



For event listings,  
wellness notes, and  
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***Caring  
for the  
Community!***

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# Reach For Good Health!

**- SPRING 2023 -**

A newsletter from Redington-Fairview General Hospital

## PFAS - “Forever Chemicals”



PFAS is a family of thousands of human-made chemicals that are in many everyday objects such as cookware, fabrics, adhesives, firefighting foam, and more. They are known as “forever chemicals” because they are extremely persistent and do not break down in the environment easily. Some are also known to be toxic and can accumulate in the human body.

These manmade chemicals are found in rivers and lakes and in many types of animals on land and in the water because of chemical run off from landfills, military bases, factories, and in many areas of Maine, application of biosolids as fertilizer on farmland. People are exposed to these chemicals by consuming PFAS-contaminated water or food, using products made with PFAS, or breathing air containing PFAS. One report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) found PFAS in the blood of 97% of Americans. ([www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/pfc/index.cfm](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/pfc/index.cfm))

Recent research studies reveal possible links between human exposures to PFAS and adverse health outcomes. These health effects include elevated cholesterol, decreased immune response, kidney, testicular, and breast cancers, thyroid disease, ulcerative colitis, decreased infant and fetal growth, elevated liver enzymes, and hypertensive disorders of pregnancy. Descriptions of these studies are available at: [nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26156/guidance-on-pfas-exposure-testing-and-clinical-follow-up](http://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26156/guidance-on-pfas-exposure-testing-and-clinical-follow-up).

While research into the short and long-term health effects of PFAS exposure is still evolving, some physicians in Maine believe testing can offer more insight

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# What Are PFAS?

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about PFAS exposure and the potential health risks in Maine. Now, new national guidance is expected to help make the process more accessible. The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine recently outlined specific guidance for a broad range of people exposed to PFAS, recommending a blood test and ongoing medical monitoring for those who fall in certain categories, including those with documented high PFAS levels in their water, firefighters, military personnel, and people who work with PFAS in factories.

Skowhegan Family Medicine physician and environmental health researcher, Rachel Criswell, MD recently sat down with News Center Maine and WGME to help explain this new guidance for providers.

“It [the new guidance] includes blood testing, thyroid testing for adults, screening for kidney cancer, ulcerative colitis, and additional cholesterol screen for children,” Dr. Criswell explained. “I think there’s a lot of confusion about who is at risk [from PFAS] and a lot of people are concerned when they find out they have high levels in their body, what that means for them, and what that means for their long-term health.”

You can watch the news segments from Dr. Criswell’s interviews in their entirety here:

<https://wgme.com/news/i-team/this-is-brand-new-pfas-blood-tests-offer-new-insight-but-cost-education-remain-hurdles>

<https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/tech/science/environment/pfas/pfas-guidance-patients-monitoring-blood-testing-exposure/97-ccd92251-49a8-47b4-867c-eb1ae886bbf2>

## Welcome New Provider



**Joseph Higgins, PA-C**

**RFGH Emergency Department  
(207) 474-5121**

Joseph Higgins, PA-C earned his Master’s degree in Physician Assistant Studies from the University of New England. He completed an APP Hospitalist and Critical Care Fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Presbyterian and is certified by the American Heart Association for Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support and CPR Professional Rescuer for Adult, Child, and Infant.

# Boxercise is Back at SSF!

Boxercise classes are back at Somerset Sports & Fitness. Led by Carroll Ware, this class is for anyone who wants to use boxing movements to improve balance, mobility, quality of life, and endurance.

Boxercise has been getting a lot of attention for its potential in managing the progression of Parkinson's disease. It is estimated that over 3,000 people in the U.S. are using boxing to help manage Parkinson's. While there is no cure for Parkinson's, exercise may slow the rate of the disease's progression by helping changes in the brain. SSF is welcoming anyone who is experiencing some Parkinson's symptoms, or anyone who has been diagnosed with Stages 1, 2, or 3 of Parkinson's disease.

