



Extension
Utah State University



The Sampler

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September—October 2026

Issue #3

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What to Do If You Need to Evacuate Your Home

With wildfires threatening communities across the state, evacuation orders can happen with little warning. Preparing your household now can help you evacuate quickly and safely if it becomes necessary.

- Assemble grab-and-go kits. The [Ready.Gov website](https://www.ready.gov) offers printable instructions for building a basic disaster supply kit, including:

- * Water – one gallon per person per day for three days for drinking and sanitation
- * Food – at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food per person
- * Sleeping bag or warm blanket
- * Cash (small bills)
- * Battery-, solar-, or hand-cranked-powered radio
- * Flashlight
- * First aid kit
- * Extra batteries or a portable power bank or solar charger
- * Whistle (to signal for help)



- * Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- * Plastic sheeting, scissors and duct tape to shelter in place
- * Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties as well as soap, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes for personal sanitation

- * Personal hygiene items
- * Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery or solar charger
- * Prescriptions and other medications
- * Pet food, water, and supplies
- * Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes, and other

supplies

- * A complete change of clothing for each person, including underwear and sturdy shoes
- * Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels, and plastic utensils
- * Paper and pencil plus books, games, puzzles, and activities for children
- Identify emergency meeting spots and practice going there regularly.

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- Ensure that a copy of your important documents, such as birth certificates, insurance policies, and financial records, are easily accessible.
 - Make sure at least one family member knows first aid and CPR.
 - Write down or memorize all family member's contact information, including phone numbers and birthdates.
 - Have a family communication plan. Review and practice the plan regularly.
 - Be sure to involve children and youth in preparedness efforts. Research shows that youth who are involved experience less stress and anxiety during and after an emergency.
 - Visit USU Extension's preparedness website at extension.usu.edu/preparedness and Ready.gov for additional information.
- Assembling and storing a 72-hour emergency kit in an easily accessible location is a simple but important step toward being prepared for unexpected situations. Taking the time to prepare ahead of time can help you stay safe, calm, and better able to handle an emergency when it happens. ☞

~Stephanie Carlson, Extension Assistant Professor

USES FOR DRYER SHEETS (THAT AREN'T LAUNDRY)

Don't toss dryer sheet after one load of laundry - hold onto them instead. From eliminating dust to fighting static, here are some great uses for dryer sheets. Their clean scent covers up plenty of odors, and they're abrasive enough to clean, but won't damage most surfaces.

- **Get rid of ants** – Lay a sheet near ants to chase them away
- **Clean baseboards** – Vacuum the carpet or sweep the floor, then wipe a dry sheet along the baseboard to remove stubborn dust and pet hair. It repels dust later, too.
- **Eliminate static electricity** – Wipe off your television screen with a used sheet to keep dust from resettling.
- **Dissolve soap scum** - Dampen a used dryer sheet and scrub it away.
- **Shine metal appliances** - Used dryer sheets are great at buffing away fingerprints and smudges.
- **Prevent thread from tangling** - Run a threaded needle through a dryer sheet before beginning to sew.
- **Prevent musty suitcases** - Place an individual sheet inside empty luggage before storing.
- **Keep cars smelling great** - Put a few sheets underneath the seat to freshen your car.
- **Keep mosquitos away** - Place a sheet in your pocket when you go outside.
- **Tough kitchen spills** - Used dryer sheets can pick up a variety of powdery ingredients such as pancake flour, powder sugar, cornstarch and more.
- **Clean baked-on foods from a cooking pan** - Put a new sheet in a pan along with boiling water and a couple of drops of dish soap, and then soak it overnight. The next day, you can wipe the pan clean with a sponge.
- **Eliminate odors in wastebaskets** - Place a dryer sheet at the bottom of the wastebasket.
- **Clean up hair** - Rub a dryer sheet along the floor or couch to pick up pet hair- or clippings from at-home haircuts.
- **Eliminate static electricity from Venetian blinds** - Wipe the blinds with a sheet to prevent dust from resettling.
- **Clean bugs off your car's grill, hood, mirrors and windshield.** Spray the car down with either water or a mild cleaner and scrub with a sheet.
- **Deodorize shoes or sneakers** - Place a sheet in your shoes or sneakers overnight.
- **Remove crayon marks** - Lightly rub walls with a sheet and watch the crayon disappear. Magic!

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE EVENTS



Strong Bodies

Every Monday and Wednesday
2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Golden Hours Senior Center, Ogden

Join us for a 12-week group strength training fitness program! After completing the initial 12 weeks, participants are welcome to continue attending to maintain and build on their progress. The classes include progressive resistance training, balance training, and flexibility exercises. Membership with Golden Hours Senior Center is required but is free. Contact the Golden Hours Senior Center at 801-629-8864 for more information and to sign up.



