



Extension Connection

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The mission of K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences is to link education with life experiences to help people improve their lives, their families and their communities. Family and Consumer Sciences professionals support essential life skills including Community Development, Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Leadership & Volunteer Development, Relationship Development and Resource Management.

Title of Article – Stretch Your Holiday Budget

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The holidays are quickly approaching. Making a plan will save you from starting the New Year with a pile of debt that remains from holiday shopping. Here are a few suggestions for stretching your holiday dollars and managing your money and resources throughout the season and into the New Year.

1. **Decide how much you can spend.** Set a holiday budget and work within it. Set the dollar amount based on what you can afford this holiday season considering your current savings, income and other expenses.
2. **Make a list to begin building your holiday budget.** Monthly bills should be paid before you spend for the holidays. If you've found yourself with a gift list that is too long, suggest your family draw names so that each family member only has to purchase one gift or focus on the kids only this year.
3. **Consider cash and credit.** Consider a cash-only holiday. When using a debit card, keep accurate records and record all purchases in your check register. When using credit, charge only the amount that you can safely repay in a few months. Remember to keep receipts for all purchases and transactions.
4. **Be a smart shopper.** Shop early and compare price, quality and warranties while you watch for sales, coupons and special buys. Shopping online can save time and leg work but avoid paying shipping charges and know the rules for returning while allowing ample time for holiday delivery.
5. **Create your own gifts!** The best gifts don't always have the biggest price tag. They are fun, useful, and chosen with the recipient in mind. Using your talent and skill to

create gifts from your sewing room, craft corner, kitchen, or garden adds a special touch of love. A gift of time is the most precious gift.

6. **Look for frugal activities.** The season is all about being together. Get your friends and family involved. Plan an outing to see holiday light displays or attend a free holiday concert. The holidays are the perfect time to teach your kids about giving back. Consider volunteering this season. The holiday season should be about joy, good company and lots of time with family and friends. There's no need to overspend on those things. Focus on what really matters.

Source: Diane Burnett, Family Resource Management Program Focus Team Member, dburnett@ksu.edu

For additional information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233, Labette County, 620-784-5337, Montgomery County, 620-331-2690, Wilson County, 620-378-2167, Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930.-

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