

The Sampler

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Finding a Cure for the Sheltering in Place Blues

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Feeling cooped up while spending so much time at home? Consider some of these fun activities to keep restless kids busy and prevent you from pulling your hair out!

1. Give winter one last hoorah by creating your own snow. Add baking soda and shaving cream together in a container for a fantastic mold-able snow that is naturally cold. For an added science experiment, add a little spritz of vinegar to make snow balls or snow explosions. [Click here for the recipe.](#)
2. Get crafty. Make flower paper chains to decorate the house, homemade stamps out of blocks and shaped rubber shoe insoles or carved potatoes to create your own greeting cards, learn how to make items out of colorful duct tape, or create bubble art. See Pinterest for lots of great ideas of inexpensive and fun art and craft ideas.
3. Get cooking. Try a new recipe, make edible play dough, or create



favorite treats. If you have older youth, have a cooking challenge using certain ingredients.

4. Build a fort/tower/castle out of large plastic cups or blankets. Make it a competition (who can build the longest, tallest, etc.) Play a game, read, sleep, etc. in the fort.
5. Have a scavenger or treasure hunt. For example, search for all the supplies necessary for a fun project.
6. Play board games, race each other to complete simple puzzles, or get active by playing games such as Chinese jump rope. [Click here for directions.](#)
7. Put on a puppet show. For extra credit, create your own puppets out of socks or paper bags to tell a story of your own creation.
8. Take funny pictures or make funny videos together using a fun app on phones such as “LOL Movie” or “Magic Mirror.”

9. If the weather is cooperating and you can get outside, look for maps of trails in your area and explore

Spring Cleaning

We have been receiving a number of spring cleaning and organization calls the last few weeks at the Weber USU Extension Office. It might be due to the fact that many of us were home and isolated a little more, and were already cleaning with the coronavirus in mind. Whatever the reason, and because it is spring, here are a few other cleaning and organizing tips that may prove helpful as you continue.

Disinfecting and Contact Time

One thing that many do not understand, and one of the most common cleaning mistakes people make, (if you truly want to disinfect those frequently-touched surfaces in your home—doorknobs, counters, remote controls)—is you have to commit to each cleaning product's recommended contact time—how long it needs to sit on the surface. As the CDC points out in its coronavirus house-cleaning guide, most disinfecting sprays and products have to sit on a surface for a certain length of time in order to effectively destroy germs. If the surface you are disinfecting dries too quickly you it won't have an effective kill rate.

So be sure to get in the habit of checking how long that Clorox spray or bleach solution needs to sit before wiping it away. The time recommendation will be found on the product label.

Take Off Shoes

Even before the current crisis, studies have shown that our shoes are capable of spreading germs around our homes. Luckily, the solution is simple: get in the habit of taking off your shoes when you walk in the door. Consider setting up an entryway shoe rack and leave a pair of comfy shoes to slip into for only wearing inside the house. This also solves the other problem of sand, dirt, and oil being tracked through your home, and keeps your home cleaner longer, and cleaning easier.



We also know, from recent research that the coronavirus has put a new spin on this habit. According to a new study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shoes may potentially function as carriers for the virus, and in some cases, shoes worn by hospital staff are being disinfected when walking out of wards with COVID-19 patients.

Declutter for Spring

For many, the act of cleaning also brings to light things we need to get rid of, things that are cluttering our shelves, drawers, closets, etc. The trouble is the actual art of letting go. A couple of tips for decluttering is to:

- Be systematic-know where you will start first, what to tackle when, and calendar the commitment to the process. An example might be to list what to tackle on Day One...maybe it is something as simple as de-cluttering your purse. Maybe Day Two is a 'bag it' walk through, and you fill a bag of all items you really are ready to toss. It could be all knick-knacks that you don't really like anymore, or recipe books you never use...or any combination of things needing to be tossed. The cool thing about the 'bag it' system is that for most people a bag full of stuff equals trash. Or it shows your intention to get rid of it. Boxes often equate to 'store it'. Some people use the popular 40 Bags in 40 Days Challenge. Anything that helps you be systematic is the goal here.
- De-clutter one small place at a time...maybe one closet, one drawer, rather than try to attempt to declutter the entire home all at once. You are more likely to keep going if you see some success and reap the rewards of small jobs at a time. (It's the 'eat the elephant one bite at a time' approach.)
- Have a goal, set a time limit, have a place to handle the things you are removing...boxes or bags of things to throw away, things to donate, things to relocate to a better storage option, etc.
- Get serious about de-junking your space, keep pushing yourself to be ruthless—don't linger on whether to keep it...if you don't use it, really don't like it, or it doesn't really add value to your life, let it go.
- Don't get sidetracked with organizing and deeper cleaning until the space/area has been decluttered first. It makes sense, you can't really organize/clean, until 'stuff' is gone.

