



Brought to you by the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program

FALL 2021

*Nutrition Bites* is a newsletter that highlights helpful information on staying safe and staying healthy, an easy and nutritious recipe to try with your family, physical activity ideas, gardening tips, and food access resources in Massachusetts. 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

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### Coping with stress as we return to school and work.

Experiencing change in our daily routines can be stressful. Simple tasks and basic routines may require an adjustment period as we learn to navigate our new normal. Be kind to yourself; allow time to adjust. Here are some tips for coping with change.

- Plan ahead and picture what change looks like. Think about how to adjust meals, childcare, after-school activities, family obligations, and transportation.
- Try to stick to a routine. Keep the same eating patterns, bedtime, and usual walk or physical activity.
- Make time to do something you enjoy each day. Listen to music, read, write or draw, cook, spend time outside, or socialize with family and friends.
- Make mealtime simpler on busy evenings by planning and preparing food ahead of time. Spend time planning weekly meals.
- Manage your time more efficiently. Prioritize tasks that are time sensitive.
- Ask for help. It is hard to admit when you need help, but asking a family member or friend for a helping hand may make it easier to cope with change.

## FOOD ACCESS RESOURCES IN MASSACHUSETTS

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### United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) modernizes the Thrifty Food Plan.

USDA reevaluated the Thrifty Food Plan, used to calculate SNAP benefits. As a result, the average SNAP benefit—excluding additional funds provided as part of pandemic relief—will increase beginning October 1, 2021. More than 950,000 SNAP recipients in Massachusetts will receive an average monthly increase of \$36 to buy groceries.

## RECIPES AND NUTRITION TIPS

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### Try Overnight Oatmeal for a healthy breakfast.

Don't skip the most important meal of the day! Busy mornings can make it tough to serve breakfast to your family. In the morning save time by preparing our [Overnight Oatmeal](#) recipe and enjoy a ready-to-go whole-grain breakfast. Oatmeal is a great source of fiber, which will keep you full until lunch. You can mix in your favorite fruit for added sweetness, fiber, and nutrients to wake up your brain and provide energy for your day.

Try the Mississippi State University Extension's quick breakfast ideas, such as an omelet in a mug or a breakfast banana split! Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INEKFhzcUE&t=28s> for more ideas.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS

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### Fall is a fun season to spend outdoors with your family.

There are many ways to enjoy the fall outdoors. Here are some ideas for keeping everyone in your family physically active and having fun:

- Visit a farm to walk through a pumpkin patch, get lost in a corn maze, and pick fall vegetables. It is a great way to add steps to your day. You can check your local community websites to find a farm in your area.
- Go for a hike to check out the beautiful colors of the leaves. Visit <https://www.mass.gov/hiking-in-massachusetts-state-parks> to find a local hiking trail in Massachusetts and enjoy the foliage.
- Hunt for leaves as a family at a local park or in your neighborhood. Gather and sort the different colors and shapes!

## GARDENING TIPS

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### Bring your herb plants indoors before the first frost.

With the arrival of fall and winter on its way, outdoor gardening is ending soon. No need to fret—there is still a way to keep a little garden in your life by bringing your herbs inside to a warm and sunny spot.

When it's time to bring the plants inside, clean them up by removing any bugs and dead leaves. You can flush the soil with water and rinse off the foliage. Then gently dig up the herbs from the ground. To repot them you will need containers that are large enough to accommodate each herb's root ball and room for growth. Place a layer of potting mix on the bottom of the pot, and then set the herb on top. Fill the spaces around the roots with more potting soil, leaving an inch between the soil and the rim of the pot. For more details about growing herbs indoors, visit <https://extension.psu.edu/growing-herbs-indoors>.