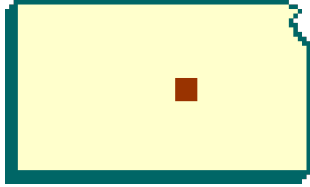


# McPherson County



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## July-August 2017



## Ag News

**Shad Marston**  
**County Extension Agent**  
**Agriculture and Natural Resources**

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*I'm Shad Marston and am very excited to be your new Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources, here in McPherson County. I grew up north of Canton where my family farmed and raised cattle. I have been a McPherson resident for most of my life. I have a lovely wife, Thea and we have two children. Our daughter Addi will graduate in December from K-State University majoring in Grain Science and our son Isom will be in sixth grade at Canton/ Galva Elementary. For the past eleven years, I've taught at Moundridge High school in their Ag Department. I taught classes such as Introduction to Ag, Horticulture, Animal Science, Ag Mechanics, Discovery to Ag and Ag Business, along with being the FFA Advisor. I'm glad to be a part of K-State Research and Extension here in McPherson County and I am looking forward to working with and meeting all the people in our community.*

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### Summer Lawns Need Water to Stay Green

It's heating up and our cool-season grasses are suffering. You can let your lawn go dormant (brown), but it will still need water to keep the plant crowns alive. (One inch every 2 - 3 weeks. Note: Your lawn may survive but not fully recover in the fall.)

The best way to water your McPherson County lawn is using a technique called Soak and Cycle. Our soils can typically absorb only two-tenths (.2) of an inch of water in one hour -- the rest runs off; there goes your hard-earned dollars down the storm drain. We tell you how you can maximize your watering resources below.

Maintaining a green lawn will require water during the heat of summer. The alternative is to let it go dormant. Either way, Soak and Cycle is the best way to conserve resources: it ensures the water reaches the roots and reduces runoff.

# Hot Summer Days and The Need for Extra Water for Pets and Livestock

All animals require water. Water is needed to transport compounds via the blood, maintain cellular structural integrity, regulate temperature as well as many more important functions. Water intake is highly variable and depends on many factors, including: species, weight, maturity, physiological status, diet, temperature and outside humidity. Always remember to put out fresh water for all your pets and livestock during these hot days of summer. Water is their most important nutrient. An adequate supply of acceptable quality water is crucial and absolutely paramount when animals are stressed with high heat temperatures during the summer months. So, ensuring that your animals have access to water must be an everyday ritual. Here is a little article all cattle producers should read.

During hot summer months, the water needed for a cow herd often determines several other management decisions. To best assess the adequacy of water quantities in surface water or from wells or "rural water" supplies, it first is necessary to have an idea of the amount needed for cattle of different sizes and stages of production that you may have during the summer on the ranch.

A University of Georgia publication (Rossi and Pence, revised by Dyer, 2012) lists the estimated water requirements for cattle in different production stages if the daily high temperature is 90 degrees F. They suggest that the amount of water required can be estimated by the production stage and the weight of the cattle. For instance, a lactating cow needs 2 gallons of water per 100 pounds of body weight. A non-lactating cow or bull needs just 1 gallon of water per 100 pounds of body weight. If you are estimating water needs for your cattle, be honest about the weight of the cows in the herd. Many cows today weigh 1200 pounds or more (some a lot more). Therefore expect that most spring calving cows will need at least 24 gallons per day for themselves and another 5 to 10 gallons of water for their calf. Also recognize that some summer days in Oklahoma get even hotter than the 90 degrees used in the Georgia paper. On days with extreme heat, expect the water usage to go up even further.

## Watering the Lawn: Soak and Cycle

Knowing how to water your lawn during the stressful summer conditions is difficult for just about everyone. Soak and Cycle takes the guesswork out of lawn watering, and ends the debate over light-and-frequent versus deep-and-infrequent watering. Soak and Cycle mimics Mother Nature's natural rainfall cycle by soaking the soil and then allowing the soil to slightly dry. This combination develops a soil condition that encourages strong roots for a more drought tolerant and disease free lawn.

### *What is Soak and Cycle?*

The Soak and Cycle method works best for sprinkler systems. But for hose draggers like me, it has merit. The theory behind the method is to soak the soil to a depth of 6 to 8 inches, which is the desired depth grass roots should grow, to develop a nice, healthy lawn.

