

# Health, Nutrition & Wellness

"Solutions In Your Community"

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## Family & Consumer Sciences

Welcome to the latest edition of the University of Maryland Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Newsletter.

Family & Consumer Science (FCS) is the comprehensive body of skills, research and knowledge that improves the quality of life of families, communities and individuals through education, research and community outreach.

Our mission is to strengthen families, communities, and individuals. Our goal is to empower Marylanders to make decisions that lead to healthy living, financial success, and long-term and wellness.

Harford County Faculty Extension Family & Consumer Sciences & Nutrition Educator, Jennifer Dixon Cravens, provides research based programs on Health Nutrition, Wellness,

Fitness Chronic Disease Prevention, and Management Healthy Living, Healthy Homes, Family & Community Health, Financial Education, Healthy Cooking, and Health Literacy & Communication and Food Safety

Complied by: Faculty Extension FCS/ Nutrition Educator, Jennifer Dixon Cravens, MS



### RECIPES

Each issue includes healthy recipes! Inside this issue:

- Greek-style Potatoes
- Moroccan Beet Salad
- Carrot Cake Cupcakes
- Loaded Cauliflower Casserole
- Strawberry Heart Muffins
- Chef Salad with Sriracha-Ranch Dressing

And Many More!

## Spring Into Health and Wellness

Winter is behind us and it's time to enjoy the health seasonal benefits of spring! Be sure to spend time outside this spring and feel the healing power of nature by eating seasonal produce and spending more time outside gardening, walking, and time in nature.

**Here are some fun ways to spring into health:**

1. **Get outside** and discover a park or walking trail near you. Walk, run, bike or hike your way through the season! There's plenty to see and do this spring.
2. **Spring clean your brain.** Springtime is full of new beginnings and fresh starts, so take some time to check in on your mental health. Detox from tv and technology. Take a mental break, and write in a journal, meditate, or let your mind relax in nature. Prioritize positivity and wellness.

3. **Enjoy seasonal foods.** Fresh fruits and vegetables are plentiful in the spring. Add items such as kale spinach, strawberries, asparagus, carrots, radishes, peas, and beets into your meals for good health that tastes delicious.

4. **Look forward** to upcoming health and wellness holidays such as National Nutrition Month (March), Earth Day (April) and Mental Health Month (May). *Source: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/healthandsafety/spring-into-health.htm>*





## March Themes

### March Wellness Themes

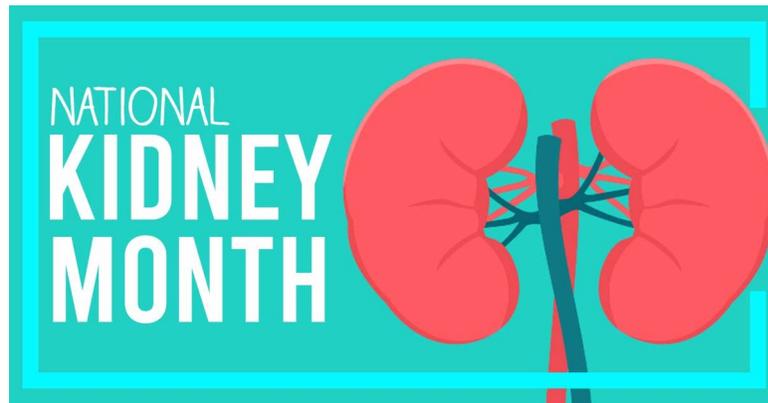
#### National Colorectal Cancers Awareness Month

March is a month dedicated to raising awareness about various health issues. Here are some of the key health themes observed in March:

**Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month** which promotes screening and early detection of colorectal cancer and **Brain Injury Awareness Month** which raises awareness about brain injuries, prevention, and

support for survivors. By participating in awareness months, individuals can take steps to protect their health and reduce their risks. Early detection and treatment are crucial for improving outcomes and saving lives.

Sources :<https://www.cdc.gov/colorectal-cancer/resources/index.html>



#### National Kidney Month

March is National Kidney Month, a time when communities across the country raise awareness about kidney disease. This year's focus is on taking charge of your health and the many factors that go into managing your kidney disease. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a serious condition affecting around 35.5 million people. Often overlooked until symptoms appear, CKD is progressive and can put you at risk for serious health complications including heart attack, stroke, and kidney failure.

Adopting a healthy lifestyle can help you manage CKD and its complications from progressing. Follow these healthy lifestyle habits to take charge of your kidney health.

1. Meet with your health care team on a regular basis, and stay connected with

your doctor, whether in-person or using telehealth via phone or computer, can help you maintain your kidney health.

2. Manage your blood pressure and work with your doctor to develop a plan to meet your blood pressure goals and check your blood glucose level regularly if you have diabetes.
3. Keep a healthy weight, and create a healthy meal plan and consider working with your doctor to develop a weight-loss plan that works for you.

Source: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/community-health-outreach/national-kidney-month>



## March Themes

### Nutrition Month—Focus on Fruits & Vegetables

March is Nutrition Month, and the theme this year is "Food Connects Us." This year we are encouraging everyone to eat more vegetables and fruits. Most people are aware that vegetables and fruits are an important part of a healthy eating pattern - they are packed with vitamins, minerals and fiber. Including vegetables and fruits daily may help to reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and certain types of cancer. Eating vegetables and fruits every day can sometimes be challenging – in fact, 80% or more are not getting enough.

The goal is to:

- Find Lower cost ways to buy vegetables and fruits ( Buy from farmers markets)
- Tips to reduce food waste ( Eat a smaller plate and serving size, can excess )
- Ideas to include vegetables and fruits in daily routines ( fruit salads, smoothies, snacks).

References:

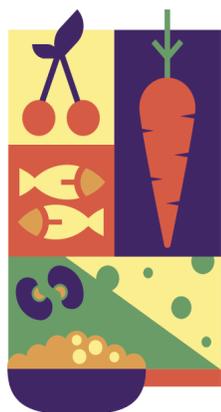
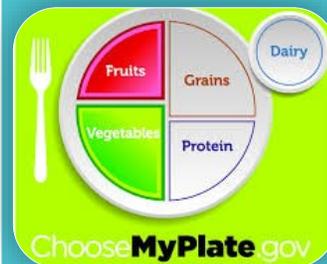
<https://together4health.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition-month>.

Fill half your plate, bowl, or lunch box with vegetables and fruits.



Choose different textures, colours, and shapes of vegetables and fruits to fit your taste.

Frozen and canned vegetables and fruits can be just as healthy as fresh and keep longer.



# Food Connects Us

2025 NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH®  
A Campaign by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Source: <https://www.eatright.org/>.

## Physical Wellness



Sources: <https://www.eatingwell.com/anti-inflammatory-foods-to-stock-up-on-this-spring-11696622>.

## Spring -Seasonal Health Tips

Spring is the perfect time to reboot and rejuvenate your health and wellness habits. The change of season is not only a symbol of rebirth in nature, but it can also be a renewal of healthy lifestyle practices.

Here are some healthy habits, recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), that you can integrate into your life to help refresh and revitalize your wellness plan:

- **Exercise regularly.** Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity at least 5 days a week.
- **Make healthier food choices.** Choose foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products.
- **Prioritize your beverage health.** Drink more water and limit alcohol and sugary drinks.
- **Practice healthy sleep hygiene.** Prioritize consistent bedtime and a comfortable sleep environment for optimal

sleep quality.

- **Be sun safe.** Wear clothing to cover skin exposed to the sun and use broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15.
- **Keep your smile healthy.** Floss daily and brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste.
- **Quit smoking and using tobacco products.** Avoid secondhand smoke.
- **Know your family health history.** Talk with your family about your health history and consult your health care provider to determine risk factors for disease and ways to reduce your risk.
- **Eat yellow and oranges seasonal foods**, like lemons, pineapples, yellow peppers, mangos, potatoes, onions, peaches, and jackfruit.

References: <https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/news/2024/03/13/spring-wellness>

## 4 Anti Inflammatory Foods for Spring

Anti-inflammatory foods—especially colorful fruits and vegetables—can help combat excess inflammation. To help you navigate the farmers' market this season, we asked registered dietitians to share their favorite anti-inflammatory foods to buy this spring.

1. **Strawberries** are at their peak in the spring, which is good news for your health. These juicy red berries are rich in vitamin C, anthocyanin's and flavonoids—powerful compounds that help fight inflammation.
2. **Asparagus** is a springtime delicacy loaded with fiber, folate and antioxidants. It also contains *saponins*, a plant compound that can have antioxidant properties. According to Alexandria Hardy, RDN, LDN, owner of Pennsylvania Nutrition Services, *saponins* can help the body fight harmful germs, reduce swelling and protect against certain diseases.
3. **Leafy Greens** like spinach, kale, Swiss chard and arugula are rich in vitamins A, C and K, as well as plant compounds like lutein and quercetin, which help combat inflammation..
4. **Pineapples** are a great anti-inflammatory food because they contain bromelain, an enzyme known to reduce inflammation and improve digestion.

