



rural spotlight

Economic Appeal in Rural Missouri

People who enjoy living in rural Missouri often talk about the friendly people, the beauty of the landscape and the laid-back rural lifestyle. But those aren't the only benefits of living in one of Missouri's rural communities. Rural Missouri is also vibrant with growing communities and economic growth.

For most of rural Missouri, a population center - the centerpoint of the county's population - is only a short drive away. The University of Missouri Extension estimates population centers with 10,000 people or more will grow in importance in the future. They will serve as hubs for all sorts of economic activities, drawing employers, retail shoppers and professional services.

In addition to the availability of services, rural Missourians enjoy a lower cost of living than rural citizens in many other states. According to the Rural MidAmerica Development Association, prices of common household expenses are about 7-percent less than the national average. That includes lower costs for groceries, gasoline, housing and transportation.

Rural Missouri also offers quality healthcare. Missouri has a total of 118 hospitals. Fifty-five are in rural areas. And nearly 350 rural health clinics operate across the state.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development programs ensure that rural Missouri continues to see investment and economic improvement. The USDA Rural Development programs invested more than 1-billion dollars into rural Missouri during fiscal year 2009. Community Development grants and loans made investments in improvements in areas including drinking water, quality housing, and high-speed Internet service, making rural Missouri an even more attractive place to live.

To learn more about economic data for your area, refer to the United States Census Web page at www.census.gov or the Missouri Department of Economic Development at www.missourieconomy.org//indicators/index.stm.

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Accessing Supportive Fitness Locations

Part of community wellness is making sure everyone in the community has access to facilities or activities that promote a healthy lifestyle. It also means helping and encouraging residents to use the walking trails, exercise center, and other facilities available.

There are many avenues one can take to find information about parks and trails. The first place to call is your local community's Department of Parks and Recreation. Many Missouri communities maintain online maps and other detailed information about their public exercise options.

Beyond the local community, many statewide resources exist, too. The Department of Natural Resources offers a comprehensive listing of state parks and other areas, with a variety of walking and biking trails. The listing can be found at www.mostateparks.com. The Katy Trail is Missouri's best-known bike trail, running from east to west across the middle of the state. Information about locations along the trail can be found at www.bikekatytrail.com.

Missouri communities have made great strides in recent years to make parks, wildlife areas and trails available to everyone. The Missouri Department of Conservation maintains a list of these and other facilities by region available to individuals with disabilities. The department's publication, "Disabled-Accessible Outdoors," found at <http://mdc.mo.gov/12183> lists available facilities by region. You can find it at the department's website.

Many hospitals offer classes that share exercise techniques and good nutrition. Your local hospital may also offer opportunities for health and wellness.

Farmer's Markets

...More than Healthy

You can find farmer's markets all over the state. There's no better place to discover the fresh taste of locally grown foods. Buying locally not only allows you to know exactly how your food was grown, but also allows you the opportunity to talk with the growers of those foods. Farmers' market vendors come from many different backgrounds and work their stands at the markets each week for a variety of different reasons. Most have interesting stories about how they came to the marketplace and why they grow or make the items they sell. Many vendors will tell you the social aspect of the market is one of its most appealing features. A strong relationship often develops between the vendors and



their repeat customers, which is often hard to find when buying your goods from a chain store.

The farmers' market can also be a great source of entertainment. From live music to performing artists to craftsmen, there's no telling what you might experience.

Buying locally not only helps boost your community's economy, but helps promote healthy eating habits and nutrition education. After all, you may find foods you never knew existed. Larger markets often feature a mix of cultural foods.

At most markets, each vendor has grown or produced the products they're selling. You'll find fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, plants, and fresh-cut and dried flowers in addition to items like jams, jellies and honey, baked goods, eggs and up and coming agricultural products. This makes the market a great resource for getting planting and growing tips from the experts to implement in your own garden. You can find information about farmers' markets across Missouri online at www.agrimissouri.com/farmersmarket.htm



Water Safety

Missouri summers are great for a family trip to the local swimming pool, lake or river. But there are some tips to keep everyone safe while in the water.

