

# A Healthier YOU NEWSLETTER



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | 2023

## Illinois Extension is here to help you on your health journey.

University of Illinois Extension is committed to helping people live healthier, safer, and more sustainable lives. We provide information, tools, and resources to inspire folks to make good choices that will help them reach their personal goals. Small changes today can build into bigger, sustainable, healthy habits that can last a lifetime. **Let's get started!**

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## Make the Rainbow Connection for Your Health

You may have heard the saying: Eat the Rainbow! It's a fun way to remind yourself to eat a variety of different colored fruits and vegetables each day. **WHY?** Fruits and vegetables get their color from a variety of **plant pigments**. These are non-essential nutrients that have added health benefits. Many are **antioxidants** and have **anti-inflammatory effects**. To get started, put at least one produce item of each color on the shopping list every week. Buy what's in season to enjoy peak flavor and lower prices. [Check out this list from the Whole Kids Foundation to see the benefits in each color:](#)

Color	Foods	Possible Nutrients	Supports
Red	apples, red cabbage, red onion, red peppers, strawberries, tomatoes, cherries, watermelon	flavonoids, lycopene, vitamin C, folate	heart health, memory
Orange/ Yellow	cantaloupe, carrots, butternut squash, lemons, mango, oranges, papaya, peaches, pineapples, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, yellow peppers	beta-carotene, vitamin A, vitamin C	healthy eyes, heart health, immune function
Green	asparagus, bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, collards, cucumbers, grapes, green beans, green peppers, honeydew, kale, peas, spinach	chlorophyll, vitamin K, carotenoids, isothiocyanates, omega-3 fatty acids	healthy bones, teeth and eyes
Blue/ Purple	dark beans, eggplant, beets, blueberries, blackberries, figs	anthocyanin	memory and healthy aging
White	ginger, jicama, onions, mushrooms	flavonoids	heart health and good cholesterol levels

Get more tips at [go.illinois.edu/FoodColorConnection](http://go.illinois.edu/FoodColorConnection)

# Winter Wellness

The winter season has its own challenges when it comes to your health and wellness. Taking some proactive steps can help boost your health during the cold months ahead. Here are a few you can do:

## PREVENT WINTER DEHYDRATION

Drink plenty of water. We may be prone to winter dehydration because we don't notice it's happening. To conserve heat in the cold, our body moves some of the blood from our limbs to our core. This tricks our brain into thinking our blood volume is good, even if it is too low because of water loss (dehydration), so our thirst signaling doesn't kick in. Don't be fooled; take preventative action.

## TAKE CARE OF YOUR SKIN

Did you know skin is the largest organ of the body? Our skin does a pretty great job of taking care of itself, producing natural moisturizers. Microbiomes work in synchrony with the skin to provide an immuno-defensive barrier to the outside. In the winter, harsh, dry air of our surroundings can dry out our skin. This can be made worse by frequent handwashing, using hot water when washing or bathing, and excessive use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Wash hands with mild soap & water, which also prevents the spread of germs. Humidifiers can help increase moisture in the air which is typically drier in the winter months. Apply moisturizers frequently and drink plenty of water.

## EAT A FIBER-RICH DIET

An essential part of a healthy diet for our gut is insoluble fiber. Fiber is found in plant foods including vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains. They also contain vitamins C and D which help support your immune system. Insoluble fiber produces helpful compounds to limit the overgrowth of "bad" microbes. Fermented foods, like yogurt, kombucha, and raw sauerkraut, can also contribute healthy microbes to your gut.

## BE ACTIVE!

Exercise is an important part of staying healthy. Physical activity is good for your health and mind! It can improve mood and relaxation, improve sleep, and reduce joint pain, among other benefits. Aim for at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week. Walking is a heart-healthy exercise! Winter weather can sometimes interfere with outdoor exercise, but there are plenty of free exercise videos you can find on YouTube or at your library to do indoors - or simply turn on your favorite music and dance!

## KIND MIND, HAPPY HEART

Increase your happiness by doing kind things for others! A study from the Journal of Social Psychology found a positive correlation between the number of kind acts a person performed and their level of happiness. Challenge yourself to do one small kind thing each day for someone else and see how it makes you feel.

Here are some things you can do, or plan your own:

- Shovel a driveway or do some other chore for a neighbor
- Put your phone away and listen
- Give someone a compliment
- Send flowers to brighten someone's day
- Pay for the person behind you in the drive-thru line
- Offer to help someone who seems to be struggling
- Leave goodie bags and a heartfelt note on someone's doorstep
- Donate blood
- Bring food to an animal shelter

## 2023 RESOLUTION: SPEND MORE TIME OUTSIDE



## NATURE HEALS AND RESTORES!

Current research links nature to general well-being. One study in Mind found that 95% of those interviewed said their mood improved after spending time outside, changing from depressed, stressed, and anxious to more calm and balanced.

