

A vibrant background of fireworks exploding in shades of orange, yellow, and purple against a dark night sky. The fireworks are scattered across the top and sides of the page, creating a celebratory atmosphere.

January 2023

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Research and Extension

Director's Note

Denise Dias,

Wyandotte County Director

Happy New Year! Our staff is here to educate you to have a better new year! Be sure to check out the programs, events and services we offer at **the end of this newsletter**. You can always check out our web page or one of our social media platforms on the go. If there is something you would like for us to offer, feel free to send those suggestions to me. I am always happy to hear your thoughts on how we can do things better for you.

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DO YOU WANT TO BUILD A (FOAMING FROSTY) SNOWMAN?!

4-H Youth Development

Jessie Carr

4-H Youth Development Agent

Playing in the snow and building snowmen is a favorite winter activity for many people. But if you're like me, being cold and playing the snow just isn't your thing! I was so excited when I found national 4-H's Home for the Holidays activity book - there are so many fun things to do!

One activity that I'll be sure to try this year is the Foaming Frosty Snowmen! Snow or no snow on the ground this snowman can be created in the kitchen! In this easy & fun STEM activity we'll create mini snowman using household supplies and then we'll get to watch this fizz away into a bubbly goo!

Here's what you'll need:

- Baking soda
- Vinegar
- Water
- 2 soup bowls or similar-sized containers
- Measuring cup (1 cup size)
- Tablespoon
- Teaspoon
- Sticky note and pen or pencil
- Small plastic beads for decorating (optional)

Here's how to create:

1. Start by measuring one cup of baking soda into each bowl.
2. Add three tablespoons of water to each bowl. This will turn the baking soda powder into a moldable form.
3. Into just one of the bowls, pour one teaspoon of dish soap. Using a sticky note, label the bowl that contains the soap, so you can keep track of it.
4. For each bowl, thoroughly mix the contents and then work them with your hands into a moldable, dough-like ball. If they're not holding together well enough, you may need to add more water. Add just a few drops at a time, so you don't add too much.
5. Then form the dough balls in each bowl into a figure of your choice: A snowman, a snow dog — it's up to you! Then, add some decorations - beads, buttons, googly eyes, that's your choice, too.
6. Once you've admired your handiwork, it's time to destroy it! Fill your measuring cup with vinegar.
7. Now, pour the cup of vinegar over your first sculpture (the one without the soap) and observe the results.
8. Refill the measuring cup with vinegar, pour it over the other snow creature with the soap, and watch what happens.



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SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR NEW YEAR'S SUCCESS

Chiquita Miller,
Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

The start of a New Year is the perfect time to turn a new page, which is probably why so many people make New Year's resolutions. "I'm going to work on finances, exercise more, eat healthy and keep my car cleaner." The list goes on and on. It seems making resolutions and keeping them are two completely different things all together. How can we make and maintain resolutions throughout the year for true beneficial change?

Try the following suggestions when selecting a New Year's resolution:

Select a few things you would like to change, less than five is ideal. The more things you try to change in a short time frame, the less likely you are to keep moving forward with your new behaviors.

Make your resolutions with a smart brain. Smart brain meaning setting goals that are logical, maintainable, and realistic. If you are thinking about results to last a lifetime, it needs to be in one of those three categories.

Try a new resolution that you have not tried in the past. If you had great idea in 2021 or 2022 and you did not succeed, do not try it again the same way. We do what is comfortable and habitual; reprogram your thinking with a new resolution.

Work in small blocks. Keep yourself focused on getting your new behavior completed in a week, then build to two weeks and so on. This way you can see the small steps are moving to a larger timeframe.

The New Year often feels like a fresh start and a great opportunity to change some habits and establish new routines that will help you grow psychologically, emotionally, socially, physically, or intellectually.

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/tips_for_sticking_to_new_year_resolutions

Family and Consumer Sciences



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EFNEP CLASSES BEGINNING IN JANUARY!

Stephanie Whatley-Hopkins
EFNEP Agent

Starting in the New Year, keep an eye out for the Dotte Eats Newsletter. Every month we will feature and learn fast facts about a “superfood,” learn evidence-based health tips, feature a “monthly move” for exercise and stretching, and share a fun recipe to try with your family. Here is a sneak peek at January’s featured “superfood,” oatmeal.

January is National Oatmeal Month. Oatmeal is thought of as a boring breakfast food with a funny texture, which it can be. However, oatmeal is a nutrient dense whole grain food. It is a source of fiber, vitamins and minerals which can help to lower cholesterol and protect against heart disease and diabetes.

Substituting a sugary breakfast cereal for oatmeal is a great way to cut sugar (a good New Year’s resolution to try to stick with) and stay fuller for longer.

In honor of National Oatmeal Month, we asked all of the staff members at K-State Research and Extension Wyandotte County for their favorite oatmeal toppings. Here are a few of their recipes

- Peanut butter, plain yogurt, and fresh berries (The PB&J)
- Peanut butter, honey, and banana (The Elvis)
- Raisins, honey, and cinnamon (The Pooh Bear)
- Brown sugar, walnuts, cinnamon, a splash of milk, and dried cranberries (Holiday Special)
- Fresh blueberries or strawberries, walnuts, chopped dates, and a drizzle of skim or almond milk (Berry Delicious Oatmeal)
- Cinnamon, walnuts, flax seeds, a bit of milk, and brown sugar (Cinnamon Delight)

Nutrition and Food Safety



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NEW YEAR, LESS STRESS!

Lori Wuellner

Food and Nutrition Agent

Oh, to be stress free in the new year...the fact is that's not true for anybody nor is it always healthy! Not all stress is bad- some can inspire and motivate us in certain situations. However, stress can become a problem when we attach the label "bad" or "chronic". When it's not managed in a positive manner, our physical and mental health can be impacted.

