



December 2024

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Research and Extension



Director's Note

Denise Dias

Wyandotte County Director

Can you believe we are counting down to Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukah, and of course New Year's? No matter how or when you celebrate the season we would like to wish you glory, peace, and happiness for the holiday season. Please take time to celebrate all that is good in this world and as the new year unfolds, commit to being more kind and understanding of each other! Happy Holidays!

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4-H Youth Development

GETTING INVOLVED WITH KANSAS 4-H

The Kansas 4-H Youth program has many things to offer youth participants. The 4-H program is designed to give youth opportunities to learn and grow in many different areas. 4-H offers fellowship with other youth, mentors in older youth and adults, projects promoting exploration and learning, competitive events showcasing the learned skills, and so much more!

Not interested in livestock? No problem! 4-H has many other projects to explore. Everything from sewing and textiles, food and nutrition, creative and performing arts, photography, robotics, and woodworking are just a handful of projects offered in 4-H.

Visit the Wyandotte County 4-H webpage for more information about clubs, project meetings, and [how to enroll in the 4-H program](#).

Start your 4-H journey today!



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GET ACTIVE AND STAY ACTIVE DURING THE HOLIDAYS!

During the holidays it can be difficult to maintain your usual workout schedule. In an effort to reach your physical activity needs try to switch it up! An article of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (PAGA) shows that there is evidence that physical activity can foster normal growth and development in children. It can also make people feel better, function better, sleep better, reduce anxiety and reduce the risk of a large number of chronic diseases. But we all know that actually doing physical activities and the right kinds can be difficult.

If you are crunched for time try fitting in time at work during your lunch break! You could go for a brisk walk or even do chair exercises at your desk. You can also save time by incorporating your family into your workouts. Backpacking or ice skating together can provide exercise while also allowing quality family time.

Staying Active If you are not able to make it to the gym try putting together some at home workouts. Body weight exercises that don't require equipment are great for home workouts. Try crunches, pushups, lunges, or jumping jacks. You can do cardio by running up steps or jogging around your house. Add some variety in your workouts to stay motivated. If you usually run, try biking or weight lifting. For more motivation try creating a vision board and setting realistic goals.

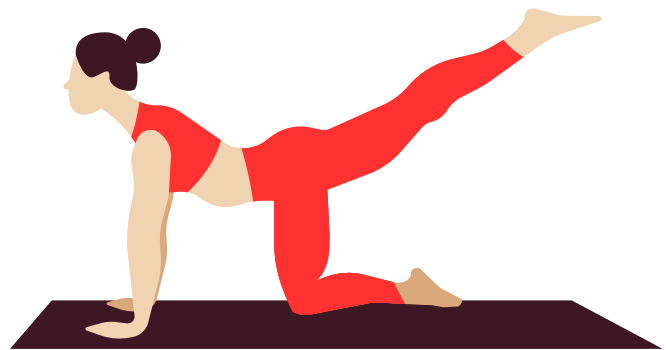
Although the holidays make it difficult, make exercising and reaching your physical fitness goals a top priority. Shoot for at least three thirty-minute workout sessions per week.

For children and young adults, exercise plays a major role in building strong bones and muscles. As we age, exercise helps slow the natural loss of bone density and maintain muscle mass. For older adults, balance and muscle strengthening exercise programs have been shown to decrease the risk of falls.

The PAGA stresses that some physical activity is better than none and encourage everyone to move more. The goals for adults are to do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week. That's about 22 minutes a day or ½ hour for five days a week. Obviously, there are more health benefits the more you do. When you look at the statistics, about half of Americans do accomplish this part of the goal.

The last and most important tip is not to overdo it. Find balance and manage your time wisely so that you can enjoy the holidays with family and friends while also getting physical activity.

Source: ncefnep.org



Nutrition and Food Safety

TIS THE SEASON

The holiday season is a wonderful time of year where the focus is on family, friends, and often delicious food and drink. But after all the festivities January can often bring the post-holiday blues. To avoid this, take a little time now to think about what is important to you and your well-being for the long term. Start by practicing better self-care during holidays. The following is a list common holiday obstacles and solutions to overcome them.

