



Henry/Stark Counties

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(309) 932-3447
Tues, Wed, Thur. 8 am - 4 pm

Mercer County

910 13th St. Viola, IL
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321 W 2nd Ave. Milan, IL
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Cultivate an Attitude of Gratitude for Better Health

*Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension nutrition and wellness educator.
Hear her podcast at go.illinois.edu/WellnessWakeup*

As fall arrives and nature transitions, it brings a special opportunity to pause and appreciate the simple joys of life. The crisp air, colorful leaves, and cozy gatherings with loved ones encourage us to reflect on the good around us and cultivate an attitude of gratitude. Embracing gratitude during autumn prepares us emotionally for the colder, darker months by fostering positivity, resilience, and contentment with what we have.

Practicing gratitude is more than just a feel-good exercise; it's a transformative habit with measurable benefits. Research shows that people who regularly express gratitude are happier, more resilient, and better able to handle stress. Gratitude can boost mental clarity, enhance decision-making, and even improve physical health. When we focus on what we are thankful for, we build stronger connections, show more kindness, and feel more at peace.

These practices help us savor good moments and reframe challenges with positivity. Over time, gratitude can improve sleep, boost optimism, and foster emotional resilience. This season, make gratitude part of your routine and enjoy the benefits that follow.



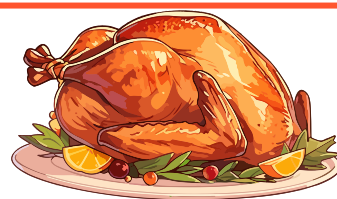
Ways to Start Practicing Gratitude This Fall:

- **Daily Affirmations:** Begin or end each day with affirmations to reinforce positive thinking. Try simple phrases like:
 - "I believe in myself."
 - "I am capable, kind, and worthy of good things."
- **Gratitude Journal:** Keep a notebook or use an app to jot down three things you're thankful for each day.
- **Family Gratitude Time:** Share what you're grateful for at the dinner table, sparking meaningful conversations and mindfulness.
- **Reflection Questions:** Consider questions that help uncover gratitude, such as "What made me smile today?" or "Who am I grateful for?"

Choosing Your Turkey: A Guide to Buying the Perfect Bird

Are you hosting Thanksgiving or in charge of bringing the turkey? When preparing for a holiday meal, choosing the right turkey is essential. Here's a quick guide to help you decide on size, type, and storage.

- **How Much to Buy** Plan for about one pound of turkey per person, or 1.5 pounds if you want ample leftovers or expect hearty appetites. For mixed gatherings of adults and children, one pound per person usually balances out. If your turkey is pre-stuffed, plan for 1.5 pounds per person. For bone-in turkey breasts, half a pound per person is enough.
- **Fresh vs. Frozen** Frozen turkeys can be stored for months, so you can purchase one well in advance. Fresh turkeys, however, should only be bought 1-2 days before cooking. If needed, fresh turkeys can also be frozen for up to 12 months.
- **Check labels** USDA Grade A symbol indicates the highest quality. Pre-basted turkeys contain added broth or spices for flavor, while un-basted turkeys have no added ingredients.
- **Hen or Tom Turkey?** Hens are generally under 16 pounds and often have more edible meat than larger toms, which are over 16 pounds. However, tenderness depends on the bird's age, not gender.
- **Wild and Smoked Turkeys** Wild turkeys are leaner due to their active lifestyles and are best cooked using moist heat to avoid dryness. Smoked turkeys are fully cooked and only need reheating unless stated otherwise on the label. They can be refrigerated for up to a week, but once opened, use them within three to four days.



For more tips and recipes, visit Illinois Extension's Turkey website at extension.illinois.edu/turkey.



Create Winter Terrariums: Four Seasons Webinar Tues Nov 12, 1:30 PM

Terrariums are wonderful accents for a home all year round, especially during the holidays and into winter. Live plants in a terrarium add color and serve as a reminder that spring is not far away. Participants will explore terrarium basics and plant choices in more detail. Learn the steps to make gumball machine terrariums for your home or to give to others as a handmade gift.

Register at go.illinois.edu/4SGTerrariums



Autumn Health Picks Series

Sign up at go.illinois.edu/FallHealthPicks

Get research-based information on complex health issues in this free online series, where experts from the University of Illinois offer holistic solutions to address health challenges.

Add a Little Bit of Spice: Seasoning Awareness and Culturally Tailoring Foods | Nov. 6, Noon.

Tired of eating the same things over and over again? Spices and herbs are a great way to help enhance your food and make your typical home-cooked dishes more flavorful. There are thousands of different spices and herbs found in various regions all over the world. However, there are gaps in awareness and utilization of specific spices, especially in healthcare settings. Enhance your culinary skills with a presentation that will broaden your understanding of global spices and herbs and discover how to seamlessly incorporate them into your diet.

Transform Your Aging Experience: How Mindfulness and Resilience Work Together | Nov. 13, Noon.