The cycle phase refers to the fact that water is not applied at a rate faster than the soil can soak up, thus reducing runoff and waste. So, first we soak, allowing that water to move into the soil; and then we wait; then soak again; and maybe even again, until we have applied up to the recommended 1 – 1½ inches of water per week needed for a lawn to remain green during the blazing heat of summer.

### *How much water can local soils absorb?*

McPherson County soils have a very slow infiltration rate. In fact, university research shows that our local soils cannot absorb more than two-tenths (.2) to three-tenths (.3) of an inch of water in one hour. How much your soil can absorb depends on its type, slope and other factors. A flat area can take up more water per hour, while a slope may start to run off after two-tenths is applied, with the rest of the water running off into the gutter and down the storm drain. Simply stated, if you add water faster than the soil can absorb it that's wasted water — and wasted money! Who can afford that?

### *How much water does your watering system apply?*

Do you know how much water your sprinkler heads apply? If you don't know how much you are applying then how do you know how long to run the sprinklers in order to achieve the desired goal of 1 inch of absorbed water? Or, do you just water to keep the grass green and alive, which probably wastes water and increases disease and root problems?

First, you need to know how much water your watering system puts out in a given amount of time. To determine the flow rate of your sprinkler system, set several rain gauges or empty straight sided cans (tuna cans are ideal) in each sprinkler zone so they are within the spray pattern of the sprinkler heads. Then, run the system for a set amount of time — we recommend 30 minutes. Shut off the sprinklers and measure the amount of water collected in the zone. Pour all the water into a single can. When using a tuna can take it to a flat surface and measure the depth of water with a ruler. Divide that number by the number of collection cans. This determines the average amount of water that particular zone applies during a 30-minute time period. This is called the flow rate.

Congratulations! Now do it again for each and every zone in your sprinkler system, because chances are each zone has different kinds of sprinkler heads that put out different amounts of water.

*Soak: flow rate VS absorption rate*

Remember what I said earlier about how McPherson County soils can typically absorb only two-tenths (.2) to three-tenths (.3) of an inch of water in one hour? Because you now know your flow rate (how much water your system puts out per zone per 30 minutes), you can set your timer so the system only puts down two-tenths (.2) of an inch of water, soaking that zone with only enough water without it running off. Congratulations! You are now ready to Cycle.

*Cycle*

Cycle means to switch to a different zone in your lawn and water it for the correct amount of time determined in your empty can test. This allows the water applied to the previous section to soak into the soil. After you've applied the requisite two-tenths (.2) of an inch to the second zone, then go back to the first zone and soak again. Keep in mind, the Soak-and-Cycle method may require several soakings and rest periods in order to apply the needed 1 inch of water per week to keep the lawn spring time green. So this means that on any one day the same area or zone may be watered three or four times.

*How often should you water your lawn?*

If you use the Soak and Cycle method, the area or zone is not watered again until the soils dry and the grass starts to wilt. In the hot McPherson County summer, lawns lose about one-third of an inch of water each day. So based on the Soak and Cycle method, once the soil has absorbed a total of 1 inch of water it will probably take about three to four days to dry out to the point of needing to be watered again. This means that your entire system still may run every couple of days, but not the whole yard, just the zones that are ready for their round of Soak and Cycle.

*Soak and Cycle ends light, frequent applications of water*

People traditionally run their systems over the entire lawn every few days, three or four times a week. They probably have no idea how much water is being applied. This practice concentrates all of the water in the upper few inches of the soil, and encourages the development of a shallow root system and disease prone plants. With Soak and Cycle, each area is soaked about every three to five days, depending on the zone's particular attributes, such as sun, shade, slope, soil type and other factors.

*Sound difficult? It's not.*

I know this is a lot to absorb, pun intended. But it really only requires you to do three simple steps:

Step 1 – Determine the flow rate of your sprinkler heads

Step 2 – Re-program your timer clock to Soak and Cycle the zones, based on that zones flow rate. Remember, the same zone will be watered several times on the same day. Your sprinkler system might still run just about every day, but you'll be watering different areas each day

Step 3 – Monitor the lawn for a few weeks and make adjustments based on the various conditions.

The concept of deep and infrequent lawn watering is not new. But the method for achieving a deeply irrigated lawn has been modified because of research. Once you've figured it out, it takes the guesswork out of the watering-the-lawn equation. You'll know just how much water is being applied;

- \* the amount of time in which the soil can absorb it; and
- \* create the ideal conditions for the development of a healthy root system that can withstand the traumas of our McPherson County summers.