## Get Fit -Weight Loss Goals for Spring

With the warm weather moving in, many of us start thinking about our health and wellness. Gaining weight over the holidays and winter is the norm. According to a study published in a 2014 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine, the average person gains 0.6 percent of their total body weight over the holiday season. Lose the extra pounds and increase energy levels by adjusting your diet and scheduling in regular workout routines. Get ready for summer by making these lifestyle changes now.

### 1. CREATE GOALS

Setting a goal for yourself is a great way to stay motivated. Monitoring your progress keeps you in check and is encouraging when you see the weight start to come off. Keep goals obtainable to avoid feeling let-down. Take measurements and check your weight on a regular basis, but don't become obsessed with the numbers. Aim to check measurements and weight once a week instead of daily.

### 2. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR DAILY FOOD AND EXERCISE HABITS

Writing down every morsel that passes your lips may seem excessive, but many are surprised by just how much they eat each day. Food diaries are a surefire way to get rid of your mindless snacking habits from the winter. Smartphone apps are ideal for tracking your diet and exercise each day. The apps calculate nutritional values for food items and also provides an average of calories burned.

### 3. ENJOY THE BEAUTIFUL WEATHER

One of the top tips for losing weight in the spring is to go outside and take advantage of the perfect temperature. No gym required to exercise as you enjoy long walks, bicycle rides, jogs, and more. Spring is usually the startup time of sports leagues too. Adult leagues offer the ideal opportunity to be social and get fit. Research community softball, baseball, soccer, or volleyball leagues in your area.

### 4. OVERHAUL YOUR KITCHEN

Perform a spring cleaning on your refrigerator and pantries. Toss out the junk food compiled over the winter to clear room for healthier items. For any unopened items and non-perishables, look into donating the items to a local food pantry. Fill cupboards and refrigerator with canned and fresh vegetables, frozen and fresh fruits, healthy protein choices such as poultry, fish, and lean cuts of beef, and whole grains.

### 5. INCREASE THE AMOUNTS OF VEGGIES ON YOUR PLATE

When the weather gets warmer, it's natural to want to eat more of nature's bounty. Research has shown that physicians recommend plant-based diets as an effective strategy to quickly lower body mass index. At mealtimes, fill up your plate with mostly vegetables and only a small amount of proteins, grains, and fats. During the spring, more healthy vegetables are in season and easy to find at the grocery store and farmer's market. Popular seasonal choices include asparagus, artichoke, spinach, and beets.

### 6. AIM FOR A HIGHER FIBER INTAKE

Read food labels and choose foods high in fiber. Vegetables, legumes, and whole grain breads are a few examples of food groups high in fiber. Try to get at least 30 grams of fiber daily to improve digestion and keep your appetite suppressed between mealtimes. Fiber from fresh and all-natural foods are preferred over fiber supplements.

### 7. DRINK BETTER

Get rid of those calorie-laden drinks that you've been enjoying all winter long. Hot chocolate, cappuccinos, and frappes have as much as 400 calories a serving. Switching to lighter and more refreshing sips can help you reach your spring weight loss goals. Unsweetened iced tea and water are your best bets. Seltzers and fruit-infused waters are also your best bets to trim your daily calorie intake.



Source: <https://www.eatingwell.com/article/291624/weight-loss-meal-plan-for-spring-1200-calories/>.

## Heart Healthy Recipe for Spring

### Baked Salmon



**Ingredients:**

- 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh herbs, such as parsley, dill, or a combination
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 (6-ounce) salmon fillets
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

**Directions:**

Heat the oven to 400°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

Finely grate the zest of 1/2 large lemon into a small bowl. Juice 1/2 the lemon into the bowl. Cut the remaining 1/2 lemon into 4 wedges and reserve for serving.

Stir 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh herbs and 1 minced garlic clove into the lemon mixture.

Pat 4 (6-ounce) salmon fillets dry with paper towels and place on the baking sheet. Brush all over with 1 tablespoon olive oil, then season with 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. Arrange skin-side down, then spoon the lemon mixture evenly over the salmon.

Bake until the salmon is opaque and flakes easily with a fork, 12 to 15 minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the middle of the thickest part should register 120°F to 130°F for medium-rare, or 135°F to 145°F for well-done. Serve with the lemon wedges.

*Nutrition Information:*

*CALORIES 487kcal 24%, FAT 37.0g 57%, SATURATED FAT 14.0g 70%, CARBS 2.0g &lt;1, SODIUM 310mg 13%, 35.0g protein, 132mg cholesterol*

*Allrecipes.com*



## Heart Health Tips

### FCS Celebrates- February is American Heart Month

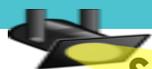


Heart disease is the #1 cause of death in the United States.

Did you know that lowering blood pressure can help save your life? Follow these tips for a heart-healthy lifestyle and diet. A combo platter of high blood pressure and an elevated lipoprotein could put some at risk for heart attacks, strokes, and death due to heart disease, according to new research.

- #1 Follow the DASH diet. Include plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy products in your diet.
- #2 Reduce sodium in your diet by cutting back on fast food, processed food, cured meats, salty snacks, and convenience foods.
- #3 Cut back on foods high in saturated fat, including fatty cuts of beef and pork, fried foods, whole milk dairy products, and high-fat desserts.





## Spotlight on Community

County Extension goes Red for Heart Health Month

Heart Health  
2025

# Harford County Celebrate Heart Health Awareness Month!

Extension Staff & Faculty along with Community Partnership went RED



Harford County Extension Office with Acting AED Andy Kness

Community  
Outreach



Harford County Department of Social Services, and Havre De Grace Housing Authority, a Total of 25 program Participants for Heart Health Sessions

## March Recipes

### Stuffed Cornish Game Hens



#### Ingredients:

2 Cornish game hens  
 ½ cup melted butter  
 ¼ onion, chopped  
 ½ stalk celery, chopped  
 ¼ green bell pepper, chopped  
 1 (4.5 ounce) can mushrooms, drained and chopped  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 tablespoon dried basil  
 1 teaspoon dried oregano  
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley  
 ¼ cup melted butter

#### Directions:

Gather all ingredients. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Combine 1/2 cup melted butter, onion, celery, bell pepper, mushrooms, garlic, basil, oregano, and parsley in a bowl.

Season hens inside and out with salt and pepper to taste, then stuff with equal amounts of vegetable mixture.

Place stuffed hens in a 9x13 inch baking dish, breast-side up. Drizzle with 1/4 cup melted butter.

Cover dish and bake in the preheated oven for 1 ½ hours. Remove cover and brown at 500 degrees F (260 degrees C).

#### Nutrition Information:

*Calories 476, Total Fat 45g, Saturated Fat 25g, Cholesterol 167mg, Sodium 421mg, Total Carbohydrate 5g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Total Sugars 2g, Protein 14g, Vitamin C 9mg, Calcium 52mg, Iron 2mg, Potassium 280mg.*

Source: [Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com)



### Strawberry Spinach Salad

#### Ingredients:

##### Dressing:

½ cup white sugar  
 ½ cup olive oil  
 ¼ cup distilled white vinegar  
 2 tablespoons sesame seeds  
 1 tablespoon poppy seeds  
 1 tablespoon minced onion  
 ¼ teaspoon paprika  
 ¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

##### Salad:

1 quart strawberries - cleaned, hulled and sliced  
 10 ounces fresh spinach - rinsed, dried and torn into bite-size pieces  
 ¼ cup almonds, blanched and slivered

#### Directions:

Gather all ingredients.

Make dressing: Whisk together sugar, oil, vinegar, sesame seeds, poppy seeds, onion, paprika, and Worcestershire in a medium bowl. Cover and chill for 1 hour.

Make salad: Combine strawberries, spinach, and almonds in a large bowl.

Pour dressing over salad; toss to coat. Refrigerate for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

#### Nutrition Information:

*Calories 491, Total Fat 35g, Saturated Fat 5g, Sodium 63mg, Total Carbohydrate 43g, Dietary Fiber 6g, Total Sugars 34g, Protein 6g.*

Source: [Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com)



## March Recipes

### Greek Style Potatoes

#### Ingredients:

6 potatoes, peeled and quartered  
 1 ½ cups water  
 ½ cup olive oil  
 ¼ cup fresh lemon juice  
 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
 2 cubes chicken bouillon  
 1 teaspoon dried thyme  
 1 teaspoon dried rosemary  
 ground black pepper to taste

#### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F  
 Arrange potatoes evenly in the bottom of a medium baking dish.  
 Mix together water, olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, bouillon cubes, thyme, rosemary, and pepper in a small bowl. Pour mixture over potatoes.