## What will I be doing in a Boxercise class?

- Stretching and warm up exercises
- Punching speed bags and heavy bags
- Ring work
- Footwork and agility exercises
- Exercises to improve overall fitness
- Core exercises



## What are the benefits of boxing for Parkinson's?

Parkinson's occurs when neurons that produce the neurotransmitter dopamine start to die in a part of your brain. Exercise is thought to help slow down or possibly even reverse the progression of Parkinson's by causing neurological changes in your brain. Studies over the past 15 years have shown that boxing has helped adults with Parkinson's disease improve balance, pace, hand-eye coordination, confidence, daily activity, and quality of life.

For more information contact Kelly Coughlin at 207-474-2224 or email [kcoughlin@rfgh.net](mailto:kcoughlin@rfgh.net)

Source: [www.healthline.com/health/parkinsons-disease/boxing-for-parkinson](http://www.healthline.com/health/parkinsons-disease/boxing-for-parkinson)



New Graduate Nurses  
Apply Now!

## E.N.G.A.G.E.

Engaging Nurse Graduates in Active, Guided Education



Interviewing now  
for June 2023 start

- ✓ 12+ Week Individualized Program
- ✓ Structured In-Person Education
- ✓ Enrollment in a Year-Long Mentorship
- ✓ Hospital-Wide Interdisciplinary Experiences

## E.N.G.A.G.E.

Redington-Fairview General Hospital is offering a unique opportunity for new graduate RNs to join our team through our ENGAGE (Engaging Graduates in Active, Guided Education) Nurse Residency Program. This program will provide education, support, and hands-on training to new graduate nurses as they begin their careers at RFGH.

All new RNs can expect a structured, comprehensive orientation in which they will work closely with experienced nurse preceptors. New RNs will also be paired with a specific nurse mentor for their first year of employment who will help guide them through the transition from student to practicing RN.

Full time positions are available for nurses who have recently graduated or who are graduating in the upcoming months from an accredited nursing school.





## GET ACTIVE WITH SOMERSET OUTING CLUB



Somerset Outing Club, a partnership between Move More Kids and Skowhegan Outdoors, offers free activities on the first Saturday of each month to all Somerset County families.

"The response has been incredible!" said Kristie LeBlanc, Assistant Director of Somerset Public Health.

Trips highlight all the Maine outdoors has to offer; hiking, winter recreation, coastal activities, and more.

Upcoming outings include **Pleasant Pond** on May 6, and **Popham Beach** on June 3. Free transportation is available from the following locations:

- Skowhegan or Madison municipal parking lot
- Carrabec High School
- Athens Community School
- Moscow Elementary School

Scan the QR code in the graphic above to register or visit [MoveMoreKids.org](http://MoveMoreKids.org)

## NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

May is National Nutrition Month. This year's theme is "Fuel for the Future." Eating with sustainability in mind is a tasty way to nourish ourselves during every phase of life and protect the environment.

To help save money and reduce food waste, plan your meals and snacks and make a grocery list before heading to the store!

More tips for shopping healthy on a budget: [sm.eatright.org/shopbudget](http://sm.eatright.org/shopbudget)

eatright. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

**Save money while staying nourished and healthy.**

#NationalNutritionMonth

**FUEL FOR THE FUTURE**  
NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH 2023



# Virtual Store Tour

**FREE \$10**  
Hannaford Gift Card!

**Scan to register** →  
or call (207) 474-7473



Our goal is to make Somerset County a healthier place to live and work for the families we serve. We strive to make this happen by:

- Improving nutrition • Increasing physical activity • Stopping tobacco use • Preventing substance misuse

Website: [somersetpublichealth.org](http://somersetpublichealth.org) Facebook and Instagram: @SomersetPublicHealth Email: [sphinfo@rfgn.net](mailto:sphinfo@rfgn.net)

## LEARN AND EARN WITH THE VIRTUAL STORE TOUR

**Virtual Store Tour**

**Learn about:**

- Whole grains vs. refined grains
- Nutrition Facts labels
- Unit Prices

**#Healthy LIVING**

**Scan to register**

**FREE \$10 Hannaford Gift Card!**

Logos: COOKING MATTERS at the STORE, Good Shepherd FOOD BANK OF MAINE, Somerset Public Health, MAINE SNAP-Ed

In response to the pandemic, Somerset Public Health moved their popular Store Tours to the virtual world with remarkable success.

