

Newsletter

April 2024

Earth Day—April 22

Earth Day is held each year on April 22 and has been since 1970.

According to the website, www.earthday.org, this year's theme is "Planet vs. Plastics." The focus is to raise awareness of the health risks of plastics and the environmental impact of single-use plastics. The world's plastic problem has recently been in the news.



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reminds everyone that each day should be Earth Day and that we can make daily choices to protect our environment.

Everyday steps that you can take include actions like:

- Reduce, reuse, and recycle as much as possible.
- Take your own reusable bags when shopping instead of having your items placed in plastic bags each time.
- Plant a tree.
- Save water by not leaving the water running in the sink as you brush your teeth.
- Take shorter showers to use less water.
- Install and use a rain barrel to collect rain runoff to water your lawn and landscaping.
- Drive less. Walk or ride a bike whenever possible.
- Do not run your car while parked. After a few minutes of idling, turn your car off. Save gas and eliminate car exhaust.
- Turn the lights off when you leave a room.
- Use energy efficient lightbulbs throughout your home.
- Properly insulate your home to use less energy when heating and cooling.

By taking these steps and others, we can make choices that will contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment for all.

References:

<https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2024/> Accessed 1/22/24

Bottled Water is Full of Plastic Particles. Can They Harm Your Health? from the *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/well/live/bottled-water-nanoplastics.html> Accessed 1/22/24

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/ocean/earthday.html> Accessed 1/22/24

Source: Hardin Stevens, senior Extension associate, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, January 2024

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Understanding Alpha-Gal Syndrome, the red meat allergy

Alpha-gal syndrome, known as the “red meat allergy,” was discovered in 2009 as a reaction in humans to lone star tick bites. Alpha-gal is short for the name of a sugar molecule found in all mammals except for humans. This molecule is not found in birds or fish. After the tick bite, some people develop an immune response to this specific sugar which causes the development of the syndrome. Not everyone bitten by a lone star tick will develop alpha-gal.

Like other food allergies, alpha-gal syndrome can cause symptoms such as skin irritations, hives, gut issues, and breathing problems. The severity of the condition is different for everyone. Unlike the typical food allergy, a person with alpha-gal syndrome may have a delayed allergic reaction anywhere between three and six hours after ingesting meat or other products that come from mammals. This may make it difficult to diagnose.



It is a rare condition but is becoming much more common across Kentucky. Medical professionals diagnose alpha-gal syndrome with a blood test. There is no cure, but people living with the condition can eliminate foods that contain alpha-gal to avoid allergic reactions and manage symptoms.

People who have alpha-gal must remove beef, pork, and lamb from their diets to avoid allergic reactions. Certain cuts and types of meat have higher amounts of alpha-gal and cause worse reactions. For example, organ meats such as liver, heart, and tripe have higher amounts of alpha-gal. Other foods often made with ingredients from mammals that may cause reactions include broths, bouillon, stocks, gravy, and other items made with lard or tallow. For those who hunt, be mindful that wild game is also a source of alpha-gal. This includes everything from venison to squirrel.

Several food additives come from animals and may cause a reaction. These include gelatin, glycerin, magnesium stearate, and bovine extract. As a result, you should check ingredient labels. Some prescribed medications and medical treatments may also cause a reaction. These may include heparin, antivenoms, certain chemotherapy drugs, and even heart valves derived from pigs or cows. Always ask if the prescribed medication or suggested treatment causes a reaction for those living with alpha-gal.

While it may seem like there are a lot of foods people cannot eat when they have alpha-gal, there are still many options that can be a part of a balanced diet. These foods include:

- * Poultry (chicken, turkey, duck, or quail)
- * Beans
- Grains
- * Nuts and seeds
- * Fruits
- * Eggs
- * Vegetables
- * Seafood (fish, shellfish)

Depending on the severity of the condition, some people may still be able to have dairy. Those with a more serious form of alpha-gal may not be able to tolerate dairy at all.

Those living with alpha-gal may have concerns about getting enough protein in their diet. Luckily, there are high-protein foods that do not contain alpha-gal. To ensure enough protein throughout the day, look to add poultry, nuts, seeds, whole grains, beans, seafood, and shellfish to meals and snacks. Cheese, milk, cottage cheese, and yogurt also add protein to the diet for those who can still tolerate dairy.

As individuals with alpha-gal tend to have different tolerance levels to meat products, dairy, and other animal byproducts, individuals should work with a health-care provider, such as a registered dietitian, to find a diet that works for them and meets their personal nutrition needs.

