



## AFTER SHOT: LIFE IN A PARTIALLY VACCINATED WORLD

With millions of people receiving vaccines each day, Americans are breathing sighs of relief as an end to COVID-19 restrictions appear to be in sight. And as Indiana lifts its mask mandate on April 6, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is tapping the brakes a bit with this message: Don't shed those masks just yet.

In a statement issued in early March, the CDC acknowledged that some precautions can be relaxed for people who are fully vaccinated but cautioned that we all should continue to follow basic prevention practices to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The official guidance is straightforward. Those people who are fully vaccinated may:

- visit with other fully vaccinated people without wearing masks or staying 6 feet apart.

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- visit with unvaccinated people from one other household indoors without wearing masks or staying 6 feet apart if everyone in the other household is at low risk for severe disease.

The CDC explained that it determines a person to be "fully vaccinated" two weeks after receiving the final dose of a two-shot vaccine or two weeks after receiving the single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Even after being fully vaccinated, you should continue to wear masks in public, avoid large crowds and follow other precautions.

People who have not been vaccinated should continue to follow stringent precautions until they become fully vaccinated. To find a vaccination site near you, go to [Vaccine Finder](#).

## Smart Facts

**180+ MILLION**

coronavirus vaccine doses have been distributed in the U.S.

**60% TO 70%**

of the U.S. population should be vaccinated by year's end.

**48+ MILLION**

people have been fully vaccinated.



## PREP AND WAIT: EARLY SPRING GARDEN TIPS

This time of year can be frustrating for gardeners. A few pretty days with warm temperatures, and we're all itching to get out and start planting things. But in many areas, a mid-spring freeze could wipe out a lot of hard work if you jump the gun.

However, that doesn't mean you can't get your garden started. In fact, some plants love to take root in this time of year. It's also a great time to do some of the garden prep that many of us leave until the last minute - and then hurry through.

Following are some early-spring garden tasks that not only allow you to get your hands dirty, but also help make your garden better all season.

- **Make a plan.** When it comes time to plant, we often wait until we're at the plant shop to make decisions about what to put in the garden. Start planning now. In addition to giving you a head start on your garden, the process will help you make it through the final weeks of spring.
- **Prepare your soil.** This is the perfect time to spade and till your ground to get it ready for planting. You can also feed the soil with compost, add peat moss where needed and make other necessary amendments to help your plants grow.
- **Prepare pots and raised beds.** Refresh the soil in pots from last year, repair and refresh raised bed gardens, or even build new ones. Start now, and you'll be ready to plant when the weather warms up.
- **Clean up perennials.** Cut back perennials and ornamental grasses that are still standing from last season, leaving about three inches above the ground.
- **Plant cool-season annuals.** Put those pansies, lobelia and violas out to add color to the landscape.
- **Plant cold-loving vegetables.** Put in onions, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and other cold-weather veggies now.
- **Divide and transplant perennials.** If you have perennials that are overgrown or simply could stand to be moved, now is the time.
- **Keep out the critters.** If your area features rabbits or other animals that like tender green things, protect young, emerging plants with cages or safe deterrent sprays.



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A lot of gardeners see early spring as a time of frustrating anticipation, but if you use this time to prepare, you'll find that things go easier once you are able to get into the garden for real. A little patience can pay off, but a little prep can do even more.



# MAKE YOUR HR TEAM HAPPY: TAP THEIR EXPERIENCE

Here's something you probably didn't know: Tuesday, April 6 is National Employee Benefits Day, a day set aside each year since 2004 to recognize the many people who make sure employees have the benefits they need, and know how to make the most of them.

Now, you could celebrate by sending your HR team a note of thanks. But, you probably could make those HR folks happiest by fulfilling their greatest wishes: Don't wait until there's a deadline or crisis to tap into their expertise, and don't forget to take advantage of the benefits you do have.

With that in mind, the following are a few ways to help your HR team celebrate National Employee Benefits Day.

- **Think about your benefits.** Too often, employees ignore their benefits until Open Enrollment or there's a problem. As a result, they end up making decisions under pressure. Take time this month to review your benefits and ask your HR team questions. They'll appreciate the opportunity to answer without deadlines or problems forcing the timeline.
- **Use your benefits.** You might be surprised how many employee benefits go unused. Preventive healthcare coverage. Flexible spending programs. Retirement savings plans. Employee Assistance Programs. And more. Often, HR pros spend a lot of time researching benefits and fighting to get them supported by higher-ups ... and then those benefits sit unused. Make an HR staffer smile. Use your benefits.
- **Don't complain, explain.** If you have a benefits problem, don't complain to co-workers; explain the problem to your HR team. They're not just there to administer benefits. A big part of their job is making sure your benefits are working for you, and to advocate for you if there is a problem. But, they can't do that if you don't let them know when you have an issue.
- **Respond when they ask.** Companies occasionally ask employees about their benefits through surveys or meetings, and then too many employees shrug off the opportunity to offer input. Help your HR team help you by responding when they ask how your benefits are working for you, and tell them if there's something you'd like to see done differently. They'll appreciate the feedback when they're planning program changes.

Most important, perhaps, just show your HR team some love. It's not an exaggeration to say that most of what companies do couldn't be done without the HR pros. So, make them happy; help them do their jobs. And, sure, send a nice note too. It's sure nice to be appreciated.



## Arbor Day

On the first Arbor Day in the United States, in 1872, an estimated one million trees were planted. Since then, most states have recognized Arbor Day to encourage the planting of trees and other acts that nurture the natural environment. To learn more, go to [www.arborday.org/celebrate](http://www.arborday.org/celebrate).

# HARVEST OF THE MONTH: ASPARAGUS

You probably don't associate asparagus with speed, but there are a lot of things about the green stalks that happen in a hurry. Well, after they get started, that is: The plant typically takes three years from seed to first harvest.

After that, though, asparagus happens at a fast clip. The traditional season for asparagus growers is about three months, and during that time, stalks on a strong, healthy plant will grow six or seven inches in one day. As a result, growers must harvest every day. Stalks that are left to grow much more than 24 hours will start to sprout inedible ferns.

Once you get them home, the stalks cook quickly as well, a fact that inspired ancient Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus to use the phrase "Velocius quam asparagi conquantur!" (in English: "Faster than cooking asparagus") when he wanted things to happen in a hurry.

When buying asparagus, look for bright green or purple-tinged spears that feel firm but not woody. The tips should be closed and compact. To store fresh asparagus spears, you can treat them like fresh flowers: Trim the bottoms and place the cut ends in a vase with an inch of water, cover the tops with a plastic bag and put them in the refrigerator. More simply, you can wrap the cut ends in a damp paper towel and refrigerate the spears in a plastic bag for up to three days.



## Recipe: Asparagus, Egg and Bacon Salad

### Ingredients:

- 1 large hardboiled egg, peeled and sliced
- 1 and two-thirds cups chopped asparagus
- 2 slices cooked and crumbled center-cut bacon
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
- A pinch of salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions:

Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add asparagus to cook two to three minutes, until tender yet firm. Drain and run under cold water, then set aside. In a small bowl, mix Dijon, oil, vinegar and pinch of salt and pepper to make vinaigrette. Arrange the asparagus on a plate, top with egg and bacon, and drizzle with vinaigrette.

### Nutrition Information:

CALORIES: 219; PROTEIN: 16G; FAT: 13G; CARBS: 11G; FIBER: 5G; SODIUM: 306MG; SUGAR: 1G

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