March 2022
Volume 16 # 3

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Clay Center, KS
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Concordia, KS
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cd@listserv.ksu.edu

WASHINGTON OFFICE
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Phone: (785) 325-2121
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Check us out on the Web at:
www.rivervalley.ksu.edu
or on Facebook @ River Valley Extension District

MEDICARE BASICS

Medicare can be confusing. Let us help.

If you are on Medicare or will be starting soon, join Extension Agents Monica Thayer and Jordan Schuette for Medicare Basics.

When: Monday, March 7, 2022
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Where: First National Bank (FNB) Basement
101 C Street, Washington, KS 66968

Please RSVP to the River Valley Extension District - Washington Office by calling 785-325-2121
Each year many people are approaching their 65th birthday, contemplating retirement, and starting their journey with Medicare. Medicare, all it’s parts, and the advertisements can be confusing. Let us help. Join Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Agent and Jordan Schuette, Adult Development and Aging Agent for a Medicare Basics class. The information for the Washington program is on the cover and an additional program will be held:

Concordia – April 4th
Commercial Building, Cloud County Fairgrounds
610 Industrial Rd., Concordia, KS 66901
6:00 p.m.

Please RSVP for the Concordia Program by contacting the Concordia Extension Office at 785-243-8185.

We do schedule one-on-one appointments in all four offices of the River Valley Extension District. If you are New to Medicare or have other questions about Medicare contact Monica Thayer in the Belleville Office at 785-527-5084 or Jordan Schuette in the Washington Office at 785-325-2121.

APPLY FOR EXTRA HELP WITH YOUR MEDICARE PART D EXPENSES

Are you eligible to save on your Medicare Part D premiums, co-payments, and deductibles? If your income and resources are less than or the same as monthly guidelines, you may be eligible for Extra Help. Extra Help is a low-income subsidy program and will not put a claim on your estate for repayment. The 2022 qualification guidelines were recently released.

The gross monthly income is your monthly income before deductions, which includes your Social Security check amount before your Medicare Part B premium and/or Medicare Part D premium is deducted.

For resources, they do not count the home you own and one vehicle. Unfortunately, if you own farmland or other property, you will not qualify in most situations. They also count bank accounts, stocks, bonds, etc.

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<tr>
<td>Gross Monthly Income</td>
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<td>Resources</td>
<td>$15,510 or less</td>
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The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recognizes March as National Nutrition Month®. During National Nutrition Month® health and nutrition professionals share their knowledge and tips with patients, family, friends, and the community to increase awareness about the importance of good nutrition. A healthy diet can reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke. Fortunately, eating right doesn’t have to be hard or require you to give up all of the foods you love. This month, I encourage you to add more fruits and vegetables to each meal or snack. Current MyPlate guidelines state half your plate should be fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables provide us with vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, prevent some types of cancer, lower risk of eye, and digestive problems, and have a positive effect upon blood sugar, which can help keep appetite in check. In addition, fruits and vegetables add more color, flavor, and texture to meals and snacks.

Try the following tips to add more fruits and vegetables to each meal or snack:

* Keep cut vegetables handy for mid-afternoon snacks, side dishes, lunch box additions, or a quick nibble while waiting for dinner. Ready-to-eat favorites: red, green or yellow peppers, broccoli or cauliflower florets, carrots, celery sticks, cucumbers, snap peas, or whole radishes.

* Wake up to fruit. Make a habit of adding bananas, raisins, berries, or other fruit to your cereal, oatmeal, yogurt, or toaster waffle.

* When you use the oven to cook your meal, put in a whole potato, sweet potato, or yam at the same time.

* Carry dried fruit, such as raisins, dates, or dried apricots, in your purse or pocket, for a quick and healthy snack.

* When making rice, add some frozen peas or frozen mixed vegetables for the last three minutes of cooking.

* On hot days, munch on a bowl of frozen fruits or vegetables, such as grapes, peas, or bananas.

* Stock your freezer with frozen vegetables to steam, stir-fry, or microwave for a quick side dish.

* Get saucy with fruit. Puree apples, berries, peaches, or pears in a blender for a thick, sweet sauce on grilled or broiled seafood or poultry, or on pancakes, French toast, or waffles.

* Top a baked potato with beans and salsa or broccoli and lowfat cheese.

