

# Nutrition Matters

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## Best Buys In... Vegetables and Fruit

Are you getting enough? *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* recommends 5-10 servings of vegetables and fruits per day. Vegetables and fruit are great sources of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Dark green vegetables and orange fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamin A and folate. Citrus fruits are excellent sources of vitamin C.

### Think Fresh

- Fresh produce is cheapest when it is in season.
- Buy produce at its peak of freshness.
- Buy bags of produce instead of individual pieces. Share with a friend or be sure that you can use them all before they spoil.
- Choose small apples or bananas for children instead of large fruit.
- Visit pick-your-own farms; preserve large quantities by freezing or canning.
- Grow your own vegetables. You can get started with a small garden or window box.

#### Good Value For Vegetables in Season

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Broccoli         | Romaine Lettuce |
| Brussels sprouts | Potatoes        |
| Cabbage          | Rutabagas       |
| Carrots          | Spinach         |
| Cauliflower      | Squash          |
| Corn             | Sweet potatoes  |
| Green beans      | Tomatoes        |

#### Good Value For Fruit in Season

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Apples       | Bananas    |
| Grapefruit   | Grapes     |
| Kiwis        | Nectarines |
| Oranges      | Plums      |
| Peaches      | Pears      |
| Strawberries |            |

### Frozen and Canned

- Canned or frozen products are a better buy when vegetables and fruit are not in season.
- Canned and frozen products have about the same nutrient content as fresh.
- Do not thaw frozen vegetables before cooking. This will help retain the nutrients.
- Avoid breaded vegetables or those that have added sauces. These cost more and may be higher in fat.
- Compare the price of the products using unit price (price/100 mL usually seen on the store shelf sticker) to find the best buy.
- Avoid fruit punches, beverages or drinks as they contain a small amount, or no fruit juice. Look for frozen concentrated **juice** for the best buy.
- A juice box costs more per serving than juice bought in a larger container. For lunches, use a thermos or bottle to bring juice from home.

## Best Buys...When in Season

The following chart indicates the main season for Ontario harvest. The dots indicate optimum availability and peak “pick your own” season.

| Fruits/<br>Vegetables | June      | July      | August    | September | October   |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Apples                |           |           |           | • • • • • | • • • • • |
| Blueberries           |           |           | • • • • • |           |           |
| Cherries              | • • • •   |           |           |           |           |
| Grapes                |           |           |           | • • • • • |           |
| Peaches               |           | • • • • • |           |           |           |
| Pears                 |           |           |           | • • • • • |           |
| Strawberries          | • • • • • |           |           |           |           |
| Beans (wax)           |           |           | • • • • • |           |           |
| Broccoli              |           | • • • • • | • • • • • | • • • • • | • • • • • |
| Carrots               |           | • • • • • | • • • • • | • • • • • | • • • • • |
| Cauliflower           |           | • • • • • | • • • • • | • • • • • | • • • • • |
| Peas                  |           | • • • • • | • • • • • |           |           |
| Squash                |           |           |           | • • • • • | • • • • • |
| Tomatoes              |           |           | • • • • • |           |           |

Source: Foodland Ontario

### Tips on How To Use Leftover Vegetables and Fruit

#### Vegetables

- Add to tossed salad
- Create a stir fry
- Add to casseroles, soups or an omelette
- Marinate in oil, vinegar and spices (serve chilled)

#### Fruits

- Make a fruit salad
- Add to a vegetable salad
- Mix into batter for baked goods (muffins, bread)
- Use on top of cereal

### Quick & Easy Stir Fry

| Ingredients |  |        | Method  |
|-------------|--|--------|---|
| ½ cup       | Chicken or vegetable stock                   | 125 mL | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mix together the stock, soy sauce, cornstarch, and sugar. Set aside.</li> <li>2. In a wok or large frying pan, heat 1 tbsp of the oil over medium heat. Add meat and stir fry for 4 to 5 minutes until cooked through. Remove and set aside.</li> <li>3. Add remaining oil and heat as before. Add the garlic and onion and stir fry 1 minute. Add the other vegetables starting with the firmer ones. Stir fry 1 to 2 minutes between each group of vegetables.</li> <li>4. Add the meat and sauce to the stir fry. Continue to cook until the sauce is clear and thickened. Serve immediately.</li> </ol> |
| 2 tbsp      | Soy sauce                                    | 30 mL  |   |
| 1 tbsp      | Cornstarch                                   | 15 mL  |   |
| 1 tsp       | White sugar                                  | 5 mL   |   |
| 2 cloves    | Garlic                                       | 2      |   |
| ¾ lb        | Chicken, beef or pork, thinly slice          | 350 g  |   |
| 1           | Medium onion, thinly sliced                  | 1      |   |
| 3 cups      | Assorted vegetables cut in bite-sized pieces | 750 mL |   |
| 2 tbsp      | Vegetable oil                                | 30 mL  |   |

Source: Cooking Healthy Together, 1998.

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