

November – December, 2017

Prepping Your Kitchen for the Holidays

'Tis the season...prepare your kitchen ahead of time for safe and healthy holidays!

- Clean it! Start off your holiday season by cleaning and sanitizing surfaces, such as countertops and cutting boards. Safeguard by cleaning both before and after food preparation. Avoid spreading germs by wiping down the inside of the refrigerator, handles and bins and stock up on cleaning products like paper towels, sanitizing sprays, or cleaning wipes. If you use sponges or cloth wipes, wash these regularly and never use these to clean up raw and uncooked messes, such as meat or eggs.
- Temp it! Make sure to have a thermometer on hand. Cold foods should be kept at 35-40 F°. Internal temperatures of cooked food should be checked prior to consumption. See the chart below to make sure the correct internal temperatures are reached for each type of food.
- Store it! Prior to shopping, organize the refrigerator, freezer and pantry to ensure adequate space for every item. Frozen turkeys take several days to thaw in the refrigerator; place this and all other raw meat on the bottom shelf to avoid cross-contamination. Don't forget to properly store leftovers. Be sure you have enough sealable containers for proper storage.
- Serve it! Plan ahead and confirm you have enough serving plates, cutting boards, and utensils that can all be used separately to avoid cross-contamination.
- Relax and enjoy it! Plan ahead by getting an accurate head count, check for any food allergies, and purchase needed items before the holiday rush.

USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures

					
Beef, Veal, Lamb Steaks & Roasts	Fish	Pork	Beef, Veal, Lamb Ground	Egg Dishes	Turkey, Chicken & Duck Whole, Pieces & Ground
145 °F	145 °F	160 °F	160 °F	160 °F	165 °F

Adapted from: Colorado Farm to Table <http://farmtotable.colostate.edu/prepare-resources/holiday-food-safety.pdf>

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Playful Ways for Cooler Days

Do you welcome the falling leaves and changing colors of fall? With the change of seasons also comes changes in our active lives. Kids were once playing in the outdoor pool, participating in organized sports like baseball, softball, and soccer, and going for bike rides down to the park during the warmer months. What is there to do when it starts to get cold outside to keep young hearts healthy, young bones and muscles strong, and young bodies energized? NO couch potatoes allowed! There are many activities kids can do to help keep them fit while having fun during the fall and winter months.

First of all, just because the temperature drops does not mean outside activities have to cease. Just remember to wear warm layers of clothing, drink water with increasing activity and wear sunscreen. Here are some outdoor activities to enjoy in the fall that are fun for all ages:

- Enjoy the beautiful foliage on a walk or hike
- Rake leaves and play in the piles
- Try a holiday race like a “Turkey Trot” 5k walk or run

When the snow starts to fall try these fun activities:

- Snowshoe around your yard or out on a golf course
- Ice skate at an indoor or outdoor rink
- Sled on your favorite hill
- Build a snowman or snow fort
- Go cross country skiing
- Have a snowball fight and make snow angels
- Help your neighbors by shoveling snow from their sidewalks



There are always cold, wet, snowy days that require everyone to be inside for the day. Again, parents can encourage kids to be active while inside the home. The following are a few ideas to help keep kids moving while using their imaginations and their brains.

- Turn up the music and dance
- Play board games or card games for a while, then switch to a more active game
- Let friends come over to build forts with blankets and the furniture.
- Jump rope
- See who can balance on one foot the longest
- Hula hoop



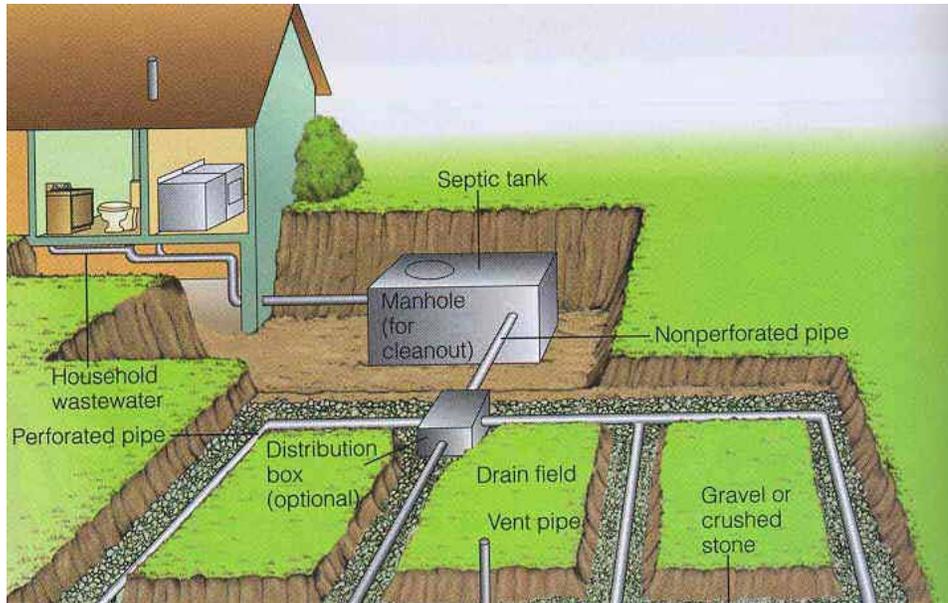
In addition, if there is an internet connection in the home, go to www.youtube.com and search “Zumba Kids.” There are a number of video dances kids can do with fun music, interesting background and dance leaders who are kids. The site is done by Family Friendly Gaming, so the dances and music are age appropriate. The site looks very much like what kids would see if they were playing on an Xbox. So, a couple of kids can watch and perform the dances from the computer screen.

