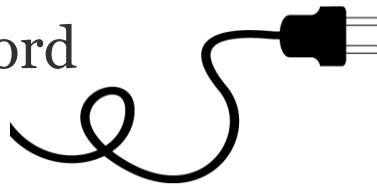


The Extension Cord



Health and Human Sciences

January & February 2024

Hello,

Happy New Year to all. I hope this newsletter finds you and yours well and excited for the upcoming year. January seems to be a month of ‘regrouping’ for me, both professionally and personally. Adjusting back to reality, operating on days with least amounts of daylight, and planning for things to come.

As I keep looking forward, I can’t help but reflect on the amazing things Fulton County Purdue Extension accomplished in the last year. We’ve collaborated across program areas to bring projects and resources into the community that we hope to continue to grow in 2024.

This summer, Purdue Extension and the Nutrition Education program worked together to impact food insecurity with food collections and community gardens. At the conclusion of the fair, the trailer from the “**Stock the Trailer**” project was weighed and the Fulton County Food Security Alliance had **3960 pounds** of food items to distribute to local pantries that included United Ministries, Mathews Market, Joseph Storehouse (DeLong), Kewanna and United We Stand Ministries in Akron. These pantries help to ensure that more than 2,300 of our food insecure neighbors have access to healthy food. Additionally, over **400 lbs. of produce** from 6 raised beds were grown and shared with 5 food pantries, the library and a Blessing Box in Fulton County. The garden efforts involved 86 recorded volunteer hours.



Literacy and physical activity were also a focus this past year. The Fulton County Leadership Academy, facilitated by Purdue Extension, and the Nutrition Education Program collaborated with other community partners to bring Storywalks to Fulton County. There are Storywalks placed at the Woodlawn Hospital trail, Union Township Park in Kewanna, and in Leiters Ford. The fourth and final Storywalk will be placed in Talma at the community building. Each feature a different story targeted to early readers and learners of all ages.



2023 was busy. 2023 was fun. I can’t wait to see what opportunities 2024 brings. I’ve included articles about shopping smart at the grocery and review of blood pressure. We can’t let February pass us by without considering our heart’s health!

-Jessica Riffle

Smart Shopping Tips at the Grocery

According to the USDA's Economic Research Service summary findings of the Food Price Outlook for 2023 and 2024, overall food prices were 4.3 percent higher in August 2023 than in August 2022. **Grocery store** purchases were 3.0 percent higher in August 2023 than August 2022 and **restaurant** purchases were 6.5 percent higher in that same timeframe.



As usual, it's cheaper to eat at home than to eat out, but at this point in time, eating out costs are increasing higher than the grocery store costs so it's especially more important now to your budget. To help you better control your food costs, here are some smart shopping tips for the grocery:

- 1.) Purchase fresh produce in season. Most fresh fruits and vegetables are priced lower when they are in season. If you have freezer space, buy extra and freeze them for later use. Canned & frozen produce is a good, low-cost alternative for when out of season. I recognize finding in-season produce in Northern Indiana winter months can be a challenge. Search for those on sale!
- 2.) Buy whole and bulk items. Generally, the more prepared and convenient a food is for you to eat it, the higher the cost. For instance, buy whole carrots versus bagged baby carrots and prep them yourself. Bulk produce such as bagged apples have a lower per pound cost than buying individual apples. Block cheese versus shredded cheese is usually cheaper and the same goes for meat. Bulk ground beef will be cheaper to purchase than pre-made patties. Value-added processing adds cost.
- 3.) For items that can be easily frozen and stored, buy more when you find a good sale and put away for use at a later date.
- 4.) Purchase store brands versus brand names. You may have to look at the upper shelves or the lower shelves. The premium brands get the eye level space in the store. Make sure to search out all your options.
- 5.) Use substitutions in recipes for a cheaper alternative. Does your casserole call for ground beef but there's an excellent sale on ground turkey? Pick the more budget friendly substitute.
- 6.) Download your grocery store's phone application and check the digital coupons before you shop. There are incentives for using your store apps like access to more savings opportunities, points accumulation for special discounts on things like gas, see the ad for sale items before you get in the store, etc.
- 7.) Make a list before you go into the store of only what you need and then stick to it. Also, don't go shopping when you are hungry! You will tend to make more impulse purchases.





