



# Mission: Nutrition

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

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## Fun in the Sun

You might think that with summer comes the need for sun safety tips. According to the Sun Safety Alliance, sun-safety tips should be followed year-round to prevent serious skin damage and possibly skin cancer. Below, are tips sun-safety tips to help you enjoy the outdoors:

Keep in mind the sun is strongest between 10am and 4pm

Wear clothing that is dark and tightly woven

Remember that UV rays bounce off sand, snow, concrete, and water

Do not use tanning beds

Keep very young children (6 months or less) out of the sun

Apply sunscreens liberally and evenly over all exposed areas including the neck, ears, and lips

Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher whenever you are outdoors. For adequate UV protection, use products that protect against UVB and UVA rays. When purchasing a sunscreen, look for an SPF of at least 15 and ingredients with Avobenzone (Parsol 1789) or zinc oxide.

Use an SPF of 30 or higher for children

Apply sunscreen before going outdoors and reapply often

Reapply sunscreen after swimming, perspiring, and toweling off

For people with thin or thinning hair, apply sunscreen to the scalp as well

### What is SPF?

SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor. It indicates how much longer a person wearing sunscreen can stay in the sun before beginning to burn—than they would without using any sunscreen at all.

### Facts About Getting Too Much Sun

-Overexposure to the sun can lead to skin cancer later in life.

-You can sunburn even on a cloudy day.

-On average, children get three times more exposure to UV rays than adults.

-Concrete, sand, water, and snow reflect 85% to 90% of the sun's UV rays.

-Depletion of the Earth's ozone continues to increase your exposure to UV rays.

### Skin Cancer

-Melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, kills one person every hour.

-Melanoma, in some parts of the world, is increasing at rates faster than any other cancer.

-More than 1.2 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year in the US.

-One blistering sunburn can double a child's lifetime risk of developing skin cancer.

Source: Sun Safety Alliance



# **Mission: Nutrition**

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## **Strategies for Safe Picnics**

Summer marks the beginning of picnic season and the challenge of food safety, according to LSU AgCenter nutritionist **Dr. Beth Reames**. Cross-contamination is a particular problem. It occurs when harmful microorganisms from raw meat and poultry are transferred to cooked and other ready-to-eat foods from improperly cleaned hands, utensils and cutting boards. Reames offers several picnicking tips in two critical food safety areas.

Keep everything clean. Find out if there's a source of potable (safe drinking) water at your destination. If not, bring water for preparation and cleaning; or pack clean, wet, disposable cloths or moist towelettes and paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces. Cross-contamination during preparation, grilling, and serving food is a prime cause of foodborne illness.

Always wash your hands before and after handling food, and don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry. Soap and water are essential to cleanliness, so if you are going somewhere that will not have potable water, bring it with you. Even disposable wipes will do. Include lots of clean utensils, not only for eating but also for serving the safely cooked food.

Keep hot food hot and cold food cold. "It's essential to keep hot food hot and cold food cold on the way to, and throughout, the meal," Reames stresses, noting that holding food at an unsafe temperature is a prime cause of foodborne illness. Already-high summertime temperatures can spike higher in direct sunlight on the beach or in a boat. The nutritionist says food should not be left out of the cooler or off the grill more than two hours (one hour when the outside temperature is above 90° F).

Most bacteria do not grow rapidly at temperatures below 40° F or above 140° F. The temperature range in between is known as the "danger zone." Bacteria multiply rapidly at these temperatures and can reach dangerous levels. Raw meat and poultry products may contain bacteria that cause foodborne illness. They must be cooked to destroy these bacteria and held at temperatures that are either too hot or too cold for these bacteria to grow.

If bringing hot take-out food such as fried chicken or barbecue, eat it within two hours of purchase. Or, plan ahead and chill the food in your refrigerator before packing it into an insulated cooler. In addition to a grill and fuel for cooking food, remember to pack a food thermometer to check that your meat and poultry reach a safe internal temperature. When reheating food at the outing, be sure it reaches an internal temperature of 165° F.



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

Carry cold perishable food like hamburger patties, hotdogs, luncheon meats and chicken in an insulated cooler packed with plenty of ice or frozen gel packs. Be sure raw meat and poultry are wrapped securely to prevent juices from cross-contaminating ready-to-eat food. Perishable cooked foods such as meats, chicken and potato or pasta salads must be kept cold, too.

Store food in the cooler except for brief times when serving. Cook only the amount of food that will be eaten to avoid the challenge of keeping leftovers at a safe temperature. Discard any leftovers that have not remained cold.