For more ideas about fitness activity, nutrition and recipes visit: <http://www.liveeatplay.colostate.edu>

Taking care of your Septic System

About a year and a half ago I wrote an article about water well maintenance. In that article I mentioned the importance of maintaining your septic system, if for no other reason, to maintain water well safety. I remember thinking, "I need to call and have mine checked!" Fast forward a year and a half to a Saturday night about 6:00 p.m. After a day of painting with a three and five year-old (imagine the mess!), I ran a tub of water only to soon find out nothing will drain! Nothing! The entire house is backed up and the next day is a Sunday!

There are two main reasons to do regular maintenance of your septic system. The first is safety. If a septic system fails, it can contaminate the ground water, nearby wells, and drinking water sources. The second is cost. Failure to maintain a septic system is one of the main reasons for early system failure. Preventative



maintenance costs very little compared to a new system. It costs between \$100 to \$300 dollars a year to have a septic system inspected and pumped, and anywhere from \$3000 to \$10,000 to have one replaced.

The average recommendation for septic systems is to have them inspected every three years by a septic service professional, and pumped every three to five years depending on septic tank size, household size, volume of water and solid waste. There are many ways to take care of your septic

system during your everyday routines. One important way is to maintain and update your household plumbing. The average indoor water use per individual is 70 gallons of water a day. A leaking or running toilet can use up to 200 gallons of water a day! Updating toilets to high-efficiency toilets with reservoirs of 1.6 gallons, opposed to the typical 3.5 - 5 gallon reservoirs, can also help.

When doing laundry, select the proper load size. Do not put in a small load of laundry on a large load setting. Also, spread your loads of laundry throughout the week. Doing them all in one day can overload your septic tank and could cause your drain field to flood.

Your septic system contains a collection of living organisms responsible for breaking down and digesting household waste. Killing off these organisms can disrupt or permanently damage your septic system. DO not pour cooking grease, harsh chemicals, flushable wipes, cigarette butts or coffee grounds down your drains. It is important to only flush human waste and toilet paper down the system.

Additional resources:

<https://www.epa.gov/septic/how-care-your-septic-system>

http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/pdf/ww/septic/pl_fall04.pdf

Effective Co-Parenting Communication

Divorce has become a common experience - about [40-50 percent of married couples in the United States divorce](#). When families go through a major change event, such as divorce, everyone involved experiences transition. The amount of time it takes to successfully form a parenting partnership with your child(ren)'s other parent can have a lasting impact on your child(ren). Therefore, it is critical to explore co-parenting skills that will enable healthier communication patterns between you and your co-parent.



Different Approaches to Co-Parenting

Approaches to co-parenting vary from highly conflictual to cooperative; developing a co-parenting relationship centered on the needs of the child(ren) has a huge impact on the overall well-being of your child(ren). Common approaches to co-parenting include:

- **Conflictual Co-Parenting-** this is the worst approach to co-parenting and can lead to parents placing children in the center of their disputes or one parent departing from the parenting relationship. This approach remains extremely hostile and introduces barriers to communication for both parents and child(ren).
- **Disengaged Co-Parenting-** when one parent disengages or withdraws from the relationship with their child(ren); this can be a result of high conflict, geographical moves, court ordered restraining orders, etc. This approach may lead to short term disengagement or long term abandonment, which can factor into parental allocation determination by courts.
- **Parallel Co-Parenting-** this approach can be an effective way to reduce conflict and still sustain a relationship with their child(ren). More often than not, this approach is a reflection of the inability for co-parents to parent together, but remain supportive of each other's parental role with the child(ren). Although this approach can be successful in the short term, it can lead to long term miscommunication and confusion for the child(ren).
- **Cooperative Co-Parenting-** this is the ideal approach with very low conflict. Whereas both parents actively participate in joint decision-making, communicate regularly about their child(ren) and engage in flexibility to fit their child(ren)'s needs.

