



## Lions breakfasts support eye health

SUBMITTED BY KIRK LAIRD

The Leavenworth Lions Club acquired a brand new PlusOptix vision screening machine in August. This \$6,000 device, paid for through the Lions fundraising efforts including Lions Park Saturday breakfasts and Christmas Lighting chestnut sales, was purchased to help provide vision services for local school age children, including public schools, private schools, and home-schooled. Dorothy Nilles, pictured in the photograph, is one of many Lions who have worked hard to raise the funds used to acquire the device. This device is a great tool in detecting the most prevalent

vision disorders quickly and easily. Early diagnosis and treatment of vision disorders can help support more normal visual development, prevent further loss of vision and help equip children with the tools needed to succeed.

The Lions Club is looking forward to coordinating with both the Cascade School District and the Cashmere School District for student vision screening. In addition, the Lions will be happy to arrange for vision screenings for private schools or with parents who are engaged in homeschooling their children.

Please feel free to reach out to the Club at Lions.Leavenworth.wa@gmail.com

## Two-week detour on Sunburst Lane



BY JILL FITZSIMMONS

PIO/Special Projects  
Coordinator Chelan County  
Public Works

Beginning Sept. 16, Chelan County's contractor on the West Cashmere Bridge replacement project will start construction on a large pier on the project's north side, or on the Hay Canyon side. The work will impact Sunburst Lane through Sept. 30.

During that time, the east end of Sunburst Lane will be closed, so the contractor is able to use a crane. The construction crew will be drilling three shafts for the pier that will support the Hay Canyon entrance/exit to the

new West Cashmere Bridge.

With the road closure, a temporary, graveled detour will be in place (see drawing). Motorists should use caution when using the detour route and keep speeds at 10 mph. Please remember this is an active construction area, with many workers and large pieces of equipment on site.

The new West Cashmere Bridge is scheduled to open in late 2021. For more information about the construction project, visit the county's website at <https://www.co.chelan.wa.us/public-works/pages/west-cashmere-bridge-replacement-crp-693>.

## Accessory Dwellings, Chickens and Short Term Rentals

BY KIRK BECKENDORF

Reporter

Accessory dwelling units (ADU), allowing chickens in the city and short term rentals (STR) were the three topics of discussion at the Sept 8, Cashmere Planning Commission (CPC) meeting.

The CPC voted to send revised city ADU codes to the City Council for review. Commission members asked Director of Operations, Steve Croci, to include a letter to the Council to consider if annual and/or application fees should be required, how much the fee should be and how would the revenue be used. The vote followed substantial discussion about the ADU \$200 application and \$100 annual renewal fees that were recommended by city attorney, Chuck Zimmerman and Christina Wollman with Perteet Engineering. Commission member, Matt Walgren expressed concern that individuals who already have ADUs would now be assessed an annual fee. He said that he balks at creating a new annual fee for existing ADUs and that grandfathering in ADUs already in existence should be considered. Commission members Charlie Cruickshank and Maureen Lewison agreed that the new fee for existing structures seems to be out of bounds. Cruickshank asked if the city requires apartment owners to pay a fee for every apartment unit. Commission members also expressed concern for how the city would use the new funds. Commission member Paul Nelson said that for the city to be able to address the affordable housing

shortage it is necessary to count housing units.

Due to a citizen's request, the City Council has asked that the CPC consider if city codes should be changed to allow chickens on small lots within the city. Currently chickens are not allowed in Cashmere on lots smaller than 1 acre. Croci provided CPC members with city codes from nearby towns, many of which allow hens on small lots. There was no immediate consensus among the members on allowing chickens. Lewison said allowing chickens would be great. Walgren said he is totally against allowing chickens in town since they are loud, stink and may end up in your yard. Member, Rick Shorett agreed and is concerned about unintended consequences if all of the neighbors around you have chickens. CPC Chairman, Kirk Esmond, said that he personally doesn't want chickens on lots around him, but what is the consensus? Nelson said he does not like the idea of telling individuals what they can do with their own property and he also thinks about kids who may want to have a 4H or FFA project. But he said it also depends on who is keeping the chickens. Thinking of this from an enforcement standpoint, he asked Croci about enforcement. According to Croci, if new codes are written to allow chickens, additional regulations will need to be written so enforcement is consistent. He added that he has previously written letters to residents who had chickens on lots smaller than an acre. The issue was tabled for further consideration and Croci told the CPC to talk with friends

and neighbors to get a broader perspective and to think more about the topic.

