

Money Tips

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Full-time child care can be costly. If your company's benefit plan includes a flexible spending account for child care, be sure to take advantage of it. Flexible spending accounts allow you to pay expenses with pretax dollars thus reducing your income and payroll taxes.

Also ask about a medical flexible spending account when to talk with your Human Resources office at work.

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When money is tight it is hard to look forward 10, 20, 30 years or more. I understand that, but time is slipping through your fingers! Time value of money is a very impressive thing. Please review an ISU Extension publication - PM 1816 - Begin by Planning Today from the Retirement: Secure Your Dreams series at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/co2.htm> Even small amounts deducted from your paycheck and placed into a 401 (k) or 403 (b) account, will grow over time. No 401 (k) or 403 (b)? Consider starting or adding to a Roth IRA or regular IRA.

Employee 401k (or 403 (b)) contributions are automatically deducted from their paycheck each pay period. This money is taken out before the paycheck is taxed. The contributions are invested at the employee direction into one or more funds provided in the plan. Employers may "match" employee contributions, but are not required to do so. While the investments grow in the account, no taxes are paid until the money is withdrawn.

Is your employer willing to match some or all of your contribution? If they are and you aren't taking advantage of their match, you are leaving part of your salary on the table! Talk with your employer today!

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What are you choosing? The number of miles you drive, the number of lights you have on, the temperature of your home, etc . . . are choices you make. With prices at an all time high, what can you do to spend less on energy? Your choices today have a great deal to do with whether you will have money for your goals over the next few months.

Visit the ISU Extension web site for energy publications <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/ho.htm> and ISUE housing site at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/housing/> to learn more.