

Use Your Senses to Pick Healthy Fruits and Vegetables

Choosing the best fruits and veggies can be a challenge, especially when you are choosing new varieties to try. Use your senses to find the fruits and veggies at their peak.

Sight – choosing fruits and vegetables that are different colors will add a variety of nutrients to your diet. Also, choose rich, deep colors when available—dark green lettuce will provide more nutritional value than iceberg lettuce. In addition, strawberries should be red to the stem and not be white; watermelon should only have one yellow spot where it was resting on the ground; and pineapple should be yellow to the stem. The fruit or vegetable doesn't need to be a perfect shape or size, but it should be free of bruises and blemishes.

Smell – make sure what you are choosing passes the sniff test. Don't just look at the fruit when you buy it, smell it. Do you smell the freshness of the fruit or do you smell wilting greens? Pick fruits and vegetables with a vibrant aroma. Avoid anything that smells moldy, old or sour.

Touch – fresh fruits and vegetables are typically firm. Snap the green beans to make sure they are still fresh. Melons should be heavy for their size to offer the most flavor and juice.

Hearing – not all fruits and vegetables make noises that give hints of freshness, but some do. If your pepper rattles, it may mean the seeds are loose and it isn't as fresh as it could be.

Taste – You may not be able to taste the veggies in the produce section of your local store before purchasing, so aim to try a different fruit or vegetable two week or so to find out what tastes you like. One low-risk way to give a new fruit or veggie a try is a single serving at a salad bar. In general, the fresher the fruit or vegetable, the more flavorful it will be. Make sure you prepare them several ways—raw vegetables taste very different from roasted vegetables. If you don't like the taste try them in an omelet, salad, soup or meatloaf. The goal is to find what you like and add five to nine servings a day.

Become familiar with **Seasonal** fruits and veggies. When produce is out of season, choose frozen or canned versions. These were often picked at their peak season, and processed and packaged within hours. Frozen veggies work well for soups, stews, and casseroles that will be cooked.

Adapted from: Rebecca Jilek, MPH, RD, LD, CDE, Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator at the St. Elizabeth Physicians' Healthy Headlines webpage. Accessed 6/5/19

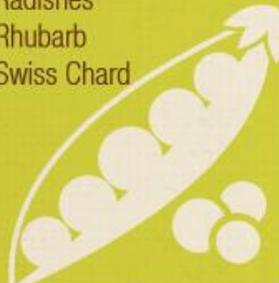
SEASONS of eating



Your heart-healthy recipes will taste even better with seasonal produce.

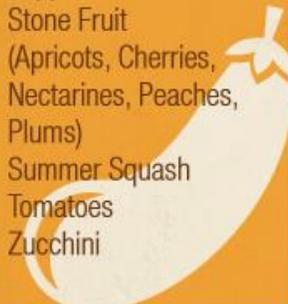
SPRING

Artichokes
 Asparagus
 Chives
 Fava Beans
 Green Onions
 Leeks
 Lettuce
 Parsnips
 Peas
 Radishes
 Rhubarb
 Swiss Chard



SUMMER

Berries
 Corn
 Cucumbers
 Eggplant
 Figs
 Grapes
 Green Beans
 Melons
 Peppers
 Stone Fruit
 (Apricots, Cherries,
 Nectarines, Peaches,
 Plums)
 Summer Squash
 Tomatoes
 Zucchini



FALL

Apples
 Brussels Sprouts
 Dates
 Hard Squash
 (Acorn, Butternut,
 Spaghetti)
 Pears
 Pumpkin
 Sweet Potatoes



WINTER

Bok Choy
 Broccoli
 Cauliflower
 Celery
 Citrus Fruit
 (Clementines, Grapefruit,
 Lemons, Limes, Oranges,
 Tangerines)
 Collard Greens
 Endive
 Leafy Greens
 (Collard, Kale, Mustard,
 Spinach)
 Root Vegetables (Beets,
 Turnips)



YEAR ROUND: Cabbage, Carrots, Garlic, Onions, Mushrooms

Keep these tips in mind when using and shopping for seasonal produce:



Freeze fresh produce to add to smoothies, soups and breads.



Fresh foods are often less expensive during their harvest season. You may even save a bit more by buying in bulk.



Gardening is a great way to get fresh seasonal produce from your own backyard while getting a little exercise too.



Shop your farmers' market. The farmers can share a wealth of information about the foods and might even give you ideas on how to prepare them.



Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are also healthy choices. Compare food labels and choose products with the lowest amounts of sodium and added sugars.

The American Heart Association recommends



4-5 servings per day
 each of fruits and vegetables.