



FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Newsline

KAY COUNTY - P. O. Box 430, Newkirk, OK 74647-0430 ☎ 580-362-2200 📠 FAX 580-362-2268
County Website: <http://www.oces.okstate.edu/kay/fcs> State Website <http://www.fcs.okstate.edu/>
County Email: kay.oces@okstate.edu

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February is American Heart Month

Cardiovascular diseases, including stroke, is the No. 1 killer in the nation and in Kay County. Urging Americans to join the battles against these diseases, February has been proclaimed “American Heart Month” since 1963.

“The best weapons to fight cardiovascular disease are a healthy diet and healthy lifestyle” said Janice Hermann, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension nutrition specialist.

“It’s important to know how many calories you should be eating and drinking to maintain your weight. Do not consume more calories than you can burn every day,” Hermann said. And, be aware of the type of foods you’re eating. While you may eat enough food, your body may not be getting the nutrients it needs to be healthy.

Nutrient-rich foods have vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients and are lower in calories. To get the nutrients you need, choose foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole-grain products, lean meats and fat-free or low-fat dairy products.

Fruits and vegetables are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber. And as an added bonus, they are low in calories. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables can help a person control weight and blood pressure.

Whole-grain foods also contain fiber, which makes you feel full. In addition, these foods also have a positive impact on your blood pressure and can help you manage your weight.

Herman also advises people to eat fish at least twice a week. Research indicates that eating oily fish containing omega-3 fatty acids may lower the risk of death from coronary artery disease. Healthy choices of fish include salmon, trout and herring.

Something else to keep in mind is the positive effect physical activity has on the body. Being active brings many benefits for your heart and your health. Regular physical activity can help you improve your blood pressure and blood sugar levels and can reduce your risk

for chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, depression and breast and colon cancer.

“You should try to get in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most, if not all, days of the week,” Hermann said. “Individuals who are trying to lose weight should aim for 30 minutes to 60 minutes most days.

Keep in mind that ‘exercise’ doesn’t necessarily mean a gym membership. There are many ways to incorporate physical activity into your day.”

For example, take the stairs instead of riding the elevator. Park further away from your office or the store. Although it may sound simple, small steps do add up.

It also is a good idea to keep a written log of your physical activity. Although you think you are getting enough exercise, actually seeing it written down may put it more into perspective, much like keeping a food intake log.

Just as parents do with their children, keep track of your TV time, including time spent watching television, surfing the Web or playing computer games.

“Being physically active can boost your ability to make other lifestyle improvements as well,” Hermann said. “You’ll feel more confident, have more energy and serve as a good role model for your family and friends.”

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What Type of Eye Doctor Should I See

Start the year with a visit to your eye doctor

Many people confuse optometrists, ophthalmologists, and opticians.

An *optometrist* has both a four-year Bachelor of Science degree and a four-year post-graduate degree from an accredited college of optometry. An optometrist is called a Doctor of Optometry. (O.D.). Optometrists examine patients for near and farsightedness and can diagnose some diseases like glaucoma and cataracts. They can also prescribe treatment, normally non-surgical, such as eyeglasses, contact lenses, visual aids, and vision rehabilitation. Optometrists can manage some eye diseases and conditions. However, they do not perform surgery, and they are not trained to diagnose and treat all eye diseases.

An *ophthalmologist* has an undergraduate degree, a four-year medical degree, and four years of post-graduate training in ophthalmology. Ophthalmologists are medical doctors who can diagnose, treat, and manage all eye diseases, and perform eye surgery. Both optometrists and ophthalmologists are licensed by the states in which they practice.

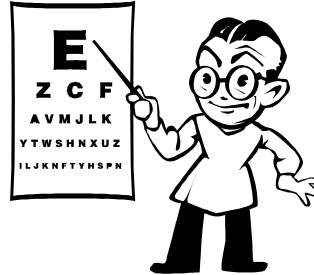
Opticians have two-year technical degrees. They fill prescriptions for eyeglasses and contact lenses, including adjustment, repair, and replacement.

For regular, comprehensive eye exams, an optometrist is a good choice. For people with higher risk of developing eye disease or those who have already been diagnosed, an ophthalmologist may be better able to treat and manage symptoms. Always consult your eye doctor for professional advice.

Lifelong Good Eye Habits

As we age, our risk of developing eye diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), cataracts, and glaucoma increases. Lifelong healthy vision habits that begin in childhood may lower the chances of developing these disorders and protect eyesight. Although we realize how vital vision is to our lives, many of us take our sight for granted and forget to include these practices in our daily routine.