So, give it try and stop the light, frequent applications of water to your lawn that helped create the horrid conditions that lead to last year's lawn collapse in the heat of summer.

**Be watching for the Annual Pre-Plant Wheat School coming in August 2017. Information will be available as soon as the date is set!!**



# Clover Corner

**Lindsey Friesen**  
**County Extension Agent**  
**4-H Youth Development**



Discovery Days, Oz-Some 4-H Camp and Campference are all complete and were loads of fun! How does summer go by so fast? It is July which means... FAIR TIME! I hope each of you are having a good time learning about your projects.

Don't forget to invite family, friends and supporters to the 4-H Fair... July 21-24!!! Fair books are complete! Be sure to read the general rules and each project department carefully for updates and continue to watch your email inbox for reminders about upcoming events! The fair is a HUGE task, but with the help of everyone we get it done and have a lot of fun! As always, please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions!

~Lindsey

## McPherson 4-H Fair- July 21 - 24

The Fairbook is done, plans are made and judges hired! Remember, there are no pre-entries required for most exhibits, study each Department's rules for specific entry information. An electronic copy of the fairbook can be found on our website: [www.mcpherson.ksu.edu](http://www.mcpherson.ksu.edu), 4-H Youth Development, 4-H Fair. Plan to stick around the fairgrounds that weekend and participate or support your friends in all the activities planned!

### Fair Reminders!

**Concession Stand** - Club leaders will be receiving more information on shift times. Please stay tuned and be willing to help with this! Each club is asked to provide \$10 to help cover the cost of some items. This replaces bringing buns, pop or desserts.

**Club Responsibilities** – Each Club has been assigned tasks to help with during the 4-H Fair. The fair is a HUGE task, but if everyone works together it can run very smoothly! Please ask your leader what your club is assigned and sign-up for where you can help. You will have a concession stand shift and additional activity assignments!

**Silent Auction** - Each club is asked to bring at least a \$25 donation for each 15 members enrolled in your club! This is another excellent fundraiser to help us put on the fair and other 4-H events!

**Booths and Banners** - Each club is strongly encouraged to enter either a booth (6'x6' area) or banner in the McPherson 4-H Fair. These are great advertisement and a welcome to visitors as they come to our fair. If you need ideas for these items, contact Lindsey. Prizes will be awarded!

## McPherson County Fair- July 12-16

You should have received a copy of the McPherson County Fair book in the mail - if you have not - we have some at the Extension Office! Be sure to look at it closely and plan to enter! Entries are checked in on July 13 and there are lots of events throughout the weekend. This is an "extra" fair that we have in our county. Any 4-H member in the state is invited to participate. It is a great opportunity for our members to go through the judging process before our 4-H fair.

## Fair T-Shirts

Don't miss out on ordering your 2017 McPherson 4-H Fair T-Shirt! Orders must be placed by July 7 and shirts will be \$12 each. Plan on picking up orders at Fair Set-Up Day on July 18! Order forms were emailed to families and are available at the Extension Office.



## Record Books (KAP)

Record books will be DUE to the office by September 29. More information on what is included in a complete record book and forms and information can be found on our website.

Only record books that have been screened by your leader or record book committee will be accepted at the office. *We will not accept books in the office that have not gone through your club! PLEASE CHECK with your clubs to see when your club's deadline is for record books being due.*

Lindsey is more than happy to meet with any family or club wanting to learn more about completing or improving record books. We also have many very talented 4-H'ers who have gone on to be State project winners for their KAP. The resources are plenty and the task is not nearly as bad as it seems! Plan to complete at least one KAP this year!

## Share Your Information

The next edition of the Clover Corner Newsletter will be September. Deadline to get your news, dates and fun information printed is August 15. Please type up and email or bring in your news and articles to Lindsey!

## Family Of The Year

Each year every club has the opportunity to nominate a family for the "Family of the Year" award. We have lots of deserving families that volunteer a lot of time and energy to the McPherson County 4-H program and to their club. So it is time to recognize those efforts. So at your next club meeting consider which family you would like to nominate for this award. Award nominations for clubs are due on August 7 to the Extension Office. At the August Meeting of 4-H Council, we will announce the nominations and then council members will take it back to their clubs for a vote before voting as a 4-H Council. So get your nominations ready, nomination forms are available at [www.mcpherson.ksu.edu](http://www.mcpherson.ksu.edu). Remember there are other awards nominations as well later in the fall as we get ready for Achievement Banquet.