Spring is a perfect time of year to be cleaning and organizing. After being cooped up inside our homes during the winter (or the coronavirus) a clean and organized home can refresh our minds and souls. Something about it just makes things look brighter! 🌞

~Teresa Hunsaker

Family and Consumer Science Events

Master Food Preserver Course Update

In light of our recent concerns with the coronavirus the Master Food Preservation Course may look a little different. At this time we are going ahead with the course, are making some adjustments, and watching what transpires in the next 6 weeks. We will keep you updated as things unfold, and will accept registrations, but will not require a payment at this time. As the date gets closer, and it looks like we will hold the course, we will be in contact for a payment with those registered. We appreciate your flexibility and patience with us as we consider the best interest of all participants, and the facility, in delivery of the course. Please feel free to sign-up!! We will be in touch. See next page for class schedule.



Pressure Canner Lid Gauge Testing

USU Extension Office
Monday-Friday
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

The USDA recommends dial gauges be checked for accuracy yearly, so drop off your pressure canner lid at our office to have it tested. When it's been tested we will give you a call to pick it up. Cost is \$2.00 per lid. If it is recommended that you need a new gauge bring the new one in and we will test it for free!

Date Nights. . .

Due to COVID 19 we are holding our date nights virtually. See below for two great date nights schedule for this month.

How to Start the Money Conversation Date Night

Thursday, May 7 at 8:00 p.m.
Your House
FREE

Personal Financial Expert, Amanda Christensen, will be sharing how to start to the money conversation. To sign up you will need to RSVP Hollie Henrie at hollie.henrie@usu.edu or call her at 435-676-1113. Log in directions will be sent to RSVP list



The Power of Play Date Night

Thursday, May 21 at 8:00 p.m.
Your House
FREE

Extension Professor, Naomi Brower, will help you discover the power of play in your relationship. To sign up you will need to RSVP Hollie Henrie at hollie.henrie@usu.edu or call her at 435-676-1113. Log in directions will be sent to RSVP list.

Master Food Preserver Class Schedule/Outline for Summer 2020

June 23-26, 2020 Roy High School FACS Kitchens

<p>Tues. June 23 – Morning Session 8am-11:30am Introduction and course overview Introduction to food science and microbiology Canning Basics</p> 	<p>All classes will be held at Roy High School, FACS kitchens...North West side of school—signs will be posted.</p>
<p>Tues. June 23 – Afternoon Session Noon-3:00pm Canning fruits and pie fillings lecture and lab Freeze Drying—we will be prepping food for the freeze dryer and begin the freeze-drying process.</p>	<p>There will be a short 30 minute break <u>each day</u> between the am and pm session.</p>
<p>Wed. June 24 – Morning Session 8am-11:30am Jams and Jellies lecture and lab: pectin (liquids, powders, universal), jells, jar sterilization, and much more! Comparison of other non-pectin options and low sugar options will also be discussed.</p>	<p>Hands on lab with jams and jellies, conserves, spreads Hands on Freezer Jam</p>
<p>Wed. June 24 – Afternoon Session Noon-3:00pm Dehydration (drying) foods—fruits, veggies, and jerky. A look at food dehydrators...what to look for and consider in purchasing. Freezing--Discussion on pretreatments and prepping food for freezing...this is not the same as the freeze drying section.</p>	<p>Hands on lab will include dehydrating – fruits, vegetables and meats</p>
<p>Thurs. June 25 –Morning Session 8am-11:30am Pressure canning low acid foods – using the pressure canner for dry beans, soups, meats, and low acid mixtures. Reviewing the pH of low acid foods.</p>	<p>Hands on lab includes pressure canning of meats, soup, beans and vegetables.</p>
<p>Thurs. June 25 – Afternoon Session Noon-3:00pm Pickling lecture and lab...including fermentation.</p>	<p>Because fermentation requires a number of days/weeks the lab will be pickled products, but the lecture will include details and instruction on fermentation.</p>
<p>Fri. June 26 – All Day 8am-2:00pm Canning tomatoes and tomato mixtures...especially salsa and pizza sauce, pH, and acidification.</p> <p>Judging Lid Testing Final Exam</p>	<p>There will be a lunch break during this lecture and lab, but we will be focusing on tomatoes the better part of this last day.</p>

Best By, Use By, and Sell By...

