

# Home & Family Update

Providing relevant, unbiased, science-based information for you and your family



Sept.—Oct.—Nov.—Dec.  
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## PRESERVING GARDEN PRODUCE

Our summer got off to a cool start, which was wonderful for cool season garden crops, but now the temperatures are back to seasonal norms and we are starting to see the warm season crops mature. Make sure you have current USDA food preservation guidelines (canning, freezing, and drying) to ensure the safety and quality of the foods you are preserving.

High acid foods (fruits, pickles, etc.) can be canned by using a boiling water bath or pressure canner. Check containers so they are clean, leak free, and have racks on which to place the cans. Jellies, jams and preserves should have two piece lids and be processed (1000 to 6000 ft. altitude) for ten minutes in the boiling water bath. Paraffin or wax seals are not recommended.

Low acid foods (vegetables, meats and poultry) require a pressure canner if you are canning products. If you have a dial gauge pressure canner get the gauge tested before the food preservation season begins. We do this at the Extension offices – free. By checking your gauge you will find out if it is accurate or needs replacing. Weighted pressure canners do not need the weights checked. Both types of canners need to be checked over to make sure all the other parts of the canner are in proper working order. Seals or gaskets that fit in the lid to form a tight seal with the canner may become dry and need to be replaced.

Remember, due to the varying acidity levels of tomatoes all tomato products must be acidified. Lemon juice or citric acids are the most common ingredients used to acidify tomatoes. Add two tablespoons lemon juice or one half teaspoon citric acid per quart of tomatoes.

If you need current USDA food preservation methods information or equipment checked contact your local County Extension Office.

*Submitted by: Sally Park-Hageman*



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For more information on food preservation and canning food safely, please check out the National Center for Home Food Preservation's Website:

<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>



**National Center for Home Food Preservation**

## Aging Attitudes: \$250 Medicare Rebate

Could you be eligible for a \$250 rebate this year to help with your Medicare Drug costs? Most Medicare drug plans have a coverage gap. This means that after you and your plan have spent a certain amount of money for covered drugs, you have to pay all costs out-of-pocket for your drugs (up to a limit).



The Explanation of Benefits notice, which your drug plan mails to you each month when you fill a prescription, will tell you how much you have spent on covered drugs and whether you have entered the coverage gap.

There are **no forms to fill out**. Medicare will **automatically** send a check that is made out to you. You do not need to provide any personal information like your Medicare,

Social Security, or bank account numbers to get the rebate check. **Do not give your personal information to anyone concerning this \$250 rebate check!**

If you reach the coverage gap this year and enter the Part D “donut hole” you will receive a one-time \$250 rebate check if you are not already receiving Medicare Extra Help. Checks will be mailed monthly throughout the year as beneficiaries enter the coverage gap. You will not have to pay taxes on your \$250 rebate check. If you hit the donut hole, you should expect to receive your check within 45 days.



Submitted by: Nancy Pauly



## Portions VS Servings: What's the Difference?

A **portion** is the amount of food that you choose to eat for a meal or snack. It can be big or small – you decide. A **serving** is a standard unit of measuring food or drink, such as one slice of bread or one cup (eight ounces) of milk.

Average portion sizes have grown so much over the past 20 years that sometimes the plate arrives and there's enough food for two or even three people on it. These growing portion sizes are changing what Americans think of as a “normal” portion at home, too. You may have heard of this referred to as **portion distortion**. Some common food portions can equal the amount that is recommended for the whole day. Eating a serving size is not easy because everyone has a different idea of what a serving size is.

To get a better grasp of serving sizes, you can use some visual cues to remind yourself of appropriate serving sizes. Many foods match up to everyday objects such as:

- A medium size apple or orange is about the size of a tennis ball
- Half a cup of cooked vegetables is about the same size as half of a baseball
- A cup of raw leafy vegetables such as spinach is about the same size as a baseball
- 1–1/2 to 2 ounces of low-fat hard cheddar cheese is about the same size as three to four dice
- A 3 ounce serving of meat is about the same size as a deck of cards
- Two teaspoons of mayonnaise are about the same size as two dice
- One baked potato is about the same size as a computer mouse
- 1/2 cup of pasta is about the size of a tennis ball



For more information on serving sizes and to help you manage your daily intake of food, go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

Submitted by: Ruth Schmeichel

**Due to budget constraints, the Lawrence County Extension Office may not be able to continue to provide this newsletter to you by mail. If you would like the opportunity to continue receiving it, please provide an e-mail address that it can be sent to by calling Alyce at 642-6200. Thank you.**



## Family Focus: "Get Up & Get Active!"

The rising incidence of childhood obesity is difficult to ignore, especially when the Kaiser Family Foundation reports that American children eight years old and above spend an average of 6.5 hours a day engaging in media technologies that include watching TV, using the computer and playing video games.



