



Nutrition News



Southwest Region Quarterly Nutrition Newsletter
Spring 2021 Edition

Chew on This: Tips for choosing fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables

Fruits and vegetables provide us with nutrients, vitamins, and minerals. They help decrease our chances of having certain cancers, heart disease, and digestive and eye problems. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables provide the body with fuel and a variety of nutrients. Below are tips for making healthier choices when purchasing fresh, frozen, or canned fruit and vegetables.

Fresh

Fresh fruit and vegetable choices are good to snack on while on the go. A few examples of snacks to pack for on the go are carrots, apples, blueberries, cherries, and bananas. They are easy to transport, give a quick boost of energy. Eating fresh fruits and vegetables between meals can help curb hunger lessening the chances of visiting the vending machines and choosing less healthy snacks.

Pick fruits and vegetables that are in season when shopping In-season fruits and vegetables taste better and give recipes a better flavor as well. Some of the winter fruits and vegetables currently in season are: apples, avocados, cabbage, bananas, collard greens, grapefruit, oranges, winter squash, and turnips.

Frozen

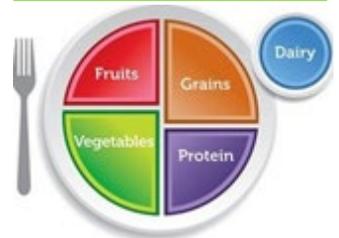
Frozen fruits and vegetables are picked at peak ripeness then quickly frozen to preserve their nutrients.

Look out for added sugar. Look for frozen produce with no added sugars. Words on the packaging, including lightly sweetened or sweetened, indicate that frozen fruit has added sugar.

Health Awareness

Look out for sodium. Remember that sauces and seasoning can contain more salt with extra calories. Words such as lightly sauced, sauced, in butter, and seasoned indicate that the

April is
Garden Month
Move More Month
May is
Strawberry Month
Egg Month
June is
Dairy Month
Fresh Fruit and
Vegetable Month



food may have added sodium. It is always good to look at the food labels. Select the produce with the least amount of sodium.

Canned

Watch out for added sugars. Look for fruits in their natural juices or water. If the can has heavy syrup, in light syrup, or extra light syrup, it has added sugar. Look at the

Watch for sodium. When shopping look for cans labeled low sodium, no salt added, or reduced sodium. When shopping for canned goods, compare the amount of sodium listed on food labels and choose the one with the lowest amount of sodium. To reduce sodium or sugar in canned fruits, vegetables, or beans, drain or rinse before using. Canned fruits, vegetables, and beans that contain sauces and seasoning can contain more salt and may have extra calories.

2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines encourage Americans to “make every bite count” to reduce chronic disease risk and lead healthy lifestyles. We are guided to make every bite count in 4 simple steps. The first tip is to start at infancy to follow positive dietary patterns; however, one could begin in older adulthood. No matter your age, nutrition is key to growth, health, and energy. The next step is to tailor and include nutrient-dense foods based on one’s personal preferences and needs. Step three is to focus on staying within the calorie goals with nutrient-dense foods. These include but are not limited to having little to no sugar added and reduced-sodium amounts. The final step is to limit foods and beverages that are overly processed and higher in saturated fat, sodium, added sugars, and alcohol. It is encouraged to seldom indulge in these.

Building Healthful Habits and Making Nutrient-Dense Choices

Sometimes when we decide to make changes in our diet, we can make too many at once which can set us up for failure. The best way to succeed is to make small changes over time. The goal is to make those small changes into habits. When first deciding to live a healthier life, instead of restricting your diet, try adding nutrient-dense foods! Foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean proteins are high in vitamins, minerals, and other things that promote health. If you’re not used to eating these, start slow. Pick one meal and one food group to focus on for the week. The following week pick another meal and food group to focus on. Keep going until you are making the healthful changes that make you feel good! Once you add healthy alternatives, you naturally will have less room for foods with empty calories or less healthful choices. Building onto your diet is a great way to build a strong foundation to a healthy lifestyle!

Get Moving: Go Play, Your Way!

