



TULSA COUNTY  
EXTENSION

# STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES

## Family and Consumer Sciences News

### Pumpkin Offers More than Traditional Pumpkin Spice in the Fall



The air is starting to feel crisp now that the fall season is underway. As we move into the holidays, pumpkins can have the spotlight. Pumpkins can be so much more than jack-o-lanterns for Halloween or a flavoring in a latte. The [seeds can be roasted for a tasty snack](#), and the meat of the pumpkin can be used for pumpkin pies and other delicious vitamin-packed treats.

Pumpkins are a great source of vitamins, said Candy Gabel, associate state Extension specialist with Oklahoma State University Extension and statewide coordinator of the Community Nutrition Education Program.

“Just 1 cup of pumpkin contains 245% of the Reference Daily Intake of Vitamin A,” Gabel said. “In addition, pumpkin contains Vitamin C, Vitamin B2 and Vitamin E, as well as minerals such as Potassium, Copper, Manganese and Iron. It also is very high in Beta-Carotene, a carotenoid that our body turns into Vitamin A.”

There are many ways to add this fall favorite into a healthy diet. Add pumpkin to your favorite smoothie recipe or stir a spoonful or two of pumpkin puree into a steaming bowl of oatmeal for a great-tasting breakfast. Top the oatmeal with some cinnamon and toasted almonds for even more flavor. Whip up this [30-minute pumpkin soup](#) for a warm and tasty meal. For those who are adventurous in the kitchen, add pumpkin to your favorite chili recipe.

“You can easily transform a common dish into something spectacular”, she said. “Get your kids involved in the kitchen by trying some low-sugar options of pumpkin muffins, pumpkin bread, pumpkin cookies, pumpkin donuts and pumpkin pancakes. Kids love to help in the kitchen and will be excited to try these tasty treats.”

For many families, tradition runs deep when it comes to favorite holiday foods. You still can stick with your family favorites but try surprising your family with a new side dish this year. Consider a new super-food salad such as [roasted pumpkin and quinoa](#). Another option would be this tasty creamy [maple bacon pumpkin risotto](#).

Of course, dessert always is the part of the meal everyone looks forward to, and this [pumpkin cheese pie](#) is a great option for cheesecake lovers. It has less fat than a traditional cheesecake, but it packs a punch of flavor everyone is sure to enjoy.

“While pumpkins do have their traditional role in this fall holiday season, think outside of the box this year and add some exciting new flavors to your dinner table”, Gabel said.

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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!

## Blue Light has a Dark Side



### What is blue light? The effect blue light has on your sleep and more.

Although it is environmentally friendly, blue light can affect your sleep and potentially cause disease. Until the advent of artificial lighting, the sun was the major source of lighting, and people spent their evenings in (relative) darkness. Now, in much of the world, evenings are illuminated, and we take our easy access to all those lumens pretty much for granted. But we may be paying a price for basking in all that light. At night, light throws the body's biological clock—the [circadian rhythm](#)—out of whack. Sleep suffers. Worse, research shows that it *may* contribute to the causation of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.

### What is blue light?

Not all colors of light have the same effect. Blue wavelengths—which are beneficial during daylight hours because they boost attention, reaction times, and mood—seem to be the most disruptive at night. And the proliferation of electronics with screens, as well as energy-efficient lighting, is increasing our exposure to blue wavelengths, especially after sundown.

### Light and sleep

Everyone has slightly different circadian rhythms, but the average length is 24 and one-quarter hours. The circadian rhythm of people who stay up late is slightly longer, while the rhythms of earlier birds fall short of 24 hours. Dr. Charles Czeisler of Harvard Medical School showed, in 1981, that daylight keeps a person's internal clock aligned with the environment.

