



**Free Things you can do to
Save on Winter Heating Costs**



Temperatures in Oklahoma often can sink below freezing. While keeping your home warm is a priority, so is keeping down the cost of your utility bill.

Gina Peek, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension housing and consumer specialist, said there are free things homeowners and renters can do to help keep heating costs from going through the roof.

“Heating bills can really put a strain on your wallet during the winter months, so it’s important to take advantage of some cost-saving tips,” Peek said. “You should see a change in your heating bill after implementing these tips.”

The easiest thing that you can do is to turn the thermostat down when you go to work or leave the home for extended periods of time. You do not want to pay for heat that you are not home to enjoy. Also, turn down the heat a few degrees when you go to bed.

“When you return home, set the thermostat to the lowest, comfortable setting. For every degree you lower the thermostat, consumers can save about 3 percent on heating costs. Also, instead of turning up the heat if you get chilly, dress for the weather. Wear warm clothes, including a sweater and socks, around the house and add an extra blanket to your bed,” Peek said. “To help keep your heat set where it should be, make sure you lower it when you leave for work and raise it up a bit when you return home.”

Sunlight, even in the winter, is a way to add natural, free warmth to your home. Open your blinds and curtains to let the sun stream through the windows, particularly on south-facing walls. As the sun sets, close them to help keep trap that warmth inside.

“Be sure doors and windows are closed tight. Check to make sure your fireplace isn’t letting air enter and escape your home. Obviously, a roaring fire in the fireplace creates a space of warmth and comfort in your home, but it also can be a source of air leaks. When not in use, keep the damper closed to help prevent cold air from coming in and warm air from escaping,” she said. “If your fireplace has doors, keep them closed when there isn’t a fire burning. You should definitely see some extra money in your pocket throughout the winter season.”

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**TULSA COUNTY
EXTENSION**



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If you receive the monthly newsletter by mail and would like to receive it by email, please call Roxanne at 918-746-3706. Receiving it by email would greatly reduce our printing and postage expenses.

Thank you!

Can Drinking Tea with Honey and Lemon Help You Get Over a Cold?

A steamy mug of honey-lemon tea is a classic remedy for the common cold. But is this soothing concoction really an effective way to alleviate symptoms or is it simply an urban myth? Here's what the research has to say about whether lemon and honey really work.

Honey for Cough and Colds

Honey has been used as both food and medicine since ancient times. It has antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antiproliferative (Tending to suppress cell growth) anticancer and antimetastatic (inhibiting metastasis) properties, according to a 2017 review in *Pharmacognosy Research*.



There's also research showing that it can be antiviral, which can be particularly useful in reducing inflammation and alleviating a sore throat or other sources of pain, reports Michele Sidorenkov, RDN, trained chef and dietitian.

Additionally, in a July 2014 study published in the *Archives of Medical Research*, researchers found that honey — specifically manuka honey — demonstrated a potential medicinal value by inhibiting the growth of the influenza virus.

And that's not all: "Honey is great for cold recovery and can act as a natural cough suppressant," Sidorenkov says. In fact, honey may suppress coughing better than diphenhydramine (which is found in over-the-counter medications such as Benadryl, Unisom SleepMelts and Alka-Seltzer Plus Allergy), according to a *Cochrane review* published in April 2018.

That's why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using honey to relieve a cough accompanied by a sore throat for adults and children at least one year of age and older. (*Honey is a known source of the bacteria spores that cause botulism. For this reason, honey **shouldn't** be given to babies younger than 1 year old.*)

Lemon for Colds

There's little scientific evidence that lemons can be effective in alleviating cold symptoms. While it's true that lemons are a great natural source of vitamin C, there's conflicting evidence on whether vitamin C can actually boost the immune system and ward off harmful viruses and bacteria.

A meta-analysis of nine clinical trials, published in *BioMed Research International* in July 2018, did find that a higher dosage of vitamin C, taken at the onset of a cold helped reduce the duration of the illness and lessen its symptoms. That said, the benefits of vitamin C come from taking it long-term on a daily basis — not just when you're already sick.

The Bottom Line

All scientific evidence (or lack thereof) aside, there's a reason people have been drinking warm lemon and honey brews for generations. The flavor and scent are soothing and pleasant, and the effect on a sore throat and pesky cough can be comforting.