Spring has finally sprung and is a great time to make small steps to become more physically active. A lot of people say they do not have the time to devote to activity or other reasons. If it is challenging to devote large chunks of time, break up that activity into small time segments. Suppose it has been some time since you have exercised or have chronic health conditions. In that case, you want to check with your healthcare provider before beginning to be sure you can do so. The following are ways to make some small changes to become more physically active as an individual or family.

- Take a 5–10-minute walk at least three times during the day.
- If your kids or grandkids have soccer, ball, or dance practice, while you wait for them, walk in the parking lot or in a nearby field to get some steps and activity in.
- Incorporate at least once a week on the weekend or during the week a family walk in a nearby neighborhood, park, or if the kids want to ride bikes, walk with them.
- Take the dog for longer walks instead of just down the driveway.
- Gardening or yard work is great exercise, and spring is an excellent time to get it done because it is not too hot or too cold. Make sure to get the family involved in the projects.
- Join an exercise group or class you have been wanting to do or that interests you.
- While watching TV, incorporate fitness activities during commercial breaks such as sit-ups, toe touches, planks, or marching in place.
- Devote half of your lunch break to doing some activity like walking, climbing a few flights of stairs if you work in a building with stairs, yoga, or desk activities.
- Get a pedometer or fitness tracker you wear and aim every day to reach 10,000 steps. If it has been a while, set small goals until you reach 10,000 steps a day.

Making just one of these small changes is a big impact to adopting a healthier lifestyle!

Healthy Communities Showcase

To learn more about Healthy Communities in your parish, please contact your local extension office.





Live Healthy Houma piloted a new exercise park for downtown Houma residents. After successful feedback, permanent signs were installed in February so that residents can have a free space to be physically active. This park contains 13 stations that target different areas of the body.



Local farmers sell their bountiful produce at the new Live Healthy Thibodaux Farmer's market.

Get Growing: Container Gardening

Having trouble finding yard space for a vegetable garden? Container gardening may be the solution for you! Any outdoor space can be transformed into fruitful gardening using pots, barrels, buckets, baskets, or any other type of tub that holds soil. Just be sure to have drainage holes at the bottom so that any excess water has a way to escape.

Vegetables that can be easily transplanted are best when using containers. They may need to be watered as often as twice a day. Make sure that the containers are in a place that receives a good amount of sunlight. One benefit of container gardening is that they can be moved from one place to another if you feel they are getting too much or not enough sunlight.

When determining which container would work best for your garden, consider how much space is needed for the particular plant to thrive. Here are some common recommendations.

Beans, snap

Container: 5-gallon window box

Broccoli

Container: 1 plant/5 gallon pot, 3 plants/15-gallon tub

Carrots

Container: 5-gallon window box at least 12 inches deep

Cucumbers

Container: 1 plant/1-gallon pot

Eggplant

Container: 5-gallon pot

Lettuce

Container: 5-gallon window box

Stirring it Up: **Homemade Guacamole**



Ingredients

- 3 ripe avocados
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. lime juice
- 2 Roma tomatoes, diced
- ½ c. red onion, chopped
- 1 cup celery (washed and chopped)
- ½ jalapeno pepper, chopped (note: include seeds if you want extra spice/heat)*
- ¼ c. cilantro, chopped, or 2 tsp. dried cilantro
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper

Directions

- Cut avocados in half, remove the pit and scoop pulp into a medium bowl.
- Mash avocado pulp with a fork and mix in the remaining ingredients.
- Stir to combine. Serve with raw vegetable sticks or baked tortilla chips

Note: Makes 6 servings

Nutrition Information

Nutrition Information for 1 serving size: 1/6 of the recipe. Calories 120; Total fat: 11g; Saturated fat: 1.5g; Cholesterol: 0 mg; Sodium: 200mg; Total carbohydrate: 8g; Dietary fiber: 5g; Protein: 32g; Total Sugars: 1 g; Added Sugars included 0 g

Notes:

* If you desire less spice/heat, remove jalapeno from the recipe.

* You can also use a food processor to mash avocado and mix ingredients together.

Source: EFNEP 50th Anniversary Recipes [link to the recipe](#)

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