



## STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES Family and Consumer Science News

### Caregiving during the coronavirus pandemic

Within the last several weeks, Oklahoma, along with the rest of the United States and the world, entered an unprecedented time. As COVID-19 continues to spread, public officials have implemented new policies regarding social spaces, increasing to shelter-in-place orders across the state.

Kris Struckmeyer, Oklahoma State University Extension assistant specialist, said many families are left to figure out how to both work from home, as well as help continue their children's educations.

"But for some families, it isn't about trying to figure out 'new' math or brushing off their geography skills, but instead, how to best care for an aging relative," Struckmeyer said.

Coronavirus disease 2019, also known as COVID-19, is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted by close contact with an infected person through droplets produced when they cough or sneeze. Another way the disease can be transmitted is coming in contact with a surface or object that has the droplets on it, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes. Some symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. While some patients have reported mild cases, individuals with weakened immune systems, such as older adults or those with asthma, are at an increased risk for severe – even deadly – respiratory symptoms.

"So, what can caregivers do to protect themselves and their loved ones? First

and foremost, it is vital as the caregiver to keep yourself well," he said.

"Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water. Caregivers also should avoid crowds. This has become a little easier as people are sheltering at home."

Other tips include coughing or sneezing into the bend of your elbow or a disposable tissue and cleaning frequently touched surfaces in your home. This includes mobility and medical equipment.

Not only do caregivers need to keep themselves well, they also need to keep their loved one well, too.

"To help reduce the risk of exposure, take your loved one to the emergency room only if they're having difficulty breathing or a very high fever," Struckmeyer said. "Otherwise, your best bet is to call your healthcare provider. Check into telehealth options. Medicare has expanded the benefits for telehealth."

He also suggests helping your loved one remember to wash their hands. Caregivers could even put written notes around the house with reminders. For those fortunate enough to have hand sanitizer in the home, keep it out in the open so it serves as a visual reminder to use it. Also, have an alternate plan in mind in the event that you as the primary caregiver becomes ill.

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"In these times, it's important to remember that social distancing doesn't isolation. Encourage your loved one to think beyond their circle of friends and reach out to neighbors or congregation members," he said. "Thankfully during this time, technology can help with social distancing while still feeling in touch. Show your loved one how to video chat with a loved one, or make the call yourself and hand off the phone."

While technology is a wonderful tool to use, going old-school can be just as much fun. Struckmeyer said. Ask other family members and friends to write letters or cards to help lift your love one's spirits.

"Above all, always ensure your loved one feels included. As we are all homebound during this unprecedented time, it may be a good idea to ask your loved one to complete a project," he said. "Be sure that the project is something that excites them and keeps them engaged, though it does not need to be a large project. This also is a great time to get your loved one to tell stories of their youth. Record short videos or audio tapes to capture these precious memories."

## Summer Canning Resources!

People have been preserving foods at home for many years. It isn't a complicated process and it's just food which leads people to believe that any information source (or no directions at all) are needed to preserve foods. This is false! It is very important to follow approved, tested recipes for processing any food at home.

Foods not utilizing water bath canning methods, or pressure canning for low-acid foods can contain toxic levels of food bourn bacteria when consumed.

Although sight and smell can be an indicator, it isn't a fail safe method for knowing if a product is safe. The use of colored jars makes visual evaluation of a product very difficult. For this reason, using these product for craft purposes may be the best policy.

## Cup Half Full

In her book, *Positivity*, Barbara Fredrickson says, "We are either on a positive trajectory or a negative one. Either we are growing in goodness, becoming more creative and resilient, or we are solidifying our bad habits, becoming more stagnant and rigid. No matter how much we may want to keep things as they are, or envision our life goals as a perfect snapshot we can one day frame and preserve, times move on. How you'll move with it is up to you" (p. 17).

The difference between languishing and flourishing depends on how positive we are. Are we glad for new experiences even when they are challenging or painful? Or do we complain that life is not delivering the future we dreamed of? We can make a conscious decision to embrace experience and thereby set a positive trajectory for our lives.

Next time an event threatens to throw you into a tailspin, catch yourself. Don't let your mind drop into despair and gloom. Consider the ways that this "unhappy" event can make your life better. Choose positivity.



Source: [www.arfamilies.org](http://www.arfamilies.org)

Home food preservation is a great way to enjoy fresh foods all year long. It helps consumers control additives to foods, however; safe practices must be followed.

### Check out these great resources for home food preservation.

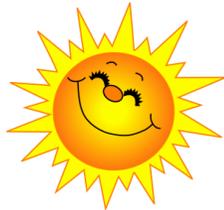
[So Easy to Preserve Food Preservation Cookbook](http://www.soeasytopreserve.com)

[www.soeasytopreserve.com](http://www.soeasytopreserve.com)

OR

[University of Georgia Center for Home Food Preservation website](http://www.homefoodpreservation.com)  
[www.homefoodpreservation.com](http://www.homefoodpreservation.com)

# County Council Meeting Summer Breeze!



Join a local OHCE group and enjoy programs that help make Oklahomans be their best.

Over 35,000

Face Masks made statewide!

You make a difference—

*You maintain high standards in your homes through research and education to promote a better use of our environment and better living conditions for all.*

*OHCE members don't just say their creed— they live it!*

THANK YOU!

**\*July 13, 2020 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm\***

OSU Extension Office—  
side yard by the butterfly garden  
**DATE AND LOCATION CHANGE!**

Come socialize with friends and enjoy some simple summer picnic snacks (no kitchen access)

Chairs from the OSU Classroom will be available, but bring a lawn chair if you want to be more comfortable! Fans are encouraged, but the yard is shaded that time of the evening.

Although some business will be conducted this meeting will focus on friendship and togetherness!

\*Please stay aware—given the current state of public health this meeting may be canceled or rescheduled.

### Group Assignments:

Courtesy, Devotion, registration—Dale & Stars  
Door Prizes (6) - Cheerful Workers &  
Down Home Friends  
Decorations, Food Detail—MOMS & The Little Club

## OHCE Educational Event

**August 31, 2020**

10:00am - 2:00pm

Murray County Extension Office  
3490 W. Hwy 7, Sulphur

\$10 registration by July 27, 2020  
Includes lunch and afternoon Activity

Gut Health—State Lesson  
Simple Home Repairs  
Wills, Trusts and Power of Attorney  
Activity: Journals and Recipe Booklets

## This and That:

**OHCE membership dues are  
Due October 1st to the County treasurer**

**OHCE State Meeting has been Canceled.**

**Stay tuned for news about the  
County Fair!**