Croci told the CPC that the city currently does not have a code to address short term rentals (STR). Throughout the county there are problems with large numbers of STR in residential neighborhoods and these STR's become party houses. According to Croci, a lot of people are ok with STRs if a resident lives on site, but in many cases there is nobody local to take responsibility or to manage guest who are on the property. The county is working on revising its codes to restrict and regulate the rental properties and currently has placed a moratorium on building, developing or permitting STRs. Croci said that the number of STRs in Cashmere is small but that could change. He asked the commission to consider developing a code to address STRs and/or adopt the county's moratorium. He said that Entiat has a fairly simple code that could be easily adopted. Nelson said, that as a law enforcement officer, he frequently responds to complaints at STRs and he thinks that there needs to be a requirement for property owners to be available and responsible. He said he has written tickets for breaking noise ordinances but also criminal offenses for public nuisance. Following additional discussion and recommendations from the CPC, Croci said he would talk with the city attorney about the best options in terms of adopting the moratorium or Entiat's code, as a first step in developing a city plan for addressing the STR issue.



PHOTO BY BILL FORHAN

Dismantling of the old Goodwin Bridge continues. The new bridge is expected to be completed in 2021.

## DNR Closes Recreation on Eastern Washington Lands Due To Fire Danger

**Closure is effective immediately and will remain in place through Friday at the earliest**

**OLYMPIA** – The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is closing all of the lands it manages east of the Cascades to recreation due to high fire danger. The closure will last at least through Sept. 17, and DNR staff will evaluate the possibility of extending it.

Critical wildfire danger and ongoing fires in the area warranted the closure, as Labor Day saw a rash of new fires ignite

all around the state.

"We had a historic fire event yesterday – 58 new wildfire starts and nine large fires on the landscape, compounded by hurricane-level winds," Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz said. "That dangerous combination led to smoke-filled skies and low visibility, which grounded our aircraft and limited our ability to fight the fire from the air."

"The destruction we have seen is unimaginable. My heart breaks for the residents of Malden who have seen their homes destroyed."

With high east wind conditions continuing into the week, wildfire

risk remains extreme. These hot, dry and fast-moving winds are extremely dangerous, since they cause fire spread to behave in unpredictable ways and make fires challenging to get under control.

With no lighting yesterday or in the forecast for the next few days, the overwhelming majority of wildfires DNR is responding to are presumed to be human-caused. The agency has responded to 106 fires caused by recreation already this year.

"Whenever we close recreation lands to the public, our only motivation is safety," Commissioner Franz said. "With

more than 300,000 acres burning since Monday, this remains a very volatile and dangerous situation. Because of the scale of these fires, our state's resources are fully deployed. We are holding nothing back. But that means we must take every possible precaution to prevent new fires from being started. That's why we've taken action."

Some areas had already been closed for recreation due to the Evans Canyon Fire in Yakima and Kittitas counties, where the BBQ Flats and Wenas recreation areas were closed, as well as the Yakima River Canyon. That fire has burned more than 75,000

acres and is 70 percent contained.

Additionally, timber harvest activities on DNR-managed lands have been shut down at least through Thursday morning because of potential fire risk caused by the ongoing gusty conditions, warm temperatures, and low humidity across Washington. All timber sales and fuel mitigation work on U.S. Forest Service lands performed under DNR's Good Neighbor Authority has also been halted.

DNR will announce the reopening of public lands to recreation and the resuming of timber harvest activities when it again becomes safe to do so.

## Community Foundation of NCW Accepting Donations to NCW Fire Relief Fund

SUBMITTED BY JENNIFER DOLGE

Director of Donor Services & Communications

The Community Foundation of NCW has reopened its NCW Fire Relief Fund and is accepting donations to support fire relief and recovery efforts in

Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties.

Minimum donation is \$10 and 100% of the funds will help individuals and families impacted by wildfire in North Central Washington. The foundation will be working with nonprofit, governmental and faith-based

partners across the region who provide direct services and resources to those who have lost homes, structures, or have essential needs.

"Unfortunately, we are experienced in supporting people in our region who have been displaced or otherwise

impacted by wildfire" said Beth Stipe, the foundation's executive director. "We have long standing partnerships with agencies that are in direct contact with wildfire victims and know their needs and the resources available."

