



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Twin Valley
Electric Cooperative, Inc.

**TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

NEWS

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Healthy Winter Habits to Maintain Health

Another cough and cold season calls for healthy preparation, and while there may not be a foolproof plan for escaping pesky germs, taking preventive steps and practicing self-care can help protect your health.

“As much as we all would love a quick cure for the common cold, unfortunately, that doesn’t exist,” said Ian K. Smith, MD. “However, there are many options one can try to relieve cold and flu symptoms, including over-the-counter medications. These medications can provide fast and much-needed relief.”

Reduce the chances you’ll contract a serious illness this cold season by following these tips from the experts at Mucinex:

Make Handwashing a Priority

Preventive measures like washing your hands often can significantly lower your odds of getting sick. In

fact, handwashing is such a powerful tool against germs that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention compared it to a “do-it-yourself vaccine.” Wash regularly with soap and water for about 20 seconds, especially when handling food, caring for someone sick or after using the restroom.

Make Overall Wellness a Way of Life


Adopting healthy everyday habits means your body is in better condition to fight off potential attacks by germs and combat an illness more effectively if you do get sick. A well-balanced diet that includes moderate portions from each of the major food groups can help ensure you’re getting the nutrition and nutrients your body needs. Staying physically active can help promote a stronger immune system. Getting enough sleep and making sure you’re

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Tip of the Month

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.





SPEAK UP ABOUT WORKPLACE SAFETY

IDENTIFY HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE

Speaking up about unsafe or hazardous work conditions help keep everyone safe. Workplace hazards can be chemical (such as a spill), physical, biological (e.g., bloodborne pathogens) or ergonomic.

The National Safety Council Recommendations:

- ▶ Wear proper personal protective equipment.
- ▶ Avoid distracted walking.
- ▶ Use caution in high-traffic areas.
- ▶ Store heavy objects on the floor.
- ▶ Check workstations for exposed cords.
- ▶ Ensure cups and glasses have spill-proof lids.
- ▶ Replace burned out lighting.

In addition:

- ▶ Immediately report/address unsafe conditions.
- ▶ Always observe lockout/tagout procedures.
- ▶ Use tools, equipment and machinery properly.
- ▶ Be aware of your surroundings.

SOURCE: NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

Healthy Winter Habits to Maintain Health

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drinking enough water can also ensure your body is ready for whatever the season brings.

Stock Up on Necessary Supplies

If you do get sick, the best place for you is at home, where you can nurse yourself back to health. That means having the essentials on hand, like over-the-counter medications to treat uncomfortable cold and flu symptoms. Be sure to check last year's leftover meds, as some may have expired. A shopping list to fight common cold and flu symptoms should include pain relievers, fever reducers, decongestants, antihistamines, throat lozenges and cough suppressants, as well as plenty of facial tissue, a working thermometer and humidifier. Also update your supply of hand sanitizer and disinfecting cleaners and sprays to protect family members in your home.

Relieve Bothersome Symptoms

When you're under the weather, treating your symptoms gives you a reprieve and lets your body rest so you can get back to feeling better. A cough is a common cold symptom, and relieving chest congestion that causes you to cough frequently can make a big difference. If symptoms persist, contact your health care professional.

Do Your Part to Prevent Spreading Germs

If you do get sick, take steps to protect those around you. Simple acts like covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and using your elbow if you don't have a tissue can be effective in preventing the spread of germs. It's also important to wash your hands well and keep a distance from others to help prevent the spread of your illness.



5 Ways to Save During Winter

Winter weather typically means increased energy use at home. Keep your bills in check with these tips to save energy — and money!

MIND THE THERMOSTAT. If you have a traditional heating and cooling system, set the thermostat to 68 degrees or lower. Consider a smart or programmable thermostat for additional savings.

GET COZY. Add layers of clothing for additional warmth, and snuggle up under your favorite heavyweight blanket.

DON'T BLOCK THE HEAT. If your air vents or heating elements (like radiators) are blocked by furniture or rugs, your home isn't being adequately heated.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUNLIGHT.

Open window coverings during the day to let natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to block the chilly night air.

BLOCK AIR LEAKS. Seal windows and exterior doors with caulk and weather stripping to improve indoor comfort and decrease the amount of energy used to heat your home.