Cover and bake in the preheated oven, turning occasionally, until potatoes are tender yet firm, 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

#### Nutrition information:

Calories 318, Total Fat 19g  
 Saturated Fat 3g,  
 Cholesterol 0mg ,Sodium 599mg  
 Total Carbohydrate 59g ,  
 Dietary Fiber 7g  
 Total Sugars 3g Total Sugars 3g  
 Protein 7g , Vitamin C 71mg  
 Calcium 60mg , Iron 3mg  
 Potassium 1386mg.

Source: [Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com)



### Grilled Asparagus

#### Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil  
 1 teaspoon coarse salt or to taste  
 ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper  
 3 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 pound fresh asparagus spears, trimmed

#### Directions:

Gather all ingredients.  
 Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat.  
 Add olive oil, salt, and pepper; cook and stir until garlic is fragrant, about 30 seconds.  
 Add asparagus and cook until fork-tender, turning asparagus often to ensure even cooking, about 8 to 10 minutes.

#### Nutrition information:

Calories 188, Total Fat 12g  
 Saturated Fat 8g ,Cholesterol 31mg  
 Sodium 225mg , Total Carbohydrate 5g  
 Dietary Fiber 2g ,Total Sugars 2g  
 Protein 3g ,Vitamin C 7mg ,  
 Calcium 36mg

Source: [Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com)



## March Recipes

### Moroccan Beet Salad



#### Ingredients:

5 medium sized beets, tops removed  
 1 red onion, cut in half and thinly sliced  
 1 tablespoon olive oil ¼ cup freshly squeezed orange juice  
 1 tablespoon orange zest  
 2 teaspoons cumin  
 1 teaspoon salt ¼ cup fresh mint leaves, packed  
 ¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves, packed

#### Directions:

In a large pot bring enough water to cover beets to a boil. Add in beets and allow to simmer until beets are tender enough to be pierced with a fork, about 35-40 minutes. Remove from pot and allow to cool completely. While running under cold water,

remove the skins from the beets using a peeler. Cut beets into 2" pieces and set aside. 2. In a small bowl combine orange juice, orange zest, olive oil, cumin and salt. Stir well and set aside. 3. In a large bowl add in beets, fresh mint, fresh cilantro, sliced onions and dressing and toss until everything is mixed together. Top with more fresh herbs and serve. Note: Without the fresh herbs, salad will store well for up to 5 days in refrigerator

#### Nutrition Information:

*Calories 67, Protein 2 g, Carbohydrates 10 g, Total Fat 3 g, Dietary Fiber 2 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 243 mg, Total Sugars 6 g.*

Source: <https://themodernproper.com/moroccan-beet-salad>.

### Stewed Cabbage



#### Ingredients:

½ head green cabbage chopped (about 4 cups)  
 ½ onion sliced  
 1 cups chicken or vegetable stock plus more if needed  
 2 teaspoons of olive oil  
 pepper to taste  
 1 teaspoon Garlic powder

#### Directions:

Place 1 tablespoon of Olive oil a skillet over medium heat with the onion and cabbage. Pour the stock into the skillet - the liquid should come up about halfway over the cabbage, maybe a bit more.

Increase the heat to medium-high to bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce to medium low to simmer the cabbage for 20-25 minutes, stirring every once in awhile, until the cabbage is very soft.

When the liquid is mostly reduced and the cabbage has cooked down, swirl in the remaining butter, taste, and add lots of salt and pepper to your preference. Enjoy!

#### Nutrition Information:

*Calories 200, Total Fat 12g, Saturated Fat 7g, Cholesterol 31mg, Sodium 131mg, Total Carbohydrate 23g, Dietary Fiber 6g, Total Sugars 13g, Protein 4g, Vitamin C 88mg, Calcium 153mg, Iron 2mg, Potassium 729mg.*

Source: [Allrecipes.com](https://www.allrecipes.com)

## March Recipes

### Carrot Cake Cupcakes

#### Ingredients:

1 ½ cups white sugar  
 2 large eggs, lightly beaten  
 ½ cup vegetable oil  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 2 cups shredded carrots  
 ½ cup crushed pineapple  
 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour  
 1 ¼ teaspoons baking soda  
 1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
 ¼ teaspoon ground ginger  
 1 cup chopped walnuts, divided

#### Cream Cheese Icing:

2 ounces white chocolate  
 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened  
 ½ cup unsalted butter, softened  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 ½ teaspoon orange extract  
 4 cups confectioners' sugar  
 2 tablespoons heavy cream

#### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line a 12-cup muffin pan with cupcake liners.

To make the carrot cupcakes: Beat white sugar, brown sugar, and eggs together in a bowl; mix in oil and vanilla. Fold in carrots and pineapple.

Mix flour, baking soda, cinnamon, salt, nut-

meg and ginger in a separate bowl; add to carrot mixture until evenly moist. Fold in 1/2 of the chopped walnuts. Spoon batter into the prepared liners, filling each 3/4 full.

Bake in the preheated oven until tops spring back when lightly pressed, about 25 minutes. Cool cupcakes completely on wire racks.

Meanwhile, make the frosting: Melt white chocolate in small saucepan over low heat; stir until smooth and allow to cool to room temperature.

Beat cream cheese and butter together in a large bowl with electric mixer until smooth. Mix in cooled white chocolate, 1 teaspoon vanilla, and orange extract. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar until mixture is fluffy; mix in heavy cream. Top each cooled cupcake with frosting and sprinkling with remaining walnuts.

#### Nutrition information:

*Calories 539, Total Fat 32g, Saturated Fat 13g, Cholesterol 78mg, Sodium 217mg, Total Carbohydrate 45g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Total Sugars 39g, Protein 6g, Vitamin C 2mg, Calcium 58mg, Iron 2mg, Potassium 191mg.*

Source: *Allrecipes.com*



## Environmental Wellness



# April Themes Spring Gardening Tips

## Early Spring

Though the official first day of spring is in March, gardeners often go by the weather to decide that spring has started. Think of early spring as the time when temperatures begin trending upward and stay consistently above freezing if you live in a cold climate. In temperate regions, most plants are just about to break dormancy but haven't started actively growing yet.

### 1. Clean up flowerbeds.

Clear away dead leaves or any other winter debris from the soil surfaces where you're planning to plant annual flowers and vegetables. Remove protective winter mulch from around perennials and ornamental grasses (hedge trimmers make it easy to give grass clumps a clean, even look), and cut back last year's dried foliage. To protect yourself from cuts and scrapes, remember to wear gardening gloves, especially when working with plants with prickly leaves.

### 2. Divide your perennials.

A good time to divide many perennials is just before spring growth begins. Dividing perennials is a budget-friendly way to add more plants to your garden, or to share extras with friends. It also aids in keeping your existing perennials healthy. After a few years, if your plants grow in a large clump, the middle can thin out, leaving a bare spot. Dividing the clump will encourage new growth.

### 3. Add mulch around perennials.

One of the easiest ways to make your yard look polished is to add a fresh layer of mulch around the garden beds. This also helps the soil retain moisture and keeps down weeds. It often takes more mulch than you imagine to cover a bed, so it's a good idea to buy a little more than you think you'll need. Spread the mulch evenly with your gloved hands or use a rake, being careful not to layer it on too thickly or too close to your plants, which can cause diseases. Keeping the mulch level also helps it stay in place during heavy rains or wind. If you have downspouts that tend to wash

away mulch, one fix is to replace it with river rocks.

### 4. Prune trees and shrubs.

If you didn't prune in winter, now is the time to trim your fruit trees. Prune before the buds begin to break into bloom, or you'll stress the tree and get a tiny crop (or possibly none). It's also a good time to prune evergreen trees and shrubs.

### 5. Perform basic maintenance on your hardscaping.

Check stonework for frost heaves, particularly in paths and edging. Check the general condition of your deck or patio and make any needed repairs. Clean off outdoor furniture so it's ready when you are for relaxing after a busy day in the garden.

### 6. Plant vegetables.

Hardy, cool-season vegetables, like potatoes, artichokes, peas, and some lettuces, germinate best in cool soil, so plant them in early spring, once the soil has thawed. They should be ready to harvest by early summer.

## Mid Spring

Halfway through the season, you should start to see your spring landscape take shape, as more and more bulbs, perennials, shrubs, and trees start growing, possibly even blooming. With most of the clean-up completed, you can get started adding new plants.

### 1. Clean bird feeders.

Some people like to take down their bird feeders in spring and store them away until fall. If you want to leave them up year-round, now's a good time to empty and wash them out. Then fill your feeders with fresh seed.

