

January 2025

# FCS NEWS & NOTES

Todd County Extension Office  
240 Pond River Road  
Elkton, KY 42220  
Phone: 270-265-5659  
todd.ext@uky.edu

**Todd County Family & Consumer Sciences Extension**

## Create an Emergency Kit for your Car

We all know the importance of preparing for an ice storm or other potential natural disasters. Having an emergency kit with essential items in your home is the first step to surviving such an event. But you should also think about your car. Winter storms can create dangerous roads and a higher risk of frostbite, hypothermia, and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Create an emergency kit for your car and be prepared if caught out during a winter storm. Include the items below and have them in a bag, bucket, or small tote for easy access.

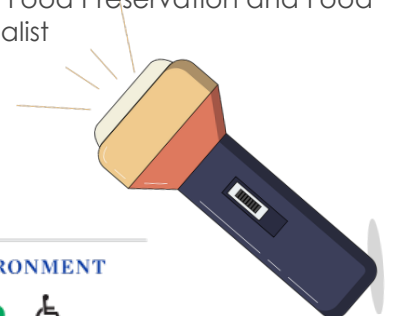
- Warm clothes (heavy coat, extra socks, gloves, hand warmers)
- Blankets
- Ice scraper
- Bottled water
- Shelf-stable snacks (Choose high protein foods to provide energy.)
- Flashlight
- Cell phone charger and battery backup
- Jumper cables or battery-powered jump starter

- Sand or kitty litter (to help with traction if you are stuck in snow)
- Small or collapsible shovel
- Roadside flares or glow sticks
- Flat tire inflation canister (non-explosive)

During the winter months, you should keep your gas tank full. Don't let it get low as you never know when you might be sitting for a while and not able to refuel. If you're stranded, only run the engine for 10 minutes each hour to charge your phone and run the heater. Be sure to open a window slightly to allow fresh air to enter the car and avoid carbon monoxide poisoning while it's running.

**Reference:** <https://www.ready.gov/winter-ready#travel>

**Source:** Annhall Norris, Food Preservation and Food Safety Extension Specialist



# January is Mental Wellness Month

January is Mental Wellness Month, a perfect time to focus on your mental health and well-being. It's like giving your mind a fresh start, just like you might give your home a deep clean after the holidays. You may be wondering, "but what is mental wellness?" Mental wellness is a state of well-being in which individuals are functioning as their best version, they are able to realize their strengths, build on their weaknesses, can cope with stress, and have an overall balance between their emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental selves. There are several activities that individuals can participate in to ensure they are taking care of their mental wellness.

Here are some fun ways to boost your mental wellness:

1. **Try something new:** Pick up a hobby you've always wanted to try or rediscover an old one. Maybe you've always wanted to learn to play an instrument, paint, or write. Or, if you used to love a particular activity, give it another shot. Sometimes, revisiting old hobbies can bring back a sense of joy and fulfillment.
2. **Learn and Grow:** Engage in activities to better yourself such as reading self-help books, seeking therapy services, and engaging with a health and wellness coach.
3. **Find your peace:** Try participating in activities that will calm your mind and enhance your mental health such as meditation or yoga.
4. **Connect with others:** Volunteering or spending time with friends and family are shown to enhance your mental health.

So, this January, let's make it a month of feeling great! By incorporating these activities into your routine, you can improve your mental wellness and overall well-being. Remember, it's important to be patient with yourself and to find what works best for you.

#### Resources:

<https://www.voasw.org/blog/what-is-mental-wellness-how-to-improve-it/>  
<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>  
<https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/what-is-wellness/mental-wellness/>  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health>

**Source:** Dr. Natese Dockery, Clinical Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist for Mental Health and Well-Being

## RECIPE

In a mealtime rut? Try this Plate It Up Kentucky Proud recipe. Find other recipes at <https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/piukp-recipes>

### Baked Broccoli Frittata

<b>1 cup</b> broccoli florets	<b>2 tablespoons</b> water
<b>½ cup</b> tomato, diced	<b>¼ cup</b> 2% milk
<b>1</b> small red bell pepper, sliced	<b>¼ teaspoon</b> salt
<b>2</b> green onions, sliced into 1 inch pieces	<b>¼ teaspoon</b> black pepper
<b>1 tablespoon</b> olive oil	<b>½ teaspoon</b> Italian seasoning
<b>6</b> whole eggs	<b>1 cup</b> low fat mozzarella cheese, divided
<b>¼ cup</b> Dijon mustard	