* Top your salad with chickpeas or edamame (fresh soybeans)

Sources: eatright.org; heart.org; usda.gov; hsp.harvard.edu

If you have questions about healthy eating or increasing your fruit and vegetable intake, contact the River Valley Extension District’s Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health Agent, Kaitlin Moore. Kaitlin can be reached at 785-243-8185 or kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu.
Powerful Tools for Caregivers Virtual Class Series

March 29 – May 3, 2022
Wednesdays 1:30-3:00pm
Cost: $5 Class Size Limited
Register by March 22 by calling one of the host counties or by going to this https://bit.ly/34J5URA

This educational class series is designed to help family caregivers. The program will help you take care of yourself while caring for a relative or friend. You will benefit from this class whether you are helping a parent, spouse, child, friend or someone who lives at home, in a nursing home, or across the country.

Reduced Cost Thanks to:
• KSRE Adult Development and Aging Program Focus Team

Caregiver Tools Provided:
• Help you reduce stress
• Communicate effectively
• Take care of yourself
• Reduce guilt, anger, and depression
• Help you relax
• Make tough decisions
• Set goals and problem solve

Online class includes the Caregiver Helpbook topics include: hiring in-home help, helping memory impaired elders, making legal and financial decisions, making decisions about care facility placement, understanding depression and making decisions about driving.

Call your local Extension Office for questions or to register over the phone.
Gray County 620-855-3821  Ford County 620-227-4542  Meade County 620-873-8790  River Valley District 785-325-2121

K-STATE Research and Extension

Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, visual, or hearing disability, contact K-State Research and Extension, 785-443-1628. Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
WALK KANSAS 2022

It is that time of year again! Registration for Walk Kansas 2022 opens March 1st.
Walk Kansas 2022 aims to inspire and help you achieve a healthier lifestyle through exercise.
An easy first step toward a healthier lifestyle can be as simple as going for a walk.
Walking can be a social activity or a time for introspection and relaxation. It can allow us to reconnect with nature if we've been discouraged to do so by the cold weather in recent months. Walking is free and accessible, it does not require special equipment, a special facility, or special training to do.
Walk Kansas 2022 will run from March 27th to May 21st. Registration opens March 1st. Like last year, participants are encouraged to register online at www.walkkansasonline.org. Participants can choose to create a team or join solo. The cost to join is $10. During their Walk Kansas journey, participants can expect to receive helpful information each week about how to incorporate more physical activity into daily life, how to make better nutrition choices, and how to handle stress in healthy ways.
Additionally, participants can purchase Walk Kansas t-shirts. We hope you strongly consider joining this health initiative presented by K-State Research and Extension.
Questions can be directed to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health Agent. Phone: 785-243-8185 Email: kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF BABYSITTING

Caring for a child is a big responsibility. Whether babysitting for a family member, friend, or neighbor, Building Blocks of Babysitting prepares youth for the task.
The Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents in the River Valley Extension District are hosting four babysitting classes for youth, 5-8th grade, that are interested in learning skills, tips, and techniques to increase their babysitter knowledge and skills.
Topics covered will include child development, basic first aid, emergency procedures, activity ideas, food preparation, business practices, and more!
Youth may attend any one of the Building Blocks for Babysitting classes held in the River Valley Extension District at the following locations:

- Friday, March 11th, 4-H Building, Belleville, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Monday, March 14th, FNB Bank Meeting Room, Washington, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 16th, 4-H Conference Center, Clay Center, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Friday, March 18th, Cloud County Resource Center, Concordia, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Cost to attend is $10 per youth and will include snacks, lunch, educational materials, and supplies to start their babysitting journey. Fee is payable the day of the event to the River Valley Extension District.
Register online at https://bit.ly/2022babysitting or by calling any of the four River Valley Extension District Offices by Friday, March 4th. Any questions may be directed to Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu.

LIVING WELL WEDNESDAY

Living Well Wednesday is a virtual learning series hosted by K-State Research and Extension, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) professionals from across the state of Kansas. We invite you to join us on the second and fourth Wednesday of March. The webinars will be held 12:15-1:00 p.m. Topics will touch on a wide variety of essential skills that empower you and your family to live, work, and thrive!
Register for the March sessions OR view January and February recordings, here: https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/fcs/livingwellwed/
The March webinars include:
- March 9, 2022: "Preparing Your Finances for Times of Disaster"
- March 23, 2022: "Consumers Beware: Avoiding Identity Theft & Scams"

Today’s technology leaves the door open for intrusions from the ever-crafty marketers and even criminals. This program will cover some of the common approaches to the invasions of our personal privacy. Tools and information will be shared to help prevent these types of activity from happening to you.
Previous webinars include Parents Guide to Social Media, Cultivate an Attitude of Gratitude, The Five Languages of Appreciation, and The MIND Diet and Walk Kansas 2022. Recordings for these webinars are available at https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/fcs/livingwellwed/
Questions about these topics or how to access these webinars may be directed to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health Agent. Phone: 785-243-8185 Email: kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu
GARDEN TO PLATE: FOOD SAFETY

Kids and families who grow their own produce are more likely to eat the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor. Because gardening is an effective strategy for healthier food consumption, the number of school and community gardens is increasing across the state of Kansas. However, fresh produce has also been linked to outbreaks of food-borne illness. Fruits and vegetables can be contaminated any time from planting to eating. Most pathogens are killed by cooking, but they are very difficult to wash off produce that will be eaten raw.