### 2. Make notes as you watch the spring show.

Some of your spring bulbs should be starting to flower. Enjoy the blooms, and take note of any empty spots where you'll want to plant bulbs later in the fall.

3. Plant new perennials and cold-hardy annuals.

Freshly planted perennials need a little

## April Themes

### Spring Gardening Tips, continued

time to get settled and grow new roots before hot summer weather hits. For some quick garden color, add a few cool-season annuals, like pansies or snapdragons. They also work well in containers, where they'll brighten your front porch.

#### 4. Add new trees and shrubs.

Plant as soon as the ground is no longer frozen. The earlier you can do this, the better, so your trees and shrubs have enough time to grow new roots before temperatures start getting hot.

#### 5. Apply fresh mulch.

Once you're finished planting, add a fresh layer of mulch around all your new plants. If you mulch now, before weeds have a chance to sprout, you'll have next-to-no weeding come summer.

#### Late Spring

In late spring, you can start cleaning up flowers that have already bloomed. It's also time to get planting in earnest to fill out your garden.

#### 1. Deadhead flowering bulbs.

Remove spent blossoms from spring-flowering bulbs; this encourages the plants to store energy for next year rather than expend it to make seeds. Let the foliage die back on its own, and don't remove it until it's completely yellow or dried up.

#### 2. Shop for summer annuals.

Pick out flats of your favorite summer annuals, like petunias, impatiens, and zinnias. Choose plants that aren't yet in bloom, because they'll be stronger.

#### 3. Start warm-season vegetables.

While you're harvesting the radishes and lettuces you sowed early in the spring, you can transplant seedlings of warm-season crops, like tomatoes, peppers, and all sorts of herbs.

#### 4. Plant summer-blooming bulbs.

While spring-blooming bulbs should be planted in the fall, summer-blooming bulbs, like dahlias and gladiolus, should be planted once there's no more threat of frost. Check your area's average last frost date for a general idea of when to plant these bulbs, then get them in the ground once the soil has warmed up.

Use this spring gardening checklist, and you'll have one of the best-looking yards on the block. While there are still a few maintenance chores you should do every season, once you power through these spring tasks early in the growing season, you'll have more time to kick back and enjoy your landscape throughout summer.

Source: <https://www.bhg.com/gardening/yard/garden-care/spring-gardening->



## 8 Spring Cleaning Tips

1. Start by Preparing & Planning: Decide which areas and rooms that will clean, and decluttered , : Decide which areas and rooms that will clean, and decluttered , and make sure to get all the supplies you need together before starting. Also get everyone involved and make it a family project.
2. Decide what items will be thrown away, and donated to charities.
3. Work from the Top to the Bottom, Clean ceiling , walls, fixtures, windows, then floors last.
4. Change batteries in smoke detectors and other appliances.
5. Clean and disinfect toilets , sinks and bat tubs
6. Clean all trash cans in all rooms, and replace if needed.
7. Also make sure to disinfect all high traffic items like doors, door knobs, counter tops and light switches.
8. Make sure to sweep, vacuum, and mop floors with appropriate cleansers for floor type, and do not use to much water.



Source: <https://simplepurposefulliving.com/spring-cleaning-tips/>.

**Environmental and Social Wellness**



**April Themes**

**County Event- Earth Day Celebration**

The theme for Earth Day 2025 is OUR POWER, OUR PLANET, inviting everyone around the globe to unite behind renewable energy, and to triple the global generation of clean electricity by 2030. How? By joining us in Earth Action Day, encouraging all to take action—educate, advocate, and mobilize. Pledge an Earth Action on social media. Attend/plan/register a local event. Integrate Earth Day lessons into your curricula. Donate to support our efforts. Below you'll find resources (plus quizzes, fact sheets, articles and more) to help you take

action this Earth Day, April 22nd, and every day.

Promoting robust climate and environmental education is essential as global challenges intensify. Such education empowers informed decision-making, active civic engagement, and urgency in addressing pressing issues. By shaping policy, encouraging sustainable lifestyles, and cultivating stewards, advocates play a vital role in building a sustainable and resilient future.

**HARFORD COUNTY MARYLAND**

**EARTH DAY CELEBRATION**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26**

**11 A.M. - 3 P.M.**

**POPLAR GROVE PARK**  
3519 Conowingo Road, Street

Pit beef/ham available for purchase provided by, and proceeds to benefit, Darlington/Dublin VFW Post 10146

**FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN!**

- Compost bin and rain barrel raffle
- FREE mulch & compost: bring your own bag
- Master Gardeners projects
- Pollinator garden activities
- Agricultural & Environmental groups

**JOIN US RAIN OR SHINE**

Harford County Office of Recycling  
410-638-3417  
wdoring@menv.com  
Bob Cassilly, County Executive

**2025 EARTH DAY GROUPS**

- Ladew Gardens
- Harford Bird Club
- Harford Land Trust
- Molly Hill Farm
- Maryland DNR
- Harford Soil Conservation
- HC Office of Recycling
- HC Noxious Weed Program
- HC Adopt-a-Road Program
- HC Litter Control Program
- C.A.T. Club of Havre de Grace
- PaL Garden
- Harford County Forestry Board
- Eden Mill Nature Center
- Susquehanna Bee Keepers
- Un. MD Master Gardeners
- Master Gardener Bay Wise
- Harford County 4-H Camp
- Anita C. Light Estuary
- 4-H Makers Market
- 4-H Stockyards (live animals)
- University of Maryland Extension
- Friends of the HCPL Darlington Branch
- Mason Dixon Community Services
- Mason Dixon Country
- Susquehannock Wildlife Society



## April Themes

### Campus Event –100 Year Anniversary AGNR—Maryland Day

Extension/  
AGNR News

Enjoy a day of learning and discovery at the University of Maryland’s springtime open house.



Join us for interactive demonstrations, performances and workshops showcasing science and tech, the arts, sports, agriculture and more!

**Saturday, April 26, 2025**

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

College Park, MD

Free parking & admission

<https://marylandday.umd.edu/>





## April Themes: Tax Time Tips

Carrie Sorenson, Financial Wellness Educator | [cjrsoren@umd.edu](mailto:cjrsoren@umd.edu) | 410-386-2760

It's that time of year again! Tax time. Here are a few tips for making this tax season as stress free as possible.

### 1. Get Your Documents Together

One of the most difficult parts about filing taxes can be gathering all the information you need to file. These documents may come from your employer, bank, investment company, student loan servicer, or some other entity. Some may arrive via mail, while others may be shared electronically via email or an online account system. They may also arrive at different times. My suggestion is to have a designated place for all this information where you can gather it as you receive it. This might be a folder on your computer or a filing cabinet in your home. Having all your documents in one place will make it easier to find the information you need as you prepare to file. If you aren't sure if something is a tax document but you think it might be, put it with the tax documents just in case. Better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it!

### 2. Consider Your Filing Options

Once you have all the information you need, it's time to start thinking about preparing your actual filing. It is important to start thinking about how you want to file so that you can make an appointment if necessary. These appointments fill quickly, so don't wait!

You can file using a variety of different methods, which typically have different price points as well. First, you'll want to see if you qualify for any free filing programs. Two of the popular are the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs. These programs are managed by the IRS and returns are filed by IRS-certified volunteers, so you can trust that they are qualified to assist you. The programs are offered through a variety of local agencies, which often have different eligibility criteria for the program. To find a VITA or TCE site close to you, you can go to <https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/>

If you don't qualify for VITA, you might still be able to take advantage of a new program from the IRS called the IRS Direct File. This allows you to go online and file your taxes directly with the IRS if you live in one of 25 participating states, which includes Maryland and Pennsylvania. Filing in this way is free but only works if you have a relatively simple return. To check and see if you are eligible for direct file, go to <https://directfile.irs.gov/>. If neither of these programs work for you, then you'll likely want to filing using a private company or by working with a certified tax preparer. If you

are using an online company like Turbo Tax or H&R Block, you will enter the information yourself, so it is important to read the instructions carefully to make sure you enter the correct information. If you work with a certified tax preparer, be sure to bring all your documents so that they have the information they need to file your return.

### 3. Be Wary of Predatory Practices and Scams

Unfortunately, tax time brings with it a variety of scams and predatory services. As you are deciding how you want to file your taxes, be on the lookout for red flags. The IRS warns of "ghost preparers" who are paid to prepare the return but refuse to sign as the paid preparer. The IRS requires paid preparers to sign the return, so if you pay someone to prepare your return and they ask you to sign it that is a warning sign of potential fraud. Social media is also full of dubious advice about how to increase your tax return. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Make sure to verify any information you see online with a reputable source or to work with a professional to prepare your return. Finally, be careful of tax preparers that offer to give you your return



right away. Although they use a variety of terms for this practice, they are typically referring to a Refund Anticipation Loan. This is a short-term loan that allows you to borrow the funds from your tax return right after filing and the loan is then paid back when you receive your return. Often, these loans have expensive fees and high interest rates. The interest and fees cut into the amount you should be receiving in your refund. If you can avoid them, you can ensure that your full refund goes to you.

