

## NEWSLETTER

### *Looking Ahead in the Year of the Horse: CCE EQUINE MARKS 20 YEARS*



**CCE**   
**EQUINE**

CCE Equine extends warm wishes for a happy New Year filled with health, happiness, and—of course—horses! As we welcome 2026, the Year of the Horse, we are excited to continue expanding our educational and positive impact on New York State's equine community. This year is especially meaningful as we celebrate 20 years of service, marking two decades of dedication to supporting the equine industry since 2006. As we reflect on how far we've come, we are also looking ahead—galloping toward new goals and opportunities.

CCE Equine brings together equine practitioners, specialists, owners, trainers, barn managers, professionals, and enthusiasts from a wide range of disciplines. This diversity is what has made CCE Equine a sustainable and successful program. While we are based in Saratoga County—the equine capital of New York State—our reach extends across the entire state. As a division of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Program, we are committed to providing research-based education and reliable, unbiased resources, holding ourselves to the highest standard of service.

Serving both two- and four-legged members of our community, CCE Equine continuously seeks opportunities to connect horse owners and professionals with valuable products, information, and experts that enhance business success and everyday horse care. In addition to educational programming, we offer one-on-one farm visits to assist with pasture management, farm planning, and more. We strive to make these services available at little to no cost, ensuring accessibility for all. While we are proud of what we accomplished in 2025, we see growing needs and are eager to expand our efforts in 2026.

Sponsorship of the CCE Equine Program supports our work year-round and allows us to bring veterinarians, clinicians, attorneys, nutritionists, saddle fitters, trainers, and farriers directly to our community. Beyond expert knowledge, sponsorship also helps us provide hands-on tools and materials that allow participants to measure, calculate, and evaluate key aspects of equine management. These practical experiences empower horse owners and professionals to make informed decisions and strengthen their operations. Our goal is simple: to improve access to equine education, professionals, and equipment so we can all strive to be better horsemen.

Thank you for your continued support of CCE Equine and its many programs. If you have questions or would like to learn more about getting involved or sponsoring CCE Equine, please contact Nicolina at **(518) 885-8995** or [nfv5@cornell.edu](mailto:nvf5@cornell.edu). Your support makes a tangible difference in our equine community—and for that, we are truly grateful. See *CCE Equine's Year-in-Review* on page 4.

**2026 — The Year of the Horse**

## 2026 Farm Insurance Webinar Series

### I Thought I Was Covered For That! Understanding Farm Insurance Policies

**DATES:** 5 Sessions: Jan. , 13, 20, 27, Feb. 3 and 10 | 12 pm—1:30 pm

**LOCATION:** Online (webinar)

**HOSTS:** Cornell Cooperative Extension and FarmNet

**TO REGISTER:** [https://cornell.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_YAwNzmaQS1GLoZneTLxmxw](https://cornell.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YAwNzmaQS1GLoZneTLxmxw)

**WEBSITE:** <https://enych.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=2137>

**COST:** Free

This webinar series is intended to help farmers understand different types of insurance coverage and how to use insurance as a tool to manage financial risks.

**January 13—Insurance & risk Management 101.** This first webinar will cover many of the general provisions found in insurance policies and describe some of the terms to be aware of when you are considering your options. Steve Hadcock, Capital District Hort Team, and Greg Murk, FarmNet.

**January 20 —Liability Insurance.** Liability insurance is coverage for the

risk that your business will cause harm to someone. Are you having people on your farm or selling a food product? You probably need liability insurance! Robert Hadad, Cornell Vegetable Program, Elizabeth Higgins, Eastern NY Commercial Hort Program.

**January 27—Crop Insurance and Disaster Coverage.** Federal programs to help farmers cover risk of crop and livestock and business losses from weather and natural disasters. Elizabeth Higgins, Eastern NY Commercial Hort Program.

**February 3—Insuring People.** Options for health insurance, life insurance and disability insurance, and how they can help farmers and their employees. Maire Ullrich, CCE Orange County and Lucas Smith, Cornell Ag Workforce Development

**February 10—Property Insurance.** Insuring your infrastructure, equipment, and livestock from loss. Learn about the types of coverage, and the risks they reduce. Colin Hostetter, Tri-County Ag Team, Desiree Keever, CCE Delaware County and Steve Glick, Kevin Daniels Agency.

## 2026 Winter Greenhouse Growers School

**January 21, 2026 | 8:00 am—4:45 pm**

CCE Albany County

24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186

This event is in-person but the speakers in the morning session will present virtually. The cost to attend this event is \$60 per person. \$10 discount for members of New York State Flower Industries.

A discount of 50% will be given to additional attendees from the same greenhouse / farm. Lunch is included.

**Pre-registration is required.** Walk-ins will NOT be allowed. For more information and to register (by January 16, 2026) [click here](#).

For program questions, contact: Jingjing Yin  
[jy578@cornell.edu](mailto:jy578@cornell.edu) | 518-429-8608

## CAR SEAT CHECK

New Country Toyota of Clifton Park hosts free car seat check events, in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Saratoga County, where certified technicians help ensure your child's car seat is installed correctly.

For upcoming dates or to schedule an appointment, contact Cindy at CCE Saratoga at 518-885-8995.

### What to bring to your car seat check:

- Your child (if possible)
- Your car seat manual
- Your vehicle owner's manual
- A cleaned-out vehicle (remove other items for easier access)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for **January 21, 2025 | 7 pm** at the Extension Office.