Easy Ways to Control Water Use, Save Money

Conserving water at home can result in several downstream benefits and savings. Being mindful of home water use helps preserve the amount of water in our local reservoirs and reduces costs associated with water and wastewater treatment, including the cost of delivering it to the home (for those using a public water service).

Leaky toilets, showerheads and dripping faucets can waste up to 2,700 gallons of water annually. Home water conservation can simply start by checking your house for any leaks and drips. Another simple way to conserve water is to limit running water when it isn't necessary. For example, turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth, and defrost food in the refrigerator or in the microwave instead of placing frozen food under running water.

Home gardens are another potential area for water conservation. Thoughtful planning can transform your home garden from a water drain to a water-efficient oasis.

Start by planting drought-resistant plants or those with minimal water needs. Group the plants by similar water needs to avoid waste by watering from plant-to-plant. Additionally, a drip irrigation system for plants that require more water can boost efficiency by using less water over

a longer period. Alternatively, set lawn sprinklers on a timer to limit water use and place them where the water will only reach plants, not pavement.

Another conservation option is to use a rain barrel to collect water for non-potable purposes. Most states allow rainwater harvesting, but some restrictions may apply. In Kansas, rainwater harvesting is legal for domestic use. Harvested rainwater is an excellent option for watering ornate gardens and washing cars.

Another option for collecting water for the garden is to collect cold water that runs while you're waiting on the water to heat. Every drop of running water you can use helps.

Reducing water use at home can also help lower your energy use. The Department of Energy estimates that water heating accounts for about 20% of a home's energy bill. Switching to an energy efficient heat pump water heater can save considerable money on electric bills. Heat pump water heaters have higher upfront costs than storage tank models, but tax incentives and potential rebates can offset this cost. Check with your local electric cooperative to see if they offer rebates or a load management program.

If upgrading your water heater isn't an option, there are small changes you can make to increase water heating efficiency. Reduce hot water use by switching to low-flow faucets and showerheads. You can also turn down the water heater thermostat to 120 degrees and insulate hot water lines to increase energy savings.

Additional ways to conserve both water and electricity in the home include upgrading clothes washers and dishwashers to newer, more energy efficient models. Running these appliances only when full or selecting a "light wash" setting reduces water and electricity use. Washing dishes by hand uses more water than an energy efficient dishwasher, so avoid this method when possible.

If your home uses well water, it's important to be mindful of water conservation, particularly in drier climates. Well pumps run on electricity and can be a source of higher energy bills. Dry, over pumped wells can cause the pump to run continuously, using excess energy in the process. Malfunctioning well pumps also lead to spikes in energy use. Regular maintenance can help identify problems, such as leaks and faulty intake, which can lead to

increased use of both water and electricity.

As you can see, there are a variety of changes — some large, some small — that can help you conserve water at home. Regardless of how you do it, thoughtfully managing water use can protect our water supply and make significant changes on energy bills.

Electric Co-ops Go the Extra Mile for You

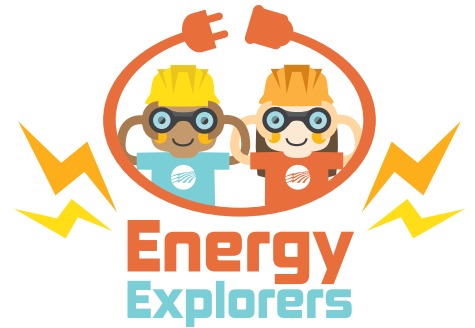
Kansas electric co-ops serve an average of **3 consumer-members** per mile of power line.

Other electric utilities serve **32 consumers** per mile. Even though we serve fewer consumers along the lines, that won't stop us from going the extra mile for you, our members, who we're proud to serve.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY WORD SCRAMBLE

Electricity is essential for our daily lives, but it can also be dangerous if you don't play it safe!

Read the safety tips below and unscramble the **BOLDED** text to complete the phrase. Use the answer key to double check your work.



▶ Never place extension **RDSOC** under rugs or carpet.

▶ Make sure electrical cords are not **YRAFDE** or broken.

▶ Smoke **MAALSR** should be tested every month.

▶ Place electrical cords in areas where you won't **ITPR** on them.

▶ Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away from space **SHETEAR**.

▶ Electricity and **rwtea** never mix.

Answer Key: 1. cords 2. frayed 3. alarms 4. trip 5. heaters 6. water