Donations to the NCW Fire Relief Fund will largely support

long-term recovery needs that are unmet by any other resource. For victims who require immediate services such as food and shelter, contact the Red Cross Northwest at 509-670-5331.

For more information or to donate, visit [www.cfncw.org/newfirerelieffund](http://www.cfncw.org/newfirerelieffund).



### During this difficult time support your neighbors

Most local businesses offer curbside service or delivery



### THIS WEEK

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**\$1.00**

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bill Cowles "How to conquer a people" letter (Sept. 2) had a particular poignant paragraph, "The liberals can vote us into socialism, but us patriots will have to shoot our way out of it."

It made me think of the last days of Germany's 3rd Reich's National Socialism. The old WWII newsreels showed Hitler out of the bunker patting the cheeks of very young, uninformed boys being sent off into

the MAW of the invading Russian communists. These young patriots were, as Mr. Cowles points out, going to "shoot their way out".

In the early 1960's, a West German delegation visited Wenatchee High School. They were polite, intelligent, and persuasive. They were recruiting students to come to Germany for jobs and skill training. Good pay, good benefits, good education. Hitler's elderly, not just


boys, did not successfully shoot their way out, as the presence of West German recruiters at Wenatchee High School could attest to. We were being recruited to fill Germany's lost generations.

If Mr. Cowles had attended that Wenatchee High School assembly with me, it would have been interesting to get his take.

**Joe Bissonnette**  
Cashmere

## October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**Are you a survivor?** *From 1 day to many years*



On Oct. 7 we will publish our feature page of survivors, in our Breast Cancer Awareness Special Section, to help encourage the newly diagnosed.

*There is life after cancer.*

For additional information please contact Carol at 548-5286, ext. 6513 or [carol@leavenworthecho.com](mailto:carol@leavenworthecho.com)

To be included on the feature pages, fill out the form below or pick one up at the Echo office. Mail your form or drop it off by **Wed, Sept. 30**

**THE LEAVENWORTH ECHO & CASHMERE VALLEY RECORD**  
215 14th Street - PO Box 39 • Leavenworth, WA. 98826

Please print information about yourself in the form below. Then submit the form, with your PHOTO, to The Leavenworth Echo office

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

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DAYS, MONTHS, YEARS AS A SURVIVOR: \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

I HAVE APPROVED BY SIGNATURE TO HAVE THIS INFORMATION PUBLISHED ON THE ABOVE DESCRIBED FEATURE PAGE MADE BY NCW MEDIA, INC. - THE LEAVENWORTH ECHO/CASHMERE VALLEY RECORD.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please submit this form by Wed., Sept. 30  
Submit your photo to [Carol@leavenworthecho.com](mailto:Carol@leavenworthecho.com)*

## YOU CAN stop the spread of COVID-19 MASK UP!

We all want to get back to a more normal routine, here's how you can help our Valley get there.



WEAR A FACE MASK when in public



SOCIAL DISTANCE as much as possible



AVOID GROUPS and gatherings



WASH YOUR HANDS or use hand sanitizer

For more information about fighting the spread of the COVID-19 virus, visit [www.cdhd.wa.gov/covid-19](http://www.cdhd.wa.gov/covid-19).



#MASKUP #STOPTHESPREAD

# UPPER VALLEY CHURCH GUIDE

New to our area? On vacation? These churches welcome you!

TO PLACE INFORMATION IN THE CHURCH GUIDE CALL 548-5286

### CASHMERE

**CASHMERE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
103 Aplets Way • 782-2889  
Sunday School 10:00 a.m. - Worship 11 a.m.  
Bible Study, Wed., 7 p.m.  
Pastor Bob Bauer  
Find us on Facebook at Cashmere Baptist Church

**CASHMERE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
303 Maple Street • 782-2431  
Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Call for activities: Pastor Charles Clarke  
[www.cashmerepres.org](http://www.cashmerepres.org)

**CASHMERE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
213 S. Division • 782-3811  
Worship & Sunday School at 11:00 a.m.  
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday  
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Pastor Lilia Felicites - Malana

**CHRIST CENTER**  
Cashmere Assembly of God • 509-782-2825  
Worship Services are available ONLINE ONLY at 10 a.m. Sundays  
All updates on COVID-19 can be found at [christcentercashmere.com/cc-updates](http://christcentercashmere.com/cc-updates)  
Underground High School Group, ONLINE ONLY at 8 p.m. Sundays  
Lead Pastor, Steve Haney  
Children's Pastor, Andy Robinson  
Congregation Care Pastor, Joyce Williams  
Director of Operations, Pastor Ian Ross  
High School Director, Steffanie Haney

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Evening Prayer or Eucharist, 6 p.m., times and place will vary with seasonal changes.  
Outdoor service at Mission Creek Community Center.  
Contact Pastor Rob Gohl 509-860-0736 for more information.

**ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Evening Prayer or Eucharist, 6 p.m., times and place will vary with seasonal changes. Outdoor service at Mission Creek Community Center.  
Contact Pastor Rob Gohl, 509-860-0736 or Deacon Carol, 670-1723 for more information.

**EVERGREEN BAPTIST CHURCH**  
5837 Evergreen Drive • 782-1662 • Sunday School - 9:45 a.m. • Morning Worship - 11 a.m. • Evening Service - 6:00 p.m. • Pastor John Smith [www.christforcashmere.org](http://www.christforcashmere.org)

### DRYDEN

**DRYDEN COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
Hwy 2 at Dryden Ave. • 782-2935  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m. • Worship 10:45 a.m.  
Pastor Steve Bergland

**MID-VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH**  
8345 Stone Hill Rd. • 782-2616  
Worship Service, 10 a.m., Sunday School, 9 a.m.  
Pastor Mike Moore  
[www.midvalleybaptist.org](http://www.midvalleybaptist.org)

### LEAVENWORTH

**CASCADE MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH**  
'Where God's Word Remains The Pillar Of Truth'  
11025 Chumstick Hwy. • 548-4331  
Sunday School 9 a.m. • Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.  
AWANA (Youth Program) Weekly Bible Studies Wednesday 8:30 p.m. (school year)  
Pastor Todd James • [www.cmbiblechurch.org](http://www.cmbiblechurch.org)

**CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH**  
Leavenworth Grange Hall  
821 Front St. • 548-0748  
Sunday Worship 10 a.m.

**CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**  
10170 Titus Rd. (across from middle school)  
Church: 548-7667  
Meetings: Sunday - 10:00 a.m.

**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH - ELCA**  
"Reconciling Works Congregation"  
224 Benton Street • 548-7010  
Worship 9:30 a.m. w/coffee following  
[www.faithleavenworth.org](http://www.faithleavenworth.org)

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LEAVENWORTH, SBC**  
429 Evans Street, 509-470-7745  
Sunday Worship: 11:00 AM  
Website: [www.leavenworthbaptist.com](http://www.leavenworthbaptist.com)  
Email: [info@leavenworthbaptist.com](mailto:info@leavenworthbaptist.com)

**LEAVENWORTH CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**  
111 Ski Hill Drive • 548-5292  
Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.  
Lead Pastor: Mark Miller  
Youth Pastor: Kent Wright  
[www.LCN.org](http://www.LCN.org)

**SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**  
10500 Ski Hill Drive • 548-4345  
Saturday Services  
Bible Study 9:30 a.m. • Worship 11 a.m.  
Fred Smith • 880-3997

**SPIRIT LIFE CENTER**  
210 Benton Street • 548-7138  
Sunday Worship 10 a.m.  
Prayer 6 p.m.  
Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.  
Pastor Russell Esparza

### MONITOR

**MONITOR UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
3799 Fairview Canyon • 782-2601  
Church Service & Sunday School 9:00 a.m.  
Pastor Lilia Felicites - Malana

### PESHASTIN

**LIGHT IN THE VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
8455 Main Street • 548-7517  
Sunday Worship 10 a.m.  
Pastor John Romine  
[www.lightinthevalley.org](http://www.lightinthevalley.org)

**NEW LIFE FOURSQUARE CHURCH**  
7591 Hwy. 97 • 548-4222  
Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.  
Pastors, Darryl and Mindy Wall  
Email: [nowlife@leavenworth@gmail.com](mailto:nowlife@leavenworth@gmail.com)  
FB page: [www.newlifeleavenworth.com](http://www.newlifeleavenworth.com)

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**Corrections**

The Cashmere Valley Record regrets any errors. If you see an error, please call 509-782-3781. We will publish a correction on this page in the next issue.

**News tips**

Have an idea for a story?  
Call the Record at 509-782-3781

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Classified ads can be placed during normal office hours by calling 509-548-5286 or emailing [classifieds@leavenworthecho.com](mailto:classifieds@leavenworthecho.com).

