

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Family & Consumer Sciences Newsletter



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Happy March,

Are we all looking forward to March 19th?
I am - that is the first day of spring.

The Licking River Area Homemaker Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 14th at 10:30am in Bath County. It would be fantastic if someone would volunteer to attend and take notes.

Our county Homemaker council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19th at 10am.

The council has scheduled the Homemaker annual meeting for Thursday, June 27th at 6pm.

I hope we can get our attendance up this year.

Happy Easter!

March Homemaker
leader lesson is Radon



Sarah Congleton

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KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE: TEST YOUR HOUSE FOR RADON

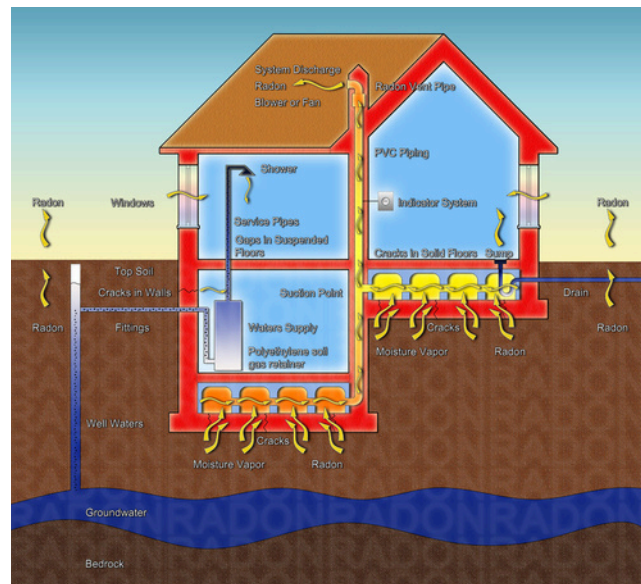
Can you name which cancer is the nation's leading cause of deaths? It may surprise you. The answer is lung cancer. Why should that concern you? Because Kentucky leads the nation in the number of new cancer cases and lung cancer deaths. Not only is this because of Kentucky's high smoking rates but also because of Kentucky's high radon levels. Radon is more than an element on a chemical chart. Now let's learn more about radon, its effects on Kentuckians health, and what steps you can take to address those effects.

WHAT IS RADON?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifies radon as a naturally occurring radioactive gas and the second leading cause of lung cancer. Radon can't be seen, smelled, or tasted. Testing is the only way to know the level of radon in your indoor living spaces, work areas, and buildings.

WHERE DOES RADON COME FROM?

Radon comes from uranium which is naturally present in soil, rocks, and groundwater. When uranium breaks down into radium, it then becomes radon, a gas that can then easily move through small spaces. Radon can move between rocks and soil to reach the surface and then enter your home. Since radon is considered moderately soluble, groundwater will absorb it, creating another possible entry point. According to the EPA, radon is quickly dispersed outdoors.



RADON AND SMOKING

Radon causes an estimated 21,000 deaths each year in the U.S. from lung cancer. Additionally, people who are exposed to both radon and tobacco smoke are 10 times more likely to develop lung cancer. Kentucky leads the nation in the number of new lung cancer cases and lung cancer deaths.

RADON IN KENTUCKY

Kentucky has rock deposits of black shale, phosphatic limestone, and other geology that contain uranium and radium where radon can be found. Radon levels can vary greatly, even for homes sitting side by side. The only way to know the radon level in your home or workplace is by testing for it.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE BREATHE IN RADON?

Much of the radon you breathe in and out causes no harm to your lungs. However indoors, it builds up and continues further radioactive decay. Through this decay, it releases ionizing radiation and forms “daughter” elements. Radon daughters are particles that can attach themselves to items in your home and to dust and other particles in the air. When you inhale radon daughters, whether free floating or attached to particles, they can embed in your lungs. As the radioactive decay process continues, alpha particles are released which can damage your lungs and possibly lead to lung cancer. The more time you spend in a space with a high concentration of radon daughters, the higher your chances of lung damage.

