

Living Well

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER FOR NORTHEAST COLORADO



November-December, 2024

First Annual Women's Health Summit

For the first time, Colorado State University Extension hosted a regional Women's Health Summit in Akron, Colorado on Saturday, October 19th. FCS Specialists from Phillips, Logan, Morgan, Washington, Yuma, and Kit Carson Counties collaborated with CSU Extension Regional Health Specialist to bring together an amazing group of speakers and panelists to help navigate and share valuable resources.

The Washington County Event Center was full of women, who were eager to gain more knowledge, make connections, and begin their own journey to wellness. The keynote speaker, Dr. Lindsey Paulson, spoke about cultivating connections for positive change. SARA House representatives, Paula Brag, Candi Gilliland, and NaTausha Ray shared empowered stories from survivors. A panel of physical therapists, Tanaye Carroll-Maez from Banner Health in Sterling, Taylor Knudson from Melissa Memorial Hospital in Holyoke, and Becky Smith from the Wray Hospital in Wray discussed the pelvic floor, breaking taboos and building strong foundations. The Summit continued with a presentation from Shannon Parker, who talked about mental health during pregnancy and beyond. A second panel of experts, CSU Extension State and Regional Health Specialists; Sue Schneider and Jennifer Aengst and Wray Hospital's Karla Saffer, shared bold ideas for rural resilience focusing on women's mental health. The final speaker was Dr. Christina Metcalf, who shared some of her research on menopause; shatter stigmas and empower change. To say the least, it was an uplifting, educational, and inspirational event.

We want to thank our sponsors: Barb's Main Street Gifts and Barnes Pharmacy, chfa (Colorado Housing and Finance Authority), Haxtun Health, Melissa Memorial Hospital, and The Colorado Health Foundation. A big shout out to Northeastern Colorado businesses that donated over \$2,500 in door prizes: Brandt Chiropractic Clinic, Chula's LLC Salon, Spa, & Boutique, CSU Extension, Glow CO Studio, Haxtun Health, Health Essentials Inc., Highline Electric Association, Jay Flaming Jewelers, Ka Bloom!, Phoenix Beauty Bar, Sterling Health Foods, Sweetly Vintage, Wray Family Dental PLLC, Wray Market, WRAC, Your Friendly Neighborhood VA, and Zoe's Nook.

Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Colorado State University Extension is implied.

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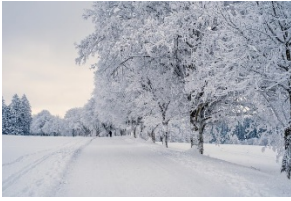


GOLDEN PLAINS AREA
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Kit Carson, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma Counties cooperating.

Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

Staying Healthy Over the Colder Months



Cold winter months can be challenging to stay healthy. Longer nights and colder weather may present obstacles, and it is easier to become unmotivated to stay physically active. Numerous holiday gatherings can play havoc on your healthy eating habits. Here are a few tips to keep in mind to continue to maintain or even improve your overall health.

Stay Active Inside or Outside

Don't let the cold or dark and gray days of winter stop you from being physically active. Be creative and start a new winter exercise routine to keep fit until the weather improves. Strength training, yoga, balance training, and dancing are some examples of how you can stay active indoors.

Depending on how bad the weather is, you can still be active outside during the winter. Walking, hiking, shoveling snow, or even skiing or snowshoeing are good ways to stay active outside. Remember to wear the proper footwear, be careful of icy or slushy conditions, plus check the wind chill before you head outside. Winter Physical Activity BINGO game - [winter-physical-activity-bingo.pdf \(unl.edu\)](http://winter-physical-activity-bingo.pdf)

Eat in Moderation and Be Mindful at Holiday Meals

Holidays bring festive gatherings with lots of food. Be mindful when filling your plate and choose healthy options with fruits and vegetables. Limit the number of alcoholic beverages and desserts you consume. It's okay to splurge occasionally but remember to eat and drink in moderation.

Dress for Colder Weather

If you plan to spend time outside during the winter, make sure you are properly dressed for the weather. Dress in layers so you can adjust when your body temperature raises or lowers. Remember to wear a hat to prevent heat loss and gloves to protect your skin and extremities from extreme temperatures.

Protect Your Skin, Hair, and Lips

Winter weather can be tough on your skin and leave it itchy, red, and flaky. The cold dry air can also cause damage to your hair and lips. Staying hydrated is one way to help your body stay healthy over the winter. Water intake is the best way to stay hydrated, but don't forget fruits, vegetables, soups, and hot tea also provide vital fluids. Run a humidifier to reduce dryness in your home or office. Also, use moisturizers and balms to rehydrate skin, hair, and lips. Look for key ingredients to slow the evaporation process and strengthen the natural moisture barrier.