Participants will learn the importance of good practices for keeping produce safe from garden to plate.

Objectives include:
- How to select and maintain safe soil.
- How to practice personal hygiene in regards to gardening.
- How to select and maintain safe water.
- How to practice food safety procedures in harvest and post-harvest.

This lesson is not just for school and community garden volunteers, educators, and teachers. This lesson would be beneficial to anyone who spends time in an edible garden.

If you have questions regarding produce safety or food safety please reach out to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety and Health Agent. You are welcome to call her at 785-243-8185 or email her at kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu.

GET FINANCIALLY PREPARED: TAKE STEPS AHEAD OF DISASTER

Storm season is quickly approaching. If you only had a moment’s notice to take shelter or evacuate before a disaster, would you be ready? While being physically prepared can be vital to survival, being financially prepared is also important during and following a disaster! Take the time now to prepare before a disaster strikes so you won’t be caught off guard financially.

Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, will be presenting “Get Financially Prepared: Take Steps Ahead of Disaster” as a part of the upcoming Family and Consumer Sciences Series offered in the River Valley District. Please see the following program schedule for all the details:

There is no cost to attend. Please RSVP to the River Valley District – Belleville Office at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu at least 24 hours in advance to the session. Lack of RSVPs may result in session being cancelled or rescheduled.

Any questions may be directed to Monica Thayer, Family Resource Management Extension Agent, at 785-527-5084 or mthayer@ksu.edu.

KEYS TO EMBRACING AGING 101

What we do today will affect our future. This is specifically true in issues regarding aging. How we take care of ourselves both physically and mentally, throughout the years will affect our natural process of aging. Many healthy centenarians (Americans who are 100 years old or older) are teaching us that aging can be a positive, joyful, and exciting experience. They demonstrate that each new year of life brings increased knowledge, wisdom, and a greater ability to engineer a positive approach to the aging process.

Many older Americans contribute their longevity to a positive attitude, nutrition, physical activity, mental and social stimulation, staying in-tune with the times, safety, medical literacy, financial security, sleep, and taking time for oneself. When given the necessary attention, such lifestyle choices can positively affect future health, well-being and optimal aging.

To learn more about enhancing your longevity attend our program Keys to Embracing Aging 101.

If you have questions about the program contact Jordan Schuette, Adult Development and Aging Agent at jschuette@ksu.edu or by phone at 785-325-2121.

River Valley District Fair Dates 2022

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<th>County</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cloud County</td>
<td>July 5th - 9th</td>
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<td>Clay County</td>
<td>July 19th - 23rd</td>
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<td>Washington County</td>
<td>July 19th - 23rd</td>
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<td>NCK Free Fair (Republic Co)</td>
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PAY ATTENTION TO GROWTH STAGE FOR SPRING
HERBICIDE DECISIONS ON WHEAT

Producers should pay close attention to the growth stage of their wheat before making spring herbicide applications. Some herbicides must be applied after tillering, several must be applied before jointing, and others can be applied through boot stage. Remember that weeds are most susceptible at early growth stages and coverage becomes difficult as the wheat canopy develops, so the earliest practical and labelled applications generally result in the best weed control.

Applications permitted prior to jointing
Dicamba can be applied to wheat between the 2-leaf and jointing stages of wheat. Application of dicamba after wheat reaches the jointing stage of growth causes severe prostrate growth of wheat and significant risk of yield loss. Dicamba is effective for control of Kochia, Russian thistle, and wild buckwheat, but is not good for control of mustard species. Kochia, Russian thistle, and wild buckwheat are summer annual weeds that may emerge before or after wheat starts to joint, so timing of dicamba for control of these weeds can sometimes be difficult. Fortunately, dicamba provides some residual control of these weeds following application.

Products labeled only for use on herbicide-resistant wheat must also be applied prior to jointing. Beyond should be applied to 1 gene ClearField wheats after tiller initiation and prior to jointing, but can be applied to 2-gene ClearField wheats until the second node is detected at the soil surface. Aggressor should be applied to CoAXium wheat varieties after 4-leaf growth stage and before jointing. Beyond should only be applied to ClearField wheat varieties and Aggressor should only be applied to CoAXium wheat varieties.