### Is nighttime light exposure bad?

Exposure to light suppresses the secretion of melatonin, a hormone that influences circadian rhythms. Even dim light can interfere with a person's circadian rhythm and melatonin secretion. A mere eight lux—a level of brightness exceeded by most table lamps and about twice that of a night light—has an effect, notes Stephen Lockley, a Harvard sleep researcher. Light at night is part of the reason so many people don't get [enough sleep](#), says Lockley, and researchers have linked short sleep to increased risk for depression, as well as diabetes and cardiovascular problems.

### Effects of blue light and sleep:

While light of any kind can suppress the secretion of melatonin, [blue light](#) at night does so more powerfully. Harvard researchers and their colleagues conducted an experiment comparing the effects of 6.5 hours of exposure to blue light to exposure to green light of comparable brightness. The blue light suppressed melatonin for about twice as long as the green light and shifted circadian rhythms by twice as much (3 hours vs. 1.5 hours).

In another study of blue light, researchers at the University of Toronto compared the melatonin levels of people exposed to bright indoor light who were wearing blue-light-blocking goggles to people exposed to regular dim light without wearing goggles. The fact that the levels of the hormone were about the same in the two groups strengthens the hypothesis that blue light is a potent suppressor of melatonin. It also suggests that shift workers and night owls could perhaps protect themselves if they wore eyewear that blocks blue light. Inexpensive sunglasses with orange-tinted lenses block blue light, but they also block other colors, so they're not suitable for use indoors at night.

### Protect yourself from blue light at night:

- Use dim red lights for night lights. Red light is less likely to shift circadian rhythm and suppress melatonin.
- Avoid looking at bright screens beginning two to three hours before bed.
- If you work a night shift or use a lot of electronic devices at night, consider wearing blue-blocking glasses or installing an app that filters the blue/green wavelength at night.
- Expose yourself to lots of bright light during the day, which will boost your ability to sleep at night, as well as your mood and alertness during daylight.

Source: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/blue-light-has-a-dark-side>

## Meaning of Resilience / Having a Vision for Your Child

***Help your child bounce back and have a bright future!***

Divorce can be a traumatic experience for children. Children's old routines and rituals have been disrupted and new routines and rituals must be created to help ease the transition for your child. As a parent, it's important to be aware of your child's emotions and how they are responding to these changes. Children respond differently to their parents' divorce. You and your co-parent know your child best! Stay attuned to their needs and help them overcome the challenges they face. The trauma from divorce can produce bad things for children, but you can help them overcome these challenges and be resilient by bouncing back and overcoming this difficulty.

### **What does resilience mean to you?**

- Speedy recovery
- Bouncing back
- Overcoming problems and challenges

There are things you can do to lessen the impact of divorce on your child to help them bounce back and have a bright future. However, there are also things you can do that will cause your child to have a much more difficult time.



**Keep in mind your vision for your child.** Having a vision and setting goals will allow you to take control of your situation and lead you and your children on the path you desire. You can't control your co-parent, but knowing where you are going will allow you to respond to some of the challenges you face and help you relate to your co-parent through this vision for your children.

Child success is predicted by how parents parent after the divorce. Stress from the divorce can often change the way you parent. **Remember to use a balanced style of parenting which is high on emotional expression, love, and support for the child's needs and best interests.**

Establish new routines and rituals to help your child adjust to the divorce. Be there for your child when he or she needs to talk and let them externalize their emotions and feelings about the divorce. Although it may be hard to hear, allowing them to share what they are feeling is key to helping them bounce back and have a bright future.

Balanced parenting also involves firm but appropriate discipline and open conversations about why the child is being disciplined.

### **When parents use balanced parenting, children tend to be:**

- Respectful
- Able to make their own decisions
- Responsible
- Secure
- Confident
- Generous
- Happy

*Need more help? We are here to help! Learn more about the Co-Parenting for Resilience Program, part of the Extension mission of Oklahoma State University's College of Human Sciences. <https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/co-parenting/index.html>, Send an email to: [coparenting@okstate.edu](mailto:coparenting@okstate.edu)*

## Why Memory Worsens as You Age, and 5 Things You Can Do About It

Ever been at a party and can't remember the name of the person you're talking to? Or find yourself tearing apart your house trying to find your keys? Your first thought may be, "What the heck is wrong with me?" and you might even jump to, "Could I be developing early Alzheimer's?" The good news is these sorts of [memory glitches](#) can happen at any age, reassures [Gary Small, MD](#), Chair of Psychiatry at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey.

