

2026
HAPPY NEW YEAR

In Touch, In Tune

www.extension.purdue.edu/dearborn



January 2026

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! The trend of New Year Resolutions has seemed to have slowed. Individuals might select a word to guide their mindset for the year. I am sharing 52 Healthy Monday opportunities in 2026 via Purdue Extension Dearborn County Facebook. Here is the link, if you want to try Healthy Monday opportunities in 2026! <https://www.facebook.com/PurdueExtensionDearbornCounty> I encourage you to put KISS (Keep it Simple and Succeed) in 2026!

If you want to increase physical activity, join Walk-a-Weigh Plus (30 for 30 Extension Collaboration) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1232668387239493> . Yes, we encourage walking 30 minutes for 30 days. Print the 30 for 30 document from the Purdue Extension Dearborn County website (www.extension.purdue.edu/county/dearborn) under the Health and Human Sciences section. Stay tuned for opportunities to meet up and walk with me and others.

If you want to eat healthy, incorporate more vegetables into your breakfast, lunch, snacks, and dinner. The new dietary guidelines encourage us to eat more vegetables and fruits. I have included ways in this edition to switch from a dairy ice cream to a fruit ice cream. You can slice bananas and freeze them. Remove from freezer and blend into a healthy dessert or snack. You can even buy frozen sliced bananas. I liked that the recipe from Utah as it suggests keeping your bananas from going to waste. You can freeze the overripe bananas for smoothies, banana pancakes, etc. Make 2026 a year to think of ways to eat whole vegetables and fruits. Eat a rainbow of colors of vegetables and fruits for your health!

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and successful 2026 in whatever intentions you decide to undertake in the months and days ahead!

Warm Regards,
Marcia Parcell
Extension Educator, Health and Human Sciences

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 19—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Extension Office closed

January 21—Extension Board meeting, 6:00pm, Extension Office conference room.

February 12—HHS and 4-H Expansion & Review meeting 10:00am, Extension Office conference room.

March 4—In The Kitchen With Marcia—Fish, 6:00pm, North Dearborn Public Library

ANNUAL MOONLIT WINTER WALK MORRIS MERCER MEMORIAL HIKE

Friday, January 30, 2026
7:00PM at Shawnee Lookout



Join Oxbow, Inc. Board Member, John Klein on this two-hour night walk around Shawnee Lookout Park to see what the night woods have to offer!

Meet John in the parking lot of the closed Shawnee Lookout Golf Course Clubhouse. A Motor Vehicle Permit (MVP) is required for all Hamilton County Parks.
Questions? Contact John Klein at john.kleinp2@yahoo.com

City Hall · 229 Main Street · Aurora, IN 47001-1385 ·
(812) 926-1189

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JANUARY IS NATIONAL BATH SAFETY MONTH: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR OLDER ADULTS?

Original Post by Heather Wingo on December 14, 2022

- Falls among adults 65 and older cause over 34,000 deaths in 2019 (CDC, 2022).
- Older adult falls cost \$50 billion in medical costs annually, with $\frac{3}{4}$ paid by Medicare and Medicaid (CDC, 2022).

For older adults, the bathroom can be a scary place. Luckily there are steps that can be taken to ensure safety. Whether you are aging in place or if you are a caregiver to an older adult, take the steps below to help prevent falls in your home.

Fall Prevention

Keeping bathrooms fall-free for older adults requires a few modifications to bathroom design and equipment. The goal is to improve balance and minimize obstacles that can cause trips and falls. Some low-cost safety tips that many people can make themselves are the following:

- Add textured, no-slip strips in the bathtub and shower.
- Add grab bars in the bathroom.
- Apply nonslip wax on floors.
- Place a waterproof seat or chair in the shower.
- Put nonskid treads on steps.
- Remove throw rugs.
- Remove wheels on chairs.
- Replace standard doorknobs with lever handles.
- Replace toilet with a raised or high-profile toilet.
- Use rubber-backed bathmats.



Falls are a threat to the health of older adults and can reduce their ability to remain independent. However, falls don't have to be inevitable as you age; Preventing falls is a great investment. If you aren't able or can't afford to take on these projects, there may be organizations in your community that can help.

In Case of Injury

If an accident does occur, ask the individual if they are experiencing pain from their fall, and if so, where and how severe. Check them for any bruises, sprains, broken bones, or other injuries.