### 4. Have a Plan for Your Return

Finally, know what you want to do with your tax return. For many people, their tax return is the only time in the year when they receive additional funds outside of their normal income. If you have clear financial goals, it can help you use your return to improve your overall financial wellbeing. For example, you may want to use the funds to pay down debt with a high interest rate, like credit card debt. You might also want to save some of the funds in an emergency savings account so that you have a buffer for unexpected issues that happen later in the year. Without a plan, it can be easy to think of the return as "extra" money and spend it impulsively. With a plan, hopefully the tax return can be a tool for reaching your financial goals!

## Financial Strategies for Tight Budgets

In the United States, we have many different measures that we use to gauge how the economy is doing. One of those tools is called the Consumer Confidence Index, which measures how people are feeling about the economy and what they plan to do with their money in the near future. The February results were released recently, and they showed that confidence has been decreasing lately. While there can be many reasons for a decrease in confidence like this, it generally tells us that Americans are feeling nervous about their financial futures and might be tightening their budgets in preparation. Hopefully these preparations are unnecessary, but just in case, here are some suggestions for preparing for and dealing with tough financial times.

First, you'll want to review your income and expenses. If you need to cut back, you'll need some information to help you figure out the best way to do so. Start by tracking your income and expenses for at least one month, but ideally for several months. This will help you establish your current spending habits. Many of us have a general idea of this information, but not too many specifics. We call this "mental accounting", which is sort of like making an educated guess about your spending. Unfortunately, this information is difficult to track mentally, so these guesses can be way off base. Tracking the actual dollars and cents will make sure that you have correct information for making important decisions in the future.

Next, you'll want to think about how important your different expenses are. Often expenses are described as either needs or wants, but household budgets are often more complex than that. Some things, like a safe place to live, food, certain debt payments, and expenses necessary to keep your job, are clearly needs. Other expenses might be more flexible and could be cut back or completely cut out. Even if you don't need to make changes now, having this information will help you decide where you could make cuts if it becomes necessary.

At the same time, consider starting or building your emergency savings. Many experts recommend having 3-6 months of expenses in an emergency savings account, like a checking or savings account. However, having anything saved is helpful in dealing with emergencies and you'll be more likely to save if your goal feels reasonable. So, set a monthly or weekly savings goal that feels reasonable for you. If you want to figure out how much you would need to cover 3-6 months of expenses, you can use the information you learned from tracking your expenses previously. The idea behind this number is that it is the average amount of time it takes to find another job after a job loss. But remember, you want to set a reasonable goal and work on steadily building your savings over time.

Finally, look for assistance programs and creative ways to save money. Often when people are worried about their financial situation, they start cutting back on spending where they can. While this is helpful, it can also create stress by making people feel like they aren't able to do the things they enjoy. For example, if you choose to cancel a streaming service you might miss the entertainment of the shows you used to watch there. Many libraries offer access to streaming music, tv shows, and movies. So, consider reaching out to your local library to find free entertainment options to fill the gap.

### Financial Wellness

Refresh your  
FINANCES



Spring Clean Your  
Finances



## April Recipes

### Apricot Cobbler



#### Ingredients:

1 cup water  
 ¾ cup white sugar  
 1 tablespoon cornstarch  
 ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
 6 cups halved fresh apricots  
 1 tablespoon butter

#### Topping:

2 cups all-purpose flour  
 ¼ cup white sugar  
 1 tablespoon baking powder  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 7 tablespoons butter  
 2 tablespoons white sugar  
 1 ½ cups milk

#### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).  
 Bring water, ¾ cup sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, and nutmeg to a boil; stir until thickened, about 1 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and add apricots and 1 tablespoon

butter. Simmer until heated through, about 5 minutes. Transfer mixture to a 9x13-inch baking dish.

Combine flour, ¼ cup sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Cut 7 tablespoons butter into flour mixture until mixture resembles a coarse crumb. Stir milk into crumbles until topping is just moistened. Spoon topping over apricot mixture. Sprinkle remaining 2 tablespoons sugar over topping.

Bake in the preheated oven until golden brown, 30 to 35 minutes.

#### Nutrition Information:

Calories 272, Total Fat 9g, Saturated Fat 5g, Cholesterol 23mg, Sodium 385mg, Total Carbohydrate 46g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Total Sugars 27g, Protein 4g, Vitamin C 8mg, Calcium 120mg, Iron 1mg, Potassium 272mg

Source:  
 Allreci-



### Spring Cucumber Salad



#### Ingredients:

1 cup water  
 ½ cup distilled white vinegar  
 ¼ cup vegetable oil  
 ¼ cup sugar  
 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste  
 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or to taste  
 3 cucumbers, peeled and sliced ¼-inch thick  
 3 tomatoes, cut into wedges  
 1 onion, sliced and separated into rings

#### Directions:

Whisk water, vinegar, oil, sugar, salt, and pepper together in a large bowl until smooth.

Add cucumbers, tomatoes, and onion and stir to coat.

Cover bowl with plastic wrap; refrigerate for at least 2 hours for best flavor results.

#### Nutrition Information:

Calories 156, Total Fat 10g, Saturated Fat 2g, Sodium 784mg, Total Carbohydrate 18g, Dietary Fiber 3g, Total Sugars 12g, Protein 2g, Vitamin C 15mg, Calcium 37mg, Iron 1mg, Potassium 394mg

Source: Allrecipes.com

## April Recipes

### Chicken Spinach Artichoke Soup

#### Ingredients:

2 tablespoons butter  
 1/2 sweet onion; chopped  
 3 celery stalks; chopped  
 2 garlic cloves; chopped  
 salt and pepper  
 2 boneless, skinless chicken thighs  
 2 cups chicken broth  
 3/4 cup white wine  
 juice of 1 lemon  
 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes  
 1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach  
 1 (12 ounce) jar marinated artichoke quarters; drained  
 4 ounces cream cheese  
 1/3 cup chopped fresh dill  
 2 - 3 scallions sliced

#### Directions:

In an insert of a slow cooker, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion, celery,

and garlic. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sauté for 7 - 10 minutes.

Add the chicken, broth, wine, and lemon juice. Sprinkle with red pepper flakes and transfer to the slow cooker. Cook on high for 2 1/2 hours or on low for 4 hours. About a 1/2 hour before it's finished cooking add the spinach and the artichokes. Stir until spinach breaks up and is no longer frozen. Cover and continue cooking. Add the cream cheese breaking into pieces. Add the dill and stir to combine. Ladle into bowls and top with scallions. Serve with fresh bread.

#### Nutrition information:

Calories 457, Fat 21 g, Saturated fat 9 g, Trans fat 0 g, Cholesterol 125 mg, Sodium 1206 mg, Carbohydrates 16 g, Fiber 5 g, Sugar 6 g, Protein 47 g, Vita mind 0 mcg, Calcium 473 mg, Iron 3 mg, Potassium 1104 mg

Source: [Delish.com](http://Delish.com)



### Loaded Cauliflower Casserole

#### Ingredients:

4 Slices turkey bacon, or more to taste  
 1 large head cauliflower, cut into florets  
 1/2 cup sour cream  
 1/2 cup mayonnaise  
 1 clove garlic, minced  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
 2 cups shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese, divided  
 1 (8 ounce) package baby Bella mushrooms, roughly chopped  
 6 tablespoons chopped chives, divided

#### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish. Place turkey bacon in a large skillet and cook over medium-high heat, turning occasionally, until evenly browned, about 10 minutes. Drain bacon slices on paper towels, then crumble. Place a steamer insert into a saucepan and

fill with water to just below the bottom of the steamer. Bring water to a boil. Add cauliflower, cover, and steam until tender, 15 to 20 minutes.

Combine sour cream, mayonnaise, garlic, salt, and black pepper in a large bowl; add cauliflower, 1/2 of the bacon, 1 cup Colby-Monterey Jack cheese, mushrooms, and 3 tablespoons chives and mix well. Transfer mixture to the prepared baking dish and top with remaining bacon and cheese. Bake in the preheated oven until bubbling and cheese is melted, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle remaining chives over casserole.