Date Night

Steeped in Strengths: An Herbal Tea Date Night!

September 25
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
USU Extension Office
1181 N. Fairgrounds Dr., Ogden
\$20/per couple

Discover how your unique strengths can blend together, just like the perfect cup of tea! In this interactive date night, you'll explore a variety of herbs and their traditional wellness uses, create delicious herbal tea blends, and discover how your differences can complement one another to create a stronger, richer relationship.

[Click here](#) to register.

Empowering Financial Wellness Webinar Series

Tuesdays or Thursdays
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
Online
Cost: FREE

September 1 & 3 - No More Guessing: Investing with Confidence Part 2: In the second part of this 2-part series, we'll go beyond the basics and guide you through how to select the right investments for your goals—whether that's using a workplace retirement plan, an IRA, or a brokerage account.

September 8 & 10 - PowerPay Your Debts: The best debt payoff plan is the one that you will stick to, and we'll demonstrate options so that you can choose a strategy that will work best for your situation.

September 15 & 17- Meet Your H.I.R.O.- A Simple System for Emergency Preparedness: We will share with you an organizing system for your documents that ensures they're easily accessible when you need them. We'll include access to a free downloadable organizing resource! Enjoy peace of mind with our proven tips and strategies that you can rely on year after year.

September 22 & 24 - How to Teach Kids About Money: How can children learn the value of budgeting and saving? We will share tips on how to involve them in the family budget, so they can start practicing good financial management habits.

Registration is required for each class. Please click [here to](#) complete your registration



Pressure Lid Testing

Pressure cooker lids should be tested regularly for accuracy and safety. You may bring in your lid for testing at a cost of \$2 per lid.

If no staff member is available to perform the test when you arrive, you are welcome to leave your lid with us. Once it has been tested, someone will call.

Midlife Recharge: Caring for Yourself to Strengthen Your Relationships

Midlife can bring significant changes to our health, identity, responsibilities, and daily demands. As these aspects of life begin to shift, they can influence how we show up in our relationships with partners, children, family members, and friends. We may not intend to interact differently with the people we care about, but stress can build up over time, and physical or biological changes can affect how we feel and function. During times of transition, prioritizing our own well-being can help us better manage these changes and continue showing up in positive and meaningful ways for the people we care about.

Why Midlife Can Feel So Demanding

So, why can midlife feel so demanding? Many people find themselves balancing multiple roles, including parenting, working, caring for aging parents, supporting adult children, and maintaining their relationship with their partner. With so many responsibilities competing for time and attention, it can feel like there is always one more thing that needs to be done. On top of these demands, physical changes, including hormonal shifts, may affect energy, mood, and overall well-being. Understanding why midlife can feel so demanding can help us recognize how these changes may affect both our own well-being and our relationships.



How Midlife Well-Being Affects Relationships

When we are overwhelmed or physically and emotionally drained, it can affect how we show up in our relationships. We may find ourselves becoming less patient, having less energy for connection, or struggling to communicate our needs. Physical and emotional changes during midlife can also influence how we feel about ourselves and interact with those around us.

Recognizing how our own well-being influences our relationships is an important first step toward caring for ourselves and the people we love. By understanding our needs and the challenges we may be experiencing, we can become more intentional about maintaining meaningful connections with others.

Protecting Relationships Through Self-Care

So, what can we do about all of this? One important step is prioritizing self-care. Caring for ourselves is not selfish, it helps us remain more present, patient, and emotionally available for the people we care about. Consider the following tips to prioritize self-care to protect your relationships:

1. Prioritize physical and emotional self-care.

Caring for your physical and emotional well-being provides a foundation for managing the demands of midlife. While stress is a normal part of life, finding healthy ways to manage it can protect both your health and your relationships. Prioritizing sleep, nutritious foods, exercise, time in nature, relaxation strategies, and activities that help you recharge can improve your ability to handle everyday challenges. Regular physical activity is especially beneficial because it supports both physical and emotional health.

2. Communicate needs, expectations and personal boundaries openly.

An important aspect of self-care is learning to communicate your needs and expectations openly. We sometimes assume that others know what we need or expect without telling them, which can lead to misunderstandings, frustration, or unmet needs. Using “I” statements can help you share your feelings and needs without placing blame on others. For example, instead of saying, “You never help me around the house,” you might say, “I feel overwhelmed when I have too much to manage, and I would appreciate more help with household tasks.” Communicating openly and respectfully can help others better understand your needs while supporting healthier relationships.