Understandably, cooperative co-parenting is the best approach to co-parenting. However, this may not be feasible in all scenarios, including those relationships with domestic violence or abandonment. Evaluate your situation and chose the best co-parenting option for your family based upon the commitment to your child and meeting their needs.



Communication Skills

Good communication is essential to a healthy and productive co-parenting relationship no matter what parenting approach you and your co-parent have chosen. Often effective communication begins with respectful non-verbal communication; facial expressions, gestures, tone, space, anything besides the use of words.

- **Style of Voice-** volume, pitch and tone do matter. They can easily be misinterpreted, therefore, avoid loud, quick, high pitched, and sharp tones.
- **Body Language-** this includes your stance, eyes, head, hands and even the tenseness in your muscles. Do your best to remain calm and relaxed; do not confront aggressively; and avoid eye rolling, inappropriate hand gestures, or a disrespectful space between you and your co-parent.
- **Be a Good Listener-** engage in active listening, which means not interrupting, removing distractions, such as cell phones, and being interested in what the other person is saying. Keep eye contact, maintain a relaxed body posture, concentrate on the words not the delivery, be patient and ask for clarification or repeat what you heard. *(Continued on next page...)*

- Use “I” Statements- avoid using statements that include “you” as this can be perceived as blame or accusatory. Using statements that begin with “I” allows you to express your needs and feelings which shows you are taking responsibility and can effectively reduce conflict.

Not all parenting scenarios allow for face to face communication and may require electronic communication, such as emails or text messages. Electronic communication poses many challenges, such as misinterpretation. For more information on electronic communication review guidelines by [Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Communication Guidelines handbook](#).

Using a Business-Like Approach

Finally, using a business-like approach can help relieve tension by reducing the emotional component of the co-parenting relationship and viewing co-parenting as objective, prioritizing your child(ren)’s success. Guidelines for a business-like approach to co-parenting include:

- Be reasonable and flexible- avoid focusing on the other parent. Focus on what is in the best interest of the child and develop plans from there.
- Remain diplomatic- listen to the other parent and remain supportive of family relationships from both families.
- Be trustworthy- tell the other parent the truth and follow through on your responsibilities.
- Be respectful- maintain a civil relationship, remove emotions or at least keep your emotions in check. If conversations get heated, remove yourself and come back to the issue at a later time.
- Continuously work at it- businesses do not thrive overnight. This is a learning process, but keep your focus and energy on the best interests for your child(ren).

For more information on co-parenting after divorce or a major family transition and how to enroll in a parenting class visit your local judiciary center or family resource center. Information adapted from [Parents Forever](#) curriculum, education for families in transition authored by the University of Minnesota Extension.

Poinsettia Pointers

Poinsettia plants are an annual tradition for many people during the holiday season. With special care, you can enjoy these beautiful plants for more than just a few weeks. Here some are tips on how to care for and what to look for when purchasing poinsettias:

- *Lower leaves with a dark green foliage color*
- *Leaves or colored bracts that are not damaged or broken*
- *Center flowers that are round and tightly closed, not showing yellow pollen - as this indicates an older plant*
- *Always wrap plants and pots when taking poinsettias outdoors in temperatures below 40°F. Paper or large sealed bags work well.*
- *Immediately unwrap plants from protective paper or bags*
- *Place in a brightly lit area but away from direct sunlight*
- *Protect plants from drafts of hot or cold air. Temperatures above 75°F shorten bloom life and below 60°F can cause root rot.*
- *Examine the potting soil daily and water when soil becomes dry to the touch. Never let the plant wilt or it will lose its leaves.*
- *Water poinsettias with lukewarm water until it begins to run out of the holes in the bottom of the pot. Discard drainage water.*
- *Keep the soil moist but not soggy wet - poinsettias do not like "wet feet."*



Source: K-State Research & Extension, Sedgwick County

Handling Food Allergies during the Holidays

The holidays are a time for spending quality time with your family and friends and gathering around the table to share a meal, but this can be a challenging time of year for those individuals who have food allergies. Food allergies are estimated to affect 4% of adults and 8% of children in the United States. According to Food Allergy Research and Education, the 'big 8' food allergens affecting the majority are milk, eggs, tree nuts, peanuts, fish, shellfish, wheat and soybeans. Here are tips to help you navigate food allergies safely this holiday season:

- If you are the host, check ahead of time with each of your guests about allergies prior to planning your menu.
- Keep the ingredient list and food labels from holiday foods in case of questions or allergic reactions.
- Don't count out the turkey – self-basted and even pre-basted turkeys can include common allergens such as soy, wheat and dairy.
- Be aware of cross-contamination. Use separate serving spoons and cutlery.
- Bring allergen-free food to holiday parties at your work or child's school and always include information about the ingredients.
- If you are traveling, pack your own snacks for the plane trip.
- Eat a light meal before you go to pot luck events, just in case there is no allergen-free option to eat.