Have you ever wondered what the ‘expiration’ date stamps on the foods you buy mean? Do you find the terms confusing? You are not alone. In fact, confusion over these terms in date labeling leads to millions of pounds of food wasted every year because we weren’t sure just what to use, or what to pitch. Here are a couple of points/definitions that may be helpful and keep the waste down:

First: The federal government does not regulate clarity on what these dates and terms mean. It is left to the manufacturers/vendors, and is not consistent. While there are currently 41 states that require a date label on at least one type of food product (with some requiring specific language and others just say there has to be a date indicator), and 20 states restricting vendors from selling products beyond the defined date, there isn’t any authority enforcing a single standard. And since no one is really keeping watch, consumers should keep in mind that the vendor has discretion over what date label to use and how to set the date. Generally, these are the terms you will see associated with ‘expiration’ date stamping:

Use-By: This label is aimed at consumers as a directive of the date by which the product should be eaten; mostly because of quality, not because the item will necessarily make you sick if eaten after the use-by date. However, after the use-by date, product quality is likely to go down much faster, and safety could be an issue.

Sell-By: This label is aimed retailers, and it informs them of the date by which the product should be sold or removed from shelf life. This does not mean that the product is unsafe to consume after the date. Typically, one-third of a product's shelf-life remains after the sell-by date for the consumer to use at home.

Best-By: This is a suggestion to the consumer on which date the product should be consumed to assure for ideal quality. “Best before”—often grouped together with “best if used by”—indicates the date for when the food is in its best quality. However, it doesn’t mean the food is unsafe to eat beyond that point.

These are the most common phrases we will see, and in fact, the Grocery Manufacturers Association indicates that as of 2017 87% of products use these terms...so there is some attempt at more consistent labeling and meaning.

So, what does that mean for consumers:

1. Most canned goods, salad dressings, ketchup (and other condiments), dry mixes, canned soups, etc. will be safe to eat well past the ‘expiration’ or ‘Best by’ date. It will be a matter of quality—color, flavor, texture, and nutrition that will start to break down.
2. Dairy products like milk and cheeses may sour or mold, but sour milk is still great to use in baking powder biscuits, pancakes, cakes, and muffins.
3. Eggs will keep in the refrigerator 4-5 weeks from time of purchase, and can also be frozen for even longer storage. Just freeze them in small containers, two at a time, so you know how many you have for baking, scrambling, or recipe preparation.
4. Store food properly...Proper storage will extend the quality. Shelf stable foods should be kept cool, dark, and dry. Check the temperature on your refrigerator, it should keep temperatures close to 40°F-42°F.
5. Fresh meat storage time: 1-2 days for poultry; 3-4 days for beef/pork roasts; 1-2 days for ground beef/poultry; 5-7 days for cured meats. Only one day for fresh fish.
6. Lastly, use common sense...don’t leave perishable foods out on the counter, check for off smells, etc. And if you aren't sure you'll be able to eat something before its expiration date, you can always freeze it before that date hits to make it last longer.



There are other kinds of dates floating around, like "Guaranteed Fresh" sometimes found on baked goods (after which they may be stale, but okay to eat), and more, but the three stated above are the most likely to be found for most of our foods. The most important takeaway is that these terms almost always refer to freshness and quality, not safety. For more information on date stamping, turn to the USDA, www.fsis.usda.gov. 🐔

~Teresa Hunsaker

Top Four Tips to Cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude

Current challenges may encourage many to reflect on what they are most grateful for in life. Cultivating gratitude can lead to amazing benefits, and not just during times of crisis. Some of these include:

- **Improved relationships with others.** Having an attitude of gratitude makes us nicer, more appreciative, enhances empathy, and reduces aggression. As a result, it can help us deepen our friendships, improve our marriages and family connections, and help us develop new positive relationships with others.
- **Improved mental and physical health.** Gratitude helps us to better cope with stress, increases self-esteem, and helps in boosting our coping skills when challenges arise. It also boosts our immune system. Research has also shown that gratitude can help individuals have more energy, and more and better sleep quality.
- **Career boost.** Gratitude can lead to better decision making, people skills, and can help boost productivity and goal achievement.

Gratitude has some amazing benefits! So how does one better cultivate this attitude of gratitude? Consider these four quick tips to increasing gratitude.