Boundaries can also help protect your time, energy, values, and well-being while allowing you to maintain healthy relationships. Learning to say no when you are overwhelmed and communicating your limits clearly can create more space for the things that matter most.

3. Give yourself grace and stay connected through change. Midlife transitions take time to adjust to. Give yourself and others patience as you navigate changing roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Some days will be easier than others and reaching out for support when you need it can make transitions feel more manageable.

Maintaining meaningful relationships is also an important part of self-care. Strong social connections support overall well-being and provide encouragement during difficult seasons of life. Connection may look different for everyone. It could include spending time with family or friends, joining a group, volunteering, or simply talking with someone you trust.

Conclusion

Midlife brings many changes, but caring for yourself can help you continue showing up for the people who matter most. Small, intentional efforts to support your physical and emotional well-being can

strengthen your ability to navigate challenges, maintain meaningful connections, and thrive during this stage of life.

This week, set aside 10 minutes each day to do something that supports your well-being. Taking care of yourself is one way to care for your relationships.



~Sunee Shaw, student intern and Naomi Brower, Extension Professor

References:

Cambieri, G. (2024). The importance of connections: Ways to live a longer, healthier life. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. <https://hsph.harvard.edu/news/the-importance-of-connections-ways-to-live-a-longer-healthier-life/>

Garg, R., & Munshi, A. (2025). Menopause and Mental Health. Journal of mid-life health, 16(2), 119–123. https://doi.org/10.4103/jmh.jmh_61_25

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SLOW COOKER RECIPES

With the days so unusually hot it is a great time to avoid heating your kitchen by using a slow cooker. A slow cooker also uses less electricity than a traditional oven. They are a great way to save time and make life a little more convenient. Here are a couple of recipes for you to try.

LAYERED ENCHILADAS

2 pounds ground beef
2 green peppers, finely chopped
2 onions, finally chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon salt
8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 tablespoon lemon juice
5 (7-inch) corn tortillas
3 cups mild cheese, shredded

Brown ground beef; drain. Add peppers, onion, and garlic; brown, then mix chili powder and salt. Blend cream cheese, soup and lemon juice. Spread this mixture divided evenly onto the tortillas. In oiled slow cooker, add a thin layer of meat mixture, tortilla spread with cream cheese mixture, and cheese; repeat four times. Cover and cook 4 hours on Low *or* 2 hours on High. Yield: 8-10.

CHEESY-POTATO CASSEROLE

7 medium potatoes (approximately 2 pounds)*
¼ cup butter, or melted
1 small onion, chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1 (8 oz.) carton sour cream
2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
1 ½ to 2 cups dry herb-seasoning stuffing mix
3 tablespoons butter, melted

Peel and cut potatoes into ¼-inch strips; set aside. Combine butter, onion, salt, sour cream and soup in a bowl. Lightly butter inside of 5-quart slow cooker; add potatoes. Pour soup mixture over top; mix well. Cover with stuffing mix; drizzle with 3 tablespoons melted butter. Cover; cook on low 8-10 hours until potatoes are tender *or* on high 5-6 hours.

*May substitute 32 oz. of southern-style cubed potatoes. Cook on low 4-6 hours *or* on high 2 hours.

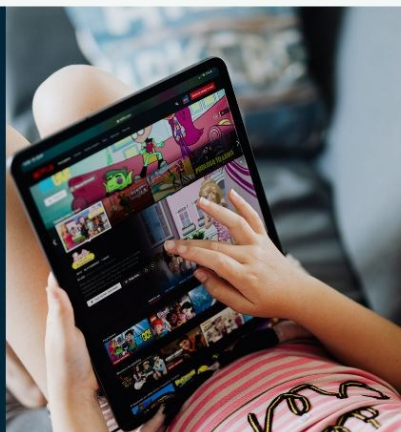


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SHARE YOUR INPUT ON FAMILY SCREEN USE

IRB Protocol #15899



Utah State University Extension is inviting parents and caregivers to complete a short survey about family screen use and routines.

- Takes about 15 minutes
- Voluntary and confidential
- Anyone age 18 or older who resides in Utah and is the parent or primary caregiver of a child age 5 to 18 can participate.
- Optional entry into a prize drawing. Winners can choose one of three family activity prizes (approx value: \$200):
 - Backyard Adventure Kit
 - Family Game Night Bundle
 - Pizza-Making Kit

Scan QR Code
to take the
survey!



Questions? Contact Taryn Wahlquist Phone: 435-586-8132 Email: taryn.wahlquist@usu.edu