

# Todd County Extension Homemaker Newsletter

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## Blood Pressure the Silent Killer

The most recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that about 70 million adults in the United States, or 1 in 3 individuals, have high blood pressure. This number may be larger than we realize if we consider that an additional 1 in 3 adults have prehypertension or higher than normal blood pressure numbers.

High blood pressure increases a person's risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney disease, leading to more than 1,000 deaths a day. This disease costs the nation over \$46 billion in health care and health care related costs each year. High blood pressure increases with age and generally affects adults 50 years and older. In addition blacks are more likely to develop prehypertension and hypertension. Hypertension is often called the silent killer because there are no symptoms and a person may have the disease and it could go unnoticed for years.

The good news is that there are many steps you can take to reduce your risk for hypertension. It is important to know your blood pressure numbers. If it is normal, you should have it checked every year. If it is high, at 120/90 for example, your doctor needs to monitor and treat your condition. You should also cut back on the amount of

salt in your diet. Many people are accustomed to adding salt to their food. One way to easily reduce the amount of salt you eat is to add little or no salt to your food at the table and during cooking. This might take some getting used to. It helps to cut back or step down from the amount of salt you eat before removing all of the salt from your diet. Herbs and spices add flavor and helps you cut back on salt. Processed and canned foods are higher in sodium and should be replaced by fresh foods. Lowering sodium can have a significant impact on your blood pressure.

Maintaining a healthy weight and engaging in physical activity can help reduce or prevent blood pressure. Following an eating plan that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat free or low-fat milk also helps reduce blood pressure. These foods provide nutrients such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, fiber and protein, which have shown to lower blood pressure. Limit alcohol consumption and if you smoke, try to quit.



**Source:** Ingrid Adams, Extension Specialist for Nutrition and Weight Management, University of Kentucky; College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

## Having Trouble Concentrating?

Do you have so many things to do that you just cannot seem to concentrate on anything? There are many distractions in our day-to-day lives. Here are a list of some distractions you may fight and how to deal with them:



- **Social Media** – Social media is a great way to stay connected to friends and family, but it can stop you from being able to concentrate on a task you have to do. If you are always checking for status updates, you may not be able to stay on track. The best way to avoid this distraction is to not log onto social media sites when you are at work. If you feel like you have to check, limit it to only when you have break times.
- **Email Overload** – Do you run to answer each email as soon as it comes into your inbox? If you stop a current project to answer an email, it may take you a little while to get back to work on the project. If possible, create only certain times that you answer emails, even if it is that last ten minutes of every hour. That way you can work on your project uninterrupted and still check your emails in a timely manner.
- **Multitasking** – We like to think that we are good at multitasking, that we are able to get more done in a shorter amount of time. The truth is that it usually takes LONGER to complete those tasks than if you had done each one individually. This is especially true if you are working with a tight deadline. Save multitasking for tasks that are not urgent.
- **Stress** – When people feel like the plate is full, they may not be able to work on any one project. A person may also develop headaches or tight muscles which make it even harder to concentrate. The best way to deal with stress is to find a way to reduce stress.

You may start deep breathing or even meditation. One study even found that when people meditated they not only lowered the stress but actually increased their focus.

- **Being Tired** – When you are not getting a good night's sleep and resting, it can be very hard to concentrate. Most adults need at least 7 hours of sleep each night and some may need up to 9 hours of sleep. By getting enough sleep you are able to be more alert and be able to pay attention to the task you need to complete.

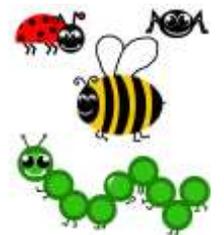
There are many reasons that people have a hard time concentrating. These are a few examples of the issues and a few solutions. Remember you can always talk to your healthcare provider about having trouble concentrating if it is a serious problem for you.

**Reference:** Ratini, M. (2014). Top Concentration Killers. <http://www.webmd.com/add-adhd/ss/slideshow-top-concentration-killers>

**Source:** Nicole Peritore, Extension Specialist for Family Health; University of Kentucky; College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

## Tips for Insect Repellent Use

If you are in an area with mosquitos, you will likely find that repellents are very helpful tools in preventing many mosquito bites. Insect repellents are made for use on bare skin. There are many different types of repellents available including creams, sprays (aerosol and pump spray), solid repellents (sticks) and liquids. There are also products available that produce a smoke or vapor that is used to prevent insects, usually mosquitos, from bothering and biting people. These types of products may be torches, candles or coils. Although repellents do not kill insects that may pester you this time of year, they certainly discourage bites from happening.



Here are a few rules to remember when you are using insect repellents:

- Some of the best protection can come from wearing long sleeves and long pants when you are outside. Remember light colored clothes are important for keeping cool in warmer temperatures.
- When applying insect repellent, use it only on exposed skin. You do not have to put it on underneath clothes unless the mosquitoes can pierce through the clothes.
- Avoid breathing in the repellent and keep it away from eyes.
- Avoid putting repellents on children's hands. Children are more likely to put their hands near their eyes and mouth.
- You should never put repellents on skin that is irritated or broken.
- Make sure to cover all exposed skin. A mosquito has the ability to find an uncovered spot the size of dime.
- Make sure to read how long the protection will last. Different types of repellent have different amounts of time for protection.
- Make sure to wash all skin that has had repellent on it after coming indoors.