Source: Heather Norman-Burgdorf, Extension specialist for food and nutrition

Reference: Alpha-gal Syndrome. (2023). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/alpha-gal/index.html>

Homemaker Happenings

Dates to Remember

- Apr. 10 Planning meeting for County Annual Meeting
- Apr. 18 Drive Through Community Baby Shower
- Apr. 30 Understanding and Preventing Suicide
- May 3 AARP Drive Safe Class
- May 22 Wits Workout
- May 30 Homemaker Annual Meeting



Roll Call & Thought for April

Roll Call: April is National Volunteer Month. What is your favorite way to volunteer?

Thought for the Day: “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”—Helen Keller

Club Meetings

- Apr. 15 Cloverport, 1 PM, CT, Cloverport Methodist Church
- Apr. 15 New Heights, 10 AM, CT, Extension Community Building
- Apr. 16 Irvington, 10:30 AM, CT, Lincoln Trail Christian Church
- Apr. 22 Countryside, 5 PM, CT, Jean Aull
- Apr. 23 Sunshine Sisters, 11 AM, CT, Extension Community Building
- Apr. 26 Flower Rangers, 6 PM, CT, Extension Office Basement

Dear Homemaker Friend:

2024-2025 Officer Elections

At the Homemaker Annual Meeting in May, a new president and treasurer will need to be elected. The nominating committee is asking membership to step up and serve. If you or someone in your club is interested in serving, please call the Extension Office at 270-756-2182 or email lallen@uky.edu, so we can share information about the volunteer opportunities.

Breckinridge County Extension Agent
For FCS Education

Looking for new recipes for healthy meals and snacks?

Check out the 2024 Food and Nutrition Calendar!



Stop by the Extension Office to pick-up your free copy!



2024 KEHA State Meeting

Registration is open.

May 7-9, 2024

For lodging information contact the Extension Office at 270-756-2182.

Sloan Convention Center and
Holiday Inn University Plaza
Bowling Green, KY

The theme is "Blazing the Way with KEHA." Fort Harrod Area will serve as the host area. Reserve your hotel room now in the KEHA group block!

Details were in the state newsletter and are on the [State Meeting](#) webpage.

Help Needed—4-H Camp Leaders!

Make a difference in a young camper's life by going to summer camp!

Adult Leaders are needed so that local youth can attend 4-H Camp July 22—25, 2024!

Adults and teens attend for FREE when they are accepted as camp counselors.

Call the Extension Office at 270-756-2182 and ask for an application today!

AARP Foundation

For a future without senior poverty.

Tax-Aide Preparation

Every Wednesday

February 7 thru April 10, 2024

Hardinsburg United Methodist Church

Please call 1-601-207-0894 to make an appointment and be prepared to stay for 90 minutes.

Save the Date!

**Breckinridge County Extension
Homemaker Annual Meeting**

Thursday,

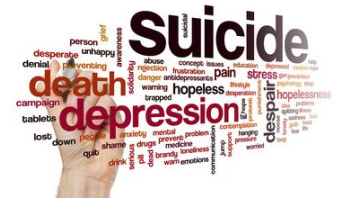
May 30, 2024

Details to be announced soon!



Understanding & Preventing Suicide

Tuesday, April 30
9:30 AM, CT



Dr. Cheryl Witt will be presenting this important lesson at the LaRue County office beginning at 9:30CST/10:30EST.

Everyone is invited to attend in-person!

For those wanting to stay closer to home an online zoom watch group will be hosted at the exact time in the Breckinridge County Extension Community Building.

Please call the Extension Office with questions.

For planning purposes we would like participants to register by April 29th.

Growing Your Own Garden

Plant cole crop plants 1st half of April

- Collards, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli
- By early April it is getting late for spinach & peas

Install raised beds at least 6" tall

- Fill with good garden soil
- Mix in organic materials in 3 to 1 ratio
- If using containers, potting soil works best

April Plantings

- Middle of month: beans & sweet corn
- End of month: Crops with vines like cucumber, cantaloupe, squash & pumpkins
- April planted pumpkins will mature well before Halloween, plan accordingly



For more gardening information contact the Extension Office for a copy of the "Growing Your Own Garden Calendar" and "Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky".

Be sure to ask about the free garden and yard soil testing program!

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The Dessert Desert

Cake, cookies, ice cream ... we all love it, especially little ones. We often save dessert for the end of a meal or after dinner. Sometimes we view this type of food as a reward, both for kids and adults. Changing our mindset to think of dessert as part of a balanced eating pattern can help build a better relationship with food.