**Preheat** oven to 375 degrees F. **Place** broccoli florets, diced tomato, bell pepper and green onions in a 9 x 13 inch baking dish. **Spoon** olive oil evenly over vegetables. **Roast** the vegetables in the oven until crisp-tender, approximately 10 minutes. In a bowl, **combine** eggs, Dijon mustard, water, milk, salt, black pepper and Italian seasoning. **Whisk** mixture until frothy. **Stir** in ¼ cup of shredded low fat mozzarella cheese. **Pour** the egg mixture over the roasted vegetables. **Stir** gently with a fork to combine. **Sprinkle** the remaining ¼ cup of mozzarella cheese over the top. **Return** to oven and **bake** 20-25 minutes or until set and cheese is

browned on top. **Serve** immediately.

**Yield:** 8 servings.

**Nutritional Analysis:** 130 calories, 8 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 170 mg cholesterol, 400 mg sodium, 5 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 2 g sugar, 9 g protein.

[www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

#### References:

• Bell Peppers. Retrieved from <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CDBREC/introsheets/pepperintro.pdf> May 25, 2013.  
• Hot Peppers & Specialty Peppers. Retrieved from <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CDBREC/introsheets/hotpeppers.pdf> May 25, 2013.  
• KY Recipe Cards: Green Peppers, Sarah B. Brandl, Family and Consumer Science Extension Specialist. Publication — ID-128, Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, 2011.

# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

## Upcoming Leader Trainings

**Indoor Air Quality** – We have included the publication with this newsletter. The Indoor Air Quality Zoom will be shown on **Friday, January 3, 10:00 a.m.** at the Extension Office. If you want to watch it on your own at 10:00 or 5:30 p.m., request the Zoom link from the Extension Office.

## Inspiring Children to Become

**Grandcooks** – will be a Lunch & Learn session on **Thursday, January 30, 12:00 p.m.** We will watch the class and try some of the recipes. If you plan to attend, please let us know so we have enough samples prepared.

## Todd County Homemaker Meetings

**Todd County Homemakers Council** will meet **Monday, January 27, 5:00 p.m.**, at the Todd County Extension Office.

The **Cooking School Committee** will meet **Tuesday, January 7, 5:00 p.m.**

The **Junior Homemaker Committee** will meet **Friday, January 10, 10:00 a.m.**, at the Todd County Extension Office. Anyone who is interested in helping is welcome to attend.

## Cooking thru the Calendar

Cooking thru the Calendar Facebook Live will be the first Thursday of each month. The next two will be **January 2 and February 6, at 11:30 a.m.** on the ToddCountyExtensionFCS Facebook page. Watch live or play it back anytime. The 2025 calendars are available at the Todd County Extension Office.

## Wits Workout

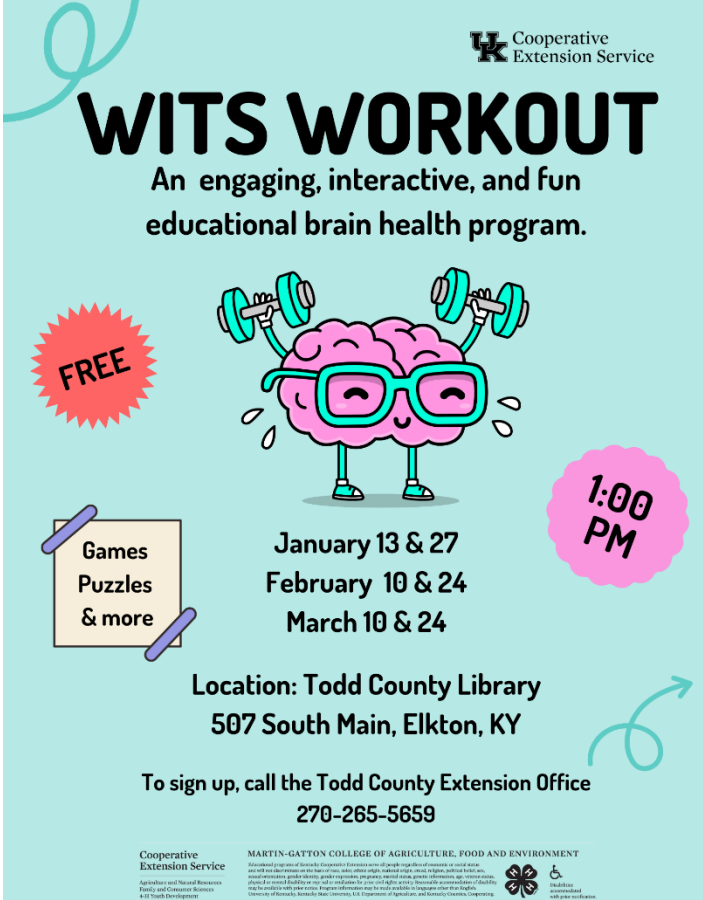
We are offering more sessions (different topics) of Wits Workout. The next six sessions are the **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of January, February, and March** at **1:00 p.m.** at the Todd County Public Library, 507 South Main Street, Elkton.