*Source: Beth Reames (225) 578-3929, or [breams@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:breams@agcenter.lsu.edu)*

## **Handling Food Safely on the Road**

No matter where we go or what we do, there is a common denominator that runs through all of our summer travels and relaxation — it's called F-O-O-D! The "road" to food safety, however, can either be a bumpy one or smooth — depending on what precautions are taken handling meals as we travel this summer.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's nationwide, toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline reminds everyone that some simple, common-sense food safety rules can save a vacation from disaster. Following this advice could make the difference between a vacation to remember and one that is remembered because people got sick from improperly handled food.

First, some general rules, while traveling this summer:

### **Plan Ahead...**

If you are traveling with perishable food, place it in a cooler with ice or freezer packs. When carrying drinks, consider packing them in a separate cooler so the food cooler is not opened frequently. Have plenty of ice or frozen gel-packs on hand before starting to pack food. If you take perishable foods along (for example, meat, poultry, eggs, and salads) for eating on the road or to cook at your vacation spot, plan to keep everything on ice in your cooler.

### **Pack Safely...**

Pack perishable foods directly from the refrigerator or freezer into the cooler. Meat and poultry may be packed while it is still frozen; that way it stays colder longer. Also, a full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled. Be sure to keep raw meat and poultry wrapped separately from cooked foods, or foods meant to be eaten raw such as fruits.



# **Mission: Nutrition**

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If the cooler is only partially filled, pack the remaining space with more ice. For long trips to the shore, take along two coolers — one for the day's immediate food needs, such as lunch, drinks, or snacks, and the other for perishable foods to be used later in the vacation. Limit the times the cooler is opened. Open and close the lid quickly.

Now, follow these food safety tips:

## **When Camping...**

Remember to keep the cooler in a shady spot. Keep it covered with a blanket, tarp or poncho, preferably one that is light in color to reflect heat.

Bring along bottled water or other canned or bottled drinks. Always assume that streams and rivers are not safe for drinking. If camping in a remote area, bring along water purification tablets or equipment. These are available at camping supply stores.

Keep hands and all utensils clean when preparing food. Use disposable moist towelettes to clean hands. When planning meals, think about buying and using shelf-stable food to ensure food safety.

## **When Boating...**

If boating on vacation, or out for the day, make sure the all-important cooler is along.

Don't let perishable food sit out while swimming or fishing. Remember, food sitting out for more than 2 hours is not safe. The time frame is reduced to just 1 hour if the outside temperature is above 90 °F.

Now, about that "catch" of fish — assuming the big one did not get away. For fin fish: scale, gut and clean the fish as soon as they are caught. Wrap both whole and cleaned fish in water-tight plastic and store on ice. Keep 3-4 inches of ice on the bottom of the cooler. Alternate layers of fish and ice. Cook the fish in 1-2 days, or freeze. After cooking, eat within 3-4 days. Make sure the raw fish stays separate from cooked foods.

Crabs and other shellfish must be kept alive until cooked. Store in a bushel or laundry basket under wet burlap. Crabs are best eaten the day they are caught.

Caution: Be aware of the potential dangers of eating raw shellfish. This is especially true for persons with liver disorders or weakened immune systems. However, no one should eat raw shellfish.

## **When at the Beach...**

Plan ahead. Take along only the amount of food that can be eaten to avoid having leftovers. If grilling, make sure local ordinances allow it.



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

Bring the cooler! Partially bury it in the sand, cover with blankets, and shade with a beach umbrella.

Bring along disposable moist towelettes for cleaning hands.

Don't eat anything that has been sitting out in the hot sun for more than 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F) — a real invitation for foodborne illness and a spoiled vacation.

## **When in the Vacation Home or the Recreation Vehicle...**

If a vacation home or a recreational vehicle has not been used for a while, check left-over canned food from last year. The Meat and Poultry Hotline recommends that canned foods which may have been exposed to freezing and thawing temperatures over the winter be discarded.

Also, check the refrigerator. If unplugged from last year, thoroughly clean it before using. Make sure the refrigerator, food preparation areas, and utensils in the vacation home or in the recreational vehicle are thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water.

*Source: USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service*

## **June Vegetable of the Month: Okra**



Okra grows in an elongated, lantern shape vegetable. It is a fuzzy, green colored, and ribbed pod that is approximately 2-7 inches in length. This vegetable is more famously known by its rows of tiny seeds and slimy or sticky texture when cut open. Okra is also known as bamia, bindi, bhindi, lady's finger, and gumbo, is a member of the cotton (Mallow) family.