Preparation and little extra efforts here and there can cut down your food budget costs and help you to stretch your dollars.

"Summary Findings Food Price Outlook, 2023 and 2024." USDA Economic Research Service, Sept. 25th, 2023, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-price-outlook/summary-findings/>. Accessed October 10th, 2023.

February is Heart Health Month.

What are some risk factors that influence heart health?

- Blood Pressure 
- Cholesterol 
- Weight 
- Eating behaviors 
- Inactivity 
- Smoking 
- Blood sugar level 
- Family history 
- Age 

Those risk factors listed with a check mark mean they are controllable. Family history and age are not in our control, they are uncontrollable risk factors.

Blood Pressure is one of our controllable risk factors.

Blood pressure is the force of blood against artery walls as it circulates through the body. It consists of two numbers: systolic pressure and diastolic pressure. **People with high blood pressure often have no symptoms.** High blood pressure can affect the heart, but it can also affect all the blood vessels of the body. Uncontrolled blood pressure can lead to hardening and thickening of your arteries.

In 2017, the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association published new guidelines for hypertension management and defined stage 1 hypertension as a blood pressure at or above 130/80 mmHg. Stage 2 hypertension is defined as a blood pressure at or above 140/90 mmHg.

Systolic pressure: the pressure at the peak of each heartbeat. The recommended systolic pressure reading is less than 120.

Diastolic pressure: the pressure when the heart is resting between beats. The recommended diastolic pressure reading is less than 80.

Set yourself up for a most accurate blood pressure reading. Sit with your back straight and supported (on a dining chair, for example, rather than a sofa). Your feet should be flat on the floor. Do not cross your legs. Your arm should be supported on a flat surface (such as a table) with the upper arm at heart level.

Upcoming Public HHS Programming

Date	When	Where	What
Jan. 8		Ask about the next DWD classes	Dining with Diabetes Reunion
Jan. 10	11:00 am	Kewanna Public Library	Introduction to Diabetes
Jan. 24	9:00 am	Miami Co. Community Building	Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing
Feb. 14	11:00 am	Kewanna Public Library	Heart Health
Feb. 28	9:00 am	Miami Co. Community Building	Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing



The two-day Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing program is a great skill builder for the beginner or intermediate grant writer. Whatever your skill level, come with an idea and be ready to write. At the end of Day One, you will have a proposal outline and all of the resources you need to expand your outline into a full proposal.

Return on Day Two with your full proposal and we will put you into the role of a reviewer, teach you strategies for finding funding, and provide you with an opportunity to polish your proposal and send it in for a strong professional review.

When: Wednesday, **January 24** and Wednesday, **February 28, 2024** at 9:00 am to 4:30 pm Eastern

Where: Miami County Fairgrounds Community Building, 1029 West 200 North, Peru, IN 46970-7526

Cost: The workshop is \$195.00, which includes all materials and lunch on both days.

Miami County Community Foundation is offering ten (10) reduced fee sponsorships on a first-come, first-served basis to nonprofit organizations located in Miami County.

Fulton County Community Foundation is offering ten (10) reduced fee sponsorships on a first-come, first-served basis to nonprofit organizations located in Fulton County.

Registration: For more information on receiving a sponsorship, contact Courtney Schmidt at 765-472-1921 or schmi163@purdue.edu. Or contact your local Community Foundation: **Miami County at 765-475-2859 ~ Fulton County at 574-224-3223**

Visit <https://cvent.me/4YO21w> by Wednesday, January 17, 2024 to register.

Whether your project is big or small, this workshop will give you the information you need to submit proposals confidently.

NOTE: If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, contact Courtney Schmidt at 765-472-1921 or schmi163@purdue.edu prior to the workshop.

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service is an equal access/equal opportunity institution.