HOW DOES RADON GET INSIDE STRUCTURES?

Since radon is a gas, it can easily move from the soil and rock underneath homes and buildings into them. Radon can enter through cracks in the foundation, basements, crawl spaces, joints, floor drains, and other openings. Radon can also be drawn into the house with the use of fans and dryers. The weather can be a factor with indoor radon levels as well. It is recommended when testing for radon to start at the lowest level of the home, such as the basement or first floor.

HOW IS RADON MEASURED?

Radon is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L). A picocurie is a measure of the rate of radioactive decay of radon. The EPA has set up a guideline of 4 pCi/L of annual average radon exposure as an acceptable health risk, even though any amount of exposure carries risk.

TESTING FOR RADON IN YOUR HOME

There are several options to test for radon. You can find test kits at home improvement stores or online. Use an EPA-approved test kit for accuracy. The kits usually have a label that says, “Meets EPA Requirements.”

The Kentucky Department for Public Health’s Radon Program recommends three testing methods:

- a. You can use a short-term kit which is for tests lasting two to 90 days. Most commonly, people test for two days to one week, but it is important to understand that radon levels do change throughout the year.
- b. The EPA recommends you test your home for one full calendar year when possible. Long-term kits range from 90 days up to a year. You can find long-term radon kits online and at home improvement stores. These tests will record the average radon level during the period you choose to test and provide a better sign of year-round radon exposure in the home than a short-term test.
- c. You can hire a certified testing and mitigation specialist to test your home or building. If you want to hire a professional, find someone who has the technical knowledge and special skills to test then install a radon mitigation system, if necessary.

When you test your home, it is important to find the right testing location.

1. Test the lowest level of the home that is used on a regular basis and where you or a household member spend at least eight hours per week.
2. Place the test kit in a general breathing zone, between two and seven feet above the floor.
3. Place the test kit at least six inches from any walls and five feet from exterior windows and doors.
4. Keep the test kit away from vents or other places where there is frequently moving air.
5. Do not place the test kit in direct sunlight or near areas of high moisture.
6. Keep out of reach of pets and children.
7. Do not move the test kit during testing.

REMOVING RADON FROM YOUR HOME

If your home has tested high for radon (4 pCi/L or higher), experts recommend you have a professional install a radon mitigation system. The mitigation system reduces radon inside your home by either preventing radon from entering or by venting it outside after it had entered. Lowering high radon levels requires technical knowledge and special skills. Contractors who do not specialize in radon reduction could make the problem worse. There are several ways to find a certified contractor.

- a. Search the National Radon Proficiency Program website and enter your zip code at <https://nrpp.info/pro-search/>.
- b. Contact the Kentucky Radon Program at <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dphps/emb/Pages/radon.aspx>.
- c. Check out the Kentucky Association of Radon Professionals website at <https://kentuckyradon.org/>.

There are several proven methods to reduce radon in your home. The most-used method has a vent pipe system and fan, which pulls radon from beneath the house and vents it to the outside. This system does not require major changes to your home. Sealing foundation cracks and other openings makes this kind of system more effective and cost-efficient. Similar systems can also be installed in houses with crawl spaces. The right system depends on the design of your home and other factors such as whether your home has a basement.

After installing a radon mitigation system, test your home again to make sure the system is working. It is strongly advised to retest your home every two years to be sure radon levels remain low. You should also retest your home after any home remodeling projects.

Hardin Stevens
Senior Extension Associate, Family & Consumer Sciences Extension



Photo courtesy of UK College of Nursing BREATHE Program

Given Kentucky's high smoking rates, the large number of lung cancer cases and deaths, and the state's geological features, it is important for all Kentuckians to be aware, knowledgeable, and ready to take action to reduce radon in homes and indoor living spaces. By reducing exposure to radon and its effects on your health, you and your loved ones can breathe easier.

