



*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 SAFE



### Freeze fresh fruits and vegetables for year-round enjoyment.

During the pandemic, many people are stocking their kitchen by freezing fresh, locally grown produce. Follow these tips to preserve the nutrients of your fruits and vegetables and enjoy the taste of summer year-round.

- Many fruits freeze well, especially berries, cherries, peaches, plums, pears, and melons. Gently wash the fruit and thoroughly pat dry. Berries may be frozen whole, and other fruit should be cut into smaller pieces. Freeze in a single layer on a baking sheet. When firm, transfer to a container or freezer bag. Squeeze out as much air as possible, label, and date.
- Many vegetables freeze well, especially broccoli, cauliflower, corn, peas, green beans, and carrots. Avoid freezing cucumbers, lettuce, cabbage, and celery. Most vegetables need to be blanched before freezing. Cook in boiling water or steam for a few minutes and transfer immediately to a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking process. Dry vegetables in a single layer on a clean dish towel or paper towel. The vegetables can then be frozen like the fruit.
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave, never on the counter. Use frozen produce within 8 to 10 months for the best quality.

## RECIPES AND NUTRITION TIPS



Tomatoes provide essential nutrients such as vitamins A and C. They are rich in the antioxidant lycopene, which may help lower the risk of certain types of cancer, promote heart health, and keep the immune system healthy.

Try this [Farmer-Style Tomato Sauce](#) recipe to learn how to prepare fresh tomatoes for a sauce, casserole, soup, or more!

Looking to add more protein to your tomato sauce? Click the recipe below for a meat sauce your family is sure to enjoy.

<https://www.eatgathergo.org/recipe/spaghetti-with-meat-sauce/>.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS

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### Practice Mindfulness.

Mindfulness is being conscious of self and surroundings. The first step could be focusing on your breathing. Try this exercise to help relieve tension and anxiety.

1. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose. Keep your shoulders relaxed.
2. Exhale slowly through your mouth. As you blow air out, purse your lips slightly, but keep your jaw relaxed.
3. Repeat.

### Now try the 4-7-8 technique.

1. Inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of 4.
2. Hold your breath for a count of 7.
3. Exhale completely through your mouth. Make a whoosh sound to a count of 8.

Learn more at <https://www.healthline.com/health/4-7-8-breathing>.



### Create a windowsill herb garden in a snap.

A windowsill herb garden is a low-maintenance way to enjoy the benefits of fresh herbs without needing an outdoor garden.

You'll need:

- A container
- Potting soil
- Packets of herb seeds or plants

### Caring for your herbs.

After planting seeds or plants, choose a window that gets at least 6 hours of sunlight each day. Make sure you water your herbs regularly.

## FOOD ACCESS RESOURCES IN MASSACHUSETTS

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### COVID-19 Update.

The Department of Transitional Assistance has received federal approval from the USDA to issue another additional SNAP payment to bring families' benefits up to the maximum monthly amount.

Find out in 10 seconds if you are eligible by using the screening tool at, <https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/screening>.

Apply for SNAP benefits online by visiting <https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/>.