As with all things, sip on honey-lemon water in moderation, and talk to your doctor if your symptoms fail to improve or get worse.

Source: <https://www.livestrong.com>

Childhood Obesity a Growing Problem in Oklahoma

Obesity has been a health issue facing many Oklahomans over the years. Unfortunately, it also is a health concern for many children across the state. Christine Walters, maternal and child nutrition program assistant at Oklahoma State University, said childhood obesity is associated with breathing difficulties, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and the risk of being obese later in life.

“It’s not just the associated health risks children face. There are emotional concerns associated with childhood obesity, such as being teased or bullied,” Walters said. “Despite its common occurrence and related health risks, many parents may be unaware of their child’s weight status or unsure how to help their child achieve a healthy weight.”

The most common way to assess if a child is obese is to calculate their body mass index. Parents can go to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://okla.st/2ZbhQCW> and calculate their child’s BMI. The CDC developed growth charts that helps to classify a child’s weight status into three categories, including healthy weight, overweight and obesity.

Walters said despite its use as a screening tool for obesity, it is important to consider BMI does not directly measure body fat. “If a parent is concerned about their child’s weight, it’s important to talk to a pediatrician or registered dietitian about the child’s overall health and plan for weight management,” she said.

In efforts to help their child lose weight, parents may be tempted to put their child on a weight-loss diet. However, diets are not an ideal solution for many children and a child should not be placed on a diet unless under the supervision of a pediatrician or registered dietitian.

Instead of a diet, Walters has some tips for parents who are helping a child achieve a healthy weight.

“Children learn when they have healthy role models. Parents can model healthy behavior by eating healthy, drinking water, exercising and getting enough sleep,” she said. “While eating healthy meals is important, it’s also important to have healthy snacks. Healthy snacks such as fruits and vegetables are great choices. Avoid snack foods that are high in calories, fat, sugar and salt. Also, select healthy beverages like water and low-fat or fat-free milk.”

Many adults have trouble with portion sizes, so it is understandable children may, as well. Start off by offering smaller portions. Never force a child to finish a meal if they are no longer hungry.

Although fast food is convenient, make an effort to decrease visits to fast food restaurants and eating meals in the car. “You can create wonderful family time around the dinner table. Try to sit down as a family for meals. Leave cell phones on the counter and turn off the television,” she said. “Simply engage as a family and use this time to talk about everyone’s day.”

Another idea is to discuss with the entire family why healthy eating is important, but do not focus solely on weight. Eating healthy is also important so children can feel good, grow to be strong, have enough energy to play, stay focused in school and sleep well at night.



Continued on page 4



Childhood obesity a growing problem in Oklahoma ~ continued from page 3 ~

Oftentimes, people use food as a reward. You got an A on your test? Let's go out for ice cream. Walters said this is not a good idea. If you want to reward your child for healthy eating or another positive behavior, consider offering to take them to their favorite park to play or buying them a new book as a reward.

Another step that parents can take to encourage a healthier lifestyle is to encourage their children to get at least an hour of physical activity every day. Here, again, is where parents can be a good example by being physically active themselves. Participate in healthy activities together. Ride bikes on the weekend or take a short walk daily after dinner. Also, limit screen time.

“Childhood obesity is a serious health concern with many potential health risks later in life. Discussing weight concerns with your child may be a difficult and sensitive subject,” Walters said. “However, by focusing on the reasons to eat healthy and be active, engaging the whole family in healthy lifestyle changes and encouraging your child when they make positive changes, can be a great start to helping a child achieve a healthy weight.”

Exercise Activities to Get Your Child Fit & Healthy:



Races:

Get creative with the type of race. You can have a three-legged race, a one-legged race, a crab walk race, etc. Skipping jump-rope races are great, too!

Obstacle course:

It's an exciting way to exercise! Use some chalk to draw out a course.

Hunt!

This can be either indoor or outdoor! Just place toys or treats hidden in different places and start your child off with the first place.

Dance!

Just put on some music, get some preferably healthy snacks and gather up your child's friends! You now have your very own dance party.

Walk:

If you have a dog, divide the daily responsibilities of walking it. If you don't, practice going for strolls in the park or walking to the grocery store instead of taking a vehicle. Walk as much as you can with your kids.