Deciding to be an active family takes deliberate actions and time is the number one cited barrier prohibiting active families. Parents and kids alike are running to a multitude of activities and are often reluctant to give up their "free" time dedicated to vegging out in front of the TV or computer.

Besides being a great way to spend time with your family, being physically active can improve your overall health and help the whole family manage their weight. The National Association for Sport & Physical Education (NASPE) recommends youth get at least sixty minutes of daily moderate physical activity each day. Does your family live up to that recommendation? Mine doesn't, but we are working on it.

One way to do this might include breaking the sixty minutes of physical activity down to more manageable ten minute "snacks". Take ten minutes for a brisk walk, do ten push-ups or ten minutes of jump roping. All of these accumulate throughout the day to add up to your sixty minutes and aren't so overwhelming to include into your daily routine.

Making fitness fun can help encourage even the reluctant family member to participate.

Turn on the radio during your morning routine or while preparing dinner and dance around the room. Play *Follow the Leader* or *Simon Says* to include younger family members and make sure that everyone has a chance to create a new dance move...the sillier the better!



Physical activity doesn't have to have a lot of expensive equipment either. Gather up some toys and ask the kids to help you create a new game, spend an afternoon at the local playground, plant a family or container garden or start taking the whole family (pets included) out for an after-dinner walk around the neighborhood. The possibilities are endless and benefits are worth a lifetime!

Sources: National Association for Sport & Physical Education (NASPE) at [www.aahperd.org/naspe](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe) and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation at [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org).

Submitted by: Amanda Larson

## ONLINE SHOPPING SMARTS



Online shopping is a huge industry. I know last year, I bought all of my children's Christmas gifts online, which made my life much easier. This article will discuss some of the benefits and dangers of online shopping.

**Save time** - Avoid traveling to and from stores, especially if you live in a rural South Dakota town.

**Save money** - Products can often be purchased for less. Prices may be lower, some retailers will pay shipping and some purchases avoid sales taxes.

**Ease of comparison shopping** - A few clicks of the mouse displays product features, colors and prices of similar items from a variety of merchants.

**Large selection** - Hundreds of thousands of items are available.

**Simplify gift-giving** - It's easy to buy and send gifts. Simply select a gift, enter a delivery address and provide payment information.

**No crowds!**

**What are the dangers?** Most online shoppers have concerns about privacy and security. By its nature, the Internet disseminates information very easily - even information you prefer to keep private. Major advances have been made to protect your privacy on the Internet.

### Tips to Protect Your Privacy

**Check for a secure server** - A secure server scrambles or encrypts personal information to keep others from using it. When connected to a secure server, most browsers (like Netscape or Internet Explorer) will show a closed padlock at the bottom of your computer screen and will switch from http to https.

**Passwords offer extra security** - The most secure sites will have you create an online account with an account name and password. Keep this information private, change passwords periodically and use different passwords for different sites.

**Consider the seller's reputation** - Well-known and respected retailers tend to have more secure Web sites than smaller companies. These companies are also less likely to engage in fraud.

**Look for a privacy statement** - Every Web site that lets you make purchases should have a statement that describes the steps they take to promote privacy and security. Read the privacy statement to learn if your information will be sold or given out.

**Understand how the cookie crumbles!** - Many merchants will want to place a "cookie" on your computer. Cookies are small files that identify you to the merchant. They may allow companies to collect marketing information about you and the Web pages you visit. You may not wish to share this information. Most browsers allow you to turn off the cookie function.

Submitted by: Carrie Jo Johnson

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## **MONEY MATTERS:**



## **Managing Your Money This Holiday Season**

Holiday shopping can prove difficult on the wallet this season, and with the down economy it can prove even worse. But you don't have to spend a ton of money on your family to show them you care.



It is very easy to get caught up in the spirit of the holiday and “spend, spend, spend”. Monthly obligations should be calculated and a gift giving budgets set.

Make a list of all of the people you want to give gifts to this year. Then go over the list and decide if you should really purchase a gift for everyone listed. For those you decide are necessary to purchase gifts for, set a spending limit for each.

Set a specific budget that you can be comfortable with. If you plan on using credit this holiday, make sure you can pay off the balance before the interest adds up. Place a piece of paper with your budget around your credit cards. This way, every time you go to use it you will be reminded of the limit you set for yourself.

To save even more money, instead of buying gifts for everyone in the family, buy one large item the whole family can enjoy. You could even take a mini-vacation versus gift giving. Spending time as a family could be the gift to yourselves.

The holidays don't have to be all about presents (even though they are fun to get and give). They should be about spending time with loved ones and the joy you share together. Take this opportunity with your family to actually be a family without all of the hectic life activities that keep us so busy the rest of the year.

*Source: University of Nebraska: Lincoln / Determine Gift-giving Budget Before the Holiday Shopping Season Begins*  
*Submitted by: Carrie L. Johnson*