### CCE Saratoga's Board of Directors

John Mancini - *President*

Liz Newsom - *Vice President*

Mark Preissler - *Secretary*

Jim Pettis, Jr.—*Treasurer*

Tom Venditti

Alex Guilmette

Nancy Wade Leary

Ian Murray—*Board of Supervisors Representative*

Danielle Hautaniemi - *Cornell Representative*



# Ag Energy NY Announces the Addition of Four Subject Matter Experts Joining its Team



Ag Energy NY announces the addition of four Subject Matter Experts joining its team, solidifying its commitment to providing energy efficiency information and education throughout New York State in six commodity sectors. The SMEs will be available to assist with questions, information and resources specific to their commodity sector.

The Subject Matter Experts include Sharon Bachman of CCE Erie, Jennifer Koval of CCE Saratoga, Ashley Schoenborn of CCE Columbia-Greene and Eliza Hensel of CCE Chautauqua.

Sharon Bachman is Ag Energy NY's Subject Matter Expert for the vegetable sector. Sharon has worked for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County since March 2008 as an Agriculture and Natural Resource Educator offering educational programs for the many different agricultural commodities.

Jennifer Koval is Ag Energy NY's Subject Matter Expert for the live-

stock and grains sectors. Jennifer grew up in Saratoga County and has an MS in Sustainable Systems. She works at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County as an Agricultural Educator and is the office manager at her family's dairy farm.

Ashley Schoenborn is Ag Energy NY's Subject Matter Expert for the poultry / eggs and maple sectors. Ashley is the Agriculture Educator of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties. She earned her bachelor's degree in animal science from SUNY Cobleskill.

Eliza Hensel is Ag Energy NY's Subject Matter Expert for the orchards / vineyards sector. Eliza previously served as an Extension Educator with Michigan State University.

The Ag Energy NY program welcomes the Subject Matter Experts to its team. For more information or to schedule a no-cost consultation in any of the six commodity sectors Ag Energy NY supports, please visit <https://agenergyny.org/>.

## One-on-One Consultations Available for All NY Agricultural Producers

Ag Energy NY, in partnership with CCE county educators from across the state, offers no cost, one-on-one consultations to all agricultural producers across the state to help with access to information, resources and guidance when addressing energy efficiencies or implementation of on-farm solar and wind energy systems.

"We are excited to partner with Cornell Cooperative Extension county associations across the state to offer this service to agricultural producers," says Gabriel Gurley, Ag Energy NY Program Manager. "Improved energy efficiencies and the use of renewable energy in agricultural production goes beyond helping the environment and reducing the effects of climate change. Adopting energy efficiency practices and renewable energy can have positive benefits to the financial health of the farm as well."

No-cost consultation services include assisting with questions regarding on-farm energy efficiencies, adopting renewable energy such as solar and wind within agricultural production, providing referrals to specialists and much more.

For more information or to request a consultation, visit the Ag Energy NY website at <https://agenergyny.org/>.

## AG ENERGY NY Upcoming Events

### Common Soon in Winter 2026

Commodity—Sector Specific Webinars Addressing On-Farm Energy Efficiencies

Beginning in January 2026 and continuing through the winter months, Ag Energy NY will be hosting its first ever webinar series that addresses energy efficiencies within specific commodity sectors.

These webinars will provide information and resources for producers within those sectors to help them make informed decisions to assist in addressing energy efficiencies in their operations. Sectors that will be covered in the series that will be covered in the series include maple, vegetables, livestock and orchards/vineyards.

Additional webinars will be offered to provide general ag production energy efficiencies for other sectors as well.

For the latest information, including dates/times and to register, go to the Ag Energy NY website at <https://agenergyny.org/upcoming-events/>



# ★ CCE Equine Year in Review ★

## Warm Greetings

Wishing you a joyful holiday season filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments. May this year bring adventures, Health, Happiness, and of course, Horses!

### 2025 Highlights

- ◆ Largest Horse Farm Tour in over 10 years
- ◆ Equine Nutrition Series
- ◆ NY County/State Equine Economic Networking Survey & Round Table



This year, our Annual Horsemen's Social had its highest attendance of over 200 people and raised over \$5,000!

### Looking Ahead for 2026 ♦ ♦ ♦

- Pasture Walks
- Equine Business Management Classes
- Trips & Tours
- Clinics
- Social & Networking Events

And so much more!

For questions, information or to see how CCE Equine can help you....

[nvf5@cornell.edu](mailto:nvf5@cornell.edu) or 518-885-8995

### Year in Review

CCE Equine helped over 100 Horse owners, Farms, and Equine-related businesses in 2025!

#### Special Message

We have been able to bring clinicians, veterinarians, lawyers, nutritionists, saddle fitters, trainers, and farriers, providing access to these professionals for our equine community. It is not only the people, information and resources CCE Equine connects to our community, but also the hands on tools and experiences. We are able to provide hands-on materials to help measure, calculate, or sample aspects of this industry that allow those in our local Equine community to be more successful. CCE Equine's goal is to provide better access to equine information, professionals, and equipment helping us all strive to be better horsemen. - THANK YOU for your support!