Here are a few small steps that can make your summer safer:

SWIMMING

- Learn to swim, and if you don't know how, take lessons. Call your local Red Cross or a nearby hospital for information.
- Swim in areas where a lifeguard is on duty, and make sure you closely supervise children at all times, even when a lifeguard is present.
- Make sure your home swimming pool is completely enclosed with a self-locking fence, and keep furniture away from the fence so children can't climb over to get to the water without adult supervision.
- Don't take chances by overestimating your swimming skills.
- Never dive into the water head-first, unless the area is clearly marked as safe for diving, as in a public swimming pool.
- Keep a phone by the pool to call 9-1-1 if there's an emergency.

BOATING

- Know the environment and the weather forecast.
- Read signs that might warn you about hazards like a strong current or depth changes. Get out of the water if the weather starts to get bad.
- Wear a life jacket. Check the label to make sure it is Coast Guard-approved.
- Don't overload the boat.
- Leave the alcohol behind.

Health Literacy

When you or a loved one become sick or need medical care, a quick trip to the doctor's office can turn into a lesson on health literacy.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines health literacy as "The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions". In the department's report, Healthy People 2010, improved health literacy is listed as an important step toward better communication, product safety and overall health. If you don't understand what you're being told by your doctor or what you've been given to read, your health can suffer. Health literacy has been proven to be an obstacle for all populations, but even more so for the most vulnerable members of society, like the elderly, minorities, and the uninsured.

To have quality care for an illness or condition you need to be able to understand instructions on prescription drug bottles, be able to decipher appointment slips, comprehend medical education brochures, know why you're being asked to sign consent forms, and be able to negotiate issues that may arise with the health care system. A recent shift toward consumer-centered health care has made these tasks easier.

You the patient, have the right to know what's going on with your health. You should feel comfortable asking questions or asking for

assistance reading and understanding materials given to you by your health care provider or pharmacist, like pamphlets or direction sheets. Information about almost every health issue can

be found online. The problem is, it's not always accurate. Be cautious about what you read and confirm the information with your doctor or nurse. Print out the information you find online and take it with you, so you can ask if it applies to your situation. Be an active participant in your own health care. If your health care provider is doing the job right, information about your health should be easily accessible to you, assistance should be offered, and the health professionals who treat you should ask you if you've understood everything they've told you.

A final step in increasing health literacy is to talk to children about it. Make sure children know that it's okay to ask questions if they don't understand what's going on with their health. Let them listen to the doctor talk about diagnosis and treatment. Only a patient knows how they feel. By understanding the care given, you'll be better able to know if it's working.

A video, produced by the Missouri Center for Patient Safety and the Missouri State Board of Nursing, provides real-world examples of the need to understand and be involved in decisions regarding medical treatment. It includes personal stories that show the risks of not being actively engaged in the quality and safety of medical care. The video can be found on You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx8Pt7x0Jk8> and also at www.mocps.org.



Accessing Affordable Health Care Through Community Health Centers

Missouri offers a number of Community Health Centers throughout the state. These are ideal locations for individuals looking for affordable health care. Services are provided by full-time board certified physicians, dentists and nurse practitioners. These sites are key to preventative care for individuals and families without insurance, without full insurance coverage, or lack a permanent medical or dental home. Without Community Health Centers, many families would go without any kind of preventative care, leading to millions of dollars in emergency care services down the road.

When you call to schedule an appointment, a staff member will inform you of the necessary paperwork you will need to bring with you. You may need to provide proof of income or unemployment. Community Health Centers treat patients with and without health insurance. Patients without insurance may be charged on a sliding fee based on income and family size. The number of patients taking advantage of the sliding fee has greatly increased with the economic downturn. Despite state funding cuts, these facilities continue to work to expand their services to meet the needs of underserved Missourians.

To find your nearest Community Health Center, search on Missouri's Department of Health and Senior Services website at www.dhss.mo.gov/Primary-CareRuralHealth/.



Correcting Health Myths

It doesn't really take chewing gum seven years to move through the digestive system. However, some of the materials in gum do make it more likely to digest in a lumpier form.



KIDS HEALTH TIP

Wild Animal Precautions

When camping or hiking, it can be tempting to approach wild animals you see along your path. They're cute and most look harmless. The fact is, some of these animals can be extremely dangerous. Beyond the threat of being attacked, wild animals can carry deadly diseases like rabies, hantavirus, Giardia infection, and more. Follow these tips to stay safe:

- Don't touch or feed wild animals.
- Stay back and watch them from a safe distance.
- Store your foods in sealed containers to avoid attracting scavengers.
- Keep a close eye on your family pets so they don't get attacked.
- After you've been around wild animals, check yourself for ticks and remove any you spot as quickly as possible.