Thanks to that success, Somerset Public Health's SNAP-Ed Team continues to hold them

each month. The Cooking Matters Virtual Store Tour provides nutrition information and education to help participants make choices at the grocery store that will benefit their overall health.

### What's covered during the tour?

- Reading nutritional facts labels
- Shopping by unit price
- How to tell if the grains your purchase are whole grain or refined grain
- Calculating grams to teaspoons for sugar or fat
- BONUS: Tips and tricks to save money while shopping

"Each person who takes our virtual tour and completes the survey also receives a \$10 Hannaford gift card. Not bad for an hour of your time!" said Cheryl Curtis, one of Somerset Public Health's Maine SNAP-Educators.

Registration for the tour can be done by phone or online. Participants receive a Zoom link via email and, at the tour time, click the link to join. During the tour, Maine SNAP-Educators present a slide show that moves through the five main food groups while navigating the store. Participants feel more empowered as a smarter, healthier consumer and shopper.

To register, scan the QR code in the graphic above, visit [tinyurl.com/Virtual-Class-Enrollment-Form](https://tinyurl.com/Virtual-Class-Enrollment-Form), or call (207) 474-7473.

**PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY**  
prevention • treatment • recovery

**Virtual**  
**NARCAN TRAINING**

**Scan to register** →

**or email Betsy,**  
**brichard@rfgh.net**

QR code

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# Community Health Education



## FAMILY & FRIENDS CPR AND NARCAN TRAINING

### CLASS DETAILS

Upper Kennebec Valley High School

June 12, 2023

2:30pm - 6:00pm

To Sign-up contact RFGH Community Health Educator Brittney Dunphy: 207.858.2318 or [bdunphy@rfgh.net](mailto:bdunphy@rfgh.net)

### FAMILY & FRIENDS CPR

This class is great for anyone who wants to learn how to save a life, but may not need a CPR certification card. Participants will learn adult, child and infant CPR, and how to use an automatic external defibrillator (AED).

### NARCAN TRAINING

Narcan can help save a person who is experiencing an overdose. Participants will learn about what an overdose is, how to tell if someone is having an overdose, how to safely give someone Narcan, and more.

#### Online Class

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

May 4, 2023

10:00am-11:00am

Via Zoom

#### Presenter

Anne Romney  
Alzheimer's Association,  
Maine Chapter

To sign-up, please  
contact:

Brittney Dunphy at  
(207) 858-2318 or  
[bdunphy@rfgh.net](mailto:bdunphy@rfgh.net)

*This program is designed  
for delivery by Alzheimer's  
Association Volunteer  
Community Educators.*

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®



Communication is more than just talking and listening. As people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias progress in their journey and the ability to use words is lost, families need new ways to connect.

Join us to:

- Explore how communication takes place when someone has Alzheimer's.
- Learn to decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia.
- Identify strategies to help you connect and communicate at each stage of the disease.

#### Online Class

### UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO DEMENTIA-RELATED BEHAVIOR

May 18, 2023

5:00pm-6:00pm

Via Zoom

#### Presenter

Anne Romney  
Alzheimer's Association,  
Maine Chapter

To sign-up, please  
contact:

Brittney Dunphy at  
(207) 858-2318 or  
[bdunphy@rfgh.net](mailto:bdunphy@rfgh.net)

*This program is designed  
for delivery by Alzheimer's  
Association Volunteer  
Community Educators.*

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®



Behavior is a powerful form of communication and is one of the primary ways for people with dementia to communicate their needs and feelings, as the ability to use language is lost.

Join us to learn:

- How to decode behavioral messages.
- Identify common behavior triggers.
- Strategies to help intervene with some of the most common behavioral challenges of Alzheimer's disease.