# Party For A Cause

**Sponsored by Harmony Veterinary Clinic**

**Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>**

**6-10pm**

## **at The Hideaway**

**35 Grace Moore Rd., Saratoga Springs**

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**Live Music**

\*

**Raffles**

\*

**Silent Auction**

### **\$20 Advance Tickets**

5 raffle tickets, Light Appetizers (veggies, cheese, crackers, pepperoni) with each paid admission.

**\*Cash Bar and  
Limited Menu  
Available for purchase**

Music by:



**Order tickets at:  
[sc4h.org/party](http://sc4h.org/party)  
or call 518-885-8995**

Featuring: Leland Bunting



January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## **Beginner Maple Syrup Course**

Have you ever wanted to make your own Maple Syrup?

We will be teaching the basics on how to make maple syrup on a small scale geared toward beginners. This hands-on class will cover identifying trees to tap, how and when to tap your trees, a basic, at home set up, syrup grades and products, including a taste test!

**Milton Grange &  
CCE of Saratoga County  
9am - 2pm  
4-H Training Center  
556 Middle Line Road  
Ballston Spa, NY 12020**



**\$30 individuals/\$45 for two**

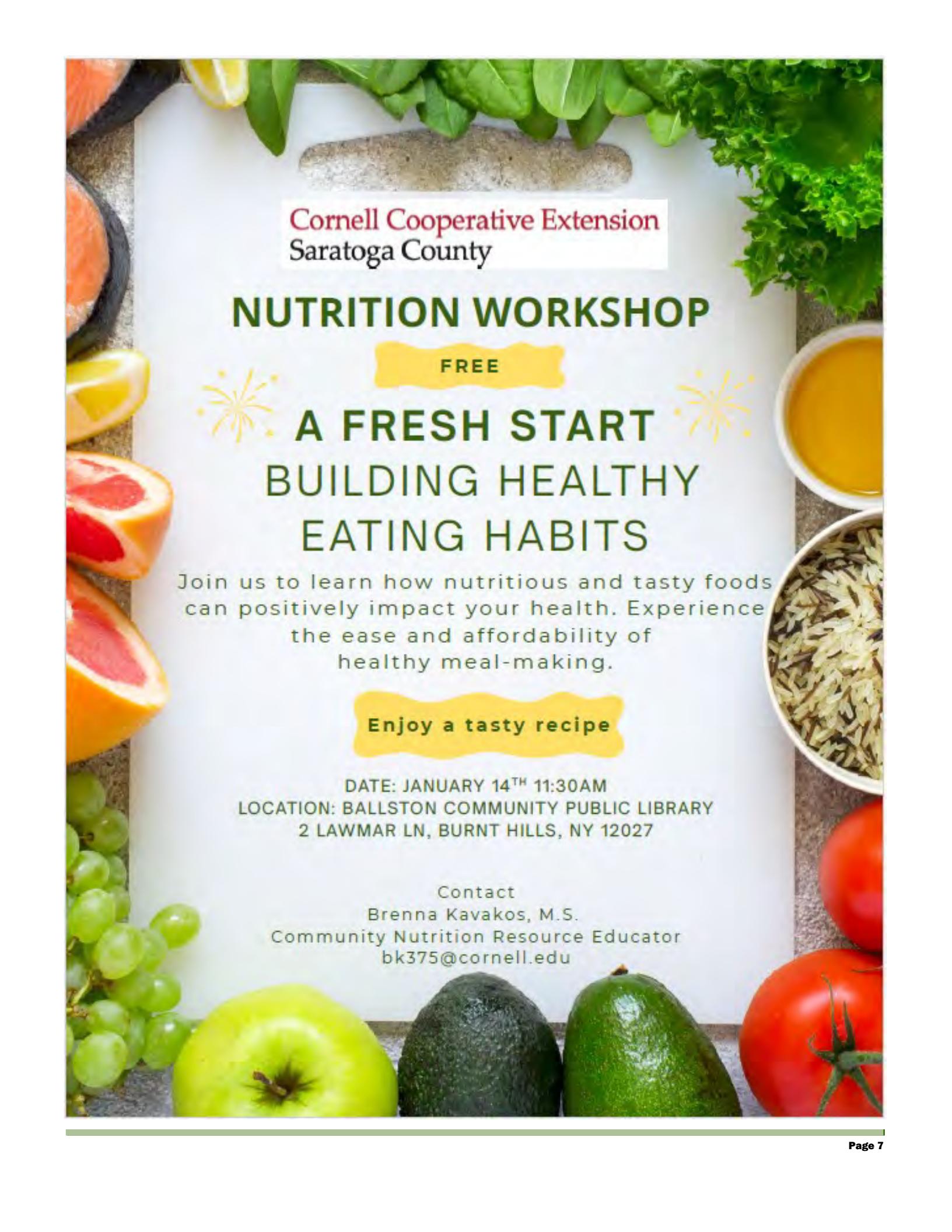
includes pancake lunch and a sample to take home

Registration Link:

[https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event\\_registration/main/events\\_landing.cfm?  
event=Maplesyrup\\_241](https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event_registration/main/events_landing.cfm?event=Maplesyrup_241)

Contact Jessica Luse with questions at [jmh452@cornell.edu](mailto:jmh452@cornell.edu)

**Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Saratoga County**



Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Saratoga County

## NUTRITION WORKSHOP

FREE

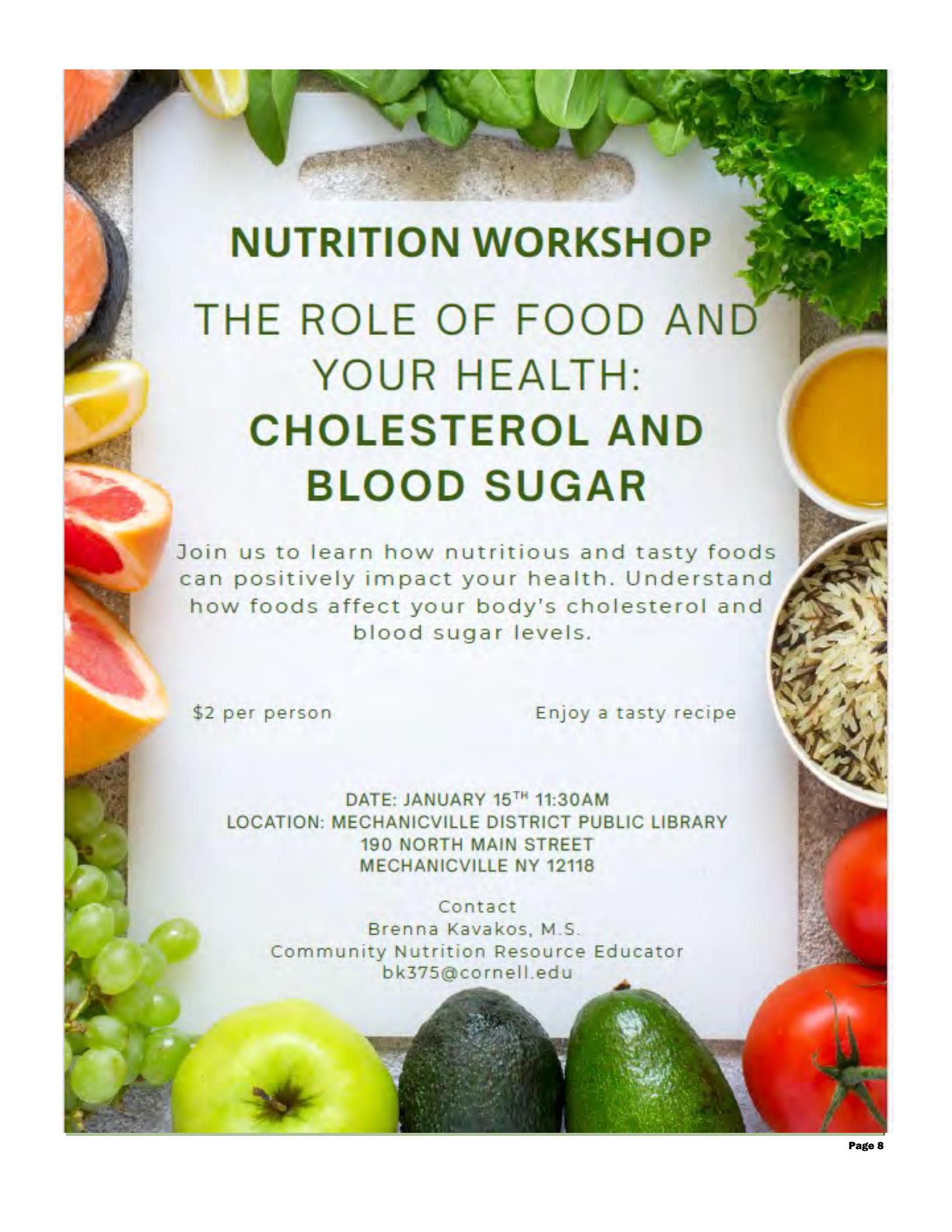
### A FRESH START BUILDING HEALTHY EATING HABITS

Join us to learn how nutritious and tasty foods can positively impact your health. Experience the ease and affordability of healthy meal-making.

Enjoy a tasty recipe

DATE: JANUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> 11:30AM  
LOCATION: BALLSTON COMMUNITY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
2 LAWMAR LN, BURNT HILLS, NY 12027

Contact  
Brenna Kavakos, M.S.  
Community Nutrition Resource Educator  
[bk375@cornell.edu](mailto:bk375@cornell.edu)



# **NUTRITION WORKSHOP**

## **THE ROLE OF FOOD AND YOUR HEALTH: CHOLESTEROL AND BLOOD SUGAR**

Join us to learn how nutritious and tasty foods can positively impact your health. Understand how foods affect your body's cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

\$2 per person

Enjoy a tasty recipe

DATE: JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> 11:30AM  
LOCATION: MECHANICVILLE DISTRICT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
190 NORTH MAIN STREET  
MECHANICVILLE NY 12118

Contact  
Brenna Kavakos, M.S.  
Community Nutrition Resource Educator  
[bk375@cornell.edu](mailto:bk375@cornell.edu)



Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Saratoga County

## NUTRITION WORKSHOP

FREE

# HEALTHY INGREDIENT SWAPS

Discover good-for-you ingredient substitutions  
that preserve the deliciousness of your favorite  
recipes!

Enjoy a tasty recipe

DATE: FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup> 11:30AM  
LOCATION: BALLSTON COMMUNITY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
2 LAWMAR LN, BURNT HILLS, NY 12027

Contact  
Brenna Kavakos, M.S.  
Community Nutrition Resource Educator  
[bk375@cornell.edu](mailto:bk375@cornell.edu)

## Start Planning for Spring Planting!

Get ready for spring planting! The DEC's Colonel William F. Fox Memorial Saratoga Tree Nursery is offering a wide selection of New York-grown tree and shrub species at low prices from now until May 13. Popular species may sell out quickly, so be sure to check availability and learn how to place your order via the link below. Remember, every tree you plant contributes to New York's ambitious goal of planting 25 million trees by 2033!