By putting food on a pedestal, we create a mindset that foods are good or bad. They're not bad unless you don't like the taste! Many times, we label foods as good or bad based on what we see in the media. Allowing yourself and children to enjoy these once "off-limit" foods in moderation can help to break down this wall of morality with foods.

Using food as a reward can make their body crave sweet things when they are not hungry. Additionally, rewarding with a dessert makes it seem superior and special, giving it more value than other foods. Having dessert more often in a casual manner can lessen the value given to the food. It also removes the power from this food.

Dessert can mean sweet treats like mentioned above, but there are other sweet nutritious options we can add into the rotation. Try berries and whipped topping for dessert. Or include a handful of nuts on that next ice cream scoop. Including a small portion on a dinner plate can help young children understand that dessert is just another food and not something you get after doing something else.

Desserts are delicious, and you deserve to enjoy them. They can include carbohydrates, protein, and fat. You can enjoy dessert as a part of a balanced diet. Removing the stigma associated with these foods can lead to a healthier relationship with food. So, yes, let them eat cake!

Resources

Jacobsen, M. (2016). *How to raise a mindful eater*. Maryann Jacobsen.

Fernando, N., & Potock, M. (2015). *Raising a healthy, happy eater: A parent's handbook*. The Experiment.

Fernando, N. (2022, November 21). *How to tame your child's sweet tooth: Tips for parents*. Healthychildren.org. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/How-to-Tame-Your-Childs-Sweet-Tooth.aspx>

Sources: Anna McDonald, Senior Extension Associate, and Courtney Luecking, Extension Specialist for Nutrition and Health



We need your help at the Spring Bazaar!

Specific ways to help with the Spring Bazaar:

- Donate a homemade cake or pie for the Bake Sale table hosted by the homemakers.
- Donate food to the Concession Stand hosted by the Homemakers: Hot dogs and buns, hamburger buns, individually packaged chips, can soda, individually packaged homemade desserts.
- Volunteer to work a shift in the concession stand or the bake sale table.
- Set-up or clean-up

Call the Extension Office at 270-756-2182 with questions or sign-up to volunteer.

Gather up family and friends and come to the Spring Bazaar!



Accepting vendor application now!

Call 270-756-2182 for details.

Extension Homemakers

Spring Bazaar

Saturday, May 11, 2024

9 a.m. CT - 2 p.m. CT

***Shop local arts and crafts vendors for
spring holiday gifts and decor.***

Free Admission

Breckinridge County Extension
Community Building & Farmers' Market &
Educational Facility

1377 S. Hwy 261, Hardinsburg, KY 40143

270-756-2182

*Proceeds to benefit
local high school
scholarships!*



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Agriculture and Natural Resources
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4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

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Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

April 9, 2024

FREE DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

Breckinridge County Extension Community Building

1377 S. Hwy 261, Hardinsburg, KY 40143

No Registration Required!

1:30—2:30 PM, CT

- * Relaxed Group Setting
 - * Recipe Sampling
- * Nutritional Information
 - * Door Prize



April's Guest Speaker:

**Casey Hicks, RN
BHI Pain Management**

Join us for a discussion of pain management relating to diabetic neuropathy

Bring a friend or family member, everyone welcome!

Call 270-756-0711 or 270-756-2182 for more information.





Friday, May 3, 2024

9:45 AM to 3:30 PM, CT

Breckinridge County Extension Community Building

1377 S Hwy 261

Hardinsburg, KY 40143

Call (270) 756-2182 to register by April 26th

Topics covered:

*Defensive driving techniques *Proven safety strategies

*New traffic laws and rules of the road

Lunch break time will occur during class.

Refreshing your driving skills could reduce your auto insurance costs.*

*Contact insurance agent for details regarding discount qualifications.

AARP Member—\$20

Non Member—\$25

**Bring your Driver's License and
AARP Membership Card (for discounted price) with you to the class.**

Note: Pay day of training with check made out to AARP or exact cash

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WITS WORKOUT

An Interactive Brain Health Program

 Cooperative
Extension Service

Breckinridge County

Did you know that social connectedness and intellectual engagement are two lifestyle factors that contribute to your brain's health?



Simply put, coming together and learning new things is good for your noggin! Join the *Wits Workout* program to engage in guided challenging puzzles, learn to help keep your brain healthy while interacting with others.

When: Wednesday, May 22, June 5, June 26, July 3, July 10 & July 31

Time: 10 to 11:15 AM, CT

Where: Breckinridge County Extension Community Building,
1377 S Hwy 261, Hardinsburg, KY

Register: No registration required!

