



NUTRITION bites

Brought to you by the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program

ISSUE 5

Nutrition Bites is a weekly 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 SAFE



Preventing foodborne illness is important, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Handle raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs properly to keep healthy and safe. Use these tips when preparing meat.

- **Wash** your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling all food.
- **Clean** the kitchen area and countertop using a sanitizer or hot, soapy water.
- **Use** one cutting board for fresh produce and another for raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Also use separate plates and utensils for cooked and raw foods.
- **Thaw** frozen meat in the refrigerator, never on the counter. Frozen food can also be thawed under cold running water or in a microwave. Cook meat and poultry immediately after thawing.
- **Cook** ground beef to 160° F and ground poultry to 165° F. Use a meat thermometer to accurately check for doneness.

RECIPES AND NUTRITION TIPS



Looking for an easy one-pot meal? Here are two recipes that everyone in your family will enjoy.

- Try this easy-to-make Skillet Lasagna recipe, made with ground beef, spinach, and cottage cheese. For a low-fat option, use ground turkey instead of ground beef. Or be creative and make a vegetarian skillet lasagna. Instead of meat, add a variety of vegetables. Choose from anything you have on hand, such as carrots, eggplant, peppers, spinach, or zucchini. Incorporating lots of vegetables into your meal adds color, vitamins, and minerals. Seasonal vegetables provide maximum flavor at a lower cost.
- Watch the video featuring a Spaghetti Bake recipe that can be made with any type of pasta.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS



Feeling extra stress due to the uncertainty of our current world situation? You are not alone.

Mindfulness, meditation, and breathing exercises can help reverse your body's natural stress response. Practicing these activities will physically relax your body and will build resilience to stress.

Try this meditative relaxation activity to help focus your mind and soften your anxiety.

1. Set aside 5 minutes of your day to sit comfortably.
2. Relax your body. Close your eyes and unwind your mind. Take a few deep breaths, breathing from your diaphragm, and release the tension in your body. Focus on your breathing for 1 minute. This will give your mind a break.
3. Be mindful of the present and clear your thoughts. When thoughts enter your mind, gently acknowledge them and let them go.
4. Move forward with awareness of yourself. Bring attention to your body, your breath, and your experience. Create a space in your mind to separate yourself from what you are feeling.

Check out these resources and find a technique that is right for you.

[Meditation](#) overview and [What meditation](#) is right for you?

FOOD ACCESS RESOURCES IN MASSACHUSETTS



Support local agriculture. Did you know that you can buy fruit and vegetable seeds with SNAP benefits?

Growing food at home is a great way to save money. Gardening can be very rewarding, and it's an activity the whole family can do together. Use the following [information](#) on plants and seeds for SNAP participants to start planting at home.

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms are a popular way for consumers to buy fresh, local, and seasonal foods directly from the farmer. By becoming a CSA member, families and individuals can receive a weekly basket of produce. Locate farms in your area offering CSA shares with [HIP benefits](#).

Stay up to date on where food is available during this pandemic.

- Locate updated sites serving [meals](#) for children and teens.
- [Resources](#) for school meals and child nutrition programs, early care and education, remote learning, and more.

Do you need help buying healthy food?

You may be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), apply here. <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-snap-benefits-food-stamps>