*Nutrition Facts: Calories 346, Total Fat 29g Saturated Fat 12g, Cholesterol 63mg, Sodium 380mg, Total Carbohydrate 19g, Dietary Fiber 3g, Total Sugars 4g, Protein 14g, Vitamin C 51mg, Calcium 53mg, Iron 1mg, Potassium 482mg*

Source: [Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com)





## May Themes

### Arthritis Awareness Month

Every **May** is Arthritis Awareness Month, an opportunity to inform even more people about this complex family of debilitating diseases. While most people have probably heard of arthritis, it's likely that many of them don't know much about the impact of arthritis, the #1 cause of disability in the United States.

#### Basic Facts About Arthritis

About 1 in 4 adults and hundreds of thousands of children in the U.S. have been diagnosed by a doctor with a form of arthritis or related illness.

Contrary to the common misconception, it's not just an "old person's" disease. About two-thirds of those living with

arthritis are [aged 65 and under](#).

- There are more than 100 types of arthritis and related rheumatic diseases.
- As our nation's top cause of disability, arthritis costs the U.S. economy over \$300 billion annually in medical bills, lost wages and associated expenses.

Most people with arthritis also have [comorbidities](#) — accompanying conditions, like heart disease, diabetes and obesity — that further jeopardizes their health.

Source: <https://www.arthritis.org/about-arthritis/arthritis-awareness-month>.

## Brain Cancer Awareness Month



**May** is Brain Tumor Awareness Month (BTAM), a time to raise awareness about brain tumors and educate the community. All brain and spine tumors, collectively called central nervous system (CNS) tumors, are rare. Only about 25,000 people are diagnosed with cancerous CNS tumors each year in the United States. Doctors will diagnose cancers of the brain or central nervous system in about 25,400 people in the United States in 2024, according to the [National Cancer Institute](#). These cancers make up a portion of the more than 94,000 brain tumors (including benign tumors) that will occur in this country in 2024.

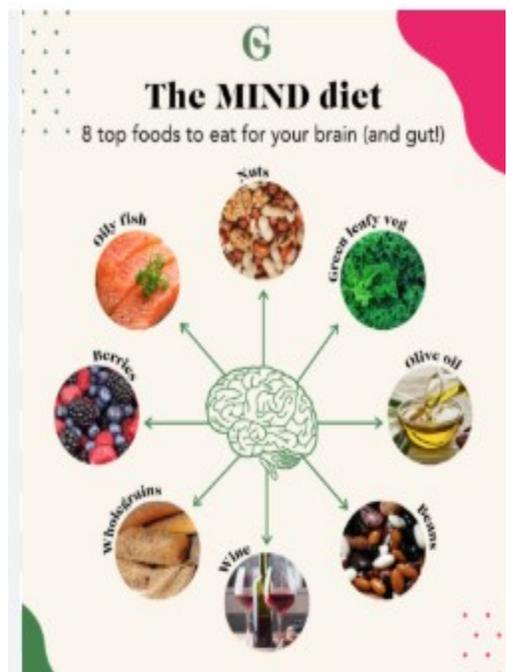
#### Brain Healthy Tips!

**Eat Brain Healthy Foods**

**Try Mind Diet!**

**Eat Foods rich in Omega3**

**Eat Berries & Nuts!**



Source: <https://www.cancer.gov/rare-brain-spine-tumor/blog/2024/brain-tumor-awareness-month-guide#:~:text=May%20is%20Brain%20Tumor%20Awareness,year%20in%20the%20United%20States.https://www.aacr.org/patients-caregivers/awareness-months/may-is-brain-cancer-awareness-month/>

## May Themes

### Food Allergy Awareness Month

Food Allergy Awareness Week is May 11 to May 17, 2025. Join us for a week of honoring, inspiring and empowering everyday individuals to take action in support of their friends, family, and colleagues living with this disease. For those with allergies it is best to avoid these 8 main allergens when possible.

What Are Major Food Allergens? While many different foods can cause allergic reactions, the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA) identified eight foods as major food allergens: **milk, eggs, fish, Crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans.**

It is best to look for these major Symptoms; Food allergies (allergic reactions), can include: hives, flushed or skin rash, tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth, face, tongue or lip swelling, vomiting and or diarrhea, abdominal cramps, coughing and wheezing, dizziness, or light headiness, swelling of the throat and vocal cords, difficult breathing and a serious symptom on loss of consciousness. If you have a epie pin make

sure to carry it with you at all times.

#### 5 tips to reduce your risk of getting sick:

1. Always read food labels.
2. Avoid foods that you are allergic to.
3. Learn to recognize the early symptoms of an allergic reaction, in case of accidental ingestion.
4. Know what to do in case an allergic reaction occurs. Plan to have ready access to the appropriate treatment measures and medical care.
5. Eat a modified diet or vegetarian diet at restaurants and events to avoid risk factors.

Source: <https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/food-allergies-what-you-need-know>.

Source: <https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/food-allergy-awareness-week-proclamations>

## Better Sleep Month

May is Better Sleep Month takes place in May every year. It is observed to encourage people to get adequate sleep daily to get all the benefits it offers. It also shows how poor sleep can disrupt lives. Gone are the days when you brag about how little you sleep but, just like diet and exercise, sleep is crucial to physical, mental, and emotional health. A survey conducted by the Better Sleep Council found that two out of three respondents reported impaired sleep due to stress. One night per week, one-third of Americans experience poor sleep at least and 16% are diagnosed with stress-induced insomnia.

#### Tips to Improve Sleep!

- ⇒ **Establish a bed time routine.**
- ⇒ **Take a warm bath or shower.**
- ⇒ **Read a book, listen to calming music, or meditate.**
- ⇒ **Avoid screens (phones, TVs, computers) for at least 30 minutes before bed.**

Source: <https://nationaltoday.com/better-sleep-month/>

#KnowTheFACTS



9 foods account for 90% of all food allergy reactions:

Peanut, Tree Nut, Egg, Soy, Dairy, Wheat, Fish, Shellfish, & Sesame.

BETTER  
SLEEP  
MONTH

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/sleep/art-https://nationaltoday.com/better-sleep-month/>

## Simple May Recipes

### Strawberry Heart Muffins



#### Ingredients:

Cooking spray or paper liners  
 1 (16 oz.) pkg. strawberries  
 1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour  
 1 1/2 tsp baking powder  
 1/2 tsp baking soda  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 2 large eggs  
 3/4 cup Nonfat Plain Greek Yogurt  
 1/3 cup canola oil  
 1 cup store-bought strawberry applesauce  
 1/2 cup sugar  
 1 tsp vanilla extract

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat a 12-cup muffin pan with the cooking spray or line cups with paper liners. Reserve 5 strawberries. Hull remaining strawberries and dice for 2 cups chopped strawberries.

In a large bowl, add the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside. In a

medium bowl, whisk together the eggs, yogurt, oil, applesauce, sugar, and vanilla. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and mix until combined (careful not to overmix). Fold in chopped strawberries.

Divide batter evenly among prepared muffin cups. Cut off tops of the reserved strawberries and then cut 1/4-inch thick slices lengthwise, with the tip of the strawberry at the bottom. Cut a V shape at the top to make the strawberries look like hearts. Place one strawberry heart on top of each muffin.

#### Nutrition Information:

*Calories 197kcal, Carbs 28.0g, Fat 7.0g, Saturated fat 1.0g, Sodium 161mg (7%), Protein 5.0g, sugar 13.0g, fiber 1.0g, cholesterol 36mg*

Source: [Savoryonline.com](http://Savoryonline.com)



### Spicy Pimiento Cheese Finger Sandwiches

#### Ingredients:

2 (6.5 oz.) jars sliced pimientos  
 2 cups shredded extra sharp cheddar (about 8 oz.)  
 1/4 tsp ground cayenne  
 1 tsp lemon juice  
 1 tbsp. light mayonnaise  
 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
 1/2 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened  
 16 slices white country bread

#### Directions:

Drain and chop the pimientos. In a medium bowl, stir together the pimientos, Cheddar, cayenne, lemon juice, mayonnaise, and

Parmesan. Fold in the cream cheese. Season with salt and pepper. Mix until well combined.

Cut the crusts off the bread. Spread pimiento cheese evenly over 8 slices of bread. Top with remaining slices of bread. Cut sandwiches into bite-size rectangles.

#### Nutrition Information:

*Calories 83kcal, Carbs 7.8g, Fat 4.4g, Saturated fat, 2.2g, Sodium 159mg, protein, 3.7g sugar, 1.1g fiber, 0.5g cholesterol 11mg*

Source: [Savoryonline.com](http://Savoryonline.com)



## May Recipes

### Mother's Day Drink

#### Ingredients:

1 (1.5 fluid ounce) cranberry raspberry juice  
1 ½ fluid ounces agave nectar  
4 fluid ounces sparkling Cider  
1 cup of water

#### Directions:

Stir cranberry and raspberry– juice and

agave nectar , sparkling cider, together in a tall, thin-sided glass using a spoon. Tilt the glass at an angle and pour in champagne.