## 4-H Council

The 4-H Council year will soon be coming to a close. We will meet on Thursday, August 10 at 7 pm at the Extension Office. Each club is asked to bring a small snack to share for a celebration.

## Fun with Flowers and Cloverbud Crafts

Exploring Members and Cloverbuds it's your time to shine! On Wednesday, July 12th at 6:30 at the extension Office we will be having a exploring\cloverbud meeting. We will be planting flowers, and painting flower pots. This is a great opportunity to complete 2 projects to exhibit in fair, in both arts and crafts and in floriculture. There will be a "crafty snack" as well to complete the night and give you another option of a project to take to fair. Please RSVP to the office by Monday, July 10th in order for us to purchase supplies. I can't wait to work with my crafty clover buds, and have an evening filled with flowers and fun! Christina Hoffman, our 4-H summer intern, will be leading this event.

## Jr Leaders Day Trip

On July 11 the Jr. Leaders will be taking a trip to K-State's Ropes Course. We will be doing activities on the low ropes and high ropes courses. In the afternoon a current K-State student will give us a tour of the Leadership Studies building as well as educate us on the Leadership Studies Minor.

Participants will meet at the Extension Office at 8:00 a.m. and we will plan to return before 5:00 p.m. 4-Her's will be asked to provide \$10 for partial payment of the ropes course, and money for lunch. We will be eating in the K-State Student Union. RSVP's are due to the extension office by July 5<sup>th</sup>, and there will be permission forms that every participant will need to fill out. Depending on numbers of participants extra adult chaperones and or drivers will be needed. Please contact Lindsey or the office if you would be available to help.

**HORTICULTURE** - The State 4-H Horticulture Judging Contest will be held Saturday, August 19, 2017 on the campus of Kansas State University, Manhattan. Registration deadline is due August 15, 2017 to the State 4-H Office. For more information go to the following link [www.kansas4-h.org/events-activities/contests/horticulture-judging/](http://www.kansas4-h.org/events-activities/contests/horticulture-judging/)

**SWINE** - PQA testing is now available online. Contact the office at 620.241.1523 or visit [www.pork.org](http://www.pork.org)

## 4-H Calendar

July	August
4 Office Closed, Independence Day	1 Entry Deadline for Horse at Kansas State Fair
15 Deadline for Livestock part of Kansas State Fair	4 State Fair Entries DUE
12-16 McPherson County Fair - CANTON	7 Family of the Year Nominations DUE
18 4-H Set-Up, Space Reservations DUE	10 4-H Council, 7:00 p.m.
21-24 McPherson County 4-H Fair	15 Entry Deadline for Kansas Junior Livestock Show
25 4-H Fair Clean-Up, Lunch Party and Celebration	

### State Livestock Entries

Entries for 4-H Beef, Sheep and Swine for the Kansas State Fair are due July 15, 2017! Forms are available online at [kansasstatefair.com](http://kansasstatefair.com) . Livestock must have been nominated by the May 1 or June 15 deadlines. Don't delay! Get them in early!



Kansas Junior Livestock Show is September 29 - October 1, 2017 in Hutchinson. Premium book and schedule information will be available online at [www.kjls.org](http://www.kjls.org) . This is for Beef, Sheep, Swine and Meat Goats.

### Kansas State Fair Entries

Entries for the Kansas State Fair are due:

4-H/FFA Beef, Sheep, Swine - July 15

Horse - August 1

All others - August 4

If you have an exhibit qualify for the State Fair (from 4-H Fair only - The County Fair in Canton is NOT a state fair qualifying fair with the exception of certain animal projects that can qualify at multiple shows), ***it is your responsibility to fill out the entry form at the Extension Office before August 4.***

*To qualify for the State Fair:*

1. 4-H member must be **9** years of age before January 1, 2017. **AND**
2. Your 4-H Fair Exhibit\* must have received a purple ribbon.

*\*Not all projects are eligible for the State Fair. See your 4-H Fair book for details. The Extension Office has a copy of the Kansas State Fair 4-H Rules as well, or they can be found online at <http://www.kansas4-h.org/p.aspx?tabid=46>*

### Kansas State Fair Gate Tickets

Youth participant (ages 5-18) gate tickets for the Kansas State Fair can be purchased through the Extension Office. *Free tickets will not be given out from our office.* If you will be participating in the state fair - you will need to purchase a gate ticket. These tickets must be ordered and paid for by **Friday, August 4!** Other advanced tickets are also available. If you are volunteering at the state fair - you will receive a free gate admission ticket from the State 4-H Office that you will pick up from our office closer to the state fair time.