Here's what we currently have available:

- **Annual Spring Seedling Sale:** Open to public and private plantings in New York State and neighboring states.
- **School Seedling Program:** Available for educators and youth club leaders. Eligible classes and clubs are encouraged to apply by March 27 to receive free tree seedlings for planting with their students.

For more information, to place your nursery order, or to apply for the School Seedling Program, please visit

<http://on.ny.gov/saratogatreenursery>.



CORNELL IPM Program

## What's Bugging You?

*Not all things that buzz, crawl or slither are pests. Figuring out **WHAT** is bugging you is the first step.*

Each month at New York State Integrated Pest Management's "What's Bugging You? First Friday" events, experts share practical information and answer questions on using integrated pest management (IPM) to avoid pest problems and promote a health environment where you live, work, learn and play. We end with an IPM Minute, and cover a specific action you can take in the next few days to help you avoid pest problems. **Events take place online from 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm.**

### FEBRAURY 6: The value of insects | Feeding Friendly Insects: cut stems

Insects have a profound impact on our planet, from ecological benefits to intrinsic value. Learn how you can help insects including a technique to use in your garden. [Register here.](#)

### MARCH 6: Here come the Joro spiders! | Lookout for termite swarms

Should you be worried about a Joro spider invasion? (spoiler alert: no) Learn the facts about this new-to-NY spider and relevant IPM strategies. And learn about appropriate IPM responses if you see winged termites inside this spring.

### APRIL 3: Mole control | Feeding Friendly Insects: delay garden cleanup

Learn how the professionals manage moles, and stay tuned to hear about creating habitat for beneficial insects in the garden.

# Perennials with Winter Interest



An attractive landscape requires careful planning for seasonal interest throughout the year. Since the *New York* landscape is dormant for about four months of the year, extending the attractiveness of the landscape and garden into the winter can help make the season a little

more bearable. Winter gardening doesn't use the flowers and fragrances of summer gardening. Instead, various plants are used to add shape, color, and texture to create, eye-catching displays. Many herbaceous perennials can be used to create interesting landscapes, even in winter!

## Colorful Foliage

Many herbaceous perennials have interesting winter appeal. Not all perennials die to the ground. Perennials with evergreen or semi-evergreen foliage can add color to an otherwise brown or white landscape. Pig squeak, or *Bergenia*, turns maroon with the onset of cold temperatures. The foliage of grape hyacinth emerges late in the season and persists through winter. Perennials like *Achillea* overwinter with a rosette of foliage close to the ground. Lavender, thyme, and other herbs hold their foliage late in the season. *Yucca* plants possess a unique character, especially after a snowfall.

## Persistent Seedheads

Other perennials are grown for their attractive seedheads in winter. Many ornamental grasses, like switchgrass, miscanthus, and northern sea oats, hold on to their interesting plumes much of the winter, providing height and movement in the wind. Other perennials hold onto colorful and large seedpods. The large black pea-like pod of false indigo, or *baptisia*, rattles in the wind. The dried flowerheads and stems of perennials like coneflower, Joe Pye weed, upright sedum, yarrow, Culver's root, bee balm, and rattlesnake master also stand out in winter.

## Interesting Forms

Other perennials stand tall through the winter, and their forms and outlines add height and interest to the otherwise flat winter landscape. Many also provide protection and food for birds and other wildlife. Ornamental grasses like feather-reed grass, giant miscanthus, and switchgrass stand tall even through heavy snow.

## Winter Blooms

A few perennials will even flower in winter. Most notably, lenten roses, or hellebores, open colorful flowers in pinks, purples, whites, and greens in February and March. Other early spring-blooming bulbs like winter aconite and snowdrops often open even with snow on the ground. Make sure to position these perennials near the sidewalk or door so they can be appreciated without venturing deep into the garden.

## Perennials with Winter Interest

Following is a list of perennials that have notable interest during the winter. Consider adding these perennials to the garden for interest year-round.

### Colorful Evergreen or Semi-Evergreen Foliage

bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*) | European wild ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) | pig squeak (*Bergenia* spp.) | barrenwort (*Epimedium* spp.) | sea thrift (*Armeria maritima*) | basket-of-gold (*Aurinia saxatilis*) | snow-in-summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*) | coral bells *Heuchera* spp.) | candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*) | moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*) | lungwort (*Pulmonaria* spp.) | lamb's ear (*Stachys byzantina*) | foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) | marginal shield fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*) | Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) | ebony spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*) | yarrow (*Achillea* spp.) | thyme (*Thymus* spp.) | lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) | English ivy (*Hedera helix*) | periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) | Japanese spurge (*Pachysandra terminalis*) | Adam's needle (*Yucca filamentosa*) | hen and chicks (*Sempervivum* spp.) | stonecrop (*Sedum* spp.) | pinks (*Dianthus* spp.) | rock cress (*Arabis caucasica*) | dwarf blue fescue (*Festuca* spp.) | Shasta daisy (*Leucanthemum × superbum*) | globe thistle (*Echinops* spp.)