*Nutrition information: Calories 246 k, Sugar 31mg, No fat, 12 carbs.*

*Source: FCS Educator*



### Smashed Avocado and Chickpea Finger Sandwiches

#### Ingredients:

1 (15 oz.) can chickpeas  
4 avocados  
1 tbsp. olive oil  
2 tsp ground cumin  
2 tsp minced garlic  
1 1/2 tbsp. lemon juice  
2 green onions  
12 slices whole wheat bread  
1 1/2 cups baby spinach

#### Directions:

Rinse and drain the chickpeas. Halve and pit the avocados. To a medium bowl, add flesh from avocados, oil, cumin, garlic, and lemon juice and mash with fork until mostly smooth. Add chickpeas and roughly mash with fork.

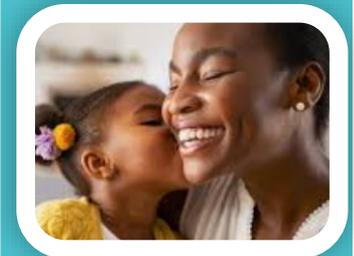
Thinly slice the green onions and fold into avocado mixture. Season with salt and pepper.

Cut the crusts from the bread. Divide the spinach among 6 bread slices. Top with avocado and chickpea mixture. Top with remaining bread slices. Cut each sandwich corner to corner to form 4 triangles.

#### Nutrition information:

*106kcal, Carbs 12.4g, Fat 5.3g, Saturated fat, 0.8g, Sodium 128mg, protein 3.2g, sugar 1.9g, fiber 3.2g, cholesterol 0mg.*

*Source: Savoryonline.com*



## May Recipes

### Chef Salad with Sriracha-Ranch Dressing



#### Ingredients:

- 2 (7 oz.) pkgs. butter lettuce
- > 1/2 cups cubed leftover ham
- > 4 hard-boiled eggs, halved or quartered
- > 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
- > 1/2 English cucumber, diced
- > 1 cup matchstick carrots
- > 1/2 (8 oz.) container diced red onion
- > 1 cup Cheddar cheese cubes
- > 1/2 (5 oz.) bag home-style herb-seasoned croutons
- > 1/2 cup store-bought ranch dressing
- > 1 1/2 tbsp. Srirach
- > 1 tsp lemon juice

#### Directions:

On a large platter, arrange the lettuce as the

base. Layer the salad with the ham, eggs, tomatoes, cucumber, carrots, onion, cheese, and croutons. (Alternatively, add all the ingredients to a bowl to combine.)

In a small bowl, whisk together the ranch dressing, sriracha, and lemon juice until smooth. Serve with the salad.

#### Nutrition Information:

Calories 464kcal, Carbs 28.0g, Fat 26.0g, Saturated fat 10.0g, Sodium 368mg, protein 29.0g, sugar 10.0g, fiber 4.0g, cholesterol 347mg

Source: Savoryonline.com



### Salmon Patties with Dill Sauce

#### Ingredients:

- 4 salmon fillets (about 1 1/4 lbs. total)
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 small onion
- 1 large eggs
- 1 cup matzo meal
- 2 tbsp. chopped green onions
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/2 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh dill
- 2 tsp lemon juice

#### Directions:

Preheat broiler. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil. Pat the salmon dry and season with salt and pepper. Arrange salmon on prepared pan, skin-sides down. Broil salmon 6–8 min., until cooked through. Let cool slightly, then shred into fine pieces.

Meanwhile, halve the red bell pepper and remove the seeds. Finely chop bell pepper and the onion. Place in a small microwave-safe bowl with vented plastic. Microwave 1–2 min., until vegetables are soft.

In a large bowl, combine the eggs, matzo meal, and green onions. Season with salt and pepper. Add salmon and vegetables to bowl with egg mixture and mix until well combined.

Using a 1/3-cup measure, form salmon mixture into about 12 equal-size patties, about 1 inch thick. Heat a 12-inch nonstick skillet with the oil on medium-high. In batches, cook 3–4 min. per side, until golden. Drain on paper towels.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the yogurt, dill, and lemon juice until smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Serve salmon patties with sauce.

#### Nutrition Information:

Calories 466kcal, Carbs 28.0g, Fat 19.0g, Saturated fat 7.0g, Sodium 173mg, protein 47.0g, sugar 3.0g, fiber 2.0g, cholesterol 251mg

Source: Savoryonline.com



## May Recipes

### Kiwi and Strawberry Lime Salad

#### Ingredients:

4 cups strawberries, sliced  
3 kiwis, peeled and sliced  
1 cup green grapes  
1/4 cup honey  
1 lime, juiced

#### Directions:

In a large bowl, combine the strawberries, kiwi and grapes. In a small bowl, stir togeth-

er the honey and lime juice. Pour the honey-lime mixture onto the fruit and stir well. Chill or serve immediately.

#### Nutrition information:

Calories 180kcal, Carbs 41.9g, Fat 1.0g, Saturated fat 0.1g, Sodium 5mg, protein 2.0g, sugar 36.0g, fiber 5.0g, cholesterol 0mg

Source: Savoryonline.com



### Fish Tacos with Quick Slaw

#### Ingredients:

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper  
1 tablespoon lime juice  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
12 oz. tilapia, thawed if frozen  
1 avocado, halved and cut into thin slices  
1 large tomato, diced  
12 corn tortillas  
dash hot sauce, to taste (optional)

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 425°. In a shallow baking dish, whisk together cumin, crushed pepper, lime juice, olive oil, pepper and salt. Add tilapia and marinate at room temperature for 10-15 minutes. Wrap tortillas in foil.

Bake fish until just cooked through, about 10 minutes. Place foil wrapped tortillas in oven for last 5 minutes of cooking time.

While the fish is cooking, combine the ingredients for the coleslaw in a large serving bowl. Season to taste with pepper and salt.

Top warmed tortillas with flaked fish, slaw, sliced avocados, chopped tomatoes and hot sauce, if desired.

#### Nutrition information:

Calories 256kcal, Carbs 27.6g, Fat 10.6g, Saturated fat 1.7g, Sodium 66mg, protein 15.5g, sugar 2.7g, fiber 6.1g. Cholesterol 28mg

Source: Savoryonline.com





## June Themes

### End of Year Tips

## 8 Tips on How to Wrap Up the School Year!

Are you feeling the excitement? The end-of-year excitement? I'm sharing eight tips on how to wrap up a successful school year. There are still so many things to complete . . . projects, review work, grades, end-of-the-year activities, and reflecting on the current year to name a few.

How are you feeling about ending the school year? Are you feeling overwhelmed? Not sure where to start? Are you thinking . . . how am I going to get "this" all done? I have a million plus one "things" that still need to get done? What about those students who need extra support throughout the summer? What about those students who need support with community resources? The list of questions continues. Are these questions keeping you up at night?

Like you, I know there is A LOT to do before the last day arrives. So, my friend, I want to offer some support and ideas to help you overcome the end-of-year struggles. As you begin winding down the school year and start thinking about the next school year, consider these eight tips. You will enjoy a full summer relaxing and renewing yourself. Ahhhh!!!

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How to Wrap up the End of Year!

The easiest way I've found to do wrap up the school year is making a list of what needs to be done, add due dates, and prioritize. Here are eight quick tips for you that have helped me be successful. Using these end-of-year tips will help you and your kiddos end the year on a successful,

positive note.

Tip #1

Make a list: Write down in ONE space (paper/google doc/calendar) what is happening during these last few weeks of school. It is important to keep this document handy, as you will be making adjustments to what needs to be done as things come up.



My school has a "gazillion" events happening that last week of school: End of year (EOY) Family BBQ, Awards Assembly, Field Day, Field Trips, and EOY Celebrations. Add in the "EOY teacher checklist", and yep, it's crazy busy!! Remember to start with a plan, but leave room for flexibility.

Tip #2

Due Dates: On your list, make certain to have due dates written down. Keeping these dates visible will assist in prioritizing your daily tasks AND ensuring everything is done without adding stress to your life.

Keeping myself organized with the list and due dates helps me to get things done on time.

Tip #3

Work the List: Check your list at least three times each week. I review mine on Sunday, check in on Tuesday, and again on Friday. This way I am ahead of the game – my goal. I'm a "cross off the list" kind of person, so I am diligent about what needs to be done when and check off when done.

Tip #4

Reflecting: While I work through my list, I also make notes about what I need to do for next year. What worked out great, what do I need to tweak, what do I need to revamp for next year?

Source: <https://www.studiesweekly.com/end-of-year-survival-tips/>.