*Here's a look at how memory declines with age, plus what you can do about it.*



### 3 Causes of Age-Related Memory Loss

#### **1. The Volume of Your Brain Shrinks**

It's a dirty little secret that your memory naturally declines about 2 percent with each decade of life, which means your memory's worse at 30 than at 20. There is a scientific explanation: "It's due to the shrinking of your hippocampus, the part of your brain that stores memories," says neurologist [Majid Fotuhi, MD, PhD](#).

#### **2. Other Health Conditions Affect Memory**

[High blood pressure](#), especially in middle age, is associated with a higher risk of dementia later in life, according to the [American Heart Association](#). Untreated hypertension narrows and blocks arteries everywhere, including in your brain, Dr. Fotuhi explains. [Elevated cholesterol](#) is also toxic to your brain: It triggers the formation of amyloid-beta protein, a key player in the development of Alzheimer's disease. Other conditions, such as untreated sleep apnea or depression, can also hurt your brain. And get your hearing checked: September 2019 research shows a link between hearing loss and dementia.

#### **3. Your Hormones Change**

You may notice you're especially forgetful when you're pregnant, or in your 40s or 50s as you go through menopause. This is due to the temporary dip in estrogen, Dr. Small says. Once your hormones regulate, though, your memory should return to normal.

### 5 Ways to Support Your Memory as You Age

While some parts of age-related memory decline are outside of your control, there are a host of things you can do to help support a healthy memory into your golden years.

**1. Break a Sweat:** "A third of your brain is made up of blood vessels, so it should come as no surprise that there's a link between [physical fitness and brain volume](#)," Dr. Fotuhi says.

**2. Limit Sitting:** It's also important to [avoid sitting too much](#) during the day, even if you tend to be physically active.

**3. Practice Mindfulness:** Stress itself is toxic to brain cells: It kills them off and shrinks both the prefrontal cortex and the hippocampus, both areas of the brain responsible for memory and learning.

**4. Dine Mediterranean-Style:** The [Mediterranean diet](#) — which is loaded with fruits, veggies, healthy fats like olive oil and fish, as well as legumes and whole grains — offers heart-healthy benefits. But the Mediterranean way of eating also appears to benefit your brain, for many of the same reasons.

**5. Get Enough Sleep:** While you're sound asleep, your brain's busy strengthening connections between its cells, transferring info from your hippocampus (responsible for short-term memory) to your neocortex (responsible for long-term). "This process essentially shifts memories and skills to a more efficient brain region so they become more stable and you can easily recall them, a process called memory consolidation," Dr. Small says. Sleep also allows your brain to clear out waste like beta-amyloid that raises Alzheimer's risk, Dr. Small adds. Practice [good sleep habits](#), including going to bed and waking up around the same time each day and avoiding screens (like your phone or the TV) for a couple hours before bed. *For the entire article: <https://www.livestrong.com/article/13768198-age-related-memory-loss/>*



## SHOUT OUT FROM SHARI



Dear OHCE Members,

Fall is in the air! We have so much to be Thankful for! We have been planting a lot of "acorns" and now we will begin to see those acorns grow! I am excited to see all our new members that we have been adding to OHCE! Keep planting those acorns!

We were blessed to have Dr. Michael Horton, with the Coffee Bunker, as our Guest Speaker at our Fall Business Meeting. We were made aware of a big need with Military Families in the Tulsa area and are hopeful that we will be able to help! More info on that to come!