# Blueberries - a Super Delicious Super Food

by Tricia Sprengel, MS, RD, LD, RFGH Director of Nutrition Services

Often labeled a “superfood,” blueberries are believed to have one of the highest antioxidant levels of all common fruits and vegetables. Blueberries contain a plant compound called anthocyanin. This gives blueberries both their blue color and many of their health benefits.

Anthocyanin is believed to help protect the body from heart disease and type 2 diabetes, provide cancer-fighting benefits, promote gut health, maintain healthy bones, and reduce inflammation. Research also suggests regularly eating blueberries may improve memory and delay age-related cognitive decline.

A one-cup serving of blueberries contains 25% of the recommended daily value (RDV) for vitamin C, 36% RDV for vitamin K, has 4 grams of dietary fiber, 21 grams of carbohydrate, and only 80 calories. Blueberries are available fresh, frozen and freeze dried. They are a delicious and nutritious addition to many foods.

Here are some quick tips for adding blueberries to your meals:

- Use blueberries as fresh toppings on oatmeal, waffles, pancakes, yogurt, or cereal for an extra burst of flavor and nutrition in your breakfast.
- Whip up a quick and easy smoothie using frozen berries, low-fat milk, and yogurt.
- Mix fresh or dried blueberries into a spinach salad with walnuts and feta cheese.
- Fold blueberries into muffins and sweet breads.
- Blend them in a food processor with a little water, as part of a fresh syrup to top desserts and breakfast foods.

## BLUEBERRY FROZEN YOGURT

This is a soft-serve treat made with 3 simple ingredients, does not require a food processor, tastes great, and is a super healthy snack alternative to ice cream or store bought frozen yogurt.

### Prep Time: 3 minutes

### Ingredients:

1.5 cups frozen blueberries

1.5 cups fat free Greek yogurt  
(Fage yogurt is recommended)

1 tablespoon maple syrup or  
honey, add a bit more if you  
want a sweeter frozen yogurt

### Instructions:

Let the frozen berries sit out for 5 minutes. Measure out Greek yogurt in a bowl, add maple syrup or honey and blueberries. Mix ingredients until well combined and yogurt is stiff. Makes 2 servings.

If you prefer a smooth frozen yogurt, place ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend for 20 seconds until all ingredients are combined. Scoop into bowls and serve.



Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories - 190, Total Fat - 1g,  
Total Carbohydrate - 28g, Dietary Fiber - 3g, Protein - 18g



46 Fairview Avenue  
Skowhegan, ME 04976

# On-going Support Groups

## Road to Wellness (via Zoom)

Every Wednesday, 3:00 - 4:00pm

Road to Wellness is a free community support group for adults (18+) who are 100lbs or more overweight and want to achieve a life of wellness.

## Circle of Strength (via Zoom)

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month, 10:00 - 11:00am

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month, 5:00 - 6:00pm

Circle of Strength is a free virtual support group designed for anyone affected by cancer.

To stay up to date on classes and events, visit [www.rfgh.net/community/calendar-of-events](http://www.rfgh.net/community/calendar-of-events)

**For more information about this newsletter, please contact Carol Steward at 207.474.5121, ext. 2319.**

Redington-Fairview General Hospital publishes the opinions of expert authorities in many fields; but the use of these opinions is no substitute for medical and other professional services to suit your specific personal needs. Always consult a competent professional for answers to your specific questions.

RFGH is an independent, critical access community hospital, located in Skowhegan, Maine. RFGH has provided quality, comprehensive health services to the residents of Somerset County since 1952. A member of the Maine Hospital Association, RFGH offers community-based primary care, pediatric care, surgical and specialty services, rehabilitation, community health education, and 24-hour emergency medical services.

The RFGH family includes: Redington Medical Primary Care (RMPC), RMPC Norridgewock Health Center, Somerset Primary Care, Redington Family Practice, Skowhegan Family Medicine, Redington Pediatrics, Redington Cardiology, Redington Endocrinology, Redington Gastroenterology, Redington General Surgery, Redington Neurology, Redington OB/GYN, Redington Orthopedic Surgery, Redington Podiatry, RFGH Rehabilitation & Fitness Services, Somerset Sports & Fitness, and Somerset Public Health.