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**Get cold hard cash for your Antiques and Collectibles by placing them in our classifieds.**

Place your ad with pictures online 24/7 at NCWMarket.com Just register and pay online and you are done. Your ad will appear online and in the newspaper for one low price.

Deadline Monday at Noon for all papers:

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Quad City Herald  
682-2213  
or call  
**Leavenworth Echo**  
Cashmere Record  
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**Real Estate**

**Homes for Sale**

Leavenworth Condo with all furnishings for sale. 975 sq. ft., 1 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath plus 1 car garage. Located 1 block from Festhalle. For residential living only. HOA Rules, prevents rentals. Ideal for seniors/retirees. Owner will be available for showing September 9-16th. Call Mary or Roy for appointment at 360-531-2154. \$340,000.

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We have buyers for your Pear, Apple and Cherry Orchards! 509-669-4500 information@nwi.net

**Furniture**

**NCW Media Newspapers**

We have excess office furniture available. Items left are 2 large wood desks with side desk attachment, One metal desk, one large wood conference table, a large counter approx. 7' x 3 1/2' tall with removable shelves, A wood credenza and a free 4' x 4' white board. All other items are \$25.00 per item. Call to arrange a time to examine or pick up. All items located in Cashmere. We also have a small safe that is FREE to a good home. It has not been opened for many years because we do not know the combination. It could include valuable material we don't know. For information call Leavenworth Echo, 548-5286 or Bill, at 509-670-1837. Also see photos on NCWMarket.com

**Rentals**

Room for rent in Leavenworth on bus line, all utilities plus WiFi. No pets please. \$650/month. 509-699-9337.

Newly remodeled 1.5 Bedroom Rental in Ponderosa Estates. Prefer yearly lease, \$1,050 per month. No smokers or pets. Call 509-881-8979

**Wanted to Rent**

**Chelan County Hospital District No. 2** is seeking the following leased space:

- Medical Office space; Approximate Square Footage (SF) 1,000
- Area: within the boundaries of Chelan County Hospital District No. 2

Information for interested parties is posted on the Lake Chelan Community Hospitals' website at <https://lakechelancommunityhospital.com/lake-chelan-clinic/>

**Garage & Yard Sale**



CLEAR SOME SPACE WITH A Fill your pockets with CASH \$\$ AD Let others know what items you are selling!

Go online now to Place your ad 24/7 at [www.NCWMarket.com](http://www.NCWMarket.com)

Print only? Deadline Monday at Noon for all papers

Lake Chelan Mirror  
Quad City Herald  
Call 682-2213

Leavenworth  
Cashmere  
Call 548-5286

Your ad will appear online and in the newspapers for one low price.

**Need some CASH?**

Place a For Sale ad and turn your 'junk' into someone else's treasure!

**Junk today. Treasure tomorrow.**

- Place your ad 24/7 at [ncwmarket.com](http://ncwmarket.com)
- Email: [classifieds@leavenworthecho.com](mailto:classifieds@leavenworthecho.com)
- Call 548-5286



Looking for a home for your Furry friend?

Try the pet section on [NCWMarket.com](http://NCWMarket.com)

# How to get enough potassium



**Ask... Dr. Louise**

of potassium gluconate. This sounds like a lot, but actually contains only 99 mg of elemental potassium in each tablet, the other 496mg being the gluconate part.

How does 99mg of non-prescription potassium compare to the prescription strength of 10mEq of potassium? In each mEq, there is 40mg of potassium, whether it comes as potassium chloride or potassium gluconate.

A potassium gluconate tablet with 99mg of potassium has 2.5mEq. You'll need to take 4 tablets of non-prescription potassium gluconate to match the potassium in one prescription-only tablet of 10mEq potassium chloride.

How much potassium can you get in drinking an 8-ounce glass of orange juice or eating a banana every day?

The average American gets 2640mg of potassium in their diet. However, to prevent high blood pressure and bone loss, the Institute of Medicine recommends 4700mg of potassium every day, nearly twice that amount.

Eating a medium-sized banana gives you 422mg of potassium, and an 8-ounce glass of orange juice contains 473mg of potassium. One potato with the skin has 610mg of potassium, and a sweet potato has 694mg.

Leafy green vegetables

and foods that grow on vines are particularly useful as potassium sources. So are milk and yogurt. Tomatoes are another great source of potassium. More information on the potassium content of foods is available in the online resource Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020, at [www.dietaryguidelines.gov](http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov).

