WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for September 23, 2024
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about the stress of parenting, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

When I think about the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisories, my first thoughts are warnings about smoking cigarettes, vaping, and drinking alcoholic beverages. Public health is of top concern to the Surgeon General and the US Department of Health and Human Services. But their current priorities may be of some surprise. These include warnings about lack of social connection, youth mental health, workplace well-being, firearm violence, and social media use.

One of the most recent advisory reports is about parental mental health and well-being, called "Parents Under Pressure." This report explores the current state of parental stress and how this is impacting mental health. There are approximately 63 million parents living with children under the age of 18 in the US. There are also more than 2.4 million children being raised by grandparents, or other family or friends, who are considered non-parent caregivers.

Many adults are experiencing stress, but on average, parents experience more stress than adults not raising children. According to a recent survey, 41% of parents say that most days they are so stressed they cannot function.

One important contributor is financial stress. Another stressor is time spent working. Parents are dedicating an average of 33.5 hours per week to employed work or work-related activities. In 1985, mothers were working an average of 20.9 hours per week. That increased to 26.7 hours by 2022. Fathers increased from 39.8 hours per week in 1985 to 41.2 hours in 2022.

Other stressors include children's health and safety, parental isolation and loneliness, technology and social media, and the general societal pressures of parenting standards. Family structure also plays a large role in the stress of parenting. Single-parent families, blended families, foster parent families, multi-generational households and others face unique challenges.

The report offers some suggestions for action. Part of the focus is on government policy initiatives as well as employer policies and programs to help support parents. Overall, this report

suggested that “raising healthy, educated, and fulfilled children is at the heart of building a strong future. It benefits all of society. And it is a collective responsibility.”

I think I was drawn to this report about parenting, because our child dedication Sunday at church was just a few week ago. Parents stood before our church family and made a public commitment to lovingly raise their children according to Biblical principles through the power of the Holy Spirit. And as a church family we promised to help them in their journey with encouragement, prayer, and our presence in their family’s lives.

If you are a friend or family member of a parent who is feeling the pressures of raising their children, offer them practical support. Look for opportunities to assist with household chores or run errands for them. Offer to watch the children to give them some breaks and to attend needed appointments. Check in with them regularly, especially during times of grief or transition. The Surgeon General’s report offers this sound advice to “listen with empathy and without judgment and be a steady, supportive presence.”

And now let’s see what else is new from OSU Extension. Preparing nutritious foods that taste good can be difficult at any time of the year. It is no wonder that the holidays present special challenges for individuals with diabetes. During the “Take Charge of Your Diabetes During the Holidays” program you will learn how to prepare favorite holiday foods that are both nutritious and delicious.

Take Charge of Your Diabetes During the Holidays will be held on Wednesday, November 6 from 5:30-7:30 PM at Coshocton Regional Medical Center. There is no cost for the program, but registration is required and is limited to 30 participants. Register by visiting coshocton.osu.edu or call OSU Extension for more details at 740-622-2265.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and empower our families, individuals, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!