Healthy Eating as a Lifestyle Choice

The task of eating healthy is often made harder than it has to be by not planning ahead before you go to the grocery store.

Wise shopping can be the key to keeping healthier foods in your home. By spending a little more time on the planning stage of your shopping trip you can cut your odds of creating an unhealthy diet. Impulse items make up a ton of the food that is brought into Missouri households. By planning ahead and deciding to keep the majority of your pantry and fridge filled with healthy choices you'll cut down on temptation eating. Planning ahead means knowing what your weaknesses are and addressing them before you leave the house. It's okay to have

junk food on your list. These days there is variety in everything from ice cream to chips. Just bring home the healthiest versions you can find. It may take some trial and error but eventually you'll be able to find the healthier products your family can live with. By keeping these types of items off your list completely you're setting yourself up for impulse buying. Some small sacrifices with a big impact include buying 100% fruit juice instead of fruit drinks, using 100% whole-grain bread, and eating more fish, poultry, and leaner cuts of meat. It's all about balance. There are foods that no matter how hard you try, your family won't eat. By writing that information down and sticking to your list, you'll go a long way in providing a healthier lifestyle for yourself and your family.



ONE MINUTE OF EXERCISE: WARRIOR POSE

Taking a minute out of your day for the following exercise can help tone your lower back, abdominals, hips and thighs. You can perform this exercise alone, or if stability is an issue, with an exercise ball to balance against. Raise your arms overhead, stand on one leg and tip to a forward position so the back leg and the hands make a parallel line to the floor. Hold the position for 30 seconds.



Healthy Snacking

Snacking sometimes gets a bad rap, but nearly every successful diet program includes snacks. There are two key elements to healthy snacking. The first is to make sure your snacks include healthy fats and protein.

It may surprise you to hear that fat can be helpful in keeping your weight in check, but it's true. The combination of fat and protein helps food take longer to metabolize in your body and helps you feel fuller longer. String cheese, almonds, and low-fat yogurt are some examples. When protein and fat are absent from your snack, your body burns through the food much more quickly. Choose low-fat instead of no-fat.

The second key to healthy snacking is making the snack yourself. Ready to eat snacks off the store shelves are often lacking in vitamins and nutrients that you'll get if you put the effort in on your own. You'll also be less likely to overeat if you make the food yourself, because you're paying attention to how much you're making. When eating straight out of the bag, you may not pay attention to how much goes in your mouth.



Risk Assessment

acid reflux

As many as one in ten Americans suffers from heartburn symptoms on a weekly basis. These symptoms can be caused by a number of things, including your diet, your medications, your weight, and how much stress you're under. Preventing heartburn symptoms can be as simple as figuring out what your triggers are. If you allow heartburn to continue, the effects on your body can become dangerous. Use the following checklist to determine if you need to take action against acid reflux:

- ✓ Do you eat heavy meals?
- ✓ Do you snack at bedtime?
- ✓ Are you pregnant?
- ✓ Are you overweight?
- ✓ Do you suffer from a respiratory ailment such as asthma?
- ✓ Do you smoke?
- ✓ Do you drink heavily?

Are you stressed?

If you answered yes to any of the previous questions, you may need to make a lifestyle change. Effective treatment for heartburn can be as simple as cutting out one or two things from your diet, undergoing stress management or taking an over the counter medication.

For questions or comments about this publication, please contact
the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services,

Office of Primary Care and Rural Health at 800-891-7415



A HEALTHY RECIPE FOR
Summer

Grilled Pears

4 pears	1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 cup brown sugar	2 teaspoons butter
1 teaspoon nutmeg	1/3 cup water

Preparation:

Peel the pears and cut them in half lengthwise; remove core. Set aside. Heat your skillet to medium, combine the butter, nutmeg, cinnamon, and brown sugar. Drizzle in the water as the butter melts. When the mixture covers the bottom of the pan, add the pears, cut side down. Grill pears for 10 minutes or until tender. Serve the pears alone or on graham crackers.