



# Family and Consumer Sciences Newsline

## Properly Disposing of Prescription Drugs

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For years, consumers have operated under the premise that *anything as safe as medicine is to ingest was safe to dispose of via the toilet.*

Flushing unused medications avoided “misuse” of substances and got them away from small children at home, pets that raid trash cans, etc. Until recently, most consumers did not consider potential long term consequences of such a wide spread practice. In 2002, the U.S. Geological Survey released a national study of surface waters. Of 139 streams involved in the study, a shocking 80 percent had common pharmaceutical drugs such as antidepressants, hormones and antibiotics.

Municipal sewage treatment plants are not engineered for pharmaceutical removal. Consequently, many medicines are not captured or only partially captured during the process and may pass through a wastewater treatment plant intact, only to be released back into the environment along with treated water.

Many municipal water departments have guidelines about what is and is not acceptable for disposal via sewer systems. Contact the local water department for specific guidelines.

Septic systems allow the earth to serve as a giant filter. If having a home septic system leaves you feeling very unaffected, consider that medicines flushed down those toilets can harm beneficial bacteria responsible for breaking down waste in the septic system. Much misuse via septic systems could allow leaching of substances into private wells, depending on conditions at particular sites.

- Call local trash service for options. Some have household waste facilities where medications can be incinerated.
  - Ask your pharmacist if there are disposal options in your area.
  - If you must dispose of unused medicine in the trash, add a little water to solid medications, or solidify liquid medicines with some cat litter, sawdust or flour to keep medications from being taken accidentally by a child or pet.
  - Keep products in original containers. Pharmaceutical container caps are typically watertight and child proof. Double seal the container inside another container or heavy bag to prevent easy identification of the drug container or to prevent breaking of glass containers.
  - Only purchase what you need.
  - Say “No” to samples if you are not going to use them. They require disposal later.
  - Centralize pharmaceuticals in the home to one location to limit over-purchasing products. Read labels. Buy alternatives for any product which contains mercury.
- Read the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy’s “Unused Prescription Drug Program for Oklahoma’s Medically Indigent” at [www.pharmacy.ok.gov](http://www.pharmacy.ok.gov). Click on “Rules” and read Chapter 12 of the 2005 Oklahoma Pharmacy Lawbook. Only unused medicines from licensed nursing home and assisted living centers are accepted at this time.

**1 Wash Your Hands for 20 Seconds :**

Wash your hands with hot, soapy water for 20 seconds before and after handling food, after touching raw meat, changing a diaper, using the restroom, handling a pet or touching anything that could contaminate your hands.

Wash produce even if you don't plan on eating the skin or peel. Remember you don't know who handled the banana; if some critter ran across in a storage facility; or if someone sneezed on it. Wash everything before consuming. The same is true with melons. The knife edge could be contaminated from the outer skin when cutting through to the melon. Wash it first!

Once you have washed salad vegetables with lukewarm water, you may follow up with cool water in order to crisp the produce. Leafy vegetables such as lettuce and cabbage should have the outer leaves pulled off and discarded. Then the heads should be washed and drained.

**W**hat can you do to protect you and your family from harmful bacteria on fresh fruits and vegetables? Food safety begins with clean running water. From the producer, to the processor and distributor, to the consumer, it is everyone's responsibility to make sure food is safe to eat. Fresh fruits and vegetables can occasionally become contaminated with pathogens, harmful bacteria or viruses which can make individuals sick. This contamination can occur at any point from harvest to

**2 Sanitize cooking areas:**

Use ¼ cup of chlorine bleach in the dishwasher cycle to help kill bacteria. To clean countertops, use a mixture of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach with 1 quart of water.

table. The recent dealings with E.coli 0157:H7 illness linked to bagged fresh spinach and lettuce have affected consumers from several states; however, the risk is always present. As a consumer, it is your responsibility to make sure the food in your home is handled properly.

Source: Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Service

**3 Wash the Produce: Use LUKEWARM Running water for most produce.**

Break vegetables apart that have tight heads such as broccoli or cauliflower before washing. Do not soak produce. Rinse the produce under lukewarm running water for at least 20 seconds or lift in and out of clean water in a colander until the water is clear.

**Vegetable of the Month**

**Pumpkin**

**T**he bright orange color of pumpkin is a dead giveaway that pumpkin is loaded with an important antioxidant, beta-carotene. Beta-carotene is one of the plant carotenoids converted to vitamin A in the body. In the conversion to vitamin A, beta carotene performs many important functions in overall health.

Current research indicates that a diet rich in foods containing beta-carotene may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer and offers protection against heart disease. Beta-carotene offers protection against other diseases as well as some degenerative aspects of aging.