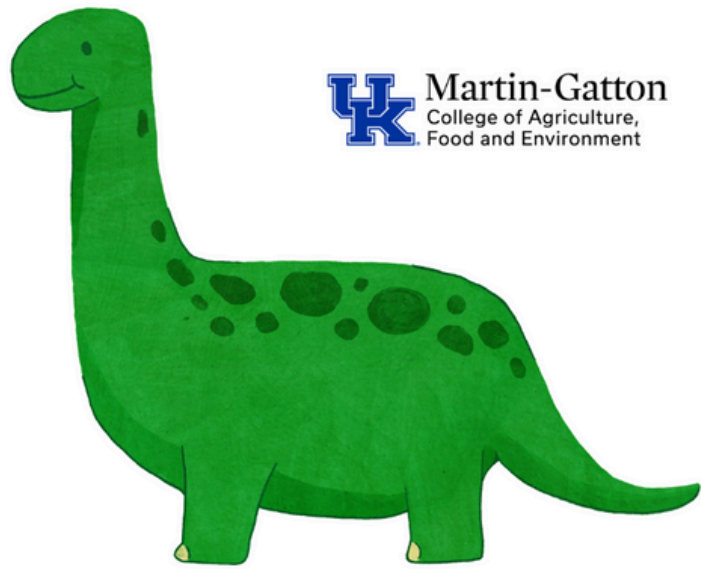
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Laugh and Learn

Playdate

MARCH 2024



Join our 12-month Laugh and Learn Playdate Program that targets school readiness objectives! Each month offers learning activities that are relevant to children's development and will coincide to help celebrate holidays or seasonal festivities.

Each session is at the Montgomery County Extension Education Center.

The 3rd Friday of every month from 10am-12pm.

FREE for all children ages birth to 5 and all children must be accompanied by an adult. Lessons include a healthy snack, book, craft, music activity, fine motor and large motor activities, and free play.



Friday, March 15th at 10am

104 E Locust Street

Registration is required by scanning the QR code:



For more information, contact our office at 859-498-8742 or email
Sarah.Congleton@uky.edu



COOKING THROUGH THE Calendar



Interested in learning how to cook, get new recipes, or meet new friends?

Join us for Cooking Through the Calendar on the 3rd Wednesday of every month from 12:00pm - 1:00pm located at the Montgomery County Extension Office.

Participants cook and sample the featured recipe of the month and will receive a free kitchen gadget at each session.

Cost is free. Registration is required. Please contact our office to sign up; 859-498-8741



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Agriculture and Natural Resources
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MONEYWISE

VALUING PEOPLE. VALUING MONEY.

MARCH 2024

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: ALLOWANCE: A LIFE SKILL BUILDER

Allowance plays a crucial role in shaping a child's development. It fosters important life skills, instills a sense of responsibility, and promotes financial literacy. Allowance can be a powerful tool for teaching important life lessons.

Allowance is money parents or caregivers give to their children on a regular basis to teach them money management skills. Giving children an allowance is a personal decision for each family that may depend on disposable income or household expectations. Some parents tie allowance to specific chores while others provide a fixed amount each week or month.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

One of the main benefits of giving children an allowance is to teach money management. When children receive a fixed amount of money regularly, it is easier to understand how to budget. They learn to save their money for various reasons, such as saving for a desired toy, spending on daily needs such as lunch, or giving to charitable causes. This early exposure to financial decision-making lays the foundation for responsible money management later in life.



WORK ETHIC

Allowance also teaches children the value of hard work. Many parents give allowance for the completion of chores. By associating money with effort, children develop a strong work ethic and understand that rewards are earned through dedication and responsibility. This connection between work and reward prepares children and teens for adulthood.

GOAL SETTING

Allowance is a practical tool for teaching children about goal setting. Whether it's saving for a new toy, a special event, or a long-term investment, children learn to set goals and work toward them. This is a valuable skill that goes beyond financial matters.

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

ALLOWANCE ALSO PLAYS A ROLE IN NURTURING EMPATHY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.