Hula Hooping:

For some reason, children love hula hoops! Just teach them how to do it and they won't be able to get enough.

Blow off that steam!

We're used to the tantrums our kids throw, right? What if you asked them to throw these temper tantrums on purpose when they're in a good mood? It will actually help them both psychologically and physically? It may sound a bit crazy, but when they kick and run and jump and scream, they're getting tired because of the energy they're spending. This also helps them get out all their pent up anger and emotion without them even realizing it.

Source: <https://flintobox.com/blog/child-development/exercise-games-kids>



SHOUT OUT FROM SHARI

Thank you to everyone who attended our Winter Business Meeting. I hope you are as excited as I am about all of the fun things we have planned for 2020! Please wear your new "ASK ME ABOUT OHCE" button everywhere you go! (A Special "Shout Out" & Thank You to our Master Gardeners for donating the items to make the buttons!) Who do you know that you can invite to come and join OHCE? Invite them to our GAME DAY on March 17 & then to our FRIENDSHIP DAY on May 7th when we go to an Amish Kitchen for Lunch! OHCE has so much to offer!

Congratulations to our EIGHT 2019 Perfect Attendance Award winners! Also, a big THANK YOU to Roxanne and Michelle for all their hard work getting our 2020 Yearbook prepared! (Everyone needs to be sure and pick up their NEW 2020 Yearbook and **completely replace** your old one) Please refer to your 2020 Yearbook for all of our upcoming events.

This year's theme is "Nuts about OHCE" - If you weren't able to be at the meeting, then I have asked your Group President to share what this theme is all about! I am hoping that all our groups will get a little crazy and start having more fun and start inviting everyone you know (WOMEN AND MEN) to come and be part of OHCE!

A special "SHOUT OUT" to the Owasso Jewels satellite group, the Diamonds in the Rough, for signing up 4 new members at their Paint and Potluck! Their 1st official meeting was held on January 21st. Congratulations!



Looking forward to seeing you soon! *Shari*

WHAT'S HAPPENING

February:

- 1 Award Reports due to State
- 10 Chat and Create 10:00 AM
- 17 President's Day – Extension Office Closed
- 18 2020 State Project – Sewing Day 10:00 AM
Bring your lunch
- 19 NE District Money Due \$20.00 per person - to County Treasurer Jean Parks
- 19 Bunko/Bingo Game Day RSVP and \$\$\$ due, - to Jean Parks
\$5.00 each, includes lunch.
- 24 Chat and Create 10:00 AM

March:

- 9 Chat and Create 10:00 AM
- 17 Bunko/Bingo Game day with lunch, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
- 23 Chat and Create 10:00 AM
- 31 NE District Meeting, First Christian Church, Miami, OK

Deadline for State Project Report due soon....

Oklahoma Home and Community Education (OHCE), consists of eight groups that meet in and around Tulsa. The groups meet once a month, at various times. The groups meet in at libraries, churches or community centers. To start or join a group in your neighborhood or community, call the Tulsa County OSU Extension Office at 918-746-3706.

Thank you, thank you Ladies. In addition to the wonderful gifts that were given to the Tulsa County Shelter (which were estimated at \$3,000.00). You all also contributed \$608.00 in monetary donations. Thank you for your wonderful support. Job well done!!!!

~ Donna Spielman, Family Issues Chairman



Bring a friend!



OHCE UPDATES



THRIVE in 2020 with the American Heart Association's "Life's Simple 7". Let's focus to live a long, productive and healthy life. Be sure to click on each infographic for more Healthy Living.

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/my-life-check--lifes-simple-7>



*~Charline Romine,
OHCE-TC Healthy
Living Chairman*



SOMETHING NEW FOR THOSE WHO LOVE TO CREATE

Some of us have been chatting while creating and we arrived at the idea of having a space to sell handcrafted items to be sold at the Fair with the proceeds going to the Scholarship fund. There are many things we thought it would be fun to make that others would find nice to have and use. There are hats, scarves and mittens (for those who knit or crochet), walker baskets, book bags and other helpful items. The aprons went over really well last year and the list could go on and on. Just use your imagination. The Fair will be here before we realize it. More information to come as we get busy keeping our hands busy.

~Pat Thomas



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