If the injuries appear minor, help the individual get up slowly. If the individual cannot support their own weight, seek medical attention immediately. For more severe injuries, do not attempt to move the individual. Instead, call 911 and make the individual as comfortable as possible until first responders arrive.

When in doubt, call 911. Even if injuries end up being relatively minor, first responders can help you get the individual back to their feet without cause more injuries. No matter the severity of the injuries, be sure to report the fall to the individual's primary care physician and continue monitoring for emerging injuries.

Source: UofA Division of Agriculture Research & Extension University of Arkansas System

GREAT WAYS TO SAVE: ON STAYING WARM THIS WINTER by Beth Braverman

Focus on filters. Replace your heating, ventilation and air-conditioning filter every three months, ideally with one that has a minimum efficiency reporting value (MERV) rating of 13. That will filter out dust and other large particles but provide enough airflow for your HVAC system to run without overworking.

Ask for an audit. Many utility companies offer free home energy audits. They'll send a professional out to identify any problem areas in energy efficiency and suggest improvements. This might include anything from small fixes such as sealing air leaks to larger projects such as upgrading the HVAC system.

It's curtains. Keeping window coverings drawn at night, and during the day on windows that don't receive sunlight, can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Eliminate leaks. This is relatively easy do-it-yourself project that can make a big difference in keeping heat from

escaping your home. Remove the old caulk from your windows with a putty knife and brush. Replace it with a polyurethane caulk made for exterior windows. Smooth it out with a wet finger and allow it to dry.

Embrace the IRA. The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 provides tax credits and rebates to homeowners for energy efficiency projects. For example, the Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit pays homeowners back 30 percent, up to \$1,200 per year, for qualifying projects such as adding insulation or switching to an electric system.

Get help with bills. Low-income families may be eligible for federal assistance with heating bills through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Find out whether you qualify and how to apply by calling the National energy Assistance Referral hotline at 866-674-6327. Source: October 2024 AARP.ORG/BULLETIN

WINTER FOOD BUDGETING TIPS

Winter is a busy time for everyone. Between holiday shopping for gifts and the cold weather approaching, it can be hard for your wallet to adjust. Managing and budgeting for your food shopping can help you stretch some of your food dollars further. Here are some tips:

- Find fruits and vegetables that are in-season. Usually, the produce that is on sale and in the front of the store is the in-season fruit.
- Buy non-perishables in bulk. For example, buying a big bag of rice instead of a smaller one can help you avoid bigger shopping trips and make your food last longer.
- Plan ahead. Instead of going without any ideas of what you will buy, making a list beforehand can help you avoid buying things you don't need and prevent food waste.

Source: Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University of Nutrition and Dietetics '26

OATS ARE NOT JUST HEALTHY FOR YOUR HEART, BUT FOR YOUR WHOLE BODY

Oats are most frequently known for their heart healthy nutrition claim in the media, but this grain has many more benefits than just heart health. Consumption of oats has been linked to improve the health of people with diabetes mellitus, hypertension, infection and cardiovascular disease. However, most research on oats supports the health claim stating, "Soluble fiber from whole oats, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease." These research studies found evidence supporting oats effectiveness in lowering LDL cholesterol when consumed regularly with a low saturated fat diet.

The unique composition of oats gives this grain its nutritional advantage against other cereals. The macronutrient composition of oats provides almost four times more healthy fat, one-third more protein, and less starch than other cereals. Oats also contain compounds that produce antioxidant properties in the body that

have an anti-allergic, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, anti-cancer and anti-diarrheal effect. With all of these benefits, oats are a great grain to eat in any form.

Oats are sold in variety of different forms that vary in the way they were processed and the length of time to cook. The least processed form of oats is whole oat groats. In this form, the grain has only been harvested and cleaned. Oat groats take the longest time to cook. The next variety of oats is steel cut oats. These are produced when whole oat groats are cut into two or three pieces. They get their name because typically they are cut from a sharp metal blade. Next, rolled oats are made when oat groats are first steamed and then rolled into flakes. Because of the greater surface area produced by the rolling process, rolled oats do not take as long to cook as steel cut oats or whole oat groats. The steaming process also allows the rolled oats to be shelf stable for longer periods of time. Finally, quick or instant

rolled oats are made when rolled oats are flattened thinner and steamed longer. Therefore, they take the shortest amount of time to cook. Any form of oat will provide a nutritious whole grain with many antioxidants.

