

# Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

## June Is Hunger Awareness Month



In 2019, more than 35 million people in the United States struggled with hunger. Hunger is the physical sensation of discomfort due to not getting enough food. Every community in the country has families who struggle with food insecurity. Food insecurity is the lack of money or other financial resources for food. The pandemic has only increased the number of people facing food insecurity and hunger.

Living with food insecurity and hunger affects our mental and physical health. For children, hunger makes it difficult to concentrate and learn at school. Long periods of food insecurity can negatively impact growth and development in children and accelerate aging in older adults. Food insecurity increases the risk of infectious disease, chronic disease like diabetes or heart disease, and anxiety and depression.

Ways you can help:

- **Donate**—If you are able, donate money and/or healthy foods to your local food bank or food pantries. Check out options for healthy food pantry donations at <https://bit.ly/38Gmmkv>.
- **Host a Food Drive**—Contact your local food pantry for information on how to start a food drive.
- **Volunteer**—Food banks and pantries can always use extra help. Spending just a few hours once or twice a month volunteering will make you feel great, too.
- **Spread the Word**—Many people are unaware of the resources available in their community or how they can fight hunger.

If you or someone you know needs help, these resources are available:

**Iowa Food Assistance Hotline**, 855-944-FOOD (3663), to speak with someone about the Food Assistance Application.

**2-1-1** connects callers to resources such as food pantries and support for older adults and persons with disabilities (such as home health services).

Source: [Feeding America](https://www.feedingamerica.org), [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org).

## Chewy Granola Bars

Serving Size: 1 bar | Serves: 24

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups quick cooking oats
- 2 cups crispy rice cereal
- 20 mini pretzels, crushed
- 3/4 cup pancake syrup, maple syrup, or honey
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Directions:

1. Combine oats, cereal, and crushed pretzels in a large bowl. Set aside.
2. Pour syrup or honey into a microwave safe bowl and heat in the microwave for 1 minute. Stir in peanut butter until combined. Microwave for 1 minute more. Stir in vanilla.
3. Pour syrup mixture over oat mixture. Stir until completely coated.
4. Spray a 9x13-inch pan with cooking spray and pour mixture into pan. Press mixture firmly into the pan using waxed paper or the back of a spoon.
5. Allow mixture to cool completely to room temperature. Cut into bars and enjoy!

Tip: Use 1 tablespoon lemon zest and 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice in place of the 1/3 cup lemon juice.

### Nutrition information per serving:

100 calories, 3.5g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0.5g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 85mg sodium, 15g total carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 3g sugar, 2g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit [spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu](https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu)



[www.extension.iastate.edu](http://www.extension.iastate.edu)

## Labels Lead to Food Waste

Many Americans throw away perfectly good food due to label confusion. This contributes 398,000 tons of food waste each year. “Best by” labels indicate when the manufacturer believes the food should be used for best quality, NOT food safety. “Use by” and “sell by” dates are similar for shelf stable foods; these dates tend to reflect quality, not food safety. However, “use by” and “sell by” dates on refrigerated items do indicate when the food may begin to spoil. Don’t use refrigerated foods that are past the “use-by” or “sell-by” date. If a food product is nearing the indicated date, you may be able to freeze it to extend its life.

Sources:

[National Resources Defense Council](http://www.nrdc.org/food-waste), [www.nrdc.org/food-waste](http://www.nrdc.org/food-waste)

[U.S. Food and Drug Administration](http://www.fda.gov), [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

## Walk Abouts



We have heard a lot about the benefits of walking, but sometimes it seems boring to walk the same route all the time. There are ways to make it more interesting for everyone. Examples include the following:

- Research community history and explore it on a walk.
- Have you wondered about an interesting house or building in your community? Check with your local public library; they may have information about community history.
- Another idea is to listen to a podcast or an audiobook on your walk. There are many interesting podcasts—some are educational, inspiring, or entertaining. Audiobooks are also available through most public library apps, including Libby and Overdrive, as well as paid services.

Keep these safety tips in mind when walking:

- Let someone know where you are going.
- Take a cell phone.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Take a walking buddy for companionship.
- Keep the volume of your headphones at a reasonable level so you can hear others, cars, etc.