



Family & Consumer Science News

November, December 2020

A Different Kind of Holiday Season

The holiday season may look different for you and your family this year. Due to COVID-19, many people may celebrate the holidays virtually, have staycations, or have small socially distanced gatherings. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that handling food or eating is associated with directly spreading COVID-19. It is possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, including food, food packaging, or utensils that have the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way that the virus is spread. Remember, it is always important to follow food safety practices to reduce the risk of illness from common foodborne germs.

Stay Safe. If you plan to go ahead and join a holiday gathering in person, it's important to remain vigilant, even when interacting with dear friends and loved ones. The greatest risk for spread of COVID-19 right now is these family gatherings. Remember there are risks associated with travel and with interacting with people who've not been tested for the coronavirus prior to the event, especially if they reside in a COVID hot spot—which is almost everywhere these days. Try to keep any family gatherings brief and relatively small, about five people or less. If the weather permits, hold the get-together outdoors.

To protect yourself and your loved ones, both now and over the holidays, please follow these **3 W's**:

- **Wear a mask** when you are out in public and when you are indoors with people who are not part of your immediate household. The only exception is while eating or drinking!
- **Watch your distance**, staying at least 6 feet away from people who are not part of your immediate household.
- **Wash your hands** thoroughly and frequently.

Information for this article is from the National Institute of Health and The Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Inside this issue

Under Pressure - Meals in Minutes.....	2
Cozy in the Kitchen.....	3
Brush up on Your Cooking Skills	3
Health Insurance Open Enrollment	4
Holiday Connections	4
Notes from Nancy.....	5
FCE Deadlines.....	5

Contact your local office

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Fort Scott Office

210 S. National Ave.
Fort Scott, KS 66701
620-223-3720

Iola Office

1 N. Washington Ave.
Iola, KS 66749
620-365-2242

Yates Center Office

211 W. Butler St.
Yates Center, KS 66783
620-625-8620



Under Pressure - Meals in Minutes

Article by Linda Leonard, Kansas Association Family & Community Education (FCE) State Educational Program Committee

How many of you remember your grandma or mama canning fruits and vegetables in a pot on the stove with a little knob that jiggled madly on top of the pot? If you do, then you might be a little leery about using an Instant Pot or modern pressure cooker. This year one of the KAFCE lessons available to you is "Under Pressure – Meals in Minutes". The lesson will help alleviate some of your hesitation and help you understand how easy the appliance is to use. This lesson is based on the Instant Pot multi-purpose cooker since that is the model I have.



The Instant Pot is a multi-use, programmable cooker that has the features of a pressure cooker, slow cooker, rice/porridge cooker, cake maker, yogurt maker and steamer. It can also sauté and proof dough. Once you get the hang of it, you can get dinner on the table in a short time. There is, however, one thing to keep in mind with all multipots, you should not expect meals in an instant. Faster, more convenient, and tasty meals, yes. But be prepared for the lag time it takes for the machine, to reach and release pressure as well as the usual prep time of cooking.

Today's modern cookers are extremely safe. The locking lid, the sealing gasket, and the way the valves on the lid work mean that the cooker will NOT come up to pressure unless everything is correctly in place. With correct cleaning and maintenance, an Instant Pot should last many years, and be very safe to operate.

So many posters on the Instant Pot Facebook forums talk about how long they have had an Instant Pot sitting around, because of their fear of opening the box and actually using the thing! A little reading, a careful study of the manual that comes with the pot, and the many online written and video tutorials can help to alleviate the stress of those first few uses. One of the first things you might try is making hard cooked eggs.

Don't be too quick to throw in the towel if you can't figure it out right away, or if you have a failed recipe or two. Once you get the hang of simple recipes, you are ready to spread your wings. Enjoy discovering the world of Instant Pot cooking. You'll wonder how you ever got along without this fantastic kitchen appliance.

Try these websites for recipes: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/comfort-foods/easy-comfort-food-recipes/must-try-instant-pot-recipes>
<https://extension.usu.edu/utah/files-ou/MealsinMinutes.pdf>
<https://www.pressurecookrecipes.com/>
<https://www.365daysofcrockpot.com/category/cooking-method/instant-pot/>

(Editors note: The Instant Pot brand is only one of many electric or multi-function pressure cookers available to consumers, and its use, as well as the suggested websites in this article are not an endorsement by K-State Research & Extension.)

