



Brought to you by the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program

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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



Strategies to reduce stress when shopping for groceries.

Planning meals for the whole week can save you time and reduce stress. Cutting and preparing ingredients ahead of time so that meals come together quickly can help as well. Soup can be a nutritionally balanced one-pot meal that is easy to prepare in advance and quick to clean up. Use these stress-reducing tips to plan and prepare tasty meals that fit your lifestyle.

- **Create a weekly menu** with foods and meals you and your family like to eat. Use the same ingredients in more than one recipe during the week. Find a soup recipe for your weekly menu, make a large batch, and freeze some for later.
- **Add to your grocery list throughout the week.** Write down the grocery items as you use them up. This will save you time before going to the store. Check your kitchen for ingredients needed for the weekly menu. Add sale items and organize your shopping list by food groups for a quicker shopping trip.
- **Stock your pantry and freezer** with healthy foods from the five food groups. Buy low-fat dairy products, lean protein sources, whole grains, and fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables. Stocking up on these basics will make meal planning easier. Don't forget about soups and broths for quick meal preparation.

Focus on one-pot meals, which are easy to prepare ahead of time, use a variety of ingredients, and are easy to clean up.

RESOURCES IN MASSACHUSETTS



The Massachusetts Home Energy and Fuel Assistance Program helps eligible people pay their winter heating bills. To see if you qualify, visit www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-home-heating-and-energy-assistance or call 1-800-632-8175 to find resources in your area, eligibility information, and details on how to apply.

RECIPES AND NUTRITION TIPS



Winter vegetables and lentils provide vitamins and health benefits.

Warm up this winter with our [Curried Red Lentil Soup](#). This delicious soup is loaded with nutritious winter vegetables and lentils. The carrots and sweet potatoes are rich in vitamin A, helping with eye health as well as building up the immune system to fight germs. Lentils are the edible seed of a legume, a great source of fiber and protein, and a staple in Indian and Middle Eastern cooking. There are five categories of lentils: red, which cook quickly, green, brown, black, and French green (Le Puy). Look for lentils near the dried beans at the grocery store. Add a colorful salad and some whole-grain bread alongside this red lentil soup for a tasty and nutritious meal. It will keep you feeling full long after the meal is over.

Here is another plant-based vegan recipe great for meatless Monday! Watch how Colorado State University Extension prepares its [Lentil Soup with Lemon](#). If you don't have a blender, you can mash the veggies with a potato masher or a spoon—or enjoy it as is!

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS



How is your balance?

Balance, the ability to control your body's position, is important for everyday activities (like walking or climbing stairs). Maintaining good balance helps prevent injuries from slips and falls.

Test your balance with these two activities:

- Stand on one foot without touching the floor with the other. Now switch feet. Is one foot easier to stand on than the other? How long could you hold it?
- Stand with your feet together. Then lean forward from your waist and stretch your arms out to your sides. Stretch your right leg up and straight back. Repeat directions with the other leg. Hold on to a chair if you need to.

GARDENING TIPS



Save your plant seeds and swap with someone in your community.

Growing season has ended, but now is the time when we can save seeds from our garden for the next year. Have you ever thought about sharing them at a seed swap?

Seed swapping has a long history. It's a low-cost way to expand your garden and share the wealth of your own growing efforts. The swap offers an opportunity to meet local gardeners and share gardening tips while adding variety to your seed supply. When you start making your list of new seeds to buy for the spring, try a seed swap near you. Check your local library or community garden to find an event.