1. Keep a gratitude journal. Write down one or two things every day that you are grateful for. Get creative—searching for those small things like having warm water for a shower or a bed to sleep in can help to develop an attitude of gratitude. Reading through past entries can also provide a positive boost when needed.
2. Share your appreciation. Let others know that you appreciate who they are or what they have done. How to best show appreciation will depend on the person (a written note, a small gift, quality time together, etc.) but a sincere thank you is always appreciated.
3. Look for the positive. How we interpret the situation can impact our future thoughts and



feelings. For example, when facing a challenge, look for the potential benefits such as increasing patience or empathy for others. Ask a friend or family member for help when it seems difficult to see any positives from a situation.

4. Some people need a visual reminder to maintain mindfulness of gratitude. For those individuals it may be helpful to create a list of people or things that they may often take for granted and place it where they will see it often.

If you haven't already, consider giving yourself the gift of gratitude during this challenging time. It is free, doesn't take much time, and the benefits are enormous, long lasting, and one of the simplest ways to improve life satisfaction. 🍷

~Naomi Brower

References:

<http://www.webmd.com/women/features/gratitude-health-boost>
<http://happierhuman.com/the-science-of-gratitude/>

Finding a Cure for the Sheltering in Place Blues continued from page 1

a new trail. Have a nature scavenger hunt while you are on the hike, and/or pack some snacks and have a picnic at the end of your hike.

10. Learn to find constellations. Find a star map on a Smartphone app or online, such as "Skyview Lite" or <http://www.stargazing.net/David/constel/skymapindex.html>
11. Have your own Olympics. Make up your own events such as hula hoop, jumping rope, shooting basketballs, Frisbee toss, swimming noodle "javelin" toss or hopping a certain distance. Create and give silly awards!
12. Dream together. Find pictures online, in magazines, or spend time drawing fun things you want to do in the future together. Paste them on a poster board and put it somewhere that you can see it often. 🍷

~Naomi Brower

Create Better Health News Corner

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Why Shop at the Farmer's Market?

It is really starting to look like summer here in Weber County and I couldn't be more excited! Not just for sunny days, swimsuits, and shorts, but for all of the delicious fruits and vegetables that are in season. My favorite place to buy tasty fruits and veggies is the Farmer's Market. There is no better place to be on a Saturday morning.

At the Farmer's Market, you can find high quality fruits and vegetables that are fresher than the ones you find at the store. They are all grown locally and sold at their peak of flavor and nutritional value. Because the fruits and veggies are so fresh, they are extremely flavorful and delicious.

Another perk of shopping at the Farmer's Market is variety. You will find something different every week. From heirloom tomatoes to purple carrots, there is always something new to be discovered! Ask the farmer about the different fruit or vegetables available. They might even give you a sample or share their favorite way to prepare it.

Did you know you can save money by shopping at the Farmer's Market? Certain items may be more affordable than at the grocery store. If you have SNAP benefits you can get up to \$20 of FREE local fruits and veggies per market day with your SNAP EBT Horizon card! Just stop by the info booth at the market before you shop. To find out more go to <https://www.uah.org/get-help/snap-farmers-market>.

If buying organic is important to you the market can be a great place to save money. Many small family farms are not certified organic because it takes

a lot of money to get that certification. However, they may still be using organic practices. Many use fewer chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides than larger farms. Make sure to ask about how the produce was grown if this is important to you.

Shopping at your local Farmer's Market also supports the local economy. Because the produce is grown locally it has a much smaller impact on the environment. On average, food in the U.S. travels 1,500 miles to get to your grocery cart! Produce at the Farmer's Market only travels 20-50 miles, meaning fewer fossil fuels were used and less pollution was created. When you shop at the Farmer's Market you are also avoiding the extra packaging found at the grocery store, reducing the amount of trash that you and your family produce.

At this time as we are practicing social distancing, Farmer's Markets are as safe, or safer, than grocery stores. The markets are out in the open greatly reducing your exposure. It is easy to take a very quick trip to the market, and you will rarely have to wait in line! Because the Farmer's Market is usually only held once a week you can count on the produce being fresher and touched by fewer hands than the produce at the grocery store.

For more information on the Ogden Farmer's Market visit <http://farmersmarketogden.com/>. There are so many benefits of shopping at the market! I can't wait to see you there. 

~Sierra Hill, Create Better Health Ambassador



For more info check out our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/createbetterhealthwebercounty/>

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