Aging brings unique challenges, both physical and emotional. Integrating mindfulness into daily life can transform aging into a more empowering and fulfilling experience. Mindfulness helps us stay present, reduce stress, and cultivate acceptance of the changes that come with aging. This presentation will explore practical ways to combine these powerful practices to navigate aging with grace, strength, and emotional well-being.



Estate Planning 101: Know the Basics: Lesson for Living Webinar Nov 14, 10 a.m.

Get an estate planning checklist and much more. Have you ever felt overwhelmed when you heard "estate planning"? In this session, we hope you become less fearful of estate planning, learn some basic concepts and terms related to estate planning, and gather resources to aid you in getting your affairs in order.

Sign up at go.illinois.edu/EstatePlanning101

A photograph of a glass jar filled with a thick, white, bubbly sourdough starter next to a loaf of rustic, crusty sourdough bread. The text "From Flour to Ferment: Sourdough Starter Essentials" is overlaid in a blue box with white text.

From Flour to Ferment: Sourdough Starter Essentials

From Flour to Ferment: Sourdough Starter Essentials Series

Uncover the secrets behind turning simple ingredients into flavorful, crusty loaves! Designed for beginners, this two-part webinar series will take you from start to finish.

Sign up at go.illinois.edu/SourdoughSeries

November 26, Noon - Sourdough Starter Essentials

Learn simple steps to create your own starter with just flour and water. Dive into sourdough fermentation's long history and science and learn how to make your starter with two simple ingredients: flour and water. We'll discuss the benefits of using local grain flour and walk you through creating and maintaining a sourdough starter.

December 6, Noon- Sourdough Bread Making Essentials

Rise and Shine! Sourdough Bread Making Essentials
Why is sourdough bread so popular? Learn the benefits of sourdough and explore the fundamental steps to making your own sourdough bread. We'll talk about gluten development, bulk fermenting and hydration. Plus, we'll demonstrate proper shaping for the best oven rise that will impress your friends!

November is National Diabetes Month

Understanding the Impact of Diabetes & Taking Control of Your Health

By Kristin Bogdonas, nutrition and wellness educator

November is National Diabetes Month. Did you know... 1 in 10 Americans has diabetes? That's more than 37 million people. In our area alone, 13% of adults have diabetes. Another 11% have been told they have pre-diabetes or "borderline" diabetes.

Don't let prediabetes take you by surprise. You can have prediabetes for years without symptoms which makes sense why more than 80% of people don't know they have it! Once you know your blood glucose (or blood sugar) levels are elevated, you can make necessary lifestyle changes to prevent or delay disease progression. If you don't do anything, many with prediabetes will develop type 2 diabetes within 10 years.

Both, diabetes and prediabetes increase your risk for heart disease and stroke, so don't delay. Taking charge of your health today may help you prevent diabetes health problems down the road involving your heart, eyes, and nerves.

Find out your risk for prediabetes by taking a 1-minute quiz online at doihaveprediabetes.org/take-the-risk-test#/



With the rise in food costs, it can be a challenge to eat a well, balanced diet AND pay for health care costs.

It's estimated that a person with diabetes pays more than twice as much a year for health care as a person who doesn't have diabetes. Here are few tips from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) on how to save money on diabetes care:

1. **To save on medicine**, call your health insurance company to find out which medicines are covered at the lowest cost to you and compare pharmacies for the least expensive prescription prices. Your neighborhood drug store may not have the lowest.
2. **To save on supplies**, consider buying in bulk online rather than buying as needed. You can also ask your diabetes educator for samples.
3. **To save on treatment**, ask your doctor about research studies for free care or supplies or ask to be referred to a diabetes education specialist. They often know about additional discounts and resources that may not be public knowledge.

Eating healthy doesn't have to cost a fortune.

Here are some money-saving tips:

1. **Prep at home.** Are you paying for produce AND prep work? Those pre-cut packages of vegetables and fruit can save time but you can save some serious money if you slice and dice the produce yourself.
2. **Stock up on various forms of food.** Fresh is not always best. Stocking up on lots of fresh produce generally leads to lots of food waste, especially if you're only cooking for one or two. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables can be equally nutritious if you select the low-sugar/sodium varieties. Frozen foods are also packed at peak ripeness so they preserve a lot of the nutrients that might be lost during transport to the store.
3. **Eat more plant-based proteins.** Enjoy smaller portions of fatty meat and more servings of beans, lentils, and chickpeas. This will reduce the amount of saturated fats in your diet and boost your fiber intake without sacrificing protein. This swap is good for your heart and also your wallet.

For more information, recipes and meal planning ideas, visit extension.illinois.edu/diabetes



96
Million

96 million American adults—more than 1 in 3—have prediabetes



More than 8 in 10
adults with prediabetes
don't know they have it

BLOOD SUGAR



With prediabetes, your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes

PREDIABETES RISKS

Prediabetes increases your risk of:



Type 2 Diabetes



Heart Disease



Stroke

TYPE 2 DIABETES HEALTH RISKS

If you ignore prediabetes, your risk for type 2 diabetes goes up — type 2 diabetes increases your risk for serious health complications:



Blindness



Kidney Failure



Heart Disease



Stroke



Loss of toes, feet, or legs



Supporting Pollinators in Your Fall Garden Cleanup

Adapted from an article by Gemini Bhalsod, Illinois Extension horticulture educator.

