

## Upcoming Awareness Campaigns 2026

### April

#### Stress Awareness Month and Sikh Heritage Month

- World Autism Awareness Day (April 2nd)
- World Health Day (April 7th)
- Earth Day (April 22nd)

### May

#### Jewish Heritage Month and Asian Heritage Month

- National Hospice Palliative Care Week (May 3–9th)
- Safety and Health Week (May 4th–9th)
- Mental Health Week (May 4th–10th)

### June

#### Canadian Men's Health Month and National In- digenous History Month

- National Health & Fitness Day (June 6th)
- World Elder Abuse Awareness day (June 15th)
- PTSD Awareness Day (June 27th)

Riddle me this!

*"I'm a fruit that is also a time  
of year—what am I?"*

*"What kind of fruit loves to go  
crazy and wild?"*  
(answers on the back)

*"What's a gardener's  
favorite veggie? -  
Beets me!"*

## Roots of Wellbeing

With March and April representing both Nutrition Month and Earth Day, it is an appropriate time to connect the mental health benefits of gardening and nutrition with the connection to ourselves, the earth, and the communities around us.

Taking care of our mental health does not have to be big or complicated. Two simple and effective ways to support emotional wellbeing and mental health are gardening and good nutrition - and gardening can have a direct and beneficial impact on our nutrition as we can enjoy the fruits of our labour! Both gardening and nutrition have meaningful impacts on mood, stress levels, and overall mental health.

Gardening offers a way to slow down and reconnect with the present moment - to be incredibly present with the natural world. Spending time outdoors, working with soil, and caring for plants can help reduce stress and anxiety. Nature has a calming effect on the nervous system,



and gardening engages the senses in a grounding way - feeling the earth, noticing colours and shapes, and paying attention to growth over time. These experiences support mindfulness and help quiet racing thoughts.

Gardening encourages gentle physical movement, which is known to improve mood and reduce symptoms of depression. Watching something

grow because of your care can build purpose, confidence, and routine. When gardening is done with others - such as in a community garden, or alongside neighbours - it can also increase social connection to others in the community. It can also connect us through conversations at garden centres, sharing accomplishments with friends and colleagues, and sharing garden-care responsibilities in shared spaces. Feeling connected with others is an important protective factor for our mental health.

Gardening ties in with nutrition, and good nutrition plays an important role in mental wellbeing. The brain needs consistent fuel to function well, and what we eat directly affects energy, focus, and emotional regulation. Eating regular, reasonably balanced meals helps stabilize blood sugar levels, which can reduce irritability, fatigue, and mood swings. Sometimes it can help to think of balanced nutrition from a broader perspective, too: overall, did I eat what I needed to today, as opposed to did I eat all the things in this meal/snack?

Together, gardening and good nutrition offer practical, accessible ways to care for mental health. They encourage routine, connection, and self-care, while supporting both the body and the mind. Even small steps, like growing a few herbs or adding more balanced meals, can make a positive difference over time.

- Erin Williams MA RCC

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# Beets—you either love them or hate them.

**Did you know:** Beets can help you at the gym—beets contain nitrates that can improve your physical performance.

## Fresh Beet Salad with Balsamic Dressing

Salad:

- 1 medium roasted beet root, cooled and sliced into medium-sized matchsticks
- 4 cups arugula leaves or mixed greens
- 1/2 apple, peeled and cut into small matchstick pieces (ambrosia or pink lady)
- 1/2 cup fetta cheese, lightly crumbled
- 1/2 cup roasted walnuts
- 3/4 cup fresh blackberries

Dressing:

- 2 1/2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1/2 tsp salt
- Black pepper

Instructions:

1. Combine dressing in a jar or dressing bottle and shake well. Honey may take a bit more to break up. Adjust salt to your taste.
2. Gently wash your arugula or mixed greens and spin to dry (or toss gently on a clean drying cloth to remove excess moisture).
3. Place greens in a wide-mouth bowl.
4. Place the matchstick beetroot evenly over the top of the greens.
5. Spread crumbled feta evenly over beet roots.
6. Add apple matchsticks and top with roasted walnuts.
7. Serve with dressing on the side - add when ready to eat.

## The Walmsley Spring Nutrition Challenge

As March is Nutrition Month, there is no better time to take a closer look at your food habits, specifically around the routines and traditions of food in your household. People often fall into habits with their food choices without even knowing it, going through the motions and sticking to the same items in their cupboards and refrigerator.

But it doesn't have to be this way! There is such a wide variety of options available to us, at all times, that it is never too difficult to experience something new, no matter your budget, health, or preferences. Here are some ways to introduce new foods or habits into your everyday life:

Try growing herbs in a small windowsill garden. You may be surprised by how quickly they grow, and how rewarding it can be to use your homegrown food in your meals.

Eat one meal per week with no distractions; no screens, no rushing through it. Take time to enjoy the flavours and the work that went into making it.

Commit to trying one new food per week. It doesn't have to be too adventurous or off the beaten path, just something that you have never tried but maybe are curious about.

Prepare one thing that the "future you" will enjoy and appreciate: overnight oats, a packed lunch to take to work the next day, whatever will ease stress the following morning and fill you up.

N	E	I	G	H	B	O	R	H	O	O	D	L	C	<b>Balance</b>
L	W	E	B	G	G	T	O	G	E	T	H	E	R	<b>Vegetables</b>
S	E	C	X	N	W	Q	F	I	S	N	Y	K	S	<b>Together</b>
N	K	N	K	U	R	Q	N	E	D	T	S	S	Q	<b>Health</b>
I	Y	A	L	T	J	M	L	O	I	W	E	C	M	<b>Nutrition</b>
A	P	L	V	R	F	B	D	N	D	N	G	X	G	<b>Grains</b>
R	W	A	H	I	A	E	U	Y	L	V	O	J	A	<b>Wellness</b>
G	H	B	K	T	L	M	Y	L	P	A	E	S	R	<b>Community</b>
F	R	E	E	I	M	Z	E	Y	I	O	U	Y	D	<b>Fruits</b>
P	R	G	A	O	C	W	S	P	R	I	N	G	E	<b>Neighborhood</b>
D	E	U	C	N	T	C	R	Z	S	I	U	N	N	<b>Spring</b>
V	F	Q	I	H	T	T	A	K	P	E	V	B	I	<b>Gardening</b>
H	Q	L	H	T	W	Y	B	V	C	C	H	D	N	
F	O	T	O	P	S	H	T	L	A	E	H	U	G	