



April 2021

## Springtime Greetings

Flowers are blooming, birds are singing, daylight is shining longer, and this edition of *Healthy State of Iowa Employees* focuses on seasonal activities for good health. The quarterly *Healthy State of Iowa Employees* newsletter is a cooperative effort between the Department of Administrative Services, Wellmark, and the State of Iowa Wellness Champions' Education and Engagement Committee. It's designed to help keep State of Iowa employees connected and informed of wellness opportunities around the state. Enjoy!

## Virtual Cooking Class for State of Iowa Employees

The State of Iowa Wellness Champions have organized a virtual cooking class with Hy-Vee Dietitian Ashley Danielson. Participants will receive nutrition information and prepare two or three summer meals. Upon registration, participants will receive a list of ingredients to purchase in advance.

The class is scheduled for Tuesday, May 11, at 5:15 p.m., in the comfort of your own kitchen. Please [register](#) by Tuesday, May 4. There is a \$12.50 registration fee for the course and space is limited to 20. If you have questions, contact [Emily](#). We look forward to cooking with you!



## Tips for Gardening Success

Gardening can be great for your health. Not only is it a chance to grow lots of healthy foods and get some fresh air, it can also be a great form of exercise. Here are some great tips for growing and tending a successful garden:

- When selecting seeds, buy what you like! Realize that every single seed has the potential to grow into a full-sized plant. It's easy to overestimate how many seeds you need.
- Generally, seeds should be planted about six to eight weeks after the last frost, which is usually around Mother's Day.
- Don't be in a rush to clean last year's garden materials until the daily low temperatures are in the 50s. This will help any hibernating insects, like solitary bees, a chance to wake up. They will help your garden later through the pollination process.
- A YouTube series you may find helpful is the [Rusted Garden](#).

No one can guarantee the success of a garden. The weather, critters, bugs, etc. - there's just too many things that can go wrong. However, your hard work is rewarded when you harvest and eat good healthy food you've grown yourself.

**Wellmark Blue Article:** [Cultivate Health and Wellness with the Help of Gardening](#)

## State of Iowa Employee Spotlight



**Name:** Jean Mayne

**Current Position:** Environmental Specialist - Iowa Department of Natural Resources

**Years with the State:** 15

**My Healthy Choice:** Gardening

“I have been gardening since I was old enough to weed. While it is a little early to start your garden outdoors, it is a great time to start seeds indoors.

To begin, you need potting mix, small containers, seed, and a good location. Every container needs some kind of hole for drainage and a tray to hold water. The most important thing in starting seeds indoors is light. Light should be 5,000-6,500 Kelvin in color ("daylight") and should have 2,000-3,000 lumen, which is the intensity of light. Keep the lights on about 12-18 hours per day; auto timers work well for this.”

## Give Geocaching a Try

Geocaching is fun spring activity for all ages, but what is it? Geocaching includes searching for hidden geocache containers using a global positioning system (GPS) device or a phone app. Once located, there is a logbook in the cache that the finder can sign and date.

Sometimes there are items that the finder can take out of the geocache and replace with one they contribute. Geocaches are located all around the state and country. It's a great way to get outside and explore new areas. Give it a try today!

- [Geocaching.com - App](#)
- [Iowa DNR - Geocaching](#)

## Being Present in a Socially-Distanced Environment

Remote and socially distanced working have had a large impact for both employees and employers over the past year. For employees, the lack of personal connections, increased distractions, and a lack of physical movement can lead to decreased work productivity. For employers, this can be costly and cause a drop in the work product.

There are steps both the employee and employer can take to mitigate these effects - improve work-life balance, encourage movement throughout the day, and keep an open line of communication between employees and employers about challenges.

**Wellmark Blue Article:** [The Business Impacts of Presenteeism](#)

## DAS Did You Know?

Each State agency has the opportunity to have a Wellness Champion representing them. Here is the list of current [Wellness Champions](#). Interested in getting involved? Contact [Amy Liechti](#) for more information.

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**To learn more about how Healthy Employees<sup>SM</sup> Powered by Wellmark is working with the State of Iowa to make the healthy choices easier for you, visit the [Healthy Employees website](#).**