Pollinators are essential to our food supply and ecosystems, with 35% of food crops depending on them. Beyond honeybees, moths, butterflies, wasps, beetles, and native bees all play vital roles. Unfortunately, habitat loss and climate change are causing pollinator declines, but a few simple fall gardening steps can help.

- **Leave Leaves:** Instead of raking, leave some leaves in garden beds to insulate overwintering insects like moths and butterflies. Leaves also add nutrients to the soil as they decompose.
- **Keep Flower Stems:** Keep some flower stems standing, as pollinators like mason bees use hollow stems for nesting. Seed heads from plants like sunflowers provide winter food for birds.
- **Create a Brush Pile:** Fallen branches and leaves in a corner of the garden create a warm, sheltered habitat for bees and butterflies.
- **Leave Bare Ground:** Many native bees nest in the soil. Avoid covering all bare ground with mulch to support ground-nesting bees.
- **For pest issues,** clear affected plants to prevent overwintering pests.

Come next spring, wait to fully clear garden debris until temperatures consistently reach 50°F to give overwintering pollinators a chance to emerge safely.

Learn more at go.illinois.edu/IllinoisPollinators.



How Leaves Impact Water Quality—and What to Do

Adapted from a Good Growing article by Emily Swihart, Illinois Extension horticulture educator.

As trees shed leaves for winter dormancy, managing fallen leaves is crucial for water quality. In urban and suburban areas, leaves on streets, driveways, and storm drains are especially prone to washing into nearby rivers and lakes, releasing phosphorus and organic matter. These nutrients can cause algae blooms that harm fish and cloud the water, disrupting plant growth.

For those in residential neighborhoods or near waterways, here are some responsible leaf management options:

- **Mulch Leaves:** Mow leaves into your lawn to add free nutrients and reduce the chance of them washing away.
- **Compost:** Add leaves to compost with green materials (like vegetable scraps) to create rich compost.
- **Bag and Dispose:** Check your local leaf pick-up schedule for proper disposal, especially in high-drainage areas.
- **Create Wildlife Leaf Piles:** In wilder parts of the yard, pile leaves to provide shelter for small animals and insects while keeping them away from water sources.

Managing leaves responsibly helps protect water quality, and if you're supporting pollinators, consider where leaves are left to benefit insects without harming nearby water systems.

For more, visit the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction [blog](#) and [podcast](#) on "Fall leaves, clean streams."



Farmland Owners Conference | November 25, 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM Illinois Valley Community College, Oglesby | \$65.00

Gain knowledge and confidence to manage your land, support tenant relationships, and protect your land's legacy. at the Farmland Owners Conference. Topics include cash rent negotiations, land appraisals, soil fertility, solar energy, insurance, FSA forms, estate planning, and organic production.

Registration covers presentations, refreshments, and lunch.

Sign up by Nov. 20 at go.illinois.edu/Landowner2024.

Attention High-schoolers

JOIN 4-H TEEN TEACHERS



1st meeting, Mon. Nov 4 @ 6 p.m.,
University of Illinois Extension, Milan, IL



Are you in high school and interested in exploring your leadership and teaching skills while making new friends and positively impacting your community?

Join the Teen Teachers training program with University of Illinois Extension and 4-H!

Through monthly meetings, you'll develop the skills you need to be a great leader and gain access to opportunities where you can share those skills.

Find out more at our kickoff meeting on November 4, featuring a pizza party and a fun, interactive activity! Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable skills, build your confidence, and contribute to your community.

Call (309) 756-9978 or visit: go.illinois.edu/TeenTeachersKickoff or scan this QR Code:



4-H Staff Update

Lyndsey Flickinger hired as the Mercer County 4-H Program Coordinator

We are pleased to introduce Lyndsey Flickinger as our new 4-H Program Coordinator serving Mercer County!

Lyndsey grew up in Texas but moved to the Midwest to attend Iowa State University, graduating in 2022 with a degree in Animal Science.



She brings a wealth of agricultural knowledge and a deep passion for working with youth, and she's excited to lead and inspire the next generation of 4-H members in Mercer County!

You can connect with Lyndsey at the Mercer County office, which is open to the public Tuesday through Thursday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. (or other days by appointment). Feel free to reach out to her by email at lkflick@illinois.edu or give the office a call at 309-513-3100.



The Science of Awe Wonder Series

November Wonder: The Awe of Aurora Borealis

This month's Wonder Series dives into the awe-inspiring phenomenon of the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights. Our 4-H Metro Educator Elaine Kaple shares her own unforgettable experience seeing the aurora with her family right here in the Quad Cities—first in May and again with an even more brilliant display in October.

Auroras occur when solar particles interact with Earth's magnetic field and gases, creating beautiful colors that leave viewers breathless. Curious about the science behind this? Check out our full article and photos from her night on our website at go.illinois.edu/NovemberWonder