Overeating

This is a common challenge during the holiday season. Moderation is the key, not necessarily avoidance, of your holiday favorites. Focus on a few of your special dishes instead of loading your plate with every food you see. Add healthy additions throughout the day such as breakfast of whole grain oatmeal and fresh fruit and veggies for a snack. Going to gathering? Offer to bring nutrient-dense appetizers such as a vegetable platter with a dip made from Greek yogurt or hummus.

Too much alcohol

Drinking too much can lead to poor judgment, feelings of emotions, and other health problems. If you choose to drink alcohol, be sure to drink twice as much water between each drink. This will help to keep you hydrated as well as slowing down your consumption. A "mocktail" (alcohol free, lower in calories) is another healthy option.

Increased sedentary time.

Why sit down while watching an intense football game? Stand and moving can keep you calm. Bundle up on a chilly evening and go for a brisk walk. The fresh air and star-studded sky is worth the time it takes to layer up. Instead of gathering to bake cookies host a holiday craft night making ornaments or small gifts.

Not enough time for yourself

Time dedicated to family and creating a festive atmosphere can be overwhelming which leads to exhaustion. Allow small windows of personal time to reflect with gratitude. Give yourself permission to say "no" to a party if you need time for yourself. Pay attention to the signals your children are sending. They could be feeling overwhelmed as well. Healthy boundaries can help minimize overstimulation.

By incorporating a few of these strategies, you will arrive in the new year ready to continue your healthy behaviors rather than starting all over. Building on small behavior changes for the long run will help you accomplish your overall wellness goals throughout the year.

(Adapted from Penn State Extension, Staying Balanced During the Holiday Season)



HOLIDAY TIPS: SAVE TIME BY FREEZING YEAST BREAD AND COOKIE DOUGH

The holiday season can get busy, and being able to prepare yeast bread dough ahead of time and freeze it for later use could save time.

Blakeslee said preparing and freezing yeast bread dough must go hand-in-hand with proper food safety practices.

When making any kind of baked good, remember to wash your hands before and after handling flour and the dough. Raw flour has been linked to several foodborne illness outbreaks, so it is important to keep hands clean.

To save time during the holidays, or any time of the year, prepare yeast bread dough ahead of time and freeze into dough balls for rolls to bake later. The trick is using a dough with extra yeast because slow freezing can damage yeast.

Safely freezing yeast bread dough includes these

- Increase the yeast by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon per 3 cups of flour to your favorite bread recipe. Dough that has extra yeast can compensate for potential freeze damage.
- Use bread flour for added dough strength.
- Consider recipes high in yeast and sugar, and low in salt, which are best for freezing.
- Dough can be frozen 1) after kneading and before the first rise, or 2) after the first or second rise.
- Place dough in a freezer-safe package and freeze. Dough can be frozen up to four weeks.
- Thaw frozen dough in the refrigerator or at room temperature, shape, let rise and bake as directed.

Cookie dough also can be prepared and frozen to save time when baking for the holidays. Some tips for freezing cookie dough include:

- Drop cookie dough can be prepared, scooped onto a cookie sheet then frozen.
- After freezing, cookie dough can be removed from the cookie sheet and stored in freezer packaging to be baked later.
- Always remember to wash your hands after handling raw cookie dough.

Caution against the urge to snack on raw cookie dough, because of the foodborne illness risks due to eating raw flour and eggs. Instead, she said, wait until cookies are fully cooked and cooled before enjoying.

Another holiday option: Instead of freezing dough, bake the products first, allow them to cool completely then tightly wrap them and freeze. Let them thaw in the wrapping before using.

Rewarm baked goods with a quick zap in the microwave for that just out of the oven taste.



