

Six Steps to Successful Container Gardening from A Registered Dietitian (10-minute segment) *Review and approve with your internal marketing and communications before pitching to media.*

(My name is) and I am a Registered Dietitian at (Your hospital or business). March is National Nutrition Month and this years' theme from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is Beyond the Plate. Container gardening is a cost effective, environmentally friendly way for people to eat beyond the plate. Here's a fun fact: A small container garden can produce upwards of 300 pounds of fresh produce equal to \$600.

Activity:

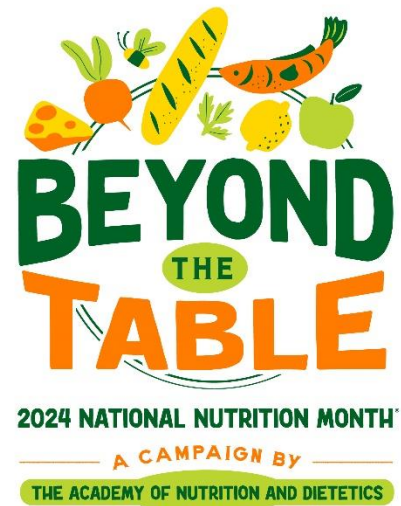
- Bring a variety of pots: Plastic cup, egg carton, yogurt or berry container, hanging baskets if limited in space, and a traditional clay pot.
- Potting Soil.
- Seed Packets: Tomato, Basil, Cilantro, Orange, Orange Wedge with seeds exposed.
- Spade
- Water pot.

((Create your container garden live on TV w media personality)).

The steps to successful container gardening are simple. Gardening is a great activity to lift winter blues and engage the young and old in a project that yields healthy results!

Six Steps to Successful Container Gardening

1. **Choose your pots.** There's no need to waste your money on a mail order kit. There are plenty of everyday options in which to grow your plants. You just need to ensure a way for the plants to drain excess water. Create a 1-inch hole in the base of your containers and place them on a catch tray to avoid water damage wherever you grow them inside.
2. **Decide what to plant.** Herbs, tomatoes, peppers, citrus trees, greens, garlic, onions, etc. The list of healthy and delicious possibilities is endless. Select fruits, vegetables, and herbs that you and your family enjoy eating fresh or use on salads, sandwiches, and seasonings. Seeds and starter plants can be purchased with EBT benefits and Double Up Bucks and some libraries will provide free plants in the Spring.



3. **Buy potting soil.** Our plants, like our bodies, need good nutrition to grow strong and healthy.
4. **Ensure adequate sunlight.** Sunlight to plants is like sleep to humans. Vegetables and fruits should average 8 or more hours, root vegetables 6 hours and green leafy vegetables can sometimes manage on as little as 4 hours of sunlight.
5. **Water is required for life.** Container gardens need more frequent watering than outdoor plants in a garden because the soil dries out more quickly.
6. **Fertilize your plants.** The importance of good nutrition is never ending. Most container gardens will grow best with the use of a slow release or liquid fertilizer to keep the soil rich in nutrients. Store these out of reach of children.

Here's my favorite container garden meal. (Bring samples)

Bruschetta

- Baguette cut into ¼ inch slices
- 8 Roma tomatoes, diced
- 1/3 cup basil, chopped
- 1 ounce parmesan, grated
- 1 tsp. garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. Balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Bruschetta is packed with vitamin C and potassium from the tomatoes along with phytochemicals from the fresh herbs. Phytochemicals help plants fend off disease, fungus and pollutants in the air. When we consume plants, many of these health promoting effects are conveyed to us.

Thanks for celebrating National Nutrition Month with our Registered Dietitians across Michigan and we hope you enjoyed our snack healthy tips!