Cozy in the Kitchen

70% of Americans are preparing the majority of their meals at home. It may surprise, well...no one, but consumer surveys are showing that the COVID-19 pandemic has led Americans to their home kitchens more often.

Kansas State University food safety specialist Karen Blakeslee cites a report that 70% of U.S. households are now the central food preparation spot for 80% of meals. In 2019, the same survey found that to be the case in 30% of American homes.

“Cooking at home more has helped to increase family time,” Blakeslee said. “Some have learned to cook new recipes and some have learned new hobbies, such as baking. Others have found new culinary ingredients – such as seasonings – and have created new meals for their families.”

According to a review of data by the [Institute of Food Technologists](#), the most common recipes searched on the internet include banana bread, pancakes, chicken, pizza dough, brownies, crepes, meatloaf, French toast, lasagna and cheesecake.

Some other trends include:

- Millennials and Gen Z consumers are learning new cooking skills and discovering new passions by experimenting in the kitchen, particularly with new seasonings.
- Slow cookers are used in 9 of 10 households and pressure cookers are in half of consumer’s kitchens.

Eight in 10 who have taken up baking say they will continue to do so even after the pandemic is past.

Brush Up on Your Cooking Skills, or Help Someone New to the Kitchen

In the early days of COVID-19, many Kansans said they needed a brush-up on their cooking skills - help with preparing meals, eating well on a budget, and improving their skills since they were spending more time at home. The result is a seven-part series of cooking basics and information to help have a well-stocked kitchen.

The series provides something that can be easily used by all populations, such as new cooks, youth learning basic skills, cooks on a budget and people needing to brush up on cooking skills. You can access them online, or call the K-State Research and Extension Bookstore: 785-532-5830.

The full series includes:

[Cooking Basics: Getting Started](#). Simple meal planning and choosing a recipe that suits the family's needs.

[The Well-Stocked Kitchen: Pantry and Non-Refrigerated Foods](#). Shelf stable ingredients to have one hand with advice about healthier choices.

[The Well-Stocked Kitchen: Refrigerated and Frozen Foods](#). Cold and frozen ingredients and suggestions for healthier choices.

[Cooking Basics: Measuring Tools and How to Use Them](#). A review of ingredient equivalents and how to measure dry and wet ingredients.

[Cooking Basics: Basic Cooking Terms](#). Definitions of cooking terms, such as what it means to chop or dice.

[Cooking Basics: Making a Meal from What's On Hand](#). A guide on using ingredients you have on hand and turning them into a casserole, soup, stir fry, salad or skillet meal.

[Cooking Basics: Reducing a Recipe](#). To avoid food waste when cooking for smaller groups, this publication has tips on what recipes can be reduced, a worksheet for the cooking math, safe food temperatures and substitutions for utensils you may not have in your kitchen.

Health Insurance Open Enrollment

It's time to review Medicare and Marketplace health insurance options for yourself and your family.

Medicare - enrolled or new - we can assist you with a Part D drug or Advantage plan comparison and enrollment. Medicare enrollment ends on December 7.

Marketplace - enrolled or new - we can assist you with the setting up of an account, application, plan comparison, and enrollment. Marketplace enrollment ends on December 15.

Call your Southwind Extension District office to set up an in-person appointment:

- Mondays: Yates Center - 620-625-8620
- Tuesdays: Fort Scott - 620-223-3720
- Wednesdays: Erie - 620-244-3826
- Thursdays: Iola - 620-365-2242

Consultations by phone, e-mail, and Zoom are also available, and all services are free.

Health Insurance Smarts

There are lots of things to consider when you are choosing a health insurance plan for you and your family. What benefits do you need? Do you already have a health care provider, and can you continue to use him or her? What costs are you able to afford?

The right plan for you and your family will depend on your health and your financial situation. Check out the K-State Research and Extension *Health Insurance Smarts* resources as you make insurance decisions.

