

SILVER THREADS

Know about indoor air hazards

by **Marsha Alexander**
**Housing and
Environmental Design
Jackson County**

alexanderm@missouri.edu

Have you ever considered if the air you're breathing at home is healthy? It's estimated that most of us spend about 90% of our time indoors. Older adults are likely to spend even more time inside. It's crucial that you're aware of the condition of the air inside your home and how to improve it when needed.

Biological pollutants such as molds, mildew, fungi, bacteria and dust mites are some of the main biological pollutants found inside the house. Mold, mildew, fungi and bacteria are often found in areas of the home that have high humidity levels, such as kitchens, baths, laundry room and basements. Dust

mites and animal dander are other examples of biologicals. Allergic reactions often occur with symptoms including watery eyes, runny nose and sneezing, congestion, itching, coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing, headaches, dizziness and fatigue. Dust mites have been identified as the single most

studied trigger for asthma attacks.

'Watch for the danger signs'

Mold and mildew are two of the most common concerns. Mold growth should be suspected wherever there are water stains, standing water or moist surfaces. Prevent mold growth by keeping surfaces and rooms clean and dry. Keep humidity levels at acceptable levels, less than 50 percent, and make sure there's plenty of ventilation, especially in bathrooms and kitchens.

Watch for these signs

- ❖ Stale, stuffy air with a distinctive odor
- ❖ Noticeable lack of air movement
- ❖ Dirty or faulty central heating or air conditioning equipment
- ❖ Damaged flue pipes or chimneys
- ❖ Excessive humidity
- ❖ Tightly constructed or remodeled home
- ❖ Presence of molds and mildew
- ❖ Feeling noticeably healthier outside the house

Inside:

Colon Cancer...Pg 2

Recipe.....Pg 2

Death and Dying..Pg 3

Shut Your Mouth..Pg 4

Can aspirin lower your risk of cancer?

by **Susan Mills-Gray**
Nutrition/Health
Specialist
Cass County

millsgrays@missouri.edu

According to a new study, daily use of low-dose aspirin can lower the risk of developing colon cancer and the risk of dying from it.

'Don't start popping baby aspirin'

That's potentially good news for people who already take aspirin to reduce their risk of heart attack or stroke. But it doesn't mean otherwise healthy people should start popping baby aspirin!

Daily low doses (75mg - 300 mg) of aspirin were just as effective as higher doses. Taking aspirin for 5 years or longer reduced risk more than taking aspirin for less time. "The study demonstrates that the lower doses of aspirin typically taken for heart disease prevention are adequate to reduce risk not only of colorectal polyps, but also of colorectal cancer," adds Eric Jacobs, PhD, and director of epidemiology at the American Cancer Society (ACS).

Nevertheless, the American Cancer Society does not

recommend taking aspirin as a colon cancer prevention measure, Jacobs emphasizes.

"Aspirin, even at low doses, substantially increases the risk of serious, occasionally fatal, gastrointestinal bleeding," he says. "Current

evidence suggests that very low doses of aspirin (such as 81 mg)

may increase risk of gastrointestinal bleeding as much, or nearly as much, as higher doses, such as 500 mg."

Decisions about whether you should start taking aspirin must be made by balancing the **benefits** of aspirin use in preventing cardiovascular disease against the **risks** of

gastrointestinal bleeding. You should take into account your individual medical history and risk factors.

Colon cancer screening is still crucial. It's very important to get screened for colorectal cancer so that colorectal polyps can be detected and removed before they ever turn into cancer. The ACS recommends regular colon cancer screening for men and women starting at age 50. People who are at a higher-than-average risk of the disease (those with a family history of colon cancer) may need to begin getting tested earlier or have more frequent tests. (Sources: American Cancer Society; UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, Dec. 2010).

Pumpkin Bread Pudding



4 oz (3 cups) French bread, torn into small pieces,
 1 cup half-and-half
 2 medium eggs
 1/3 cup granulated sugar
 1/3 cup brown sugar
 1/2 can pumpkin puree

1/2 cup dried cranberries
 1 1/2 T. melted butter
 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
 1/4 tsp. ground ginger
 1/2 tsp vanilla

1. Butter an 11x7-inch baking dish. Heat oven to 350°. In a bowl, cover the torn bread with the half-and-half; set aside.
2. In another bowl, combine eggs, sugars, pumpkin, cranberries, melted butter, spices, and vanilla; blend well. Pour pumpkin mixture over soaked bread and stir to blend.
3. Pour mixture into the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle top with cinnamon-sugar, if desired. Bake for 45-60 minutes, or until set.