Just because the days are shorter and the weather is colder doesn't mean you need to go into hibernation mode. Ignore your excuses and the desire to slow down. Your body needs a boost in the winter, and when you are active, your energy increases. Be mindful and eat healthy and protect yourself against winter elements which in turn will help you stay happy and healthy all winter long.

Preventative Tips for Slick Winter Weather

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports about 1 million U.S. adults are injured due to slips and falls every year, with the injury rate increasing significantly as temperatures decline. While falls are unexpected, there are some simple strategies that can be implemented to reduce the risk of falling.



Wearing proper footwear is important. Big bulky boots that may seem excellent for keeping your feet warm can end up being more of a hazard as they are heavy and awkward. Choosing a lightweight boot with support or adding snow grips to the bottoms of your shoes is a better option. It is important to dress for the weather with proper gloves, hat, and coat too.

Pay attention! Be mindful of your steps and the surroundings like curb or uneven ground. Take your time and don't get in a hurry. Allow for extra time so you don't feel rushed trying to get from one place to the next. Use assistance like handrails or a walking stick or cane if needed in slick winter weather.

Penguin steps can help. Take small steps to maintain your center gravity. It may even look like a waddle like a penguin! Keep your hands out of your pockets to help and if carrying groceries or items in a bag, carry them by your sides to lower your center of gravity.

Staying inside is always a good idea when we don't necessarily need to go somewhere. If it can wait and you are concerned about ice or snow, use your best judgement and just stay indoors.

Cell phones can be a hazard when trying to talk on the phone and walk in icy conditions. Refrain from talking on the phone so you can have better focus on walking carefully. It is a good idea, however, to carry a cell phone or alert device to be able to call in an emergency if you were to fall.

Ice melt is a good product to use to keep stairs and walkways clear of ice and snow accumulation. If you can park indoors, such as in an attached garage, that is the best option so you can stay out of the elements.. Avoid walking on sloped driveways and smooth surfaces.

Simple daily exercises that work on balance such as yoga, Pilates, tai chi, or chair exercises can help increase muscle strength and balance which ultimately can increase stability and prevent falls. Proper posture and technique when shoveling snow can also prevent injuries or falls.. Pushing snow rather than lifting the snow is a safer option.

Though many cold-weather injuries result from falls on ice-covered sidewalks, steps, driveways and porches there are many preventable tasks we can do to help ourselves each winter. Whether we enjoy winter or not, it happens every year in Colorado, and we can't avoid it. Reminding ourselves of tips and ways to stay safe and healthy during the cold months is one way to increase our overall health and well-being.

References: www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/>

How Fine Motor Skills Change with Age



There are certain changes to be expected with age. Wrinkles appear on our skin and our hair starts to turn gray. Our metabolism slows, causing unwanted weight gain if we don't adapt our diet. It takes longer to walk from point A to point B, and it takes less time to grow short of breath as we exert ourselves. Our vision and hearing can decline as well, and our taste buds diminish in size and quantity the longer we live.

What we might not associate with aging is change in our fine motor skills. What was once easy for us to manage on a regular basis can become quite the difficult feat to muster. Changes in fine motor skills can cause seniors to stop engaging in favorite hobbies, such as knitting, sewing, woodworking, or even gardening. Cooking and baking can become a challenge as we struggle to open jars or other ingredients. Even taking medications can cause us pain as we have difficulty manipulating pill boxes or containers.

It's important for seniors and their families, as well as caregivers, to understand how fine motor skills change with age. By taking the time to understand, families and caregivers can show empathy and patience while waiting for their aging loved one to complete a task that involves their fine motor skills. Here are a few suggestions to help your aging loved one improve their fine motor skills.

Tremors

Although tremors can be caused by Parkinson's disease or as a result of a stroke, tremors are known to occur more frequently with advancing age. Seniors are more likely to experience active tremors—shakiness that occurs during an action, such as reaching for an object, writing a letter, or while drinking a glass of water. To reduce active tremors, seniors should practice relaxation techniques. This helps them to calm their bodies by honing in on their extremities. Seniors can also practice relaxation through finger painting. Finger painting is very therapeutic and provides an outlet for seniors to express their emotions.

