



Brought to you by the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program

SPRING 2022

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

Trying new foods is good for your health.



We hear that it's important to try new foods—whether a child, adult, or caregiver. Eating a variety of foods gives us the nutrients our bodies need to grow. Getting children to try new foods can be a challenge. Beginning in childhood, eating habits often stay with us through adulthood, so it is important to start healthy eating habits early. Follow these tips for introducing new foods to your family.

- Avoid pressuring anyone to try a new food—this may make them hesitant to try it.
- Learn what the nutrients in these foods do for our bodies. Knowing how beneficial they are can motivate us to try a new food. For example, carrots, butternut squash, and cantaloupes have vitamin A, which helps our eyesight.
- Ask your family or friends how they cook a certain food. This can give you some new ideas when choosing and preparing foods for your family.
- Start with a small amount of a new food and keep trying it. It may take up to 15 times of tasting a food before you know if you like it or not.
- This spring, introduce your family to rhubarb. Rhubarb can be baked, roasted, stewed, or even used in muffins. Try something new and treat your family to the rhubarb muffin recipe in this newsletter.

FOOD ACCESS RESOURCES IN MASSACHUSETTS



Use your SNAP benefits to buy food online at these retailers.

Massachusetts residents who receive SNAP benefits can use their EBT card to buy food online from Amazon, BJ's Wholesale Club, Stop & Shop, Walmart, ALDI, Hannaford, Price Chopper, and Stop & Shop via Instacart. Visit <https://www.mass.gov/snap-online-purchasing-program> for more information.

RECIPES AND NUTRITION TIPS



Try this sweet way to cook with rhubarb.

Whether you eat a muffin at breakfast or as an afternoon snack, this [Rhubarb Muffin recipe](#) will add spring to your step. Rhubarb is a vibrant pink or red stalky vegetable available in Massachusetts in the spring. Rhubarb adds vitamin K for healthy blood and bones and antioxidants for reduced inflammation, healthy skin, and prevention of cell damage. This tart vegetable also provides fiber, which will keep you feeling full and helps digestive health. If you are looking to add more fiber to this muffin recipe, swap out all-purpose white flour with whole-wheat flour and maybe add some chopped nuts. Watch how our friends at UMaine Cooperative Extension prepare this rhubarb muffin recipe at <https://youtu.be/ZNxYnqdWGM4>.

Get creative with rhubarb; it is not just for pies or baked goods! Mix it with strawberries to add sweetness. Top your oatmeal or whole-grain waffles with rhubarb to boost the nutrition or cook up with dates, ginger, cardamom, and vinegar to make a chutney.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS



It's finally spring. Let's get moving and celebrate!

As we spring forward with more daylight hours to enjoy, you may wonder how to incorporate outdoor adventures that can help strengthen both our hearts and our minds while we take in the fresh air. Let's get moving and spring into action with the simple act of walking. Walking is a low-impact activity and a great opportunity to spend time with friends and family. So, take in some nice scenery and add physical activity to your day. To find some local walking trails in Massachusetts, check out these websites:

<https://www.visit-massachusetts.com/state/walking-and-hiking/>

<https://www.alltrails.com/us/massachusetts>

GARDENING TIPS



Plant seeds in the early spring.

Spring is the perfect time for planting. Some vegetables can be planted before others because they can tolerate the cold. Below is a list of cold-hardy vegetables that will withstand light frost and cold nights in early spring. All are easy to grow even if you are a beginner.

- Beets planting time is 2 to 4 weeks prior to last frost.
- Broccoli and carrots planting time is 2 to 3 weeks prior to last frost.
- Cabbage planting time is to start seeds indoors 8 weeks prior to last frost.

For more information, visit <https://www.almanac.com/gardening/frostdates/MA>.