## WHAT QUALIFIES AS TIME OUTSIDE?

Anything outdoors is time outdoors. Playing with the kids. Walking the dog. Shoveling snow. Bird watching. Of course, there are more intentional ways to engage with the outdoors than others, but according to research, the key to maximizing benefits of being outdoors is to do so while disconnected from media source. This means leaving your smart phone indoors. While that may seem impossible or uncomfortable, at best, it can be done with practice and perseverance.

## TRY THIS TO CONNECT WITH NATURE

Take a moment and allow nature to sink in. While sitting outside, close your eyes and listen. Breathe in deeply and just be present. If you enjoy keeping a journal, start a nature journal and record your observations.

## THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT FEBRUARY 17-20, 2023

Spend time in your favorite places watching birds—then report it to the Great Backyard Bird Count February 17-20. It takes as little as 15 minutes! Notice the birds around you. Identify them, count them, and submit them to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world.

Learn more at: [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)







# Enjoy these activities that reinforce being healthy and active as a family.

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## Our Family Healthy & Active

FOR RECIPES, VISIT  
<https://go.illinois.edu/FatMoveSave>



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>Take an imaginary field trip to the ice skating rink. "Skate" across the floor, twirl, balance on one leg, and jump</p>	<p>Plan a meal as a family - everyone gets a say in what is being served. Be sure of offer all 5 food groups - fruit, vegetable, protein, grain, and dairy.</p>	 <p>Make paper snowflakes by folding and cutting paper. Talk about how each one is different.</p>	<p>Have a variety of fruits on hand, make a fruit kabob for a healthy snack.</p>	<p>Stretch your body by trying alphabet yoga. Can you pose like an A, B, C? Can you stretch your body into the first letter of your name?</p>	<p>Looking for a easy warm soup for dinner, try Hearty Vegetable Beef Soup from Eat Move. Save</p> <p>Website link above.</p>	<p>Think of warm weather - have a beach party. Play catch with a beach ball, pretend to swim, and have a healthy snack on a beach towel.</p> 
<p>Explore a new food today with all 5 senses - sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste. What new food did your family try?</p>	<p>Enjoy Eat. Move. Save.'s Oatmeal Pancakes for a warm, whole grain breakfast.</p> <p>Website link above.</p>	<p>Count backwards while moving: 5 jumping jacks 4 toe touches 3 arm circles 2 high knees 1 spin in a circle</p>	<p>Too cold to go outside, play "I spy" while looking out the window.</p>	<p>Have a movement parade - come up with movements while marching through the house - marching waving hands in the air, march backwards</p>	<p>Wiggle, wiggle - Identify body parts and wiggle them. Wiggle your foot, wiggle your arms, wiggle your toes, wiggle your nose, what else can you wiggle?</p>	<p>Bundle up and enjoy a winter walk. Talk about signs of winter - can you see your breath, no leaves on trees, what else did you see?</p>
<p>Turn on the music, find a scarf, and do a scarf dance.</p>	<p>Be creative and colorful, using crayons or markers draw a picture of your favorite fruits and vegetables. Talk about colors and healthy foods together.</p>	<p>Soups are a way to sneak some vegetables into your family meals. Try Eat. Move. Save.'s Tortellini and Bean Soup.</p> <p>Website link above.</p>	<p>Pretend to be animals that live in cold areas - waddle like a penguin, swim like a seal, stomp like a caribou, walk on four legs like a polar bear</p>	<p>Make your own trail mix by using whole grain cereals, dried fruit, pretzels, and/or crackers from your pantry. What did you put in your trail mix?</p>	<p>Have an indoor snowball fight. Make snowballs out of paper or socks and practice throwing.</p> 	<p>While grocery shopping, allow children to help select fresh fruits and vegetables - aim to pick one new item to try as a family.</p>
 <p>Get help with dinner tonight - have children help set the table with plates, cups, forks, spoons, and napkins.</p>	<p>Getting moving while reading your favorite storybook. Look for action words in the story and act them out. How many actions did you do?</p>	<p>Drink more water today. Try adding some fresh orange slices to add a little flavor.</p> 	<p>Take an imaginary field trip to snow ski: bend your knees and ski down the mountain, jump the ramps, and turn curves</p>	<p>Learn about opposites. Move fast and slow. Move up and down. Move happy and sad. Move right and left.</p>	<p>Have everyone in the family find 3 blue items in the house and host "Show &amp; Tell" with the items.</p>	<p>Looking for a way to sneak some fruit into a sweet dessert - try Eat. Move. Save.'s Apple Nachos.</p> <p>Website link above.</p>
<p>Bundle up and take a shape walk. Look for items that are different shapes. Did you find something that was a circle, square, and triangle?</p>	<p>Eat. Move. Save.'s Fruit and Nut Granola Bar Clusters are a great snack for families.</p> <p>Website link above.</p>	<p>Cut fruits, vegetables, sandwiches, or other foods into fun shapes to get children excited.</p> 	<p>Being active helps you sleep better, aim for everyone to get 1 hour of physical activity today.</p>	<p>Kids enjoy dipping their food. Offer fresh vegetables with a low-fat dip.</p>	<p>Play a board game or a card game together.</p> 	<p>Please take a short survey by snapping a picture of this QR code:</p> 