- Children and adults should wear sunglasses and brimmed hats for protection against ultraviolet (UV) radiation that may harm the eyes and increase the risk of developing eye disease. Sunglasses don't have to be expensive, but make sure they block at least 99 percent of UVB and 95 percent of UVA rays. The most protective



sunglasses fit snugly to the face and wrap around the temples.

- Use sufficient light in the home when performing close up work, and when reading or writing. Proper lighting can also protect accidental eye injury caused by bumping into open doors or tripping, for example.
- Long hours in front of a computer screen may not increase the risk of eye disease, but can make eyes tired and dry. When using the computer for extended periods, make sure to “rest” the eyes regularly by looking away from the screen at objects that are farther away. It can also help to close the eyes for short breaks.
- Wear approved protective eyewear in the workplace (if required), at home (for example, when mowing, hammering, or drilling), and when playing racquet sports. Wear a helmet that protects the eyes when playing baseball and hockey.
- Eat a healthy “vision” diet, including brightly colored fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and foods containing Omega-3 fatty acids, such as tuna, salmon, and certain nuts and oils.
- Exercise regularly – it’s great for every part of the body: the eyes, the brain, and the heart.
- Avoid or quit smoking.
- Control other medical conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure that may increase the risk of developing eye disease.
- Get regular eye exams – at least once every two years. Your doctor may recommend more frequent exams, particularly if you are at risk.
- Contact an eye care professional immediately if you notice any changes or problems with your vision such as eye pain, blurriness, or the appearance of halos around lights.

If you have an eye disease, make sure you understand its symptoms, progress, and treatment options. Follow your doctor’s instructions, take medications exactly as prescribed, see your doctor regularly, and report any problems immediately.

What should I ask the Doctor?

During a comprehensive eye examination, it may be difficult to remember all the information the doctor needs and how to get as much information as possible from your eye care professional. A little planning can make the exam better for both the doctor and the patient.

Before the exam, make sure you have information about your general health and health history readily available so that you can fill out any necessary forms. Write down any medications you are currently taking and any questions you have. It can help to bring a friend or relative to the doctor's office.

If you are diagnosed with an eye disease:

- Request that the doctor explain the disease, its symptoms, progress, treatment options, and ongoing care.

- Ask for explanations of anything that is not understood, and for further written information to read after the visit.
- If medication is prescribed, ensure that you know exactly how to take it and are aware of any side effects. Ask about possible drug interaction.
- If surgery is recommended, make sure you understand what will happen, and what must be done before, during, and after the procedure.
- Know when you should come for a return visit.
- If you have already lost some vision, inquire about vision rehabilitation and resources.

- American Health Assistance Foundation,
www.ahaf.org

Winter Fire Safety

The high cost of home heating and utilities have caused many of us to search for alternate heating sources. The use of wood-burning stoves is growing and portable space heaters are selling rapidly. The sales of wood and man-made logs for fireplaces are at an all time high. All these methods of heating are acceptable and safe if they are used and maintained properly.

During the months of December, January, and February, home heating is the number one cause of residential fires.

The following are some safety tips for the different types of heating appliances.

Kerosene Heaters

Although this type of heater is not a common source of alternate heating its use is becoming more prevalent as the cost of propane and other fuels are escalating. Following these tips will ensure your safety while using these appliances.

- Never use a kerosene heater indoors if it is not rated for this type of use.
- Be sure your heater is in good working condition. Inspect exhaust parts for carbon buildup and be sure the heater has an emergency shut off in case the heater is knocked over.
- Never use fuel-burning appliances without proper room ventilation. Burning fuels such as coal, kerosene, or propane can produce deadly fumes.
- Use **ONLY** the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Never introduce a fuel into a unit that it was not designed for.

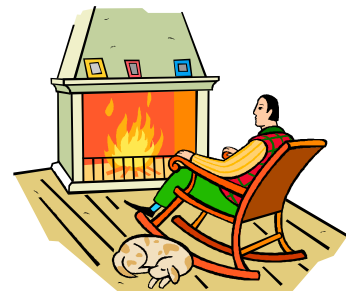


- Keep fuels and other flammable liquids in UL-approved containers. Store these containers in a well-ventilated storage area outside of the house.
- Never fill a heater while it is operating or still hot. When refueling heating units, avoid overfilling because cold or cool fuel will expand as it warms in the tank.
- Refuel all units outside on a stable hard surface and clean up any spills before using the heating unit.