## June Themes

### continued

management, procedures, projects, personalized learning, supplemental learning, online learning, supplies, organization, seating, room

arrangements . . . etc. I spend a few days of quiet time in my classroom thinking about each of these areas, and again, begin writing a list. To accomplish this task, I use a Google doc and calendar to keep myself organized and enjoy easy access everywhere. Finally, I review my initial reflections over the summer when I have more time to dive deep in my reflection.

#### Tip #5

**Student & Parent Input:** As I engage in the reflecting stage, I always ask students and parents for their input. What went well, what needs improvement, what do we need more of, less of, what would students like to learn next year . . . etc.

This piece of my reflection is very important. I have had great feedback from students and parents, which in turn not only supports my instruction, but helps me provide a better program for my future students.

#### Tip #6

**Wrapping UP:** By this time, we are down to a week or less in the school year. My list is nearly complete (even my add-ons), I have input forms and may or may not have had time to review them, grades are done, and my goal is to keep the day as routine as possible, but with lots of fun! This is that crazy, busy week I told you about, so I want my list to be nearly done!

These are also the last few days that we get to spend together. You'll find that student behaviors/emotions can be all over the place. While students are excited to have NO SCHOOL for 2 1/2 months, many will go home with nothing to do. Soon they will begin complaining and wishing they were back in school. Of course, other students

will be visiting families, going camping, fishing, or other vacation destinations. Listen to your kiddos this last week. They may need reassurance that their summer break will be fun and relaxing, they will see their friends and YOU in the fall, and you're excited to hear about their adventures.

#### Tip #7

**Summer PD:** My district always holds a summer academy for teachers. This is an opportunity for teachers to learn, earn recertification credits, and/or engage in book clubs or study groups.

Think about what skills you want to enhance or even learn. How are your literacy, math, and content instructional skills, strategies, and knowledge? Are you meeting the needs of all learners? How is

classroom management? Oftentimes, many of the courses allow opportunities to plan for the upcoming school year. That's what I call a sweet BONUS!

#### Tip #8

**Self Reflection & PD:** At this point, school has been out for 1, maybe 2 weeks. I've had time to chill and am ready to begin thinking about next year. I always pull out my reflection notes (step 5) and review student/parent input data (step 6). Then I think about the professional development I've had throughout the year. I start thinking about how I want next year to go. If there is a certain instructional area I want to beef up, I am reading text, viewing videos, or following my favorite teachers' blogs or Instagram accounts. I always take time to read some children's literature that I may use for class reads or book clubs.

After I take some time for self-reflection and self PD, of course taking notes, I'm now ready to take a well-deserved break and have fun vacationing!



@ Blue Ribbon Teacher





## June

### Men's Health Month

Men's Health Month is observed annually in June. It aims to raise awareness about men's health issues, encourage regular checkups, and promote healthy lifestyle habits.

If you don't know what your prostate is or what it does, you're certainly not alone: most men don't. But you really should. More than 30 million men suffer from prostate conditions that negatively affect their quality of life.

- Over 50% of men in their 60s and as many as 90% in their 70s or older have symptoms of an enlarged prostate (BPH).
- Each year over 230,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer and about 30,000 will die of it.
- Prostatitis is an issue for men of all ages and affects 35% of men aged 50 and older.



### Father's Day Recipes

#### Mac and Cheese



**Ingredients:**

- 1 (16 ounce) package elbow macaroni
- 1/4 cup butter
- salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 1 (16 ounce) package shredded Cheddar cheese, divided
- 1/4 cup of garlic powder,
- 1 pinch of black pepper
- 1/2 cup of sour cream
- 1/2 cup of 1% milk or almond milk
- 1 pinch paprika, or as desired (Optional)

**Directions:**

Fill a large pot with lightly salted water and bring to a rolling boil. Stir in macaroni and return to a boil. Cook pasta uncovered, stirring occasionally, until tender yet firm to the bite, about 8 minutes. Drain and transfer pasta to a slow cooker. Add butter to pasta and stir until melted;

season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle about 1/2 of the Cheddar cheese over pasta and stir.

Whisk milk and together in a bowl until smooth; stir into pasta mixture.

Whisk milk and condensed soup together in a bowl until smooth; stir into pasta mixture. Sprinkle remaining cheese over pasta mixture; garnish with paprika.

Cook on Low for 3 hours, checking the edges are not getting too brown after 2 1/2 hours.

*Nutrition info:*

*Calories 432, Total Fat 25g, Saturated Fat 15g, Cholesterol 99mg, Sodium 524mg, Total Carbohydrate 34g, Dietary Fiber 1g, Total Sugars 5g, Protein 18g.*

*Source: Allrecipes.com.*

## June Recipes

### Cool Summer Salad

#### Ingredients:

1 (5 ounce) package romaine lettuce  
1 cup shredded Swiss cheese  
1 cup cashews  
1 red apple, diced  
1 pear, cored and diced  
¼ cup dried cranberries

#### Dressing:

⅔ cup vegetable oil  
½ cup white sugar  
⅓ cup lemon juice  
1 tablespoon poppy seeds  
2 teaspoons diced red onion

#### Directions:

Toss romaine lettuce, Swiss Cheese, cashews,

apple, pear, and cranberries together in a large salad bowl.

Whisk vegetable oil, sugar, lemon juice, poppy seeds, red onion, and salt together in a bowl until dressing is smooth. Pour dressing over salad and toss to coat.

#### Nutrition Information:

Calories 214 , Total Fat 24g, Saturated Fat 6g  
Cholesterol 10mg, Sodium 143mg, Total Carbohydrate 21g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Sugar 12g  
Protein 6g, Vitamin C 9mg, Calcium 112mg  
Iron 1mg, Potassium 175mg.

Source: Allrecipes.com.



## Classic Burgers

#### Ingredients:

1 tablespoon canola oil  
2 tablespoons ketchup, divided  
2 tablespoons low-fat mayonnaise  
2 teaspoons dill pickle relish  
1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar  
1 pound lean (93% lean) ground beef  
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
4 hamburger buns, toasted  
4 slices tomato  
4 leaves green-leaf lettuce

#### Directions:

1. Preheat grill to medium-high (or see Stovetop Variation).
2. Combine onion, oil and 1 tablespoon ketchup in a medium saucepan. Cover and cook over medium-high heat, stirring often, until the onion is softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low, uncover and cook, stirring occasionally, until very soft, 5 to 8 minutes more. Transfer to a medium bowl and let cool for a few minutes.
3. Meanwhile, combine the remaining 1 tablespoon ketchup, mayonnaise, relish and vinegar in a small bowl. Set aside.

4. Add beef, Worcestershire and pepper to the onion and gently combine without overmixing. Form into 4 patties, about 3/4 inch thick.

5. Oil the grill rack (see Tip). Grill the burgers, turning once, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center registers 165 degrees F, 4 to 5 minutes per side.

6. Assemble the burgers on toasted buns with the ketchup-mayonnaise sauce, tomato slices and lettuce.

#### Stovetop Variation:

Coat a nonstick pan, preferably cast-iron (or a grill pan), with cooking spray and heat over medium-high heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Add burgers, reduce heat to medium and cook, turning once, until an instant-read thermometer registers 155°F (for pork and bison) or 165° (for beef or chicken), 4 to 5 minutes per side.

*Nutrition Information: Servings Per Recipe 4, Calories 374, Total Carbohydrate 24g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Total Sugars 8g, Added Sugars 4g, Protein 22g, Total Fat 12g, Saturated Fat 5g, Cholesterol 74mg, Sodium 541mg.*

Source:

<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/252379/classic-hamburger>



# Save The Dates! Upcoming Online Classes



Register at  
[Agnr.umd.edu/  
events](https://Agnr.umd.edu/events)  
 or  
[www.jenniferdc.ev  
entbrite.com](http://www.jenniferdc.ev<br/>entbrite.com)

Date	Online Class Description	Time	Cost
April 2	Nutrition Plus Eating for Self Care & Stress Reduction	11:30 am	Free
April 30	Health Literacy-Green Cleaning	11:30 am	\$5.00
May 14	Nutrition Plus –Mind Diet For Chronic Diseases	11:30 am	Free
May 28	Nutrition Plus - Mediterranean Diet for Chronic Disease	11:30 am	Free
June 4	Nutrition Plus-Power Plate-Plant Based Nutrition	11:30am	Free
June 11	Food Safety-Food Preservation Pickles	11:30am	\$25.00
In person	Note: Students, Interested in our Programs’ Dining with Diabetes, Fresh Conversation, Dash Plus, Wellness Plus Session s-which are ongoing and taught @ our community partnerships location–Inquire about classes at your location—Check website for more details.		



If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any event or activity please contact your local University of Maryland please contact your local University of Maryland Extension Office at least two weeks in advance.

**Contact the Faculty Extension FCS/Nutrition Educator for more information**

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