



# NUTRITION bites

Brought to you by the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program ISSUE 21

*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



### Use food safety with your slow cooker.

Fall and winter meals prepared in a slow cooker are comforting and delicious. A slow cooker (such as a Crock Pot) is economical, convenient, and great for cooking food ahead of time. Keep these tips in mind when using a slow cooker.

- Read the manufacturer's manual for safety and use guidelines.
- Clean hands, utensils, and slow cooker before and after each use.
- Follow instructions for water level, recipes, cooking heat, and time.
- Defrost meat or poultry in the refrigerator before placing it in the slow cooker.
- Do not cook on the warm setting. This is designed to keep cooked food hot.
- Check for readiness by using a food thermometer. Check the internal temperature of meat and poultry before tasting.
- Store leftovers in shallow covered containers and refrigerate within two hours after cooking is finished.

## RECIPES AND NUTRITION TIPS



### Enjoy Black Bean and Veggie Burritos with your family.

Mix up your family meals by adding meatless Mondays to your routine. Plant-based proteins such as beans, chickpeas, and lentils are great for your health, your budget, and the environment! The [Black Bean and Veggie Burritos recipe](#) includes beans that provide protein and add fiber to help with digestive and heart health. Use any veggies you have on hand to avoid an extra trip to the grocery store.

You can also add plant-based proteins to other meals. Try this easy slow-cooker recipe for chicken tacos. <https://www.eatgathergo.org/recipe/slow-cooker-chicken-tacos/>

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS

---



### Grab a broomstick for an easy home workout.

Do you want to try a stretching and strengthening workout at home without a gym? Start with these activities. Use a towel if you do not have a broom.

**Broom Stretch:** Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, and hold the broom at your hips with a wide, firm grip. Keeping your arms straight, lift the broomstick up overhead in an arc motion. Slowly move the broomstick behind you, and focus on the stretch in your shoulders. Hold the stretch for a few seconds and then slowly return to the starting position. Repeat 10 or more times.

**Flutter Kick:** Lie face down with your legs and arms extended. Hold the broom with both hands shoulder width apart. Lift your head while looking down to keep your neck stable. Squeeze your buttocks as you exhale and raise your arms and legs about 6 inches off the floor. Keep your arms and legs lifted and hold the position for 30 seconds. Release and rest by placing your arms and legs back down on the floor. Repeat 10 or more times.

### Garden indoors during the winter months.

Are you craving freshly grown vegetables during the winter or do you live in an area without a gardening space? Here are items to get you started growing vegetables and herbs indoors.

- Locate a window that offers 4 to 6 hours of consistent sunlight. Or use inexpensive fluorescent lights placed about 6 inches from plants.
- Consider the temperature. Most plants require at least 70° F.
- Select planting pots that have adequate drainage. Water can collect in the saucer or reservoir beneath the plant.
- Use potting soil for indoor plants. Lettuce, peas, dwarf varieties of vegetables, and many herbs generally grow well indoors. For more information, visit [https://extension.usu.edu/news\\_sections/gardening/indoor-gardening](https://extension.usu.edu/news_sections/gardening/indoor-gardening).



## FOOD ACCESS RESOURCES IN MASSACHUSETTS

---



### Project Bread provides a list of COVID-19 food resources for Massachusetts residents.

Visit <https://www.projectbread.org/get-help/covid-19-hunger-food-resources-for-households> for a list of food resources for Massachusetts residents seeking assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Need food right away?

Call the confidential and anonymous Project Bread Food Source Hotline at 800-645-8333 for information on how to find food near you.