A huge "Shout Out" to Ashlee Overall, Holly Eller, Linda Rasure, Donna Weida and myself for helping with the Extension Parking Lot during the Fair! We were able to help raise money for our General Fund and the UNITED WAY! Thank you all so much for your hard work!

Another big "Shout Out" to Ashlee Overall for helping with the YMCA of West Tulsa at their Family Camp Out Night. While children colored "Thank You" cards for our Veterans, she was able to hand out the materials on our "Veterans Day" Leader Lesson! THANK YOU, ASHLEE! The cards will be delivered to the Coffee Bunker and given to our Veterans for Veterans Day! Way to Go!

Nuts about OHCE! *Shari*



### WHAT'S HAPPENING

#### November:

- 1: Holiday Luncheon covers **DUE** to Ext. Office  
**Requirements:** Date, Location & Theme (Christmas Memories)
- 8: 10:30 am, Chat and Create
- 11: Veteran's Day – Ext. Office closed
- 16: Nominations for State Member Awards **DUE**
- 16: RSVP & \$\$\$ **DUE** for Holiday Luncheon **\$15.00 per person**
- 17: 10:00 am, Yearbook meeting
- 25-26: Thanksgiving – Ext. Office closed

#### December:

- 1: 11:00 am, Holiday Luncheon @ Memorial Drive Methodist Church, 7903 E 15th St., Tulsa
- 6: Family Holiday Workshop – details pending.
- 13: 10:30 am, Chat and Create
- 23-24: Christmas – Ext. Office closed
- 31: New Year's Eve - Ext. Office closed

The 2021 OHCE Holiday Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 11:00 am at the Memorial Drive Methodist Church located at 15th Street and Memorial. (\$15.00 per person.)

***RSVP and \$\$\$ DUE on or before 11-16-21.***

*~ Glenda Meinheit, Holiday Luncheon Chairperson*



Oklahoma Home and Community Education (OHCE), consists of six 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, call the Tulsa County OSU Extension Office at 918-746-3706.



# OHCE UPDATES



"According to Resource Management, in what situations would using City Transportation be more economical than driving a car?"

~ Dolores Williams, Resource Management Chairperson



**Membership:** Please remember our **FAMILY WORKSHOP NIGHT on Monday, Dec. 6th!** We will let you know the place soon! (*We're thinking we will be changing over to the Tulsa County Emergency Shelter!*) Bring your family and enjoy an evening of fun, games & crafts! We need for everyone that comes to bring store-bought cupcakes that we can use for the "Cupcake Walk". We will be inviting our Military Families and the Shelter Families to join us! Please invite your neighbors and friends to join us, too! Please watch for an email letting you know the details.

~Shari Munroe, Membership Chairman

**Chat & Create:** We continue to have so much laughter and good times when we get together to make things for others. There are things everyone can help with and the demand is increasing for fidget blankets and lap blankets for veterans. We need more help to keep up with the requests. Give us a try. ~ Pat Thomas

**The Healthy Living THRIVE focus this month....**

Five Healthy Habits: A friendly reminder from the American Cancer Society. Thrive Time!

<https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/5-healthy-habits-may-help-you-live-more-than-10-years-longer.html> ~Charline Romine, Healthy Living Committee Chairman



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*Michelle Bonicelli*

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**FAMILY ISSUES**

As you know each year we gather items for the Tulsa County Shelter to donate at our Christmas Party. This year I thought it might be good to begin a little early. Each month we will present a list of items that are needed. Please keep all items you buy until we meet for our Holiday Party, 12-01-21. Below is the list for each month. Keep it handy and if you see sales you can buy more than one. As always thank you for your generosity.

~ Donna Spielman, Family Issues Chairperson

November—Household Items

**November Suggestions:**

- Bath Towels
- Washcloths
- Bed Sheets
- Blankets
- Mattress Covers
- Comforters
- Paper Plates
- Brooms/Dust Pans
- Trash Cans
- Kitchen Towels
- Small rugs
- Curtains
- Any Kitchen items
- Any hygiene items