DECISION-MAKING

Receiving an allowance allows children to make choices about spending. “Do I buy what I can afford today, or do I wait and save more money for the nicer option?” This fosters critical thinking and decision-making skills. Children must evaluate their priorities, make trade-offs, and consider the consequences of their choices. Such decision-making experiences contribute to the ability to analyze and solve problems which are essential skills in life.

EMPATHY

Allowance also plays a role in nurturing empathy and social responsibility. Parents can encourage children to give some of their allowance to charitable causes or community projects. This practice can expand a child’s understanding of others’ needs and teaches them to give back. These early lessons in generosity and compassion create individuals who are mindful of the needs of others.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

As children grow, the lessons learned through allowance provide a foundation for understanding financial literacy concepts.

Understanding the basics of budgeting, saving, and making informed financial decisions is crucial in making wise decisions later. Individuals who have been exposed to these concepts through allowance are better equipped to manage money, avoid debt, and plan for their future.

The value of allowance extends far beyond the simple act of receiving money. It is a tool for building life skills, responsibility, and financial literacy. Allowance can contribute to the overall development of children, shaping them into more responsible, thoughtful, and money-wise individuals.

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ADULT

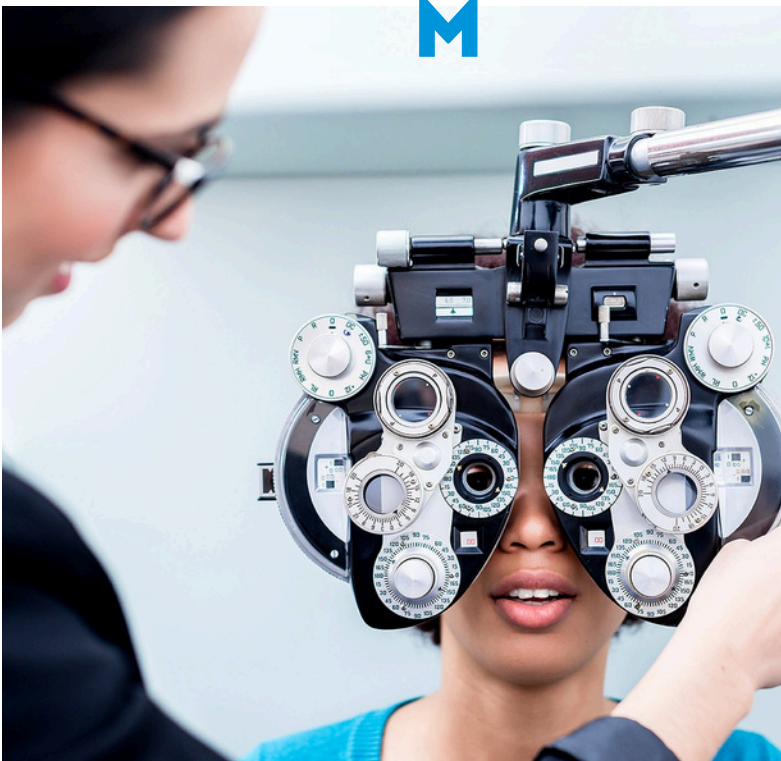
HEALTH BULLETIN



MARCH 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 SAVE YOUR VISION



arch is “Save Your Vision Month” in the United States. This is a timely reminder to all of us to make good choices regarding our eye health. Experts estimate you can prevent half of visual impairment and blindness through early diagnosis and treatment. Making time for preventative care is an important part of taking care of our eyes.

Many people do not realize that eyesight can get worse over time. Because of slow changes, it can be difficult to tell if your eyesight has changed until you have an eye exam.