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Illinois Extension: <https://go.illinois.edu/FatMoveSave>. Illinois at Chicago: <http://cphp.uic.edu>



Illinois Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD CAMPUS



# EAT.MOVE.SAVE.

University of Illinois Extension has a website designed to help you Eat Better, Move More, and Save Money. It offers recipes featuring foods that taste great and are easy to prepare; Fun activities to get the whole family moving; and Smart shopping tips to keep more money in your pocket. By making small changes, you can build healthy habits to last a lifetime. This Quick Tomato Soup recipe is an example showing how you can create a balanced, healthy meal for you and your family, even when you are short on time.

## Quick Tomato Soup Recipe

[VISIT EAT-MOVE-SAVE.EXTENSION.ILLINOIS.EDU](http://VISIT EAT-MOVE-SAVE.EXTENSION.ILLINOIS.EDU)



### Ingredients

2 cups frozen mixed vegetables  
1 can tomato basil soup (not condensed; about two cups)  
1 can chicken (12-13 ounces), drained and rinsed  
2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

### Preparation

Wash hands with soap and water.  
Cook frozen vegetables according to package instructions.  
Combine all ingredients in medium saucepan.  
Cook over medium heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

NOTE: Recipe makes about 5 cups, or 4 servings (1 1/4 cups per serving). You can substitute 1 can (15 ounces) of canned vegetables of your choice for the frozen vegetables. Drain and rinse canned vegetables before use to remove some of the sodium (salt). Choose low sodium versions of soup and canned vegetables if possible.

## Join us for these health-inspiring programs!

### Winter Wellness Free Family Event! Sat, February 25 10 am - 1 pm Singing Bird Nature Center, Rock Island, IL



University of Illinois Extension and Black Hawk State Historic Site are holding their second Winter Wellness Event on Saturday, February 25. This free family event focuses on ways to **be healthy in mind, body, and spirit**. Stop by the Singing Bird Nature Center, 1510 46th Ave., in Rock Island Ill. between 10 am – 1 pm to enjoy the activities.

Illinois Extension will have interactive stations for visitors to learn about the **environment, reducing food waste, and how to make your own green cleaning products**. Dive into the importance of nutrition with SNAP-Ed's Eat.Move.Save program. In honor of Heart Health Month, learn steps you can take to **keep your heart healthy**.

Enjoy a **free cup of soup and hot cocoa**. **Observe birds** from the indoor viewing room. **Spend time crafting!** There will be canvases, bird-house gourds, and rocks to paint and decorate. Visit the **selfie station** to capture fun memories on your cell phone.

Youth will enjoy **"I Made That!" activity packets, interactive stations, and a fun indoor obstacle course** by 4-H, Mercer County Ag Literacy, All Our Kids Early Childhood Network, and the Rock Island Public Library, which will also have their bookmobile at the event.

Dress for the weather and do an outdoor **Soup Scavenger Hunt!** Pick up a Scavenger Hunt Map, follow the clues in the park, and bring back your completed sheet for a chance to win one of 20 vegetable soup kits to take home and make.

Get all event details at [go.illinois.edu/WinterWellness](http://go.illinois.edu/WinterWellness)

### 8 Dimensions of Wellness Holistic Health Reset Self-guided workbook



University of Illinois Extension has put together this great resource to help you reset your health journey in all areas of your life. **Health is multi-dimensional and includes:**

1. **Vocational** - balancing work and leisure time.
2. **Intellectual** - broadening your perspective and understand diverse points of view.
3. **Social** - developing a sense of connection and belonging to community, friends and family.
4. **Emotional** - adjusting to emotional challenges, coping with stress, and enjoying life.
5. **Spiritual** - developing meaning and purpose to life.
6. **Environmental** - living a lifestyle that is respectful of our surroundings and preserving the areas where we live, learn, and work.
7. **Physical** - maintaining a healthy body and seeking care when needed.
8. **Financial** - meeting all financial needs and feeling secure in future financial situations.

These eight dimensions should work in harmony to help achieve optimal health and well-being.

You can get a copy of our **8 Dimensions of Wellness workbook** which covers each area of wellness and provides tips and links to resources to help you build your knowledge and improve your wellness habits at this link:

[go.illinois.edu/8DimensionsWorkbook](http://go.illinois.edu/8DimensionsWorkbook)

Or you can call the IL Extension office in Milan, Ill to have a copy mailed to you - request a copy by calling: 309-756-9978.

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