[Health Insurance Smarts: Health Insurance 101](#)

[Health Insurance Smarts: Health Insurance 102](#)

[Health Insurance Smarts: Ways to Get Insurance](#)

[Health Insurance Smarts: Understand Enrollment Periods](#)

[Health Insurance Smarts: Finding a Network Provider](#)

[Health Insurance Smarts: Health Savings Accounts](#)

Holiday Connections: Getting Comfortable with Zoom

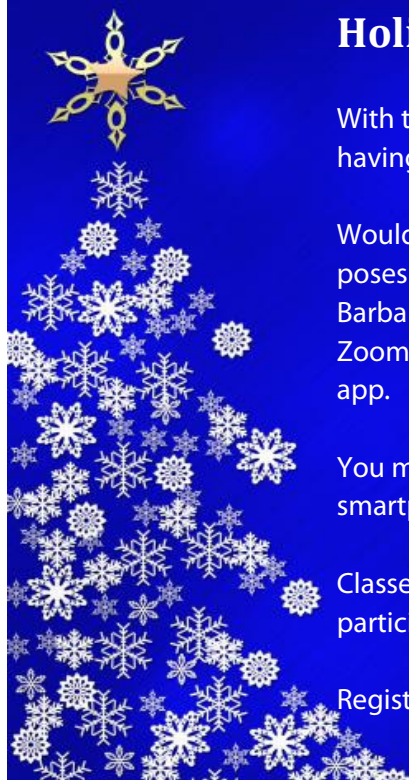
With the holidays coming up, many families may opt to connect through Zoom rather than having the large family gathering.

Would you like to learn how to be a part of a Zoom meeting, whether for educational purposes or connecting with family and friends? Participate in a hands-on practice session with Barbara Stockebrand, Southwind Extension District Agent for a little experience with the Zoom program format. Instructions will be sent prior to the class on how to download the app.

You must have an email address, as well as a laptop or desktop with a web cam, or an iPad or smartphone.

Classes will be December 8 at 10:30am and December 10 at 3:30pm. There will be a limit of 6 participants per session. If responses require more sessions, we will be glad to set them up!

Register by Friday, Dec. 4 by calling 620-625-8620 or emailing bstockeb@ksu.edu





The SE Area FCE Spring/Fall Workshop and Council meeting was held November 5 in Parsons, KS. The following is a recap of that day:

Jennine Marrone, Area Director, gave the welcome as it had been one year since we had been able to meet and share. Nancy Kernick shared updates concerning National and State FCE. The State Board approved the Standard of Excellence Report **MUST BE FILLED OUT - WITH EXPLANATION - AND MAILED TO THE REGISTRAR**, Delores Walden, and everyone will receive a Gold Seal.

Jennine Marrone announced that she would continue to serve as SE Area Director through 2021. Cindy Kiser of Neosho County has agreed to become Area Director in January of 2022.

Carol Stephens, SE Area EPC Committee member will finish her term at the end of 2020. We will need someone to serve on that committee. Contact Jennie with your information to serve on this committee.

FCE Unit Officers List and County Council Officers Lists are due December 1st to Jennine Marrone, along with a copy to Nancy Kernick.

Appointments to serve on the State Nominations Committee were made: Lois Carlson of Neosho County is the delegate, and Janie Williams of Labette County is the alternate.

Heart of FCE Candidates presented were Janie Works of Allen County, and Carol Stephens of Neosho County. Ballots were distributed to each county, and Janie Works was selected as SE Area Heart of FCE.

Lessons were presented in the afternoon and everyone was going home at 1:00pm after a full day of fun and fellowship.



FCE Deadlines

- 2020 Standard of Excellence Report (PINK paper) – Due to County FCE Council President by December 1st.
 - o All units who complete both sides of this form will receive a Gold Seal this year. Fill out as much as you can, due to Covid-19 many things were not possible to complete. The State Board has ruled that all completed forms will receive a Gold seal this year.
- 2020 Accomplishment Report – Due to County EPC by December 1st.
 - o Since this is a combined form, make sure you circle FCE Unit/County Council/Independent
 - o Mark whether you want the 2020 lesson judged or not
 - o In order for a county/area to receive 100% reporting, both sides must be completed even if you do not want your program lesson judged
- 2020 Community Service Project – Due to County EPC by December 1st.

All of the needed reports are on the Southwind website on the right hand side under the heading "2020 Forms Needed." <https://www.southwind.k-state.edu/home-family/fce>