Okra was discovered around Ethiopia during the 12th century B.C. and was cultivated by the ancient Egyptians. This vegetable soon flourished throughout North Africa and the Middle East where the seed pods were consumed cooked and the seeds toasted, ground, and served as a coffee substitute. With the advent of the slave trade, it



# **Mission: Nutrition**

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eventually came to North America and is now commonly grown in the southern United States. You'll now see okra in African, Middle Eastern, Greek, Turkish, Indian, Caribbean, and South American cuisines.

Okra is commonly associated in Southern, Creole, and Cajun cooking since it was initially introduced into the United States in its southern region. It grows well in the southern United States where there is little frost.

Okra is a powerhouse of valuable nutrients. It is a good source of vitamin C. It is low in calories and is fat-free.

## **Varieties**

Clemson variety is dark green with angular pods. This okra takes less than two months to mature.

Emerald type is dark green, with smooth round pods.

Lee is a spineless type known by its deep bright green, very straight angular pods.

Annie Oakley is a hybrid, spineless kind of okra with bright green, angular pods. It takes less than two months from seeding to maturity.

Chinese Okra is a dark green type grown in California and reaches 10 to 13 inches in length. These extra-long okra pods are sometimes called "ladyfingers."

Purple Okra a rare variety you may see at peak times. There is a version grown for its leaves that resemble sorrel in New Guinea.

## **Availability, Selection, and Storage**

Okra is available year-round, with a peak season during the summer months. It is available either frozen or fresh. When buying fresh okra, make sure that you select dry, firm, okra. They should be medium to dark green in color and blemish-free. Fresh okra should be used the same day that it was purchased or stored in a paper bag in the warmest part of the refrigerator for 2-3 days. Severe cold temperatures will speed up okra decay. Do not wash the okra pods until ready to use, or it will become slimy.

## **Preparation**

When preparing, remember that the more it is cut, the slimier it will become. Its various uses allow for okra to be added to many different recipes. Okra is commonly used as a thickening agent in soups and stews because of its sticky core. However, okra may also be steamed, boiled, pickled, sautéed, or stir-fried whole. Okra is a sensitive vegetable and should not be cooked in pans made of iron, copper or brass since the chemical properties turns okra black.



# Mission: Nutrition

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

## Young Versus Mature Okra - What is the difference?

Most okra pods are ready to be harvested in less than two months of planting. If the okra is going to be consumed, then these pods must be harvested when they are very young. They are usually picked when they are two to three inches long, or tender stage.

Okra pods grow quickly from the tender to tough stage. Pods are considered mature when they exceed three inches in length. Mature okra is tough and is not recommended for use in certain recipes.

## How do I reduce okra slime?

Most people who have eaten or have cooked okra, know about the okra slime. Some recipes call for the whole okra, but how do you deal with the okra slime?

There are few ways to minimize the slime:

- Simply trim the off the ends and avoid puncturing the okra capsule.
- You can also minimize the slime factor by avoiding the tendency to overcook okra.

## Okra and Green Beans

Makes 6 servings

Source: University of Illinois Extension

### Ingredients

- 1 lb okra, uncut
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 lb fresh green beans
- 2 large garlic cloves, crushed then chopped
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground pepper
- 1 6-ounce can tomato paste

## Okra

Serving size 1/2 cup  
cooked, sliced (80g)

Amounts Per Serv- ing	% Daily Value
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Calories 20

Calories from Fat 0 0

Total Fat 0g 0%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Sodium 0mg 0%

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Total Carbo-  
hydrate 4g 1%

Dietary Fi-  
ber 2g 7%

Sugars 1g

Protein 1g

Vitamin A 4%

Vitamin C 20%

Calcium 6%

Iron 2%

**\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.**



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

Wash okra pods, trim stems, do not remove caps. Rinse well and drain. Wash beans and cut into 3 inch lengths. Combine water, tomato paste, olive oil, onion, garlic, salt and pepper in a sauce pan and mix well. Heat, stirring frequently, until mixture comes to boil. Add okra and beans and additional water if necessary to almost cover vegetables.

Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer gently until vegetables are crisp-tender, 20 to 30 minutes. Serve it warm or cold.

\*This dish can also be oven-baked. Instead of simmering, lightly cover with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes at 350°F.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 106, Protein 5g, Fat 3g, Calories From Fat 19%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 19g, Fiber 7g, Sodium 187mg.

*Sources: Fruits & Veggies Matter and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## **Is Beef Meat in Your Shopping Cart?**

Today's meat case is brimming with many choices from traditional steaks, roasts, and ground beef to new steaks as the flat iron (shoulder top blade), ranch (shoulder enter steak), and petite tender. Knowing beef basics and understanding how to read the label will help you get the most value for your dollar.