Oats are not only a breakfast food. They can be added to many dishes for a powerful boost of antioxidants. Try adding oats to your meatloaf recipe or using oats as a crust for chicken or fish. Try something unique with your family and make a salmon or crab cake using oats, instead of bread crumbs. Oats always taste great in sweet treats like oatmeal raisin cookies, maple pecan oatmeal bars, a crunchy fruit cobbler or homemade granola.

By increasing your daily consumption of oats, not only your heart, but your whole body will thank you. So go ahead and start experimenting with oats!

Source:
https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/oats_are_not_just_health_for_your_heart_but_for_your_whole_body

APPLE-CHERRY CINNAMON OATMEAL

Servings: 2

1 cup water	2/3 cup old fashioned oatmeal
1/4 cup apple-cherry juice	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 small apple (peeled, cored, and cut into half-inch cubes)	1 cup 1% low-fat milk

Peel apples, cut in quarters, remove core, and cut into half-inch cubes. Combine water, apple-cherry juice, and apple in a small saucepan. Bring saucepan mixture to a boil over high heat. Stir in the oatmeal and cinnamon. Return to a boil, then reduce heat to low and cook until thick, about 2 minutes. Spoon oatmeal into 2 bowls. Pour 1/2 cup milk over each serving.

Source: <https://extension.purdue.edu/foodlink/recipe.php?recipe=Apple-Cherry%20Cinnamon%20Oatmeal>

OVERNIGHT OATMEAL

Servings: 4

1 cup uncooked old-fashioned rolled oats	½ cup fresh berries (raspberry, strawberry, blueberry, blackberry)
1 cup low-fat yogurt	½ cup chopped apple
½ cup nonfat or 1% milk	

Core apple and chop into bite-size pieces. In a medium bowl, mix oats, yogurt, and milk. Add the fruit now or add just before eating. Cover and refrigerate oatmeal mixture for 6-12 hours. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Source: <https://extension.purdue.edu/foodlink/recipe.php?recipe=Overnight%20Oatmeal>

LOWERING SATURATED FATS IN YOUR DIET

Fat is one of the three main nutrients that our bodies need. Fats gives us energy, help us absorb different vitamins, form hormones, and protect our organs. Many types of fat exist in our diet and each works differently in our bodies. The most common fats found in our diets include saturated and unsaturated (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated are types of unsaturated fat). Saturated fats are solid at room temperature (butter, coconut oil, etc.) and unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature (oils, such as olive oil or canola oil).

Saturated fat is mainly found in meat and dairy as well as in some plant oils such as palm, coconut, and palm kernel oil. According to the American Heart Association, ideally, saturated fat intake should be eaten in low amounts in our diets. Some of the most common sources of saturated fat in the American diet comes from convenience foods like sandwiches, pizza, burgers, and desserts like ice cream and baked goods. Limiting these foods can help lower your saturated fat intake.

Other ways to lower saturated fat are to choose plant-based oils over animal fats, and to eat more low-fat dairy and lean meats, and to read nutrition labels carefully. By lowering intake of saturated fats, and eating more unsaturated fats, you can protect your heart and live a long and healthy life.

Source: Written by Liz Pfeifer, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics, Fitness Health '27

CREATE A SOUP

- **Step 1** - Choose one fat and heat in large soup pot. 2 Tbsp. of oil (canola, olive, or vegetable), butter or margarine
- **Step 2** - Add 1 medium chopped onion and cook until tender.
- **Step 3** - Choose 3 cups of vegetables, chop and add to the pot. Fresh, canned (drain first), or frozen-celery, green pepper, green beans, carrots, peas, corn, zucchini, squash, mushrooms, cauliflower, broccoli, kale or cabbage
- **Step 4** - Choose one pound of protein and add to the pot. Drain and rinse canned ingredients. Chop canned or fresh beef, chicken, ham or sausage. Canned beans such as black, pinto, kidney, navy or chickpeas.
- **Step 5** - Choose one starch and add to the pot. 3-4 cups diced potatoes, 4 oz. uncooked egg noodles, pasta or barley, 1/2 cup uncooked rice
- **Step 6** - Choose a broth. 1 can crushed or diced tomatoes and 3 cups water; 4 cups water and chicken, beef, or vegetable bouillon; low-sodium chicken, beef or vegetable broth; 4 cups low-fat milk and chicken bouillon, any combination to make 4 cups
- **Step 7** - Add one or more dried seasonings (if using). 1-2 tsp. dried herbs (oregano, basil, cumin, chili powder, thyme, rosemary, parsley, etc.), 1 bay leaf, minced garlic to taste, pepper to taste
- **Step 8** - Partially cover the pot and simmer until meat is cooked and starch and vegetables are tender (20-30 minutes).
- **Step 9** - Add fresh herbs (if using) and simmer another 5 minutes. 1-2 Tbsp. fresh herbs



Easy, Fun and Free Recipe Videos - Featuring ingredients commonly found in New Hampshire food pantries!