Led by: Lynnette Allen Breckinridge County Cooperative Extension FCS Agent



Wits Workout is a program developed by University of Illinois Extension

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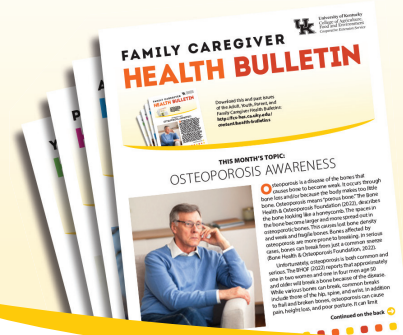
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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

FAMILY CAREGIVER

HEALTH BULLETIN



APRIL 2024

Download this and past issues of the Adult, Youth, Parent, and Family Caregiver Health Bulletins:
<http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins>

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

SUPPORTING BRAIN HEALTH



If you are a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's disease, you are not alone. According to the Alzheimer's Association, more than 157,000 family caregivers provide an estimated 302 million hours of unpaid care to help preserve the health, safety, and dignity of more than 75,000 older adults living with the condition. Alzheimer's disease gets worse over time because of a build-up of plaques and tangles of proteins in the brain. Over time, these plaques and tangles destroy the healthy connections between nerve cells in the brain and the ability for the cells to properly function, thereby impacting memory, thinking, and other cognitive abilities. Eventually, a person with Alzheimer's disease may not be able to carry out activities of daily living. As a result, dementia caregiving can be stressful, expensive, and overwhelming. Many caregivers face limited resources and lack of training. Here's how caregivers can support brain connection through everyday engagement.

Continued on the next page 



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Social activity is critical for cognitive stimulation. Plan a cookout, play a game, visit with your loved ones.

➔ Continued from the previous page

The brain has billions of nerve cells, called neurons, that process and transmit information. According to the National Institutes of Health (2024), these cells communicate with different parts of the brain and the rest of the body to function. Alzheimer's disease disrupts a neuron's ability to communicate to its neighboring cells. When neurons stop communicating properly, they die. To stay healthy, the NIH explains that neurons need constant communication with their neighboring cells, and they need proper energy in the form of oxygen and nutrients, which is supplied by the blood. A neuron's survival is also based on its ability to maintain, repair, and remodel itself. This means that the adult brain has the ability to generate new neurons and build new connections, a process called neurogenesis, depending on how much or little stimulation it is receiving from other cells.

As a caregiver, you can help protect both your brain and the brain of someone to whom you provide care. Here are some ways that you can promote brain health and support brain connections through everyday engagement:

- **Sensory stimulation:** Neurons are more likely to repair and produce neurogenesis in an enriching environment that includes sensory stimulation. Environments should include a variety of textures, sounds, smells, and tastes. Consider planting a garden, swinging on a porch swing, feeding the ducks, or playing music.
- **Physical exercise:** Combine physical activity with fresh air and sunshine to elevate the senses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 150 minutes of exercise per week. Think about ways you can move more and sit less. You could dance in your kitchen, rock in a rocking chair, wash the car, skip rocks, or window shop.
- **Social engagement:** Interact with people. Talk, sing, touch, and watch people. Take drives with the windows down. Play with children and pets. Social activity is critical for cognitive stimulation. Plan a cookout, play a game, visit with your loved ones.

- **Cognitive challenges:** Stimulate thinking by staying engaged and participating in activities. Challenge your brain just enough to make it hard, but not so hard you feel frustrated.
- **Eat healthy:** Diets good for your heart are also good for your brain. Heart-healthy diets include Mediterranean foods, low sodium, whole grains, healthy fats, and lean meats and fish.
- **Sleep:** Good sleep helps restore and cleanse the brain of toxins. You should get 7 to 9 hours a night.

Research study

For information on a voluntary University of Kentucky research study for caregivers of adults with memory loss and dementia living at home in Kentucky that include these points on brain health, scan the QR code or visit:

<https://www.ccts.uky.edu/participate-research/current-studies/are-you-caring-someone-dementia-0>



SOURCES:

- Elizabeth Rhodus, PhD, University of Kentucky Sander Brown Center on Aging
- Amy F. Kostelic, PhD., associate Extension professor for adult development and aging

REFERENCES:

- CDC. (2023). How much physical activity do older adults need? https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults
- E. Rhodus. (2024). OLLI Donovan Forum presentation. February 15, 2024. Lexington, KY
- NIH. (2024). What Happens to the Brain in Alzheimer's Disease?. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-causes-and-risk-factors/what-happens-brain-alzheimers-disease>

**FAMILY CAREGIVER
HEALTH BULLETIN**

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