When shopping for beef, make sure you stop by the refrigerated meat case last to guarantee the beef stays cold as long as possible until you return home. Select packages that are cold, tightly and completely wrapped with no tears or punctures. Check that the package does not contain excessive liquid. Excessive liquid is an indication of problems with temperature or storage. For vacuum-packaged beef, make sure the seal has not been broken and the package is not leaking. When selecting beef, look for a bright cherry-red color without any gray or brown blotches. A darker purplish-red color is typical of vacuum-packaged beef. Once exposed to oxygen, beef will turn from a darker red to bright red. Choose steaks and roasts that are firm to the touch, not soft. It is very important that you check the "sell by" date on the package. If you cannot read it or it's not there, select a different package.

To keep your meat, poultry, and seafood from dripping onto other foods, use the plastic bags provided by the store. The frozen meats you select should be rock solid. If the time from the store to your home will exceed 30 minutes, have an ice chest in your car for the cold groceries.



# **Mission: Nutrition**

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When looking for healthy meats, look for the words “round” and “loin” - round steaks and roasts, top loin, top sirloin, chuck shoulder and arm roasts. Choose extra lean ground beef, which is at least 90% lean, and possibly as much as 93% or 95% lean. Ground meat that is as much as 95% lean can be used in casseroles. Make sure when cooking ground beef that it is brown in the center, the juices are clear not pink, red, or cloudy, and the texture is firm not soft or mushy or flaky. However, when grilling, choose 90% lean so the meat will hold together.

To check that your refrigerator is cooling at 40 degrees F or below, use a refrigerator thermometer. Your freezer should be at or below 0 degrees F. If you do not plan to use fresh meat, poultry, or fish within a few days, freeze them. Overwrap packages with aluminum foil or heavy freezer wrap to make them airtight. Remember to follow the “use by”, “keep refrigerated”, and “safe handling” information on the package labels. If you cannot remember when the food was placed in the refrigerator, throw it out.

Keep raw meat, poultry, and fish and their juices from coming into contact with other foods during preparation. To prevent cross contamination, never chop fresh vegetables or salad ingredients on a cutting board that was used for raw meat without properly cleaning it first. To properly clean your cutting board, wash with warm soapy water then sanitize with a solution of bleach and water. Do not thaw your meats on the countertop and never leave out at room temperature. When cooking meat and poultry, place the thermometer in the thickest part of the meat, not touching the bone, far from the bottom of the pan.

Refrigerate cooked foods promptly after serving (within two hours after cooking). You do not need to cool food first, but do divide large amounts of leftovers into smaller portions and place in shallow containers for quick chilling. You should freeze any leftovers that you will not eat within a few days. When reheating your frozen leftovers, reheat them to 165 degrees throughout or until steaming hot. And, never eat leftover food that cooks or smells strange. When in doubt, throw it out.

*Sources: Nebraska Beef Council and Smart Choices Lesson 10.*

## **July is National Blueberry Month**

In 1999, the month of July was proclaimed National Blueberry Month by the USDA. Blueberries are grown in 35 states in the US, with the US producing over 90% of all the blueberries in the world. Research shows that foods rich in antioxidants like blueberries help reduce your chance of getting cancer and heart disease.



# **Mission: Nutrition**

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The deep blue color of blueberries is from pigments, called anthocyanins that act as antioxidants. Antioxidants are compounds that protect cells against damage by free radicals that form in the body. Uncontrolled free radical formation can cause cell damage that may lead to cancer, heart disease, inflammation, and other health problems.

Blueberries are a good source of fiber and vitamin C. They are also an excellent source of vitamin A, potassium, folic acid, and fiber. Blueberries are also low in fat and sodium-free. One-half cup of blueberries has only 42 calories. According to LSU AgCenter nutritionist, Dr. Beth Reames, some of the reported benefits of eating blueberries include: improved vision, clearing arteries, strengthening blood vessels, enhanced memory, stopping urinary tract infections, and reversing age-related physical and mental declines.

The Rabbiteye blueberry is the most successfully grown in the South. The locally grown Rabbiteye blueberries are available from early May through mid-June in South Louisiana and from early June through mid-July in North Louisiana. Blueberries from other sections of the country are plentiful in supermarkets in July and August. When selecting fresh blueberries look for blueberries that are plump and firm with a dark blue color and waxy, silvery ‘bloom’. Since blueberries do not ripen after harvest, eat them as soon as you buy them.