In just 2 minutes, UNH Extension's nutrition educators help you turn simple ingredients into delicious meals.

Tips:

- Freeze leftover vegetables, potato, etc. to add to soups, including chopped kale, corn from the cob in season. If buying canned vegetables, buy "no salt added."
- Freeze leftover soup in containers and reheat for lunch.
- Save and freeze liquid from cooked vegetables in ice cube trays or muffin tins, transfer to freezer bags, to use as broth.

Source: <https://extension.unh.edu/recipe/create-soup>

SIMPLE SOUPS

Soup is a great way to save time and money, while also improving your diet with vegetables. It can be prepared ahead of time, and often tastes just as good (if not better!) on the second or third day, as the flavors blend.

Soups consistently make great leftovers for meals at school or work.

- Start with what you know. If your family likes chicken, pasta or rice, make a soup that features that ingredient.
- Stock your pantry with soup staples. Stock up on dried beans, canned tomatoes, grains and pasta, as well as stock (chicken, beef or vegetable). Purchase hearty vegetables, such as potatoes, onions, celery, carrots and garlic, which have a relatively long shelf life. You can make several soups with these ingredients.
- Experiment. After you learn how to make a simple soup (bean, chicken, and cream for instance), add whatever ingredients you'd like, or just what you have. Fresh avocado is delicious in some tomato-based soups. Spinach, kale and other greens are great when added to many soups. If you're not sure what your family will like, steam or microwave some veggies and let everyone add their own.
- Blend it. Many soups are better if you throw them into a blender or food processor. It's often good to do just half, allowing you to get the benefit of the mingled flavors and thicker broth, while keeping some vegetable chunks and whole beans.
- Most soups can be improved with cheese. Cheese adds substance, flavor and appeal to soup. On hot soup especially, sprinkle grated Parmesan, cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese.
- Serve with a tempting bread. On a pita, put butter and Parmesan, then toast until crispy. You can also bake biscuits, or make croutons by placing slightly stale bread in the oven.
- Make a double batch and freeze half. This allows you to have a wonderful, home-cooked meal at the end of a hectic day. Just pop it in the microwave, or defrost on the stove.

Source: <https://thefamilydinnerproject.org>

DANCE PARTY ICE CREAM IN A BAG

Servings: 2

This simple ice cream in a bag is also a fun activity—you've got to shake it to make it! A family dance party means you can easily make ice cream while having a great time doing it. We've done a version of this activity at our Community Dinners for years, making whipped cream to serve for dessert, and it's always a hit.

½ cup whole milk	¼ cup kosher salt
½ cup heavy cream	ice
1 tablespoon sugar	Mix-ins, as desired: chocolate chips, chopped fresh berries, nuts or
2 teaspoons vanilla extract	crushed candy

Combine the cream, milk, sugar and vanilla extract in a small (sandwich-sized) zip-top bag. For extra security, we recommend double-bagging! Seal the bag tightly, getting rid of as much air as possible. Fill a gallon-sized zip-top bag halfway with ice. Add ¼ cup kosher salt to the ice. Place the bag of ice cream ingredients on top of the ice and salt. Cover with more ice to fill the gallon bag. Seal the gallon bag securely. Now comes the fun part: Shaking! It will take about six to eight minutes of vigorous shaking to "churn" the ice cream. That's why we recommend doing it as a family during a dance party—you can pass it around and take turns while you jump and dance to the music. Consider having gloves available in case anyone gets cold hands. Once the ice cream has thickened, carefully remove the smaller bag from the larger one. It will probably have salt on it; you'll want to rinse the bag thoroughly with cold water before opening it to make sure you don't accidentally get salt in your ice cream. Scoop the ice cream out into a bowl. It will probably be somewhat slushy; a little stirring will even out the texture. Add any mix-ins you like and serve!