Wood Stoves and Fireplaces

Wood stoves and fireplaces are becoming a very common heat source in homes. Careful attention to safety can minimize their fire hazard. Here are some tips to use them safely.

- Be sure the fireplace or stove is installed properly and have it checked and cleaned at least once a year by a professional.
- Keep at least three feet (36") of clearance around all appliances that produce heat.
- Never use a flammable liquid to start or accelerate a fire in a stove or fireplace.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out. This also will help prevent an object falling into the fireplace.

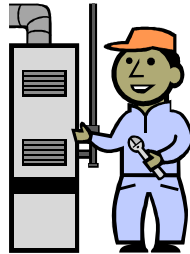


- Do not overload the stove or fireplace. This may cause the unit to fail.
- Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.

Furnace Heating

This is the most common type of heating unit in the United States and the most neglected appliance in our homes. It is the major contributor to carbon monoxide poisoning during the winter months. Safety tips to follow for this type of unit include:

- Have the unit checked by a professional each year before you start the unit.
- Make sure all furnace controls and emergency shutoffs are in proper working condition.
- Change the filter to the furnace at least once a month to reduce the stress on the heater motor.
- Leave furnace repairs to a qualified technician.
- Do not store combustibles in the furnace closet. Again, keep at least three feet of clearance all around the unit.
- Inspect the walls and ceiling around the unit and along the flue line. If the wall is HOT to the touch or severely discolored call a qualified technician.



Here are some other safety tips to help prevent injuries and fires during the winter months.

- Never discard hot ashes; let them cool before removing. Place them in a metal container outside away from any structure.
- Never use an extension cord to run a space heater. Plug the heater directly into the wall outlet and remember – do not overload the circuit.
- Never use electrical space heaters near water (bathroom, kitchen, laundry room, etc.).
- Never thaw a frozen pipe with a blow torch or other open flame. The pipe could conduct the heat and ignite materials inside the wall.

Finally, remember to make sure you have at least one working smoke detector installed on every level of your home and outside every sleeping area. The Tulsa Fire Department also recommends that you install a carbon monoxide detector on every level of your home. Have and practice a home escape plan with your family, making sure you have a meeting place outside and away from the house.

- Rick Bruder, Tulsa Fire Department

5 WAYS TO SURVIVE A RECESSION

The U.S. economy is in a bit of a pickle. In no particular order, we've had a housing bubble, a credit bubble, a bear market in stocks, soaring energy costs, falling consumer spending, increasing unemployment, high food costs, and burdensome debt levels.

The government has taken steps to maintain calm and stabilize the system – lowering interest rates, mailing \$100 billion in stimulus checks, bailing out Bear Stearns, guaranteeing the debt of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, passing a \$300 billion homeowner rescue package - but the problems have spread so rapidly that they threaten to pull the rest of the world, along with the U.S., into recession.

Recently, the National Bureau of Economic Research announced that the U.S. has been in a recession since December of last year. This news is not particularly surprising. That said, financial experts say there are ways to protect oneself.

Don't panic.

Recessions have historically occurred every few years and they last, on an average about 10 months. No matter how bad it gets, the vast majority of people will



still get up and go to work, pay their mortgage, and take a vacation now and then. The steepest recession in the last 30 years occurred in 1981. It lasted 16 months, the economy shrank 2.6 percent, and unemployment reached 10.7 percent. More recent recessions have been less severe. The 2001 recession lasted only eight months, they economy shrank less than one percent, and unemployment was barely over six percent.

“The last recession was over before it was officially announced,” said Ernie Goss, professor of economics at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb. “This one will likely be somewhat longer because of the sharp downturn in housing, but the economy will eventually recover.”

Repair your balance sheet.

Many who took on heavy debt to purchase inflated assets like real estate are now in a position where they owe more than it is worth. According to a recent report by the real estate Web site Zillow, nearly one-third of all homeowners who bought since 2003 now owe more than their homes are worth. For some, selling or refinancing may be an option.

Get rid of debt where possible and build up your cash reserves so you can ride out the storm. And put away the plastic. Credit cards in a downturn are like saltwater to a thirsty person lost at sea: It looks tempting, but it won't help. Cut up all your cards except for one for emergency use and then make a list of creditors to whom you owe money. Starting with the high-interest rate credit cards first, pay off your past purchases before making any new ones.

Stop the bleeding.