All people should have a basic vision screening annually as a part of an overall wellness exam. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends people older than 60 receive a dilated eye exam, performed

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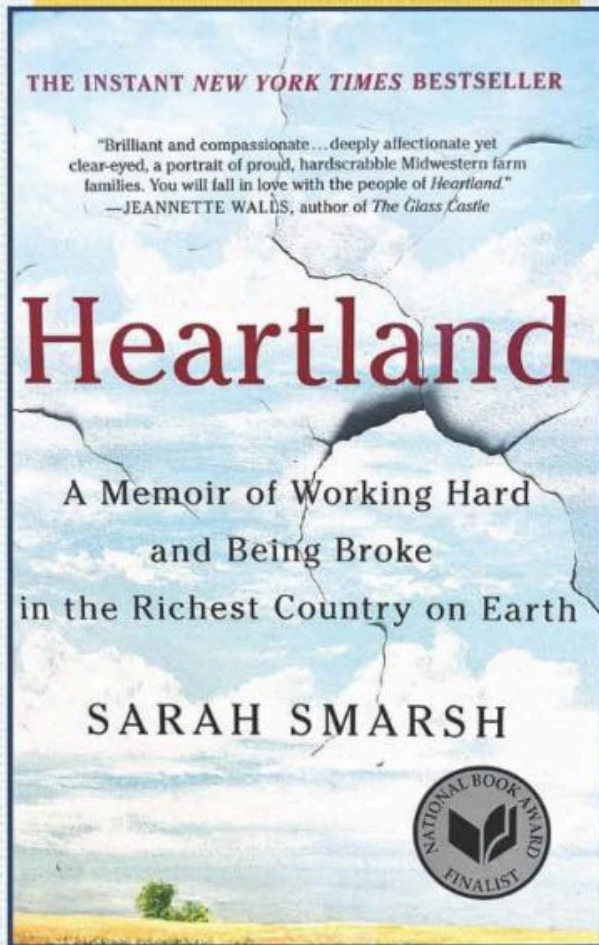
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WE ARE EXCITED TO
READ WITH
YOU
THIS YEAR!

BIG BLUE BOOK CLUB

Big Blue Book Club is back with **Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country** on Earth by Sarah Smarsh. This book is an eye-opening memoir about working-class poverty in America. Our discussions will help participants understand the impact that economic hardship and inequality have on our communities. Heartland is a descriptive and emotion-packed retelling of the author's and her family's intergenerational experience of America's wealth gap.

The first Big Blue Book Club series for **2024 will be April 11, 18, and 25**. Each Thursday morning session will be presented via Zoom at 11 a.m. EDT. We will record the sessions, so if you aren't available during the day, you are welcome to participate via the recording.

Registration will open at 9 a.m. EST on Feb. 1 at <https://ukfcs.net/BBBC24book1>. The link will not be active until registration opens. The first 200 registered participants will receive a free copy of the book. Pick up your free book at your local Extension office after you receive notification that you are one of the book recipients.

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Nutty Sweet Potato Biscuits



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 cup all-purpose flour | ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon | potatoes |
| ⅓ cup whole wheat flour | ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg | 6 tablespoons |
| 1½ teaspoons baking powder | ⅓ cup chopped walnuts | ¼ cup butter, m |
| ½ teaspoon salt | 1 cup mashed sweet | ½ teaspoon van |
| | | 1 tablespoon m |

- In a large mixing bowl, **combine** flours, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and walnuts. **Set** aside.
 - Combine** sweet potatoes, sugar, butter, vanilla and milk; **add** to flour mixture and mix well.
 - Turn out** onto a floured surface; gently **knead** 3 or 4 times. **Roll** dough into ½ inch thickness. **Cut** with a 2 inch biscuit cutter and **place** on a lightly greased baking sheet.
 - Bake** at 450°F for 12 minutes or until golden brown.
- Yield:** 18 biscuits
Nutritional Analysis: 18 biscuits contain 18g total fat, 2g saturated fat, 210mg cholesterol, 210mg sodium, 14g carbohydrate, 4g sugar, 2g protein.

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.

Registration required by calling 859-498-8741. Space is limited!

Bread Making - April 4 at 6:00pm

Learn the fundamentals of yeast breads and get your hands on some dough! This program is for beginner or seasoned bakers.



KEHA State Meeting will take place May 7-9, 2024, at Sloan Convention Center and Holiday Inn University Plaza in Bowling Green. 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! The group rate is \$126/night (1-2 people; scaled pricing for more people per room). Details are on the [State Meeting webpage](#).