Source: Healthy Living A—Z, Oklahoma State University



Calories 49  
 Protein 2 grams  
 Carbohydrate 12 grams  
 Dietary Fiber 3 grams  
 Calcium 37 mg  
 Iron 1.4 mg  
 Magnesium 22 mg  
 Potassium 564 mg

Zinc 1 mg  
 Selenium .50 mg  
 Vitamin C 12 mg  
 Niacin 1 mg  
 Folate 21 mcg  
 Vitamin A 2650 IU  
 Vitamin E 3 mg

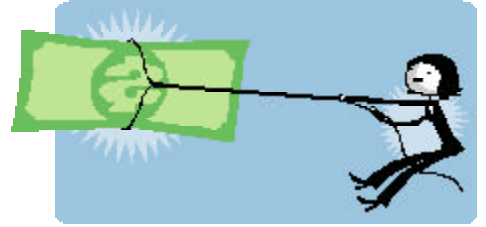
**Pumpkin Muffins**

- 1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup cooking oil
- 1/3 cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 beaten egg
- ¾ cup canned pumpkin

1. Grease twelve 2 ½ inch muffin cups or line with paper bake cups; set aside. In a medium mixing bowl combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Make a well in the center of dry moisture; set aside.
2. In another mixing bowl combine egg, milk, pumpkin, and oil. Add egg mixture all at once to the dry mixture. Stir just until moistened. Batter should be slightly lumpy.
3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each 2/3 full. Bake at 400° F over 20 minutes or until golden. Cool in muffin cups on wire rack for 5 minutes. Remove from muffin cups. Let cool and store in air tight bag until ready to eat, or freeze and reheat in the microwave. Makes 10 – 12 muffins.

## Tips to Keep Holiday Spending in Check

- Establish an overall spending limit and keep track of where you stand as the holiday season progresses. Keep receipts for all of your purchases. Not only does this help you track your spending; it also allows you to make exchanges and returns if necessary. You may want to ask for gift receipts for that difficult to buy for person.
- Suggest your extended family participate in a "pick a name" gift exchange. That way everyone receives a thoughtfully chosen gift and no one goes broke from the need to buy numerous presents. This also saves valuable shopping time.
- Keep all your credit charges to one or two cards. Psychologically you will be likely to spend less money. Write down your credit card purchases just as you would on a check register or debit card register.
- Keep an envelope for receipts so you can tally purchases at the end of the day.
- Avoid splurging on spur-of-the-moment gifts.
- Plan ahead and have ingredients for easy to fix dinners in the cupboard so you won't splurge on fast-food meals during busy shopping times.
- Don't pay for the gang's meals with your credit card. Pay for office parties or other group events "dutch treat" so no one is caught with the entire bill. Even if everyone offers to pay you cash, don't put the charge on your card. Most likely, you will end up spending the cash on other things and you'll still have a big credit card bill in January.
- Stock up on cards, gift wrap and decorations during the post-holiday sales.
- There are on-line budget calculators available to help you determine your holiday expenditures and gift giving log You can log onto [www.oces.tulsacounty.org](http://www.oces.tulsacounty.org) for links. Click on Family Financial Management.
- Remember, if you can't pay off the credit card bill when it arrives, you'll end up paying high interest payments...so much for saving on sales!
- The most important thing is to enjoy the holidays; however, using these tips to keep your spending in check will prevent you from paying in the New Year.



Source: Iowa State University, Money Talks

## Gift Cards Are Great But Beware of Risks and Costs

**Y**ou probably love giving gift cards so that the recipients can pick out exactly what they want. Gift cards are easy to buy and give to friends and relatives because they are widely available at stores and even banks, but while gift cards may seem to be the perfect gift, they also can come with potential risks and costs. Whether you're giving or receiving a gift card, remember this: **Watch out for fees.** You may be charged a fee for purchasing a gift card. You also may have fees deducted each time you use the card at a store or restaurant. Or, you may be charged fees for not using the card, perhaps \$1 or more each month after going a year or so without making a purchase. "When a fee is deducted, that's less money for you to spend," said Janet Kincaid, FDIC Senior Consumer Affairs Officer.

**Find out if there is an expiration date.** "Gift cards aren't exactly like cash—they usually can't be used indefinitely," advised Kincaid. "You don't want to put gift cards away and forget about them because, if you let them expire, you could lose the entire balance on the card."

**Immediately report a lost or stolen gift card to the card issuer.** Some companies will replace a lost card (for a fee), others may not.

**If you have a problem with a gift card that you can't solve by talking to a store employee,** consider contacting you're the Better Business Bureau or government's consumer protection office, which may be listed in the local phone book or other directories.

Source: <http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/cnsum06/giftcards.html>

**R**ight about now, many of us are beginning to

experience this unique season of the year. No doubt about it, you may already have felt the need for more time, more money, and more help! Awe, yes, it is the holiday's. Make your holidays safe by taking time practicing safety in the home.