Dexterity

Another change in fine motor skills that occurs with age is a change in dexterity. Seniors are more likely to experience difficulty manipulating objects. This may seem like a small loss but losing dexterity can have a big impact on a senior's independence. Simple tasks, such as buttoning a shirt or tying shoes, can become very challenging as a senior's dexterity decreases.

Dexterity can be improved through practice. Engaging in household chores is an easy way to practice dexterity. Encourage your aging loved one to help fold laundry or reorganize shelves. Give them time and space to button their own jacket or shirt.

Arthritis

Arthritis is another common contributing factor to a senior's change in fine motor skills. While not a disease, arthritis refers to the joint pain or joint disease that many seniors experience in older age. There are many forms of arthritis, but seniors are more likely to experience osteoarthritis or joint pain due to wear and tear. Any form of arthritis is painful and makes it difficult for any senior to complete everyday tasks, such as grooming or chores.

The pain of arthritis is best relieved through a pain management regime prescribed by your aging loved one's primary care physician. However, between doses, encourage your aging loved one to manipulate play dough. Either purchase it from the store or make your own homemade batch. This is a wonderful activity to do with a senior with memory loss and a great activity to promote circulation.

Grasping

Seniors can also lose strength in their hands as they grow older. Sometimes decline in grip strength can occur as early as the age of 50. A decline in a senior's ability to grasp is rather common and is associated with a decline in muscle mass. This only makes it more difficult for seniors to perform common tasks and necessitates adaptations so a senior can maintain their independence.

Grip strength can be improved through simple hand exercises. Purchase a stress ball your aging loved one can squeeze while watching television. Another fun way to improve muscle strength and grasping skills is to create a no-sew fleece blanket. Tying the fleece strips together helps strengthen finger strength, while working to improve all fine motor skills.

Article From: <https://www.visitingangels.com/sheboygan/articles/how-fine-motor-skills-change-with-age/17745#:~:text=Another%20change%20in%20fine%20motor,impact%20on%20a%20senior's%20independence.>

Indoor Activity For Kids

We all know it is important for our kids to stay active, but it can be difficult to find ways for them to be active when the weather outside is poor. If you struggle with this, here are some ideas to help engage your kids and keep them active during these colder months.



- Schedule Mini Movement Breaks – Depending on the age of your kids and the other activities they will be doing that day, schedule movement breaks as appropriate. Use small pieces of paper or popsicle sticks and have your kids come up with various activities they can do for a minute or two. Some examples could be jumping jacks, follow the leader, running in place, or walking like a specific animal. During your Movement Break, have your kids pick out a different activity every minute or two for about five to ten minutes. Before you know it, these mini breaks have added up to quite a bit of activity throughout the day!
- Keep up with sports conditioning – If your kids are old enough to be in sports, ask them what types of activities they did in practice and see if you can replicate it. For example, if they normally run during practice, can they run in place for a similar amount of time and do the stretches they used to do?
- Have a dance party – Put on some fun music or take turns picking songs and dance to each one of them. Music naturally encourages kids (and maybe even adults) to move. This is a great way to uplift the environment in your house and encourage some movement.
- Don't forget outside time – Unless the weather is truly miserable, try to get your kids outside for at least a little while every day. Even for adults just a few minutes of fresh air and sunlight can improve their moods and help them get through the rest of the day. Take a quick walk around the block, build a snowman after it has snowed, or take a short trip to the park if the weather is decent.
- Let your kids have a say – Kids are very creative and probably have lots of great ideas on how to stay active inside. Any type of movement through the day is helpful, so why not see what they come up with! If you are able to join in their activities, it can help you and them both feel better.
- What happens if your kids don't want to be active – Avoid using physical activity as a punishment or making it something your child has to do. Make it fun and engaging. It can also be helpful to try out many different types of physical activity. The more things they try, the more likely they are to find something they enjoy doing. Another tip is to align the activities with something they like to do. For example, if they like nature, suggest you go on a nature hunt rather than a walk.
- Source: <https://answers.childrenshospital.org/kids-active-indoors/#:~:text=She%20suggests%20taking%205%2Dto,kids%20take%20turns%20choosing%20one.%E2%80%9D>

Creating Easy Meals

Busy fall and holiday schedules can put a kink in plans to have consistent healthy meals on the table. Luckily there are simple ways to navigate the season and make tasty, quick and nutritious dishes without adding stress or extra time to the task.



Tip #1: Although it takes a bit of time up front, planning your menu of meals ahead of time for the week can save you a chunk of time in the end. Meals can include your family's favorite recipes, foods you have on hand (check your freezer and pantry) and planned leftovers. It also helps you take into account after school or evening activities that are happening.