Make sure to use repellent according to the directions on the packaging.

**Source:** American Mosquito Control Association

<https://amca.memberclicks.net/repellents>

CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/stopmosquitoes/index.html>

**Source:** Nicole Peritore, Extension Specialist for Family Health; University of Kentucky; College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

## Work-Life Balance

Balancing your personal life from your professional life is no easy task! In the world we live, it is increasingly difficult to say no to work assignments and yes to spending time with family. Some of us long to get promoted with our jobs and steadily climb the ladder. Others have kids to support and without a lot

of help. Therefore, we are working three jobs or late nights just to make sure there is food on the table. But are we missing out on the real purpose if we don't get to spend time with those we love?

When possible there are ways to balance work with life to make for a healthier and happier you.

- Leave work at work. Now this may a difficult thing to do, but emotionally, physically and mentally, it is important to unplug when you are home to give your mind a break and to be able to spend quality time on your life outside the office.
- Be flexible and make time for important activities. In both work and in personal lives, we often take on too much. Cut out the things that are not helping you personally or professionally so that you can make time for those things you care most about. It is also important to make time for your kid's events. These little moments are very valuable to your children, and it will mean the world to them that you took the time out of your day to share their experiences.
- Make goals. Whether it is in your personal or professional life, always set goals for yourself.
- Take time for yourself. You will not have a good balance on life if you don't take time to eat well, exercise, relax and sleep.

**Source:** Amy Hosier, Extension Specialist for Family Life, University of Kentucky; College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. Sarah Christian, CFT Master's Student

**Reference:** Caproni, P. (1997). Work/Life Balance. Retrieved November 20, 2015, from [http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.4/2/67268/10.1177\\_0021886397331003.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y](http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.4/2/67268/10.1177_0021886397331003.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y)

Sincerely,

Jill B. Harris  
Extension Agent for  
Family & Consumer Sciences



# Announcements...

## World's Greatest Baby Shower

World's Greatest Baby Shower will be held Monday, June 6, at Todd County Middle School. This event is for new or expectant mothers and will feature speakers on car seat safety, shaken baby syndrome, the importance of fathers, and more! Call the Todd County Extension Office at 270-265-5659 to pre-register.

## Canning Classes

Pressure Canning (vegetables) - Thursday, June 16, 10:00 a.m., at Logan County Extension Office.

Canning Pickles – July 19, 6:00 p.m. at Westside Church of Christ in Elkton

Canning Salsa – July 26, 6:00 p.m. at Westside Church of Christ in Elkton

There is no charge for the classes, but you must sign up by calling the Todd County Extension Office at 270-265-5659.

## Trip to National Quilt Museum at Paducah

Travel with Todd County Homemakers on Tuesday, July 12, to Paducah to visit the National Quilt Museum, have lunch, and make a few other stops. The cost is \$20/person for transportation in a 15-passenger van and admission to the Quilt Museum. **Lunch is not included in the price.** To register, call the Extension Office at 270-265-5659 to sign up. **The deadline to register and pay is June 30.** We will meet in front of the Courthouse at 8:15 a.m. and should return by 5:00 p.m.

## Homemaker Annual Meeting

Save the date – September 26—for the Homemaker Annual Meeting, which will be held at the Senior Citizens Center in Elkton. Be prepared to “Rock & Roll”!

## Council Officers Needed

At the County Annual Meeting, we will elect a new President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer for the County Homemakers

Council. If you are interested in serving as one of these officers, please contact Betty Coppage, Linda Chester, or Janice Groves.

## Lessons for 2016-17

At your June club meetings, you will have the opportunity to sign up to be a lesson leader for the next homemaker year. A list of lessons and dates were in the May newsletter.

## Fit Together: Body Balance Classes

Come to the FIT Together: Body Balance series to learn more about lifestyle changes you can make to help move more, eat better, lose weight, and reduce your exposure to pollution and other contaminants in the environment. Each session will consist of a weigh-in, goal-setting, movement, educational topic (see list at right), and taste testing. You will leave with information, recipes, and actionable steps you can take to toward better health.



The 9-week series of classes will be offered on Thursdays, at 10:00 a.m., at the Todd County Extension Office meeting room starting June 30 and ending August 25.

There is no fee to participate; each person will receive an incentive by participating in at least 8 of the 9 classes. Call the Extension Office at 270-265-5659 to register.

## Pennyrile Area Homemaker Summer Trip

The Pennyrile Area Homemakers have invited you on a trip to Bardstown, KY, July 13-14. The cost is \$110 per person and includes tickets to all tours/shows, double occupancy hotel, and breakfast at the hotel. Lunch, dinner, and souvenirs not included. Tours include My Old KY Home, the Stephen Foster Story, and Heaven Hill Distillery. For more information, contact the Todd County Extension Office. **The deadline to register is June 20, 2016.**