1. Learn about carbon monoxide (CO), the silent killer. Colorless, odorless and tasteless, it can invade your home without warning. As you breathe it in, the CO displaces the oxygen you need to survive. Even in small quantities it can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, irregular breathing, sleepiness, and confusion. In larger concentrations it leads to unconsciousness and death.

2. Be aware of the sources of carbon monoxide. Wherever there is incomplete combustion, there will be carbon monoxide. Some causes of carbon monoxide poisoning in the home include:

- a defective chimney
- improperly installed gas appliances (for example, a stove, cook top, or clothes dryer)
- a car running in an attached garage
- a barbecue used in an enclosed area
- gas or wood-burning fireplaces
- corroded or disconnected vent pipe
- blocked vents
- cracked heat exchanger
- portable heater (for example, one fueled by gas, propane or kerosene).

3. To help prevent CO hazards in your home, have a qualified heating contractor perform a yearly maintenance check of your furnace and venting systems, as well as fireplaces, chimneys, and all fuel-burning appliances.

4. A properly installed CO alarm can alert you to the presence of carbon monoxide. If the alarm sounds, **GET OUT OF THE HOME QUICKLY**. Call the fire department from another location and

## Holiday Home Safety Tips



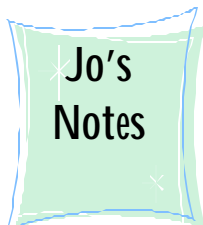
ask them to check your home for the presence of carbon monoxide.

5. When choosing a CO alarm, look for the CSA Blue Flame mark and the reference CSA 6.19-01 – the most up-to-date standard. This shows that the unit complies with recognized safety standards. Choose a suitable power source for your purposes: battery operated, plug-in, or hardwired. Some plug-in or hardwired models have a battery backup so that the alarm will sound even if the electrical power is shut off.

6. If you have only one CO alarm, install it at knee height near the sleeping area. It is a good idea to have a second detector near your furnace or heat source. If your home has more than one level, consider installing a detector on each level. Change the batteries at least twice a year – for example, when you change your clocks with Daylight Savings Time.

### OTHER HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS FROM CSA International

1. Clean or replace your furnace filter frequently during the heating season.
2. Do not store combustible materials such as paper, chemicals, paint, rags and cleaning products near your gas furnace. Do not store or use gasoline or other flammable vapors and liquids in the vicinity of your gas furnace or gas water heater.
3. Before reusing indoor and outdoor light strings check and discard if they have frayed cords, cracks in lamp holders or loose connections. Faulty cords and plugs on holiday lighting is the number one cause of indoor fires during the holidays.
4. Always turn off indoor holiday lighting before going to bed or leaving your home.
5. Never connect more than one extension cord together; instead use a single cord that is long enough to reach to the outlet without stretching.
6. When hanging lights, keep electrical connectors off the ground and away from metal eaves troughs. Use insulated tape or plastic clips instead of metal nails or tacks to hold them in place.
7. Use a certified outdoor timer to switch lights on and off. Lights should be turned on after 7p.m. to avoid the “electricity rush hour.”



**T**he brisk, cool mornings are indeed the signs of autumn. It also turns our minds to the approaching holiday season. The year seems to have gone by so quickly. I hope you are all making plans for the upcoming OHCE activities.

**Reminders and looking ahead:**

**November/December Case—Candleliters**

- November 3 All award entries are due including nominees for Group Heart of OHCE, Member, Rookie, and Young Member of the Year to the Extension Office.
- November 3 2007 Group Officers List Due to the Extension Office.
- November 3 Holiday Luncheon Cover entries due to the Extension Office.
- November 3 Holiday Luncheon decoration making workshop is scheduled at the Extension Office at 10:00 a.m.

- November 10 Extension Office closed for Veterans Day
- November 16-17 Celebrate Oklahoma! 10-2:30 p.m. OSU Extension Center—Make a Fall Table Runner with Log Cabin Quilt Squares. Supplies provided. Cost: \$40.00. Registration due by Nov. 9.
- November 23/24 Extension Office closed for Thanksgiving Holidays.
- December 6 Holiday Luncheon, Garnett Church of Christ
- December 8 OHCE Board meeting—review 2007 Yearbook—1:00 p.m. OSU Extension Center
- December 11 Quilt sewing at Jo's House at 1:00 p.m.
- January 4 OHCE Board meeting, OSU Extension Center 10:00 a.m.

Jo Harkrider  
OHCE- TC President



**Beginning Sewing Class Offered**

**C**elebrate Oklahoma by making a Fall Table Runner using Log Cabin Quilt Squares. This beginning sewing class is set

for Thursday and Friday, November 16 and 17 from 10:00 a.m.—2:30 p.m. Fabric supplies are provided. Bring your own sewing machine, sewing tools, and sack lunch.

