

# Family and Community Health “Connections” in Mason County

## DPS Offers Spring Break Safety Tips for Texans

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- ◆ Slow down – especially in bad weather, construction areas, heavy traffic and unfamiliar areas.
- ◆ Eliminate distractions while driving, including the usage of mobile devices.
- ◆ Buckle up everyone in the vehicle – it’s the law.
- ◆ Don’t drive fatigued, and allow plenty of time to reach your destination.
- ◆ Drive defensively, as holiday travel may present additional challenges.
- ◆ Make sure your vehicle is properly maintained before your trip begins.
- ◆ Slow down or move over for tow trucks, as well as police, fire, EMS and Texas Department of Transportation vehicles stopped on the side of the road with emergency lights activated – it’s the law.

DPS troopers and local law enforcement in the coastal areas of Texas will also be keeping our roads safe by enhancing enforcement efforts during Spring Break, looking for speeders, drunk drivers and seat-belt violators.



# Gardening Tips from Master Gardeners

## GARDENING IN MARCH

- ◆ Apply pre-emergent to lawns during the first two weeks of March and water in lightly. Do not use a pre-emergent on grass planted last fall.
- ◆ Be ready to protect tender young plants from late killing frosts with frost cloths.
- ◆ Watch for fire blight in pears and apples. Branches will suddenly die back from their tips and the leaves will turn dark and stay in place. Cut out the dead branches and be sure to clean your pruners with a 10-percent bleach solution between each cut to avoid spreading the disease.

## PLANT

- ◆ This is your last chance to get those cool season leafy green and root crops such as spinach, chard, turnips and beets in the ground. Plant these in the first two weeks of the month.
- ◆ Hold off on the warm season vegetables until after the average date of the last killing frost which is March 26 in our area. These vegetables like warm soil (60 degrees or warmer), so even though you plant the seeds early, they may not germinate until later, or they could rot in the ground.
- ◆ In the landscape, decide which shrubs and trees you want to add to your yard and shop the nurseries early for the best selection. Nurseries may be able to order any special varieties you want.
- ◆ Purchase cool season annuals such as sweet alyssum as soon as they appear in the garden centers for the longest color.
- ◆ Warm-season annuals such as marigolds, moss rose, pentas and copper plants will be available later in the month. Remember, these plants like warm soil, so even if they are planted early they will sit until the soil warms up to their liking before they really start to grow. Spend this time getting your beds ready by loosening the soil, pulling winter weeds and working in needed soil amendments such as compost.

## PRUNE

- ◆ Continue basic clean-up of dead or damaged branches and shaping of shrubs and trees.
- ◆ Remember, most spring-flowering shrubs such as forsythia bloom on their growth from the previous summer so don't prune your blooms away by cutting back the branches at this time.

## FERTILIZE

- ◆ For pecan trees, apply an all-nitrogen fertilizer, mainly near the drip-line at one pound per inch of trunk diameter at ground level.
- ◆ Fertilize any annuals with a half dose of high-nitrogen fertilizer one week after planting.
- ◆ When the buds begin to swell on trees, shrubs and groundcovers, apply a lawn-type fertilizer.
- ◆ Avoid weed and feed products.
- ◆ Wait to fertilize spring-flowering trees and shrubs until immediately after they finish blooming.

<https://txmg.org/fannin/gardening-tips/>





# Spring Safety Checklist

Daylight Saving Time begins every year on the second Sunday in March. We "lose" an hour when the clocks are set forward (except in Hawaii and most of Arizona), and for many, that means a tired couple of days as our bodies adjust. The [consequences of fatigue can be serious](#), so plan accordingly. Daylight Saving Time, which in 2023 begins Sunday, March 12, means it's also a good time to review your spring safety checklist.

## Smoke Alarms

[Three out of every five home fire deaths](#) result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Test your smoke alarms every month and [replace the battery at least once a year](#). If the alarm makes a "chirping" sound, replace the battery immediately.

Smoke alarms should be in every bedroom and in the common areas on each floor of a home. Mount them at least 10 feet from the stove to reduce false alarms, less than 12 inches from the ceiling and away from windows, doors and ducts.

Smoke alarms can be interconnected wirelessly. That means, when one sounds, they all sound. A [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) survey found this is the best way to notify everyone in a home if there is a fire. Be sure to purchase smoke alarms with the label of a reputable testing agency, like [Underwriters Laboratories \(UL\)](#).

## Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Anything that burns fuel can potentially become a source of carbon monoxide, an invisible, odorless gas that can kill. CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each bedroom and on every level of the home. The [safety tips for CO detectors](#) mirror those of smoke alarms: change the batteries, test them and interconnect them, if possible. Also, make sure vents for your gas appliances (fireplace, dryer, stove and furnace) are free and clear of snow or debris.

## Family Emergency Plan

The National Safety Council recommends every family have an emergency plan in place in the event of a natural disaster or other catastrophic event. Spring is a great time to review that plan with family members. Have a [home](#) and [car](#) emergency kit. The Federal Emergency Management Agency says an emergency kit should include one gallon of water per day for each person, at least a three-day supply of food, flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, filter mask, plastic sheeting and duct tape, and medicines. Visit the [FEMA website for a complete list](#). The emergency plan also should include:

- ◆ A communications plan to outline how your family members will contact one another and where to meet if it's safe to go outside
- ◆ A shelter-in-place plan if outside air is contaminated; FEMA recommends sealing windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting
- ◆ A getaway plan including various routes and destinations in different directions

Also, make sure your [first aid kit is updated](#).

<https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/seasonal-safety/spring-safety/spring-safety-tips#:~:text=Time%20to%>



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County News

Walk Across Texas! is still going strong until  
April 7, 2023



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**Spinach Quiche Bites**



**Ingredients:**

16 ounces frozen phyllo dough, thawed  
10 ounces frozen chopped spinach  
1 bell pepper, chopped  
6 eggs  
1 cup reduced-fat feta cheese ¼ teaspoon salt

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350°F  
Flatten out the phyllo dough in one sheet. (The closer to room temperature the dough is, the easier it will lie flat without cracking)  
Cut the dough into 24 equal squares. Line each cavity in a mini muffin tin with one square of the phyllo dough.  
Thaw the spinach in a microwave oven according to the package directions, then squeeze out the excess water.  
Combine the spinach, bell pepper, eggs, feta cheese, and salt in a bowl.  
Spoon the mixture evenly into the phyllo dough-lined mini muffin tin.  
Bake for 20 to 23 minutes. The filling should be set and the phyllo dough golden brown on the edges.  
The spinach mixture should reach an internal temperature of 160°F.  
Repeat the procedure to make a total of 48 spinach bites.

Yields: 48 spinach bites  
Recipe from Dinner Tonight Essentials cookbook

