorologists and climatologists.

“Our role was to serve as a sounding board and provide feedback for the development of the new map, tools, and to look closely at the weather data for our areas to confirm that it matched our lived experiences of the local weather environment,” Boyer said. “We discussed methodology, how the new maps will change plant hardiness zones and subsequent plant recommendations.”

“This is helpful because, for example, urban areas tend to be heat islands and mountain tops tend to be colder than surrounding areas, so the new maps help identify those microclimates.”

More information on crop production and gardening also is available at our extension office or online from K-State’s Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources.
UPCOMING AREA EVENTS:

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Join Geary County Farm Bureau and Geary County K-State Research and Extension over the noon hour for lunch and to learn more about Kansas weather, its impact on agricultural production and the CoCoRHS program with Christopher (Chip) Redmond, Kansas State University Assistant Meteorologist. Thursday January 18th from Noon to 1 at the Grandview Plaza Community Center.