Eating bananas and drinking orange and tomato juice regularly may not be enough to keep your potassium level balanced. People taking "water pills" every day may need more potassium than they can get by eating bananas and oranges every day.

One easy and inexpensive way to get more potassium chloride in your diet is to use a salt substitute. Salt substitutes such as Nu Salt® or Morton Salt Substitute® are sodium-free. They contain potassium chloride salt crystals instead of sodium chloride salt crystals. There are also low-sodium salt substitutes like Morton's Lite Salt, with a 50-50 ratio of sodium to potassium chloride.

Both sodium-free or low sodium salt substitutes are concentrated sources of potassium. Switching from using table salt (sodium chloride) to a salt substitute with potassium chloride can dramatically increase your potassium intake.

People with kidney disease or getting dialysis cannot easily remove potassium from their bodies. They should avoid using a salt substitute containing potassium. But for others,

switching to a salt substitute is one of the least expensive ways to get more potassium.

Here Are 4 Tips to Getting Enough Potassium:

- 1. Switch your salt.**  
Nu-Salt® has 795mg potassium in each ¼ teaspoon. That's 20mEq of potassium, more than many prescription-strength potassium tablets. Morton Salt Substitute® has 610 mg of potassium per ¼ teaspoonful (15mEq) of potassium.
- 2. Check with your doctor.**  
Certain heart medicines like lisinopril, losartan, and spironolactone encourage potassium to stay in your body. Ask your doctor before switching to a salt substitute containing potassium.
- 3. Try other potassium-rich foods.**  
Sweet potatoes, white potatoes, and 8 ounces of either low-fat or non-fat yogurt have more potassium than bananas. Low-sodium V-8 has nearly twice the potassium that orange juice has.
- 4. Avoid potassium if you have kidney problems.**  
Check with your doctor before eating potassium-rich foods.

*Dr. Louise Achey, Doctor of Pharmacy, is a 40-year veteran of pharmacology and author of Why Dogs Can't Eat Chocolate: How Medicines Work and How YOU Can Take Them Safely. Check out her NEW website TheMedicationInsider.com for daily tips on how to take your medicine safely @2020 Louise Achey*

# Keeping kids safe online this school year



(c) Nadezhda1906 / iStock via Getty Images Plus

**Families are yet again facing the challenge of ensuring children's online usage is balanced, healthy, and safe.**

STATEPOINT - Between schoolwork, socialization and gaming, kids will likely be online more than ever this year, especially with many students continuing to learn remotely. Families are yet again facing the challenge of ensuring children's online usage is balanced, healthy, and safe. Here are a few of the issues around increased screen time:

- **Disrupted sleep:** According to the National Sleep Foundation, blue light emitted from electronic devices disrupts quality shuteye, as it can delay the release of melatonin, a natural sleep hormone. Over time, compromised sleep can create a number of physical and mental health concerns.

- **Safety threats:** With kids online more hours a day and less supervised than they would be during a typical school day, online predators have taken advantage of the situation. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Cyber Tipline reported a notable surge in complaints.

- **Mental health issues:** The physical separation from friends, teachers and the classroom has created new mental health challenges for students, not all of which remote learning can completely address. With many adults and kids alike experiencing "Zoom fatigue," maintaining motivation throughout the school year will be even more challenging than in a typical year. Excessive online usage can also increase exposure to cyberbullying, and ultimately lead to other mental health issues, like anxiety and depression.

Despite these new challenges, there are many steps parents can take to help kids strike a healthy balance with their screen time for a happier, more successful school year:

- **Set a schedule:** A typical school day includes natural breaks. Families can recreate this at home with scheduled time for kids to walk around, stretch, and get fresh air between assignments.
- **Monitor online usage:** With parents themselves busy during the day, moni-

toring what children are doing online is a challenge in many cases, and impossible in others. However, screen time management solutions for parents, such

as OurPact from Eтури Corp., can prove a valuable tool in keeping kids productive and safe. Using the app, parents can set schedules, grant access to

needed sites, create daily screen time allowances, block inappropriate content and apps and monitor internet use. To learn more or download, visit [OurPact.com](http://OurPact.com).

- **Have a conversation:** Families should have an open dialogue about healthy digital habits. Parents can back up these conversations by setting a good example with their own device usage.

With the boost in online usage come new health and wellness challenges. At the same time, parents can help their children navigate the remote-learning environment by taking steps to promote healthy digital habits.

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