Other herbicides that must be applied prior to jointing include Agility SG, Olympus, Outrider, PowerFlex HL, Pulsar, and Rave.

Applications permitted through boot stage
Herbicides that can be applied later in the spring – prior to boot stage – include Ally + 2,4-D, Amber, Finesse, Glean, Starane Flex, and Starane NXT. Starane is a better choice than dicamba products for control of Kochia after wheat moves into the jointing stage of growth.

2,4-D is labeled for application to wheat from the full-tiller stage until prior to the boot stage of growth. Application of 2,4-D prior hinders the tillering process and can result in significant yield loss if applied too early. Wheat will sometimes exhibit prostrate growth from 2,4-D applications applied in the jointing stage of growth, but yields generally are not significantly affected if applied before the boot stage of growth.

In general, MCPA is safer on wheat than 2,4-D, especially when applied prior to tillering. MCPA can be applied after the wheat is in the three-leaf stage (may vary by product label) until it reaches the boot stage of growth. Neither herbicide should be applied once the wheat is near or reaches the boot stage of growth, as application at that time can result in malformed heads, sterility, and significant yield loss (Figure 2).

Both 2,4-D and MCPA are available in ester or amine formulations. Ester formulations generally provide a little better weed control than amine formulations at the same application rates, but also are more susceptible to vapor drift. However, the potential for vapor drift damage in early spring is minimal. Ester formulations generally are compatible for use with fertilizer carriers, while amine formulations often have physical compatibility problems when mixed with liquid fertilizer.

Applications permitted through flag leaf
Many herbicides used in the spring on wheat can be applied up to the time the flag leaf is visible, or later. One newer product that can be applied from 2-leaf and flag leaf is called Pixxaro EC. It is labeled for control of flixweed, horseweed, Kochia, wild buckwheat, and other troublesome weeds.

Other herbicides that can be applied through flag leaf include Affinity BroadSpec, Affinity TankMix, Ally Extra SG, Express, Harmony, Harmony Extra, Huskie, Quelex, Sentrallas, Supremacy, Talinor Weld, and WideMatch must be applied before the flag leaf is visible.

Figure 1. Stunting from an application of 2,4-D to wheat prior to tillering. Photo by Dallas Peterson, K-State Research and Extension.

Figure 2. Malformed heads from an application of 2,4-D at boot stage. Photo by Dallas Peterson, K-State Research and Extension.

For more detailed information, see the “2022 Chemical Weed Control for Field Crops, Pastures, and Noncropland” guide available online at https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/CHEMWEEDGUIDE.pdf or check with your local K-State Research and Extension office for a paper copy.

The use of trade names is for clarity to readers and does not imply endorsement of a particular product, nor does exclusion imply non-approval. Always consult the herbicide label for the most current use requirements.

Source: Sarah Lancaster, Weed Management Specialist-slancaster@ksu.edu
TIME TO PLANT POTATOES

If you listen to the old wives tale about planting your potatoes on St. Patrick’s Day, you better start planning now! St. Patrick’s Day will be here before we know it. Actually, any time from mid-to-late March is fine for planting potatoes.

Before you purchase your potatoes, make sure you buy seed potatoes, not the ones bought for cooking. Seed potatoes are certified disease free and have plenty of starch to sprout quickly as the soil temperature gets warm enough. Most seed potatoes can be cut into four pieces; though large potatoes may yield more. Each seed piece should be between 1.5 and 2 ounces to insure there is enough energy for germination. Each pound of potatoes should yield 8 to 10 seed pieces.

Cutting the seed potatoes 2 to 3 days before planting so the freshly cut surfaces have a chance to suberize, or toughen, and form a protective coating. Storing seed pieces in a warm location will speed up the process. Plant each seed piece about 1 to 2 inches deep and 8 to 12 inches apart in rows. Though it is important to plant potatoes in March, emergence is slow. It is often mid to late April before new plants poke their way through the soil.

As the potatoes grow, pull soil up to the base of the plants. New potatoes are borne above the planted seed piece, and you don’t want sunlight hitting the new potatoes. Potatoes exposed to sunlight will turn green and produce a poisonous substance called solanine. Keeping the potatoes covered with soil will prevent this from happening.