**January 13 & January 27**

**February 10 & 24**

**March 10 & 24**

Please register by calling the Extension Office at 270-265-5659 and let us know if you plan to attend. This helps make sure we have plenty of copies for everyone. These classes are free and open to anyone who would like to attend. Bring a friend! You do not have to attend all sessions.



Cooperative Extension Service

# WITS WORKOUT

An engaging, interactive, and fun educational brain health program.

**FREE**

**1:00 PM**

Games  
Puzzles  
& more

January 13 & 27  
February 10 & 24  
March 10 & 24

Location: Todd County Library  
507 South Main, Elkton, KY

To sign up, call the Todd County Extension Office  
270-265-5659

Cooperative Extension Service  
MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

Approved for use by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service as a result of a grant from the National Institute of Health, National Institute on Aging, National Institute on Mental Health, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. This program is a result of a grant from the National Institute on Aging, National Institute on Mental Health, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. This program is a result of a grant from the National Institute on Aging, National Institute on Mental Health, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

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## Learn to Bake: Cinnamon Rolls

Learn how to make cinnamon rolls on **Thursday, January 23, 5:00 p.m.** at the Todd County Extension Office. During this hands-on class, participants will learn how to measure, mix, knead, and shape cinnamon rolls. Each person will leave with four large cinnamon rolls to take home and bake. Class size is limited to 8 people and the \$5.00 registration fee is due within 3 days of registering to hold your spot. Please register by calling the Todd County Extension Office at 270-265-5659 or email [toddext@uky.edu](mailto:toddext@uky.edu).



## Learn to Bake: Basic Yeast Bread

Learn how to make basic yeast bread on **Friday, January 24, 5:00 p.m.** at the Todd County Extension Office. During this hands-on class, participants will learn how to measure, mix, knead, and shape yeast bread. Each person will leave with one loaf of yeast bread to take home and bake. Class size is limited to 8 people and the \$5.00 registration fee is due within 3 days of registering to hold your spot. Please register by calling the Todd County Extension Office at 270-265-5659 or email [toddext@uky.edu](mailto:toddext@uky.edu).



## Learn to Bake: Pie Crust and Hand Tarts

Join me for a pastry class on **Tuesday, February 11, 5:00 p.m.** at the Todd County Extension Office. We will learn to make pie crust and turn it into hand tarts such as the ones pictured in the flyer. Class size is limited to 8 people and the \$5.00 registration fee is due within 3 days of registering to hold your spot. Please register by calling the Todd County Extension Office at 270-265-5659 or email [toddext@uky.edu](mailto:toddext@uky.edu).