### Persistent Seedheads or Pods

false indigo (*Baptisia* spp.) | purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) | feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis × acutiflora*) | northern sea oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*) | Japanese silvergrass (*Miscanthus sinensis*) | Korean feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis brachytricha*) | wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) | peony (*Paeonia* spp.) | iris (*Iris* spp.) | bee balm (*Monarda* spp.) | coneflowers (*Rudbeckia* spp.) | rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) | Joe Pye weed (*Eutrochium* spp.) | upright sedum (*Hylotelephium* spp.) | Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) | Carolina lupine (*Thermopsis villosa*)

### Interesting Forms

little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) | Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) | prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) | giant miscanthus (*Miscanthus 'Giganteus'*) | switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) | blue oatgrass (*Helictotrichon sempervirens*) | purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*) | side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) | tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) | purple love grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*) | Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola'*) | Ravenna grass (*Saccharum ravennae*, syn. *Erianthus ravennae*)

### Winter Blooms

lenten rose (*Helleborus* spp.) | snowdrops (*Galanthus* spp.) | spring crocuses (*Crocus* spp.) | winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*)

### Trees and Shrubs for the Winter Landscape

Don't forget, the winter garden isn't complete without woody plants. Evergreen trees and shrubs with various shades of greens and blues and interesting shapes are staples of many winter landscapes. Deciduous trees with interesting bark characteristics, like paperback maple, or unusual branching habits, like pagoda dogwood, can also aid in providing winter charm. Many trees and shrubs have persistent fruit that looks attractive in winter and attracts birds and other wildlife.

# The Scoop on Snow Shoveling Safety

*It happens every winter in the Midwest and the Northeast: Snow falls, usually leaving piles of the stuff to clear from your sidewalks and driveway. Consider the following before you grab your shovel after a major snowfall:*

**The good news** is that 15 minutes of snow shoveling counts as moderate physical activity. We all should aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity of some kind on most days of the week. A 170-pound person shoveling for 30 minutes will burn about 250 calories. Brisk walking or social dancing are other ways to fit in moderate physical activity during cold winter months.

**The bad news** is that researchers have reported an increase in the number of fatal heart attacks among snow shovelers after heavy snowfalls. This rise may be due to the sudden demand that shoveling places on an individual's heart. Snow shoveling may cause a quick increase in heart rate and blood pressure. One study determined that after only two minutes of shoveling, the heart rates of sedentary men rose to levels higher than those normally recommended during aerobic exercises.

Shoveling may be vigorous activity even for healthy college-aged students. A study performed by researchers at North Dakota State University determined that, based on heart rate, shoveling was a moderately intense activity during about one-third of their shoveling time of 14 minutes.

The weather can make shoveling more difficult. Cold air makes working and breathing hard, which adds some extra strain on the body. Shovelers also are at risk for hypothermia, a decrease in body temperature, if they are not dressed correctly for the weather conditions.

## Should you rush out and buy a snow blower?

Not necessarily. Not everyone who shovels snow is going to have a heart attack. Snow shoveling can be good exercise when performed correctly and with safety in mind.

Also consider back safety when shoveling snow. Even if you exercise regularly and are not at risk for heart disease, shoveling improperly could lead to a strained back. If you've been inactive for months and have certain risk factors, use some common sense before taking on the task of snow shoveling.

## A Pile of Snow-shoveling Tips

**Be heart healthy and back friendly while shoveling this winter with these tips:**

- If you are inactive and have a history of heart troubles, talk to your doctor before you take on the task of shoveling snow.
- Avoid caffeine or nicotine before beginning. These are stimulants, which may increase your heart rate and cause your blood vessels to constrict. This places extra stress on the heart.
- Drink plenty of water. Dehydration is just as big an issue in cold winter months as it is in the summer.
- Dress in several layers so you can remove a layer as needed. Synthetic fibers help wick away perspiration better than natural fibers.
- Warm your muscles before shoveling by walking for a few minutes or marching in place. Stretch the muscles in your arms and legs because warm muscles will work more efficiently and be less likely to be injured.
- Pick the right shovel for you. A smaller blade will require you to lift less snow, putting less strain on your body.
- Begin shoveling slowly to avoid placing a sudden demand on your heart. Pace yourself and take breaks as needed.
- Protect your back from injury by lifting correctly. Stand with your feet about hip width for balance and keep the shovel close to your body. Bend from the knees (not the back) and tighten your stomach muscles as you lift the snow. Avoid twisting movements. If you need to move the snow to one side, reposition your feet to face the direction the snow till be going.
- Most importantly, listen to your body. Stop if you feel pain.

**Who should think twice about shoveling snow?**



Those most at risk for a heart attack include:

- Anyone who already has had a heart attack
- Individuals with a history of heart disease
- Those with high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels
- Smokers
- Individuals leading a sedentary lifestyle

NDSU | EXTENSION  
Fargo, North Dakota



# Washing Hands is the Best Way to Reduce Exposure to Cold and Flu Germs!

*Winter weather often means spending more time indoors, where germs circulate more easily. One of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of cold and flu viruses is proper handwashing. The CDC offers helpful guidance on when to wash your hands and how to do it correctly.*

## KEY POINTS

- Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean running water.
- Handwashing with soap is one of the best ways to stay healthy.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to clean your hands.