CHECKING SOIL TEMPERATURE

How do you decide when is the right time to plant your garden? Do you go by what the calendar says? Or do you go by the weather/air temperature? How about going by the soil temperature? Soil temperature is a better way to measure when it is time to plant rather than using air temperature or the calendar. Just because the calendar says it’s time to plant and you think it’s warm enough outside, doesn’t mean the soil is warm enough. Planting when the soil is too cold can cause seeds to rot and transplants to refuse to grow. One of the most neglected tools for vegetable gardeners is a soil thermometer.

A number of vegetables can germinate and grow at cool temperatures. For example, peas will germinate and grow well at a soil temperature of 40°F. Although lettuce, pars-nips, and spinach can sprout at a soil temperature of 35°F, they prefer at least 45°F for best germination and growth. Radishes also do well at a soil temperature of 45°F. Warm season crops such as tomatoes, sweet corn, and beans prefer at least 55°F for germination, but others such as peppers, cucumbers, melons, and sweet potatoes need it even warmer, about 60°F.

Taking a soil temperature accurately is a bit of a science. First, you want to measure the temperature at the right depth for the vegetables you are planting. If you are planting seeds or new plants, take your measurement at the recommended planting depth for the specific vegetables. But if you are planting a mixed garden, where everything has a different planting depth, check the soil temperature at least 5-6 inches deep. Use a metal soil thermometer, which is sold in many garden and hardware stores.

Temperature variations throughout the day and night affect- ing the soil temperature, with the lowest readings after dawn and warmest around mid-afternoon. Late-morning readings give a good average temperature. If taking the soil tempera-ture in the middle of the morning isn’t practical, take a read-ing before you leave for work and a second when you return home and take an average temperature from the two readings. Be sure to get a consistent reading for four to five days in a row before planting. You want to make sure the soil temperature is staying at a consistent warm temperature. Once your soil has warmed up you are ready to start planting your garden, just don’t forget to check the weather to make sure they aren’t predicting any cold snaps in the near future. If you have any questions feel free to stop by or contact Kelsey in the Washington office, 785-325-2121 or khatesohl@ksu.edu.

CUTTING BACK ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

March is a good time to remove dead foliage from the ornamental grasses in your landscapes. Ornamental grasses will green up earlier if the old foliage is removed. They are also more attractive without a mixture of dead and live leaves.

A number of tools can be used to cut back the previous years’ growth. You could use hand clippers, weed whips (if the foliage is of a small enough diameter), weed whips with a circular blade attachment, or even a chainsaw. If you are going to use a chainsaw, you will want to use the top of the chainsaw bar to cut so the saw doesn’t pull in debris and clog.

It is often helpful to tie the foliage together before cutting, so it doesn’t interfere and it’s easier to dispose of. Another option to removing the previous years’ growth is to burn it. You only want to burn the grass if it is safe and legal to do so. Burning works well on smaller ornamental grasses. Another tip is these grasses may not burn for long, but they will burn extremely hot. So, you will want to check the surround-ings of your grasses before you burn to make sure burning is a safe option.

After you have cut back your grasses, look at the center of your plant. If the center of the plant has started to die out, the plant would benefit from a division. The outer edge of the plant is the newest growth. As the plant gets larger, the middle will die out and the outer edges continue to grow causing the plant to expand out and get larger. If the grass is getting too large for the space it is in, you can dig up the entire clump and separate the plant. Then replant the vigorous growth found on the outer edge of the clump. By dividing the grass, you can plant the rest in other parts of your landscape or share the others with a friend! If you have any questions feel free to stop by or contact Kelsey in the Washington office, 785-325-2121 or khatesohl@ksu.edu.
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<th>DATE</th>
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<th>PROGRAM</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Tractor Safety</td>
<td>Salina</td>
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<td>March 6</td>
<td>3-5pm</td>
<td>Bonding Thru Board Games</td>
<td>Clyde– Clifton-Clyde High School Gym, 616 N High St.</td>
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<td>Medicare Basics</td>
<td>Washington– FNB Meeting Room, Bank Basement</td>
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<td>Building Blocks of Babysitting</td>
<td>Belleville- 4-H Building, Fairgrounds</td>
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<td>Garden to Plate: Food Safety</td>
<td>Washington- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church</td>
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<td>Belleville- Belleville Public Library</td>
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<td>Mar. 27-May21</td>
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<td>WALK Kansas</td>
<td>State Wide Extension Program</td>
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<td>1:30-3pm</td>
<td>Powerful Tools for Caregivers</td>
<td>Virtual Class Series</td>
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<td>Getting Financially Prepared Ahead of Disaster</td>
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<td>May 19</td>
<td>2pm</td>
<td>Keys to Embracing Aging 101</td>
<td>Belleville– Belleville Public Library</td>
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