The signs of stress may have a different look based on the person and situation and might appear as loss of appetite, low energy, feeling blue, irritable, and poor concentration. (This is not an exhausted list.)

While we can't eliminate or stop stress, we can manage it through healthy lifestyle behaviors. Some examples include:

- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Quality sleep
- Limit smoking
- Limit alcohol
- Financial management

Have a planned response when you encounter the threats of stress...learn relaxation techniques, make time for fun, laugh, share your concerns with others, journal, create a quiet space, focus on important and healthy relationships, and seek education, help or counsel when needed.

More information can be found at, [This fact sheet](#), I'm So Stressed Out, addresses the differences between stress and anxiety. (National Institute of Mental Health), [This K-State Extension Fact Sheet](#), Keys to Embracing Aging: Stress Management (Source: Nourishing Your Mind and Body: Manage Stress for Better Health

Nutrition and Food Safety



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BOOSTING YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Jan McMahon

Nutrition Program Assistant

Nutrition and Food Safety

My new year journeys are full of imperfect progress, but I get where I wanted to be if I am diligent.

“Fall seven times, stand up eight,” says an old Japanese proverb. In other words, obstacles and relapses are perfectly normal and should be expected during the process of making behavior changes. The most common cause of relapses is some type of distress, especially if an unhealthy behavior (e.g., smoking, eating, or shopping) makes you feel better, and the second major cause is social pressure. Obstacles are things that block positive actions or cause people to relapse (i.e. go back to unhealthy behaviors). Experts advise self-changers to identify their obstacles and develop plans to overcome them. For example, if you are feeling stressed out, do something else that makes you feel as good as smoking, eating, or shopping. Many plans to change fail because people don't have a good “Plan B.” What happens if you stray from your health and wealth goals (e.g., “blow” your diet, overspend, or stop saving)? You regroup and move on. Experts in behavior change recommend the following strategies:

- Balance and Compensate- When you fall short of your target behavior (e.g., calorie count) one day, make it up later.
- Learn a Lesson- When a relapse occurs, consider it a “learning lesson” and decide what you will do differently in the future.
- Get Back on Track- “Get back in the saddle” and develop new coping strategies to deal with stress and temptation.
- Reframe the Relapse- View yourself as a success, not a failure. Any small step toward health and wealth is better than doing nothing.



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JANUARY IS RADON AWARENESS MONTH: HAVE YOU TESTED?

Denise Dias
Extension Director

Radon is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that can have serious health consequences. It is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. When there are high levels of radon present in your home, you are at a higher risk of developing cancer. January is National Radon Awareness Month. Winter is an excellent time for Wyandotte County residents to test their homes for radon gas. Radon is prevalent in Wyandotte County, so it's important to test your home. Radon levels in our county average around 5.3 pCi/L which is above the EPA action level of 4.0 pCi/l.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends installing a mitigation system to reduce indoor radon levels when homes are confirmed with 4.0 pCi/L of radon gas or higher. Chronic, long-term radon gas exposure in homes increases the long-term risk of developing lung cancer. Residential radon gas exposure is the number two leading cause of lung cancer death in the U.S. for smokers, cigarettes are number one.

Residents can purchase radon test kits through the K-State Extension office for \$15. The kit is opened and left in the lowest livable part of the home for a couple of days. Once the test is completed, the kit is packaged up in the self-addressed stamped envelope which is part of the kit and then returned by mail for testing. Test results are usually ready in 7-10 days. If results show high levels of radon, addressing the issue is relatively inexpensive and should be done sooner rather than later. Each home is unique, the only way to know if your home has radon is through testing. For more information please contact Denise Dias at 913-299-9300 or denise.dias@ksu.edu.

Community Development



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DE-ICERS MAY BE HARMFUL TO PLANTS

Lynn Loughary
Horticulture Agent

Winter often brings precipitation in the form of snow and ice which tend to accumulate on driveways and walks. Many homeowners and property managers will be using chemical deicing agents to thaw ice and reduce slippery conditions leading to falls or accidents. Several of these materials can have damaging effects on plants, as well as some concrete surfaces. Deicers work by lowering the freezing point of water, creating a brine (chemical-water solution) and allowing water to evaporate.

The oldest and most common deicing agent is sodium chloride (rock salt), but calcium chloride, potassium chloride and magnesium chloride are also used. The damaging effects of these materials on plants come from their reducing the ability of plants to take up water. The effects may not show up until late spring or summer when water stresses begin to prevail so don't expect damage to be immediate. Damaging effects depend on the material used as well as concentrations and the type of plants involved. Limited use of deicers and spreading the ice slush when scooping it away over a wide area will lessen potential damage. Heavy applications of water in the spring season can also flush salts downward through the soil.

A new chemical deicing agent called calcium magnesium acetate (or CMA) is made from dolomite (limestone) and acetic acid (vinegar) and has very minimal damaging effects on plants, animals, or concrete surfaces. It is more expensive but may eliminate replacing sensitive plant materials if you have had problems in the past.

Lynn Loughary is the Horticulture Agent for Wyandotte County, K-State Research and Extension. She can be reached by calling 913-299-9300, ext 104, or by email lloughar@ksu.edu

Horticulture



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Upcoming Events



January:

January 4- K-State Garden Hour: Gardening Myths and Misconceptions

January 5 - Tulips, Wind Generation and Flood Management in Holland

January 5- Families Eating Smart, Moving More

February 14- ServSafe

K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact Jo McLeland two weeks prior to the start of the event (insert deadline date) at (insert phone number and email). Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

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