Tip #2: Prepare meals and meal ingredients ahead of time. Chop and/or roast vegetables, cook meat, and cook grains ahead of time. Preparing ingredients ahead of time is also a great way to get children involved in the kitchen and learn cooking skills.

Make your own frozen meals for a quick, less expensive option on busy weeknights. You can freeze meals in single serve portions or a full recipe such as casseroles, soups and stews, and baked pasta dishes.

Tip #3: Put your slow cooker to work. Pull out the crock-pot and prepare chicken, beef or pork for wraps, salads and sandwiches or make delicious one-dish dinners or soups. One-dish meals are great ways to save time and dishes. Along with slow cookers, one dish dinners can also include sheet pan dinners (mix protein, vegetables, seasoning, and vegetable oil onto a sheet pan and roast at 375 degrees F for 45 – 55 minutes or until the protein is cooked to the safe internal temperature), casseroles or pasta dishes.

Tip #4: Use your microwave for many quick and healthy meals. For example, a baked potato bar - cook the potatoes in the microwave, top with shredded cheese, non-fat sour cream, chopped chives or green onions, bacon bits, chili or other toppings your family enjoys.

Tip #5: Create a main dish salad. Tasty options include Chinese chicken salad, taco salad, chef's salad, grilled chicken salad, shrimp or seafood salad.

Tip #6: Whip up a stove-top dinner such as grilled cheese sandwiches, BLTs or other hot sandwiches, quesadillas, omelets, ham fried rice, fajitas, sloppy Joes, pancakes, French toast or waffles.

Tip #7: Grill it. The grill can be a quick clean up way to cook your favorite meats, vegetables and even fruit.

Tip #8: Use frozen vegetables. They can be quickly added to any meal and come in a variety of mixes, so you can get many options in just a few bags.

Tip #9: Use convenience products when the price is right and time is tight. It is generally less expensive to prepare foods at home, but pre-cut produce and pre-cooked poultry and meats can be time savers. Weigh the cost to your budget and the time saved to decide if the trade-off is worth it.

Tip #10: Serve a low-fuss fruit salad. Easy options include assorted berries, red and green grapes, bananas, canned or fresh pineapple chunks, strawberries or apple slices.

Tip #11: Dinner doesn't have to be fancy! Breakfast for dinner, soup and sandwiches, or bulking up a frozen pizza can all make a healthy, fast meal. Think of ways to add fruits and vegetables to these quick dinners. Try adding a fruit smoothie, extra frozen or steamed vegetables to canned soups, leafy greens to sandwiches, and extra bell peppers, mushrooms and pineapple to pizza.

New Schedule in 2025

Beginning in 2025, we will be publishing the Living Well Newsletter quarterly. New articles will be published in January, April, July, and October. Recently we have felt that we have not been able to dedicate enough time to write the quality of articles we want to produce. Our goal with this new schedule is that it will allow us to provide you with more in-depth, valuable content going forward.



Upcoming Events!

- **ServSafe Manager Training** –
 - Thursday, November 7th from 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Logan County Extension Office in Sterling. For more information or to register, contact Joy Akey at (970) 332-4151 or joy.akey@colostate.edu
- **ServSafe Handler Training** –
 - Monday, December 9th from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Burlington Community Center in Burlington. For more information or to register, contact Joy Akey at (970) 332-4151 or joy.akey@colostate.edu
- **A Healthier Weigh** –
 - A Healthier Weigh is a 12-week Health & Fitness Challenge – will be taking registrations for individual and team participation through the end of the year! Registration fee \$40/person with cash prizes! Be watching for more information soon on our County Extension websites and Facebook pages. Get your teams ready before the holidays!
 - Weigh in's for Logan, Morgan and Yuma counties will be the week of January 6th
 - Weigh in's for Kit Carson, Phillips and Washington counties will be the week of January 13th
 - Please contact your local Extension Agent for more details

Be sure to check our Facebook page listed below to stay up to date on all our upcoming events.



CSU Extension – NE Colorado FCS: <https://www.facebook.com/CSUExtensionNortheastFCS>

CSU Extension – Phillips County: <https://www.facebook.com/PhillipsCountyExtension/>

CSU Extension – Logan County: https://www.facebook.com/csuextensionlogancounty/?_tn=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARCS5-NbtiQryVNn5X513c5--hwVu-1ZfnhynwZsPotP7AZIVStJaoCEoaVYzZjBFhCH0tHJLHaJxQuQ

CSU Extension – Morgan County: <https://www.facebook.com/extensionmorgancounty/>