# Living Well

**Jana McKinney**  
**County Extension Agent**  
**Family & Consumer Science**



## Medicare Part D

Reminder: Medicare Part D Open Season is October 15 - December 7. Please, take the time to review your Part D coverage. Last year, 543 beneficiaries shopped with Jana, a SHICK Counselor and saved collectively over \$327,000. It is time well spent, doesn't take long and is easy to do! Appointments will be accepted started in early October.

## Brown Rice Has Many Benefits

Brown rice has the distinction of being classified as a whole grain. While white rice is enriched with vitamins and minerals lost during processing, it does not have the fiber component.

Brown rice has almost 2 grams of fiber in a half-cup serving of cooked rice. Brown rice also retains



beneficial phytonutrients, including antioxidants, anthocyanins, phytosterols, tocopherols and many other potentially protective substances, that you won't find in white rice.

Brown rice also retains the rice kernel's "aleurone layer," which contains oil and enzymes. That helps give brown rice a distinctive, fuller flavor, but also reduces the product's shelf life. While white rice can be stored at room temperature for extended periods of time, brown rice, even when stored in an airtight container, lasts only about six months before the chance that oils in the rice turn rancid. Store uncooked brown rice in the refrigerator to increase its shelf life.

Brown rice takes longer to cook. But another option is being developed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service to reduce cooking time to 20 minutes – the same as white rice.

## Food Preservation

The practice of preserving food has existed for thousands of years. Because food starts to spoil as soon as it is harvested, preservation methods helped keep the food for longer periods of time. This allowed ancient people to live in one place for longer periods of time.

Today, food preservation has transformed from a rural practice of being self-sufficient to a practice of preserving for fun. Gardening is a popular activity and farmer's markets are sprouting in many communities. Abundant fresh vegetables and fruits motivate consumers to save summer tastes for other times of the year.

Water boils at lower temperature as altitude increases. In Kansas, the altitude changes from around 700 feet above sea level in eastern Kansas to just over 4,000 feet in western Kansas. McPherson County is about 1250 feet – so if you are preserving food, you will need to make a slight adjustment.

If you need more information on Food Preservation there are some choices for you:

[www.rrc.ksu.edu](http://www.rrc.ksu.edu) - click on Food Science and Home Preservation

[www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu) - put in Food Preservation

[www.mcpherson.ksu.edu](http://www.mcpherson.ksu.edu) - look for the Food Preservation in the Hot Topics

We have lots of free publications that will give you the most recent recommendations. If you are going to go to the work to preserve the food, please make sure it will be the correct way!

We do test dial gauges at the Extension Office for free. If you would like to have your pressure canner gauge checked, please feel free to drop it by and we'll test it for you.



**Sunscreen.....** All sunscreen labels carry a sun protection factor or SPF number. A product's SPF is like a multiplying factor. For example, by applying an SPF 10 sunscreen, those who normally would be OK in the sun for 10 minutes can stay out in the sun for 100 minutes.

The general rule has been: The more easily you burn, the higher SPF number you should apply. If you're also applying an insect repellent, however, you should be applying a product with a higher SPF than you normally would use on its own.

Sunscreen is necessary even on cloudy days. Many product labels will recommend reapplying sunscreen every two hours, plus after swimming, sweating or towel drying.



## **Salmonella Linked to Backyard Poultry Flocks**

As of May 25, 2017, 372 people have been infected with strains of Salmonella traced to backyard poultry flocks. Of these people, 71 have been hospitalized and 36 percent are children under the age of five years old.

Raising poultry at home has been common in rural locations for years. Small numbers of poultry are allowed within urban city limits. But care must be taken when caring for the flock and handling the birds.

Always wash your hands after handling the birds or any equipment where they live.

Do not let birds inside the home or around areas of food preparation or serving.

While baby chicks are cute, do not snuggle or kiss them.

Clean poultry related equipment outdoors.

Collect eggs often. Wash your hands after handling eggs. Refrigerate them after collection.