We all have leaks in our budgets that can add up to serious money. Spending \$10 a day on unnecessary items is \$3,650 per year. That same \$3,650 would be a good start on a cash reserve or could be used to pay off high-interest credit cards. Miscellaneous expenses are the easiest to cut, but don't be afraid to trim the fat in the rest of your budget.

Meet with your advisors.

During the last bear market, many people learned the hard way that their investment portfolios were not properly allocated. Now is the time to ensure that your investments make sense based on your goals, time frame, and risk tolerance. If you're currently working with an advisor, these meetings are likely included in the fees or commissions you're already paying. If you've

handled your finances on your own and are just interested in receiving a second opinion, most firms are willing to provide consultations on a fee-only basis, usually ranging from \$100 to \$300 an hour.

Keep investing.

When money is tight, it's tempting to stop making IRA and 401(k) contributions. Because of the power of compounding, however, taking even a one-year break could put a serious dent in your nest egg even more so if cutting back on your contributions means giving up your employer match. To illustrate, if you have 10 years to go until retirement and are contributing \$250 a month to your 401(k), skipping just one year of contributions would shrink your nest egg by \$6000, assuming an eight percent annual return. Also, if you're nervous about throwing money into a sinking market, consider the tip offered by a health services coordinator, Dorothy Ray, of Omaha: "Investing into a volatile market has been scary, so rather than watching my account balance, I've been watching my share balance. More shares will eventually translate into more money."

Legendary investor Shelby Davis said it well: "You make most of your money during a bear market. You just don't realize it at the time."

The Parenting Journey: Don't Miss Discovery Point

We all make wrong turns along the journey of life and parenting. The important thing to remember is not to forget to learn or discover things from those experiences. Children will make lots of mistakes even when trying their best. When our children make mistakes, we can help them think about what they have learned. By being patient and understanding, we can provide a safe environment for learning.

By helping children learn and discover as they work through challenges we encourage a love of learning. We want our children to understand the value of learning. We can help by showing our own love of learning and how even adults make mistakes and learn new things. Reading together is one of the simplest ways to show the value of learning to children. Visit one of our local libraries, many of them will be extending hours to assist busy families and work schedules. We can visit interesting people and places. We can talk about the things we learn.

Children learn best from making choices. We should allow children to make choices for which they are ready. Children can choose what they wear. They can choose

among chores. Parents can help children choose from options that are safe and sensible.

Adults don't like to be forced to do things. Neither do children. We all like to have choices. Give children real choices. Asking a child whether he wants to clean up his room or get a whipping is not a real choice – it is a threat. We might instead ask a child if he wants to play music on the radio while cleaning his room or would rather have it quiet. We might even ask the child if they would rather get their room cleaned up right now or would rather wait until after dinner. (If the child decides to clean the room after dinner, we need to remember to enforce the commitment!)

Even young children should be given choices. For example, at bedtime a parent might ask a child if they would like to read a story or sing a song. Of course an infant can only make limited choices – but even young children might have preferences. If that child (past 6 months of age) favors carrots over potatoes, let her eat the carrots.

Wise parents set some limits on choices. We allow young children to decide which shirt they want to wear to school but we



set limits on bedtimes. We allow teens to go out with their friends but we ask them to be home by a certain time.

As children get older, we allow them more freedom in their choices. For example, a teenager who hates to clean his room might be allowed to clean it only once a week. Teens are also given more freedom about choosing their friends and how they spend their time. That does not mean that teens are allowed to hang out whenever they want. The normal place for teens to be when they are not in school or at work is at home.

Some things should be decided by the child. In matters of style it is better not to start a battle. You may think your child's hair is too long or too short or that baggy pants look ridiculous. (Probably our parents had some of the same concerns about our style.) Allow the child freedom to express herself or himself in areas that

are not unsafe or immoral. Do not panic when some of those choices are very different from ones we make.

We can prepare children to make good choices by providing information. For example, when a child is thinking about buying expensive shoes, we might ask them if they are willing to consider some factors in their decision. We can encourage them to think how the cost of the shoes equates with weeks of allowance or hours of work. We might ask them what alternatives they have considered. We can ask them how important those shoes are relative to other purchases that could be made with the same money. It is not helpful to pester children but we can help them learn a sensible way of making choices. If we want our children to be good decision-makers we should give them appropriate opportunities to make decisions along their journey to adulthood.

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Mary Rhyne Editor, Mary Rhyne, Kay County Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences/4-H