Cooperative Extension Service

### BASIC BAKING CLASSES

LEARN HOW TO MAKE CINNAMON ROLLS, BASIC YEAST BREAD,\* AND/OR HAND TARTS

Be prepared to take items home to bake. \*Not Sour Dough



**Cost: \$5.00 per person per class**

**LEARN:**

- Measuring
- Mixing
- Kneading
- Shaping

**JANUARY 23, 5:00 PM - CINNAMON ROLLS**  
**JANUARY 24, 5:00 PM - BASIC YEAST BREAD**  
**FEBRUARY 11, 5:00 PM - PIE CRUST/HAND TARTS**

Todd County Extension Office  
240 Pond River Road  
Elkton, KY 42220

You will leave with 4 cinnamon rolls, one loaf of bread or 4 hand tarts to take home and bake

**TO REGISTER, CALL: 270-265-5659** An Equal Opportunity Organization

For more information, contact the Todd County Extension Office at 270-265-5659.

Sincerely,

*Jill B. Harris*

Jill B. Harris  
Extension Agent for  
Family & Consumer Sciences





# Indoor Air Quality:

## Sources and Effects on Our Health



### Hardin Stevens

Senior Extension Associate  
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

The EPA estimates that we spend 90% of our time indoors, in homes, schools, workplaces, places of worship, or gyms. Research shows that indoor air pollution is increasing. Our air quality is affected by chemicals, gases, and particles from products used or naturally found inside buildings, inadequate ventilation, and moisture and humidity problems. The home is the most likely place you are exposed to indoor air pollution.

Developing an understanding of indoor air quality (IAQ) and identifying factors that impact the air you breathe while indoors will empower you to make decisions about how you can improve your indoor home environment.

### What do you think of when you hear the term “air quality”?

Many people think of outdoor air pollution such as smog, smoke, and vehicle exhaust. But what about indoor air quality?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), “Indoor Air Quality refers to the air quality within and around buildings and structures, especially as it relates to the health and comfort of building occupants.”



### Indoor Air Quality Problems

The main causes of indoor air quality problems are contaminants that release gases or particles into the air:

- Tobacco products and secondhand smoke,
- Radon,
- Burning wood,
- Mold,
- Dust, pet dander, and hair,
- Volatile organic compounds (VOC) found in household cleaners, dry cleaning, hobby supplies, etc., and
- Pesticides.

Household items that may impact your indoor air quality:

- Heating and cooling systems, air conditioning units, gasoline-powered heaters, and other appliances,
- Fireplaces and woodstoves,
- Cooking appliances, and
- Building materials and furnishings.

## Impacts of Poor Air Quality on Health

Indoor air pollution can cause symptoms such as irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, headaches, dizziness, and fatigue. It might also cause, aggravate, or worsen asthma and allergies. It can also make it more difficult to fight off infections. Air pollution can also cause long-term health problems such as respiratory diseases, heart disease, and cancer.

## How Can We Improve Indoor Air Quality?

To improve or avoid any health symptoms, work to improve your indoor air quality. Controlling the source of pollution is the most efficient way to do that. An easy way to do this is to make sure your home has proper ventilation. Increasing the amount of air that exchanges between inside and outside will keep your air cleaner.

Here are some ways to make sure your home gets proper ventilation:

- Open windows and doors (weather permitting). Keep windows and doors closed when outdoor air quality is an issue (wildfires, other health hazards, etc.).
- Use window and attic fans (weather permitting).
- Use bathroom and kitchen fans, especially if they are vented outside.
- Consider an air cleaner. They come in different types and sizes ranging from tabletop models to whole-house systems. Do some research to see if one is right for you.



To keep the air inside your home or office cleaner:

- Vacuum and dust often.
- Wash bedding regularly.
- Do not allow anyone to smoke or vape indoors. Adopt a smoke-free home and car. Ask people who use tobacco to go outside at least 20 feet from entryways, windows, and vents.
- Safely store chemicals away from children and pets.
- When taking a shower, use a ventilation fan.
- Dry any damp surfaces.
- Maintain and ventilate appliances and heating or cooling units. Change your air filters regularly especially in times of outdoor smoke events (e.g., wildfires).
- Use nonchemical products when possible.
- Seal all cracks in basements.
- Test for radon every two years. If your radon number is at or above 4.0 pCi/L, contact a certified radon measurement and mitigation professional to lower exposure to radon.

New home designs are adding features to bring outdoor air through the HVAC system.

## Do House Plants Improve Air Quality?

There is no direct evidence that having houseplants cleans indoor air. In fact, houseplants may contribute to indoor air pollution by releasing VOCs into the air. Additionally, the plant's soil may have bacteria, pesticides, or other contaminants. Overwatering plants can cause microorganisms to grow, which can affect people with allergies.

