

News Column for Use Week of 3/15/2021  
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## **Welcome to Walk Kansas**

The popular Walk Kansas program returns. Walk Kansas 2021 will begin March 28 and continue thru May 22. I invite you to participate in this K-State Research and Extension health initiative.

This year's Walk Kansas will highlight how physical activity and healthy eating can prevent or help people manage common challenges including mental health, heart disease, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease and brain health, obesity, arthritis, diabetes, and cancer.

Participants are encouraged to form teams of four to six, with one individual serving as captain. The captain will register the team online at [walkkansasonline.org](http://walkkansasonline.org). Team members record their activity, for example walking or bicycling – online weekly. Participants do not have to walk together or live in the same community. Since teams could connect through technology, many teams form with family members or friends in other parts of the state or other communities.

Though teams and individuals do not actually walk across the state, the goal is to walk in their neighborhoods or communities an equivalent distance to walking across Kansas. Challenge yourself or each other by choosing one of three walking trails at the beginning when Walk Kansas starts. The three challenges vary by the distance on the trail traveled. When forming your team look over the trails and decide what would be a goal for the team.

Something new this year, a person can sign up individually rather than as part of a team if they choose. Those who sign up individually will virtually walk the purple power trail. This trail begins at the Kansas State University campus.

Set a goal and determine how far you will walk in eight weeks. I take it as a personal challenge to push myself. We all have different lifestyles and I encourage you to 'move your way'. Along with moving, this health initiative also encourages participants to make every bite count by eating nutrient-dense foods. In weekly newsletters received, there will be activity tips, recipes, and nutrition guidelines.

Get more active and start feeling better today. The benefits of physical activity include a boost of your mood, help sharpen your focus, reduce your stress, and improve your sleep. Over time, physical activity can help you live a longer, healthier life. Put your best foot forward. Get a little more active every day.

Contact your local River Valley District Extension Office in Belleville (785-527-5084), Clay Center (785-632-5335), Concordia (785-243-8185), or Washington (785-325-2121) for more information about Walk Kansas.

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