## Why it's important

Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections. Germs can spread from person to person or from surfaces to people when you:

- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch surfaces or objects that have germs on them
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects

## Key times to wash hands

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

## How it works

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Follow these five steps every time:

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands **for at least 20 seconds**. Need a time? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or an air dryer.

## Use hand sanitizer when you can't use soap and water

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

# Food allergies and gluten safety—What every cook should know

Anyone preparing food for guests is responsible for being aware of food allergies and intolerances.

"Let's move the flour to the basement pantry," I said to my husband.

Since one of our family members has celiac disease, food storage and preparation are special safety considerations.

My husband has been a grain miller in the food industry, and I have a cereal chemistry doctorate. We are fans of grains. However, loose flour can easily spread through the kitchen and contaminate food surfaces.

Celiac disease is not an "allergy" to gluten, a complex group of protein found in wheat, barley and rye. This autoimmune disorder can greatly harm the intestinal tract because the body mistakenly recognizes the protein as an invader, triggering inflammation and internal damage.

Technically, "gluten" is the elastic protein mixture formed when bread is kneaded. It includes several proteins—most notably glutenin and gliadin.

Managing celiac disease requires lifelong avoidance of any foods with these particular proteins.

Fortunately, when you see "gluten-free" on the label, you can trust it. "Gluten-free" labeling is voluntary, but strict limits for using the claim exist.

When I prepare food for our family, I take special precautions to avoid cross-contact with gluten-containing ingredients, just as I avoid spreading chicken juice around the kitchen. Utensils, bowls and equipment must be carefully cleaned.

How common are food allergies and celiac disease? The information is courtesy of the Food Allergy Research and Education organization and the Celiac Disease Foundation.

- If 100 adults were gathered, about 10 would have a food allergy.
- If 100 children were gathered, about 13 would have a food allergy.
- If 100 people were gathered, one would have celiac disease.

Allergies to more than 170 foods have been reported. Allergic reactions were estimated to cost the U.S. \$33 billion in 2024.

If you are planning a gathering, be sure to find out if any of your guests have food allergies so you can plan appropriately.

Currently, nine food ingredients are recognized on food labels as being allergenic: eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, sesame, shellfish, soy, tree nuts and wheat. They are listed right after the ingredients and noted by "Contains" (followed by the allergen).

Companies often produce more than one type of product using the same machinery or other equipment. You may note that some

products also include "Process in a facility that also processes...". Pay attention to that information if you are very sensitive to certain ingredients.

Allergies can be life-threatening if the symptoms progress to anaphylaxis. For example, symptoms of a shellfish allergy may include tingling in the mouth, abdominal pain; nausea; diarrhea; vomiting; congestion trouble breathing; wheezing; skin reactions; swelling of the face, lips, tongue, throat, ears or hands; dizziness or fainting.

If you are preparing food for people with any type of allergy, avoid cross-contamination by using separate serving utensils. Be sure to label your menu items, or place the food package nearby.

See more allergen information from North Dakota State University Extension at [Allergens | NDSU Agriculture](#).

Here's a wheat-free recipe, but it could not be consumed by someone with an allergy to peanuts.

## Honey-Peanut Cereal Bars (Wheat-free)

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup honey
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup peanut butter
- 3 cups wheat-free cereal (Cheerios, Rice Chex, etc.)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup salted peanuts

In a 3-quart saucepan over medium heat, heat sugar and honey just to a boil, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat. Stir in peanut butter until smooth. Stir in cereal and peanuts until evenly coated. Press evenly in a 9-by-9-inch buttered pan, using the buttered back of a spoon. Cool 1 hour. Cut into 4 rows by 3 rows.

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 180 calories, 9g fat, 5g protein, 25g carbohydrate, 1g fiber and 130 mg sodium.



Photo: The Gummy Sack

# Top 10 Ways to Enjoy Raisins

Raisins are packed with nutrients and antioxidants, offering numerous health benefits such as improved digestion, heart health, and energy boosts. Here are the top 10 ways to enjoy raisins:

1. **Top Your Bagel!** Tired of boring bagels? Mash ripe bananas, spread the mixture over a bagel, and top with raisins.
2. **Top Your Salad.** Salad just got a sweet surprise when you add raisins, dried apple slices, mandarin oranges, and cranberries to a bed of your favorite field greens. Top with low-fat salad dressing.
3. **As a Sweet Surprise in Mashed Potatoes.** Try adding raisins to mashed Yukon Golds, or even mashed sweet potatoes.
4. **Trail Mix.** Trail mix isn't the same without raisins.
5. **Raisins and Berries instead of Syrup!** The next time you make pancakes, toss a fistful of raisins into the batter. Instead of using syrup, top your pancakes with fresh berries.
6. **The New Chicken Salad Sandwich.** Try adding raisins to your next tuna or chicken salad sandwich. Mix diced chicken or tuna, low-fat mayonnaise, chopped celery, raisins, diced green peppers, and diced onions in a large bowl. Serve inside a warmed whole wheat pita or on whole wheat bread.
7. **Substitute for Sprinkles.** Hold the sprinkles and add some raisins! Scoop your favorite low-fat ice cream over a peeled banana and sprinkle raisins on top.
8. **Popcorn, Raisins and Cayenne Pepper?** Mix a cup of raisins into a large bowl of freshly popped popcorn for a sweet movie treat. For an added kick, sprinkle a little cayenne pepper or Old Bay seasoning over the mixture.
9. **Top Your Cereal or Yogurt.** Top off cereal or oatmeal with a handful of raisins, sliced bananas, and chopped fresh berries. Also, try adding this fruit mixture to low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese.
10. **Ants on a Log.** Spread peanut butter over a peeled banana and sprinkle raisins on top. For a crunchier twist, use a pretzel rod or apple slices instead of a banana.



## UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

## Safely Thawing Frozen Foods

We are well into winter and it is time to use the fresh produce you froze during the harvest months! Freeing produce, fish, meat, and poultry, is a convenient way to preserve food. When thawing frozen food, it is important to limit the amount of time it is in the temperature danger zone—the range between 41°F and 135°F that supports bacteria growth. Minimize risk by using these methods to safely thaw frozen food:

- **In the refrigerator.** Place the food in a shallow dish to catch any leaks. As the food thaws, its internal temperature will never exceed 41°F, keeping it out of the temperature danger zone. Once thawed, prepare the food within 2 to 3 days.
- **In cold water.** Limit to foods that can be thawed in less than 4 hours. Place the frozen food in a leak-proof container or plastic bag. Place the food under cold running water or submerge in cold water. If submerging food, change the water every 30 minutes to keep the temperature cool. Foods thawed in cold water may thaw unevenly. The outside temperature will increase quicker than in the center. The outside temperature may increase to above 41°F, which is why it is important to limit the time needed for thawing. Once thawed, cook or use the food immediately.

- **In the microwave.** Cook food immediately after microwaving. Microwaves can heat food unevenly. Parts of the food may be heated into the temperature danger zone while other parts remain frozen. Cook foods to their safe minimum internal temperature.



- As part of the cooking process. Some foods can be cooked directly from frozen without impacting quality, such as adding vegetables to a soup.

While it is safe to eat produce while it is still frozen, such as using frozen berries in smoothies, remember to cook thawed produce before adding them to salads, salsas, dips, or other foods that won't be cooked. Pre-freezing treatments like blanching, and dipping in an acidic solution do not kill bacteria. Cooking the produce before adding to a recipe minimizes risk.





## NY DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

# ICE FISHING

Anglers in New York State can stay busy all winter by targeting some of their favorite fish species through the ice.

New to ice fishing? If you've never been ice fishing before and would like to test the waters - [learn how to ice fish](#).

### Popular Species to Target for Ice Fishing

While most freshwater fish can be caught through the ice, only certain species are in season through the winter. Some popular species to target through the ice in New York:

- Yellow Perch
- Walleye
- Brown Trout
- Northern Pike
- Lake Trout
- Black Crappie
- Atlantic Salmon

### Ice Fishing Regulations

Ice fishing is permitted on many waters in New York State, but not all. Consult the [freshwater fishing regulations](#) for specific waters, as well as the [general ice fishing regulations](#).

### Ice Shanties

Ice shanties must be marked on the outside with the owner's name and address in letters at least 3 inches high. Shanties must be removed from all waters by March 15 to prevent them from falling through the ice and becoming hazards to navigation.

### Baitfish

Baitfish are commonly used when ice fishing. Make sure your baitfish are certified disease free when you purchase them. Never dump unused baitfish or water from your bait bucket into a lake or pond. Undesirable aquatic invasive species might be mixed in with your bait or bait water. Consult the [baitfish regulations](#) before venturing out.

### Ice Safety

Safe ice should be your number one consideration when ice fishing. A minimum of three to four inches of solid ice is the general rule for safety. Ice thickness, however, is not uniform on any body of water. The guidelines presented here are based on new, clear ice on non-running water. Since ice thickness can vary on a lake, check the ice periodically to stay safe.

#### Ice Thickness Table (for new, clear ice only)

| Ice Thickness    | Permissible Load                        |
|------------------|---|
| 2 inches or less | <b>STAY OFF</b>                         |
| 4 inches         | Ice fishing or other activities on foot |
| 5 inches         | Snowmobile or ATV                       |
| 8-12 inches      | Car or small pickup                     |
| 12-15 inches     | Medium truck                            |

**Note:** This guide is based on new, clear ice on non-running water. Slush ice is about 50 percent weaker. Clear ice over running water is about 20 percent weaker. Double the recommendations for white ice. Many ice anglers do not like to fish on less than five inches of ice, and do not like to drive a pick-up truck on less than 15 inches of ice. Use common sense!

Be cautious in areas where "bubblers" are used to protect locks. They can produce thin, unsafe ice some distance away. Be especially alert in areas near shore, over moving bodies of water, and where streams enter and exit lakes and ponds.

Remember, use the buddy system while ice fishing—it saves lives.

### Other Safety Precautions

1. **Dress in Layers:** Wear moisture-wicking base layers, avoid cotton, and opt for wind and water-resistant materials like Gore-Tex® or wool. Bring extra gloves and wear warm, waterproof boots with cleats to prevent slips.
2. **Check Conditions:** Always check local conditions and ice reports before heading out. Consult with local bait shops or fishing forums for updates on ice safety.
3. **Bring Safety Gear:** Carry safety equipment such as a spud bar to test ice thickness as you move, and consider wearing a life jacket, especially if fishing near open water or in areas with unpredictable ice conditions.



Photo: money.yahoo

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Click the photos to be navigated to each of our Facebook accounts:



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TASTE NY

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*Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*