For more information on this outbreak, see <https://www.cdc.gov/zoonotic/gi/outbreaks/livepoultry.html>

## **The 10 Commandments of Clutter Control**

- > Stop procrastinating. Stop putting off until tomorrow what you can do today, especially when you know you probably will not do it tomorrow!
- > Quit making excuses. You are only fooling yourself. The clutter is not going to go away.
- > Use it or lose it. If an item is not useful or does not enhance your life in some way, move it out.
- > Learn to let go. As our lives change, needs change. However, somehow clutter accumulates with no regard for the changes in our lives. Clutter which takes up valuable space and gives nothing in return should be tossed or given away.
- > Be a giver. Give things away if they are not being used. Friends, relatives and charities all appreciate a giving person more than they do a packrat.
- > Set limits. Limit the amount of space you are willing to allocate to clutter. Just because one space fills up does not mean that you should find or buy more space. It means that it is time to weed out the clutter and reclaim the space you already have.
- > Use the in/out inventory rule. If something new comes in, something old goes out. Apply this rule to everything— from clothes and toys to books, magazines and other clutter.
- > Less is more. Less clutter means more time, money and energy for yourself.
- > Keep everything in its place. Find a place for everything and keep it there!
- > Compromise. Compromise when managing your clutter. Do not let perfectionism keep you from organizing, or keep someone from helping.

Functioning effectively is more important than functioning perfectly.





## Food Safety Kansas

Have you had a foodborne illness and don't know where to report the problem?

The Kansas Department of Agriculture and Kansas Department of Health & Environment just launched "Food Safety Kansas" at [www.foodsafetykansas.org/](http://www.foodsafetykansas.org/). Here you can report an illness caused by a restaurant, food item, or from an event. You can also report a problem with a restaurant that did NOT cause an illness.

The goal is to improve accessibility and reduce anonymous complaints. Those anonymous complaints slow down investigations to find solutions.

The public can also phone in complaints:

Foodborne illnesses — 877-427-7317

Restaurant practices — 785-564-6767

## New Recipe Cards from Ball®

In an ongoing effort to make home food preservation easy and to appeal to those who can foods in small quantities, Ball® now has six new mixes for pickles and tomato products.

They are a recipe card with six seasonings attached to the card. On the back are instructions with additional ingredients to add and processing instructions. Each recipe card makes two quarts or four pints.

The recipe cards include three types of pickles, two types of salsa, and a pasta sauce.

Learn more at [www.freshpreserving.com/mixes/](http://www.freshpreserving.com/mixes/).

## How Old are Your Spices?

Store spices and herbs in a cool, dry, dark cabinet for best storage conditions.

Do you ever buy a can of herbs and only use it once? It happens to all of us. Then we have a cabinet full of herbs and spices that get old go out of date. Here's a general guide for how long to store herbs and spices:

Dry herbs—1-3 years

Ground spices—2-3 years

Whole spices—3-4 years

Seasoning/Herb blends—1-2 years

Extracts (except vanilla extract) – 4 years

Source: Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter Special Supplement, June 2017

## Durable Medical Equipment (DME) coverage

How often is it covered by Medicare? Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers medically necessary durable medical equipment (DME) that your doctor prescribes for use in your home. Only your doctor can prescribe medical equipment for you. DME meets these criteria:

Durable (can withstand repeated use)

Used for a medical reason

Not usually useful to someone who isn't sick or injured

Used in your home

Has an expected lifetime of at least 3 years

**If your supplier accepts assignment**, you pay 20% of the Medicare-approved amount, and the Part B deductible applies. Medicare pays for different kinds of DME in different ways. Depending on the type of equipment: You may need to rent the equipment, You may need to buy the equipment, You may be able to choose whether to rent or buy the equipment.

Medicare will only cover your DME if your doctors and DME suppliers are enrolled in Medicare. Doctors and suppliers have to meet strict standards to enroll and stay enrolled in Medicare. If your doctors or suppliers aren't enrolled, Medicare won't pay the claims submitted by them.

It's also important to ask your suppliers if they participate in Medicare before you get DME. If suppliers are participating suppliers, they must accept assignment. If suppliers are enrolled in Medicare but aren't "participating," they may choose not to accept assignment. If suppliers don't accept assignment, there's no limit on the amount they can charge you.

**Competitive Bidding Program.** If you live in or visit certain areas, you may be affected by Medicare's Competitive Bidding Program. In most cases, Medicare will only help pay for these equipment and supplies if they're provided by contract suppliers when both of these apply: You have Original Medicare and You get competitively bid equipment and supplies in competitive bidding areas.

Health E Quip has recently made a business decision to not accept Medicare assignment on CPAP supplies. You will receive a 40% discount off the retail price. Health E Quip will bill Medicare and you will be reimbursed up to 80% of medicare assignment. A list of the DME supplies that use medicare assignment is available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).