



NUTRITION bites

Brought to you by the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program

ISSUE 30

Nutrition Bites is a newsletter that highlights helpful information on staying safe, an easy and healthy recipe to try with your family, physical activity ideas, and food resources in your area. We know you are taking extra steps to keep you and your family safe during this pandemic. Our goal is to work together to provide information to help our community maintain the safety of us all.

STAYING HEALTHY



Eating fruits and vegetables is a colorful way to get powerful nutrients.

These nutrients may protect us from heart disease, high blood pressure, and certain types of cancer. Phytonutrients in fruits and vegetables provide these health benefits. All fruits and vegetables have fiber, which helps us feel full and keeps our digestive system healthy. Fill half your plate with all the colors of the rainbow to get these health benefits.

Red: heart health, memory function

Orange/yellow: heart health, strong immune system, eyesight, healing cuts

Green: strong bones and teeth, healthy vision

Blue/purple: brain and memory function, slower aging, protects cells from damage

White/brown: heart health, healthy blood pressure and cholesterol

Include your favorite colorful fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks. Adults should aim for 2½ cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit each day.

RECIPES AND NUTRITION TIPS



Add vegetables in surprising ways.

April is a month of surprises! Surprise your family with new ways to add vegetables to your favorite meals. Vegetables are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber, which boost your immune system, keep your heart healthy, and aid in digestive health. Add vegetables in fun ways, such as pureed in sauces, added to omelets, or blended in a smoothie, or experiment with veggie noodles.

Do you have vegetables in your refrigerator or freezer and don't know what to do with them? Add them to a soup, like our [Fish and Kale Stew](#)! Or try this variation of Kale and White Bean Soup at <https://video.link/w/z4yec> from SNAP-Ed NY.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS



Try some exercise hacks!

Are you a busy person who finds it hard to fit exercise into your daily routine? Start small by incorporating hacks to add physical activity to your day. Begin thinking about exercise in small manageable bits of time instead of chunks of time that need to be dedicated to workouts.

Try these fitness hacks:

- Add exercise to your daily routines. When brushing your teeth, do five squats.
- Be creative with how you move. Lunge from one room to the next.
- When cooking, use canned goods to do arm curls.
- Put on some music and dance with your kids.

For more ideas visit <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-education/nutrition-education-materials/physical-activity>.



Spring is here. It is a great time to dust off your gardening gloves!

Check out some ways to get your garden ready for spring.

- Clear out your garden beds to prepare them for spring bulbs and plants. Rake out dead weeds, leaves, and old mulch.
- Prune any plant's dead growth and shape the plants for the coming season.
- Make sure your garden's soil is ready for spring planting. Apply compost or fertilizer, which adds nutrients to the soil.

FOOD ACCESS RESOURCES IN MASSACHUSETTS



Massachusetts Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits set to increase.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) increases monthly SNAP benefits up to \$100 per household with funding from the American Rescue Plan. You may be eligible for the SNAP program which provides monthly food benefits for individuals and families who qualify.

Apply for SNAP benefits at <https://dtacconnect.eohhs.mass.gov>.

Learn more about recipes and healthy eating through SNAP education at <https://www.mahealthyfoodsinasnap.org/healthy-foods>.