Source: <https://thefamilydinnerproject.org>

BANANA ICE CREAM

Servings: 2

3 ripe bananas

Toppings (optional)

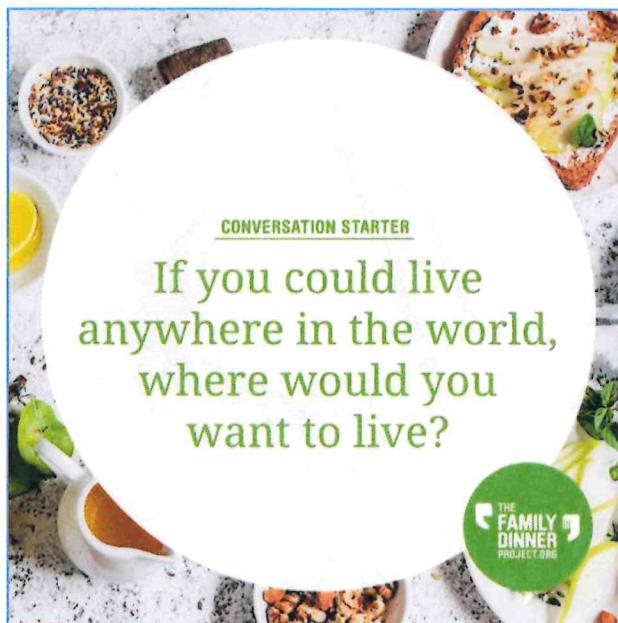


Cut ripe bananas into even pieces. Freeze in a plastic container or bowl for at least 2 hours, preferably overnight. If necessary, break apart banana pieces and blend in a food processor or blender until ice cream consistency. Scrape down sides as needed. Pour ice cream into a plastic container and freeze until it is thick enough to scoop, or enjoy immediately. Banana ice cream can be enjoyed with chocolate chips, peanut butter, candy bar pieces, and more! **Note:** Melt chocolate chips in a small bowl and drizzle on top of ice cream for a chocolate shell.

Source: *Hunger Solutions Institute Utah State University*

BANANA ICE CREAM DANCE PARTY

Have a banana ice cream dance party. Don't tell your family that you made banana ice cream. Do they notice that it is not ice cream from milk? Send me an email at mparcell@purdue.edu.



JANUARY JOKES

- Why shouldn't you kiss someone on January 1st? Because it's the first date.
- How was the snow globe feeling in January? A little shaken!
- What do you call a temper tantrum that a snowman throws in January? A meltdown.
- What do you tell someone you didn't see at New Year's Eve? I haven't seen you for a year!
- What bites but doesn't have teeth? Frost.
- Who is Frosty's favorite aunt? Aunt Arctica.
- What did the tree say after a long, cold winter? What a re-leaf!
- What did the icy road say to the car? Want to go for a spin?
- How does a North Pole carpenter fix something broken? Igloos it together.



Check for Safety

A Home Fall Prevention Checklist for Older Adults

STEADI

Stopping Elderly Accidents,
Deaths & Injuries

CDC

Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury
Prevention and Control

Contact your local community or senior center for information on exercise, fall prevention programs, or options for improving home safety.

For additional information on fall prevention, visit
cdc.gov/falls



Use this checklist to find and fix hazards in your home.

STAIRS & STEPS (INDOORS & OUTDOORS)

Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the stairs?

- Always keep objects off the stairs.

Are some steps broken or uneven?

- Fix loose or uneven steps.

Is there a light and light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs?

- Have an electrician put in an overhead light and light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. You can get light switches that glow.

Has a stairway light bulb burned out?

- Have a friend or family member change the light bulb.

Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?

- Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.

Are the handrails loose or broken? Is there a handrail on only one side of the stairs?

- Fix loose handrails, or put in new ones. Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs, and are as long as the stairs.

FLOORS

When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture?

- Ask someone to move the furniture so your path is clear.

Do you have throw rugs on the floor?

- Remove the rugs, or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip.

Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the floor?

- Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor.

Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords (like lamp, telephone, or extension cords)?

- Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in another outlet.

KITCHEN

Are the things you use often on high shelves?

- Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist high).

Is your step stool sturdy?



BEDROOMS

Is the light near the bed hard to reach?

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.

Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?

- Put in a nightlight so you can see where you're walking. Some nightlights go on by themselves after dark.

BATHROOMS

Is the tub or shower floor slippery?

- Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.

Do you need some support when you get in and out of the tub, or up from the toilet?

- Have grab bars put in next to and inside the tub, and next to the toilet.