Handle fruit gently to avoid bruising since this will shorten the life of the fruit. Store berries loosely in a shallow container to allow air circulation and to prevent the berries on top from crushing those underneath. It is important that you not wash berries before refrigerating because this will make them mushy. Store covered containers of berries in a cool, moist area of the refrigerator, such as the vegetable bin. The recommended storage time is three to five days however some blueberries will last up to two weeks. When ready for your berries, wash them gently in cold water.

Blueberries are nature’s convenience food- no peeling, pitting, or coring! Try adding them to cereals, fruit, salads, muffins, or pancakes. For a refreshing summer drink, drop frozen berries in sparkling water. A blueberry smoothie also makes a great snack!

For more information on blueberries, contact the WBR Extension Service at 225/336-2416 for a copy of “Enjoy Louisiana Blueberries” publication or go to [www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com) to download a copy.

Sources: Beth Reames (225) 578-3929, or [breams@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:breams@agcenter.lsu.edu), Enjoy Louisiana Blueberries- LSU AgCenter, [classbrain.com](http://classbrain.com), and [associatedcontent.com](http://associatedcontent.com).



# **Mission: Nutrition**

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## **Nectarines- July Fruit of the Month**



Commonly showcased side by side with peaches, nectarines are a similar, but yet different fruit. The best way to identify the difference between a nectarine and peach is by the lack of fuzz on the nectarine.

Nectarines, like peaches, most likely originated in China more than 2,000 years ago and were cultivated in ancient Persia, Greece and Rome. They were grown in Great Britain in the late 16th or early 17th centuries, and were introduced to America by the Spanish. Today, California grows over 95% of the nectarines produced in the United States.

Nectarines are smaller and smooth skinned golden yellow with large blushes of red. Their yellow flesh has a noticeable pink tinge, with a distinct aroma and a more pronounced flavor. There are more than 100 varieties of nectarine, in freestone and clingstone varieties. In freestone types the flesh separates from the 'pit' easily, while clingstone types cling to the 'pit.' Nectarines are more delicate than peaches and bruise very easily.

Nectarines are low in calories with no sodium or cholesterol.

### **Selection**

Ripe fruit are fragrant and give, slightly, to the touch. If they are a under-ripe, leave them at room temperature for 2–3 days to ripen. Look for fruit with smooth unblemished skin. Avoid extremely hard or dull colored fruits and soft fruit with soft, wrinkled, punctured skin.

### **Storage**

Nectarines keep for 5 days if stored in a plastic bag in the coldest part of your refrigerator.

### **Preparation**

Nectarines can be used and prepared in the same ways as peaches, with no need to peel because they have no fuzz. Leave the skins on when making pies, cobblers and fresh fruit salads, etc.



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## **Availability**

California nectarines are available from late April and to late August. Almost all of the nectarines available are in California. Chilean Nectarines are available from late December through early March.

*Sources: Fruit & Veggies Matter and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## **Top 10 Reasons to Eat MORE Fruits & Vegetables**

**10 Color & Texture.** Fruits and veggies add **color**, texture ... and *appeal* ... to your plate.

**9 Convenience.** Nutritious in any form - **fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100% juice**, so they're ready when you are!

**8 Fiber.** Fruits and veggies provide **fiber** that helps fill you up and keeps your digestive system happy.

**7 Low in Calories.** Fruits and veggies are naturally **low in calories**.

**6 May Reduce Disease Risk.** Eating plenty of fruits and veggies may help reduce the risk of many diseases, including heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers.

**5 Vitamins & Minerals.** Fruits and veggies are rich in **vitamins and minerals** that help you feel healthy and energized.

**4 Variety.** Fruits and veggies are available in an almost infinite variety...there's always something new to try!

**3 Quick, Natural Snack.** Fruits and veggies are nature's treat and easy to grab for a snack.

**2 Fun to Eat!** Some crunch, some squirt, some you peel ... some you don't, and some grow right in your own backyard!



# **Mission: Nutrition**

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## **1 Taste Great!**

*Sources: Fruit & Veggies Matter and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

### **What's In Season for Summer**

Below, you will find a listing of fruits and vegetables that are in season for June, July, and August. It is important to note that you can enjoy the taste of any fruit or vegetable year-round. Whether it is fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% juice- it all counts!

Apricots  
Beets  
Bell Peppers  
Blackberries  
Blueberries  
Boysenberries  
Butter Lettuce  
Cantaloupe  
Casaba Melon  
Chayote Squash  
Cherries  
Crenshaw Melon  
Cucumbers  
Eggplant

Figs  
Garlic  