Date: November 16 & 17

Time: 10:00 a.m.—2:30 p.m.

Cost is \$40.00.

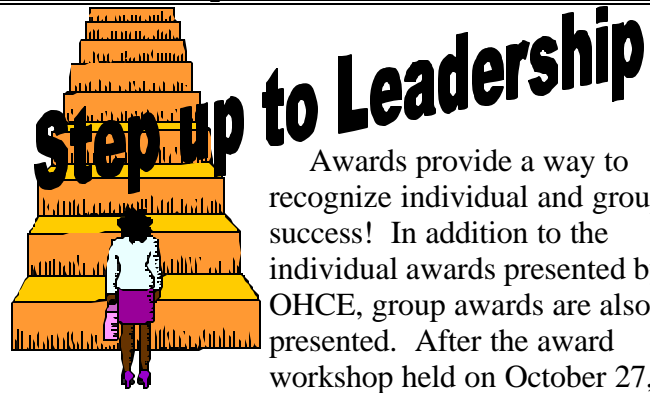
Registration due by Nov. 9. To register, come by the OSU Extension Center between 8:00—4:00 Monday through Friday. Checks and cash are accepted. This class is being taught by Judith Gillmore and Charlotte Richert. HCE Members are encouraged to help and/or attend. Call 746-3721 if you have questions.

**Home Holiday Safety Quiz**

Answer the following questions by circling T for True or F for False. For more information read page 4 of this newsletter.

- T/F Faulty cords and plugs on holiday lighting is the number one cause of indoor fires during the holiday season.
- T/F I like to arrive at home and see our lights on, so I leave them on while we go out. This is not a hazard.
- T/F There are special considerations and care for fresh Christmas trees and greenery.
- T/F Carbon monoxide has a distinct odor that I will be able to notice in my home.
- T/F You can count on batteries to last at least a year in my CO and Smoke Alarms.
- T/F It's a good idea to place CO Alarms and Smoke alarms together.
- T/F Regular housekeeping is important for CO alarms.
- T/F If the garage door is kept open, it is safe to use my gas BBQ in the garage.
- T/F It is not safe to connect more than one extension cord together.

Source: CSA International Holiday Quiz, [www.csaholiday.com](http://www.csaholiday.com)



**Yuletide around the world!**

The **73rd Annual OHCE Holiday and Awards Luncheon** is on Wednesday, December 6 at the Garnett Church of Christ. Cost is \$10.00 for members and \$12.00 for guests. Deadline is November 15 or before. Fees should be paid to your group treasurer. Please be ready to be seated at 11:00 AM.

**Theme :** “Yuletide Around the World” Each group can pick the country of their choice. Please bring at least one (1) decorative item for the country your group selects to be given away.

**Door Prize:** One basket is needed from each group of a \$20.00 value.

**Entertainment:**

**Vocal:** Adelaide Evans

**Book Review:** Marilyn Newkirk

**Toys for Tots for Marines**

The church also has a Food Pantry if you would like to contribute.

A **decoration workshop is being** held on Friday, November 3 at 10:00 a.m. at the OSU Extension Center. Bring a sack lunch and plan on a fun and productive day!

REMEMBER November 3 is also the deadline for Program Covers! Computer generated entries should enter a hard copy and an electronic copy. Should be in jpeg or gif format.

Source: Patsy Rowland  
Committee Chairman

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Awards provide a way to recognize individual and group success! In addition to the individual awards presented by OHCE, group awards are also presented. After the award workshop held on October 27, it was recommended that Tulsa County OHCE Chairmen summarize each groups’ work in the areas of:

Cultural Enrichment

Family

Healthy Living

Membership

Resource Management

We will be working to submit award entries for many of these categories based on the input we get from you! Check the objectives listed in your handbook.

Make sure you pay attention to the rules and guidelines for the *Life Story Essay Contest* on page 76 and 77 in the state handbook.

- The story should be about ONE event or time in life.
- Member must be in good standing.
- Must be written on a typewriter or computer using New Times Roman font at 10 or 12 size and double spaced with a 1 1/2 inch left hand margin. It should be at least two pages, but not exceeding 3000 words in length.
- Must include the Life Essay Release Form.
- Do not include photographs.

Sincerely,

Charlotte L. Richert  
OSU Extension Educator-Tulsa County

This newsletter is published by OSU Extension Service/Tulsa County Family and Consumer Sciences Department. Information about Oklahoma Home and Community Education (OHCE) groups may be obtained by contacting Tulsa County Extension, 4116 East 15th St., Tulsa, OK 74112, 918-746-3703 or log onto: [www.oces.tulsacounty.org](http://www.oces.tulsacounty.org). 800 newsletters are produced at .18 cents per item for a total of \$144.00.