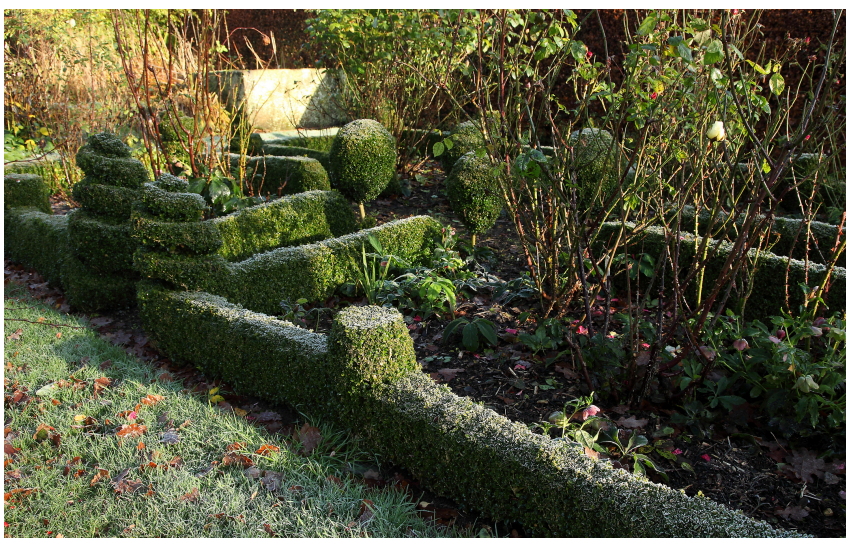
GETTING THE GARDEN READY FOR WINTER

As the cool, crisp days of fall give way to the harsh winter weather in Northeast Kansas, it's important to take proactive steps to prepare your garden and landscape for the colder months. Proper winterization not only protects your plants, but also sets the stage for a healthier, more vibrant garden come spring.

Fall cleanup is one of the most important tasks to prepare your garden for winter. Remove fallen leaves, dead plants with no winter interest, and garden waste to prevent fungal diseases and pests from overwintering in your garden beds. While some leaves can be left to decompose as mulch, it's a good idea to rake and compost any that are diseased or infested with pests. Leaves in the lawn should be mowed, to reduce the risk of smothering the grass and to return the valuable nutrients that the leaves contain to the soil.

Roses such as hybrid tea, floribunda and grandiflora should be winterized after a heavy frost. Soil, bark, wood-chips, or aged sawdust can be used to mulch the plant at a depth of 10-12 inches, and at about 18 inches across. Make sure to cover the stem and graft union. Fungicide spray can be applied proactively to stems if rose black spot is a concern. Old garden and shrub-type roses do not need mulching and are winter hardy for our area. Pull back mulch around young or newly planted trees at least 6 inches to give pests less access to the bark during the winter months. This should be standard practice at all times, to also prevent the formation of roots right up next to the trunk. Thin-barked newly planted trees such as maples can also benefit from a trunk cover in winter to prevent frost-cracking and sunscald. Ensure this is removed come springtime.

Winter watering can also be a good idea, particularly for trees or shrubs planted in the last year, and for evergreens. You are free to water any time during the winter as long as the soil is not frozen, and temperatures are above freezing. It does not matter if the temps fall below freezing after the application, as frozen water in the soil will not harm the plants. A deep thorough soaking should last for a month or more depending on the moisture patterns. Do remember to disconnect the hose from the outside faucet and drain it afterward.



Community Development

SHOP SMALL WYANDOTTE COUNTY!

Saturday, November 30th, is Shop Small Saturday. According to the Small Business Administration, approximately \$17 billion was spent nationwide at small businesses on the Saturday after Thanksgiving last year.

This initiative started 15 years ago and has significantly impacted our economy. The idea is to give our small businesses a portion of the holiday sales often spent at "big box" stores.

Small businesses generally offer one-of-a-kind items that you just cannot find anywhere else. Their products tend to be higher in quality than mass-produced items. The last few years have been really tough for small businesses to succeed, especially in a tight economy. Small businesses tend to be more environmentally conscious.

When you support small businesses, you support a family and help our community become stronger. Every little purchase makes a big difference. Just think, if everyone spent \$100 a year or more at a local business instead of at one of the big chain stores, it would put an extra \$3 million a year into our economy and create hundreds of jobs.

I would challenge you to make a promise to yourself and our community to shop small this year! Suppose we want our county to thrive and grow. In that case, small businesses help to contribute to the uniqueness and vibrancy of Wyandotte County.



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Upcoming Events



December 20: Office Closed for Staff Development

December 25 - Jan 1:
Office Closed for Holidays

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