Are you prepared for the future?

by Janet LaFon

Family Financial Educ.

Jasper County

lafonj@missouri.edu

Most of us don't like to talk about death and dying, especially our own or those close to us. But like it or not, death is inevitable. As you're probably well aware, the passing of a loved one can be very emotional and stressful. But by being prepared, this difficult time can be made a little more bearable.

One of the best places to begin is to review the following list. Determine if you have all of this information available. Also, consider if you have access to this information for others you may need to help, such as a spouse, parents or adult children. If not, use this list as a way to begin a conversation.

1. Have you considered who you would want to have your property? Many family disagreements begin when dividing property at the death of a loved one. To make sure your wishes are followed, as well as reducing the possibility of creating family

tension, prepare a will and keep it up-to-date. It is also helpful to have a list of who you wish to receive particular items of personal property.

2. Make a list of all of your assets and liabilities. Be sure to include where the assets are located. Billions of dollars worth of assets go unclaimed every year because beneficiaries have no idea they even exist.

3. Keep all of your important financial documents in one location where they can easily be located. This will save you or others time when looking for them.

4. Decide who you would want to handle your affairs if you were to become mentally or physically incapacitated. This may be one of the toughest things to do. None of us are comfortable when confronted with this possibility. However, getting the court to appoint someone after the fact can be stressful and expensive. And it may not be the person you prefer.

5. If you haven't done it already, you may wish to complete a health care

directive and durable power of attorney for health care. These are essential to help guide a person making medical decisions for you if you become incapacitated. If you have completed these documents, take time to review them to make sure they are still current.

6. Review your current medical insurance to be sure you have adequate coverage, but are not overinsured. While many older people have Medicare, supplemental coverage may also be needed.

7. Consider the possibility you will need long-term care in the future. If needed, what options do you prefer? How will you pay for this care? Many people are not aware that long-term or custodial care in a nursing home is not covered by Medicare.

8. You may want to make your own funeral arrangements or at least discuss your preferences/wishes with someone who will be making the arrangements for you.

9. Do you have a desire to be an organ donor? If so, be sure to let others know about your wishes.

'The future is not certain, so prepare'

Have you been hung by the tongue?

by Alan Munday
Youth Specialist
Bates County

mundaya@missouri.edu

Are you one of those folks who have the unfortunate habit of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time?

Gary Eby, international trainer and sales strategist, shares the following stories.

"A state trooper pulled a man over for speeding on a deserted road. Since the road was clear, the trooper indicated that he wouldn't give the man a ticket, and let him off with a warning. He even complimented the couple for wearing their seat belts. At that point the woman leaned over and said, 'Well, officer, when you drive the speeds we do, you have to wear them.' " That's when the trooper wrote the ticket.

Hung By the Tongue!

"Gene and Carolyn were entertaining after their baby's birth. When one of Gene's buddies arrived with his girl friend, a woman whom Carolyn didn't like, she beckoned her husband upstairs to check on the baby.

In the the nursery, she spoke freely of her disdain for the woman. When they went back downstairs, they were greeted with silence-- except for the occasional murmuring of the baby coming from the infant monitor sitting on the table."

'Learn to think before you speak'

Hung by the tongue!

Haven't we all experienced a

situation like one of these? The old expression "Be sure to put brain in gear before putting mouth in motion" definitely holds true. Many times we speak before we think; and by doing so, we sometimes hurt others' feelings, embarrass ourselves, and/or destroy friendships.

There is an ancient Japanese proverb that says... "A tongue three inches long can kill a man six feet tall."

How can we avoid these verbal gaffes? We must learn to think before we speak. Sounds simple enough, doesn't it? We must be careful not to say the first thing that comes into our mind! Give some thought to what you really want to say. Words once said are hard to take back. As Gary Eby says, "Make your words sweet, just in case you have to eat them!"

Remember, Samson slew 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. Way too many businesses, lives and relationships are destroyed with the same weapon.



is written by University of Missouri Extension Regional Specialists for older adults living in Missouri. This newsletter is provided by your local county University of Missouri Extension Council. For information on, guide sheets or home economics topics, contact the University of Missouri Extension Center nearest you. For specific questions, contact:

Diana Milne

Diana Milne

Human Development Specialist

**Clay County
1901 NE 48th St
Kansas City, MO 64118
Phone: (816) 407-3490**

Disclaimer: No special endorsement of any specific product is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.