If you have a child who suffers from food allergies, be sure to talk to them about checking items before eating and ensure other adults are aware of possible food allergies. Adapted from: Colorado Farm to Table
<http://farmtotable.colostate.edu/prepare-resources/holiday-food-safety-allergies.php#.Wd-eAcuWyUk>

Healthy Meals at Home

- Planning around key nutritious meal components ahead of time, keeping your freezer and pantry stocked with staples, cooking once for several meals, preparing ingredients ahead of time and using time-saving cooking methods and one-dish meals will make cooking at home quick, enjoyable, and healthy.
- Cook extra meats and proteins to have on hand for several meals. Bake boneless, skinless chicken breast to warm-up later or eat cold in a salad. Frozen fish is nutritious, thaws quickly and cooks easily. Beans and lentils are good sources of protein and fiber. Cook brown lentils or beans ahead of time to add to soups, stews or stir fries.
- Start with a whole grain such as quinoa or brown rice. Layer in black beans, corn, chopped avocado, diced tomato, cheese, lettuce and salsa for a southwest flavored burrito bowl. A stir fry version could also be made with frozen shrimp, frozen vegetables and a light seasoning. Consider adding kale, zucchini, broccoli or other vegetable to tomato-based sauce for whole grain spaghetti. To ease the transition, try mix half white spaghetti with half whole grain noodles. Whole grain tortillas, pitas and ready-made pizza crusts can be topped, wrapped or stuffed with filling like egg salad, chicken salad or tuna salad. Add some veggies like, shredded carrot, sliced tomatoes, onions and cucumbers.
- Slow-cookers are great ways to have meals almost completely prepared by the time you return home in the evening. Slow-cookers are also easy to use when making chili, stews or soups. A portion can be eaten with sandwiches and have leftovers for lunches or freeze for other meals. Grilling and stir-frying are two forms of food preparation that allow food to be cooked easily with little clean-up.



For more recipe ideas and nutrition information go to www.liveeatplaycolostate.edu or <https://www.usda.gov/topics/food-and-nutrition/dietary-health>

Program Highlights!



Phillips County: 9 youth ages 11 to 14 participated in 7 hours of “**Babysitting Basics Training**” at the Phillips County Event Center on Friday, October 13th. Students learn about the business of babysitting, expectations of a babysitter, what to prepare and how to prepare for a babysitting job, understanding ages and stages of children, common challenges of babysitting, safety concerns for young children, basic overview of CPR and First Aid.

Washington County: Youth Sewing Club – With the help of a couple parents, 7 youth met for a couple hours of sewing time to make 14 pillowcases to donate to the Children’s Hospital. For three of the kids, it was their first time of using a sewing machine. With this basic pillow case project, they learned to safely operate the sewing machine and sew straight seams. Several went on to learn how to use a serger to finish the seams to prevent raveling. The next projects are: T-shirt pillows and flannel pajama pants.



Upcoming Events!

Diabetes Webinar- Generational Links and Diabetes, November 28th 12-1pm and **Type I Diabetes**, November 28th 5:30-6:30 pm



ANNIE’S PROJECT coming this winter - Annie’s Project is a program designed to empower farm/ranch women to be better business operators and/or partners. The six-week course meets for one 3-hour session per week. Topics include five risk areas: production, price or market, financial, institutional and legal, and human and personal. Classes are being planned for mid-January through

February in Fort Morgan, Sterling, Holyoke, Burlington and Wray. Classes limited to 20 participants. \$60 fee for meal and class materials for the series. Call local Extension Offices to register.



“A Healthier Weigh” 12-week Health and Fitness Challenge starting in early January through March for teams and individuals. Morgan, Phillips and Washington counties- Weigh-In’s January 2nd through January 5th with the challenge starting on January 7th. Call Extension Offices for information. Challenge information available soon at Extension Offices.

Strong People, Stay Healthy- Morgan County Extension Office, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 pm (begins on January 9th- March 29th)

Kid Phit – Tuesdays after school from October 3 – November 7 at the WRAC, Wray



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2018 A Healthier Weigh



12 Week Health and Fitness Challenge



*Healthy You - Weight Management and Mindful
Eating Program*

January 7th to March 31st

4-Person Teams OR Individuals

CASH & PRIZES: Weight Loss
 Activity/Exercise
 Waist Reduction

*Nutrition & Fitness Lessons with activities, tips, fitness challenges available on-line, with optional local events/programs!

Entry Fee: \$160/ team or \$40 per person due at registration and weigh-in.

For challenge guidelines and entry packets contact:
Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Washington and Yuma
County Extension Offices



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