There is no way to totally rid your indoor air of pollutants, but by following these steps, you can reduce potential exposure to these risks.

Improving indoor air quality requires an understanding of what contaminants are affecting the air you breathe in your home. Once you have identified the contaminant source, take appropriate action to eliminate or mitigate the source. Sometimes, improving air quality is as simple as opening windows or doors. Sometimes, you need expert assistance to effectively improve the air quality.

### Sources:

Referenced 6/6/23

[https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/introduction-indoor-air-quality#:~:text=Indoor%20Air%20Quality%20\(IAQ\)%20refers,and%20comfort%20of%20building%20occupants.](https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/introduction-indoor-air-quality#:~:text=Indoor%20Air%20Quality%20(IAQ)%20refers,and%20comfort%20of%20building%20occupants.)

Referenced 6/6/23

<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/improving-your-indoor-environment>

Referenced 6/7/23

<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/indoor-air/index.cfm>

Referenced 10/23/23

<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/text-version-indoor-air-quality-house-tour>

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# Improving Your Indoor Environment

Did you know we spend about 90% of our time indoors?

Levels of air pollution indoors can be as high, and sometimes higher, than outdoor levels. Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) can affect anyone's health, but older adults, children, and people with health conditions like asthma and heart disease can be more vulnerable.

Learn about indoor air pollution and the steps that you can take to improve your indoor environment.

## Indoor Air and Health are Connected - Take Action



- Learn how reducing indoor contaminants may improve health. Tour the [IAQ Demo House](#).
- Ventilate! When outdoor air quality and weather permit, open doors and windows. Run kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans when cooking and showering.
- Consider a high-efficiency [air filter](#) for your HVAC system and/or a [portable air cleaner](#) that does not intentionally emit ozone.
- Control indoor moisture to prevent [mold](#). Fix water leaks and keep humidity levels between 30-50% by ventilating or using a dehumidifier if necessary.
- Install and inspect [carbon monoxide](#) and smoke alarms.
- Declutter, wipe dust with a damp rag, and vacuum to help reduce [asthma triggers](#), allergens, pests, and pollutants.
- If you rent, inform your landlord right away about indoor air quality or water concerns. You may also consult Environmental Law Institute's [Indoor Air Quality Guide for Tenants](#).

## Vent Your Combustion Appliances



- Vent all combustion appliances to the outside. Combustion appliances like heaters, stoves, and dryers can produce [dangerous pollutants](#) in your indoor air.
- Have your combustion appliances (like wood heaters and gas stoves) inspected annually and follow manufacturer instructions. Appliances that are not working properly can produce dangerous pollutants like [carbon monoxide](#).
- Never use a cooking stove to heat indoors and never use a fuel powered generator indoors, even during [power outages](#).

## Consider Outdoor Air Quality



- Learn about [pollution in your community](#) and check outdoor air quality at [AirNow.gov](#). Outdoor air pollution can impact IAQ.
- Be smoke ready. Purchase air cleaners and extra filters before wildfires start and create a [clean air room](#). During fires, check air quality at [fire.airnow.gov](#) or local news.

## Reduce Chemical Pollution Indoors



- Minimize the indoor use of cleaners, pesticides, perfumes, and other household and personal chemical products.
- Use less toxic cleaning products like mild soap and water. Look for products with EPA's [Safer Choice](#) label.
- Follow product label instructions, don't mix chemicals, and ventilate when painting, cleaning, sanitizing or disinfecting.
- Use non-chemical methods like [integrated pest management](#) whenever possible to manage pests. Avoid using pesticide sprays and foggers.
- Avoid [smoking](#) or using e-cigarettes indoors. If you live in multi-unit housing, consider advocating for a smoke-free policy in your building.

## Check for Lead and Radon



- Test for [lead](#) in your home or school if it was built before 1978 and consult with your child's healthcare provider for advice on blood lead testing.
- Test your home or school for [radon](#) and fix if needed. Exposure to radon is the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S.



Scan this QR code with your smartphone camera to view [this document](#) online



Scan here to visit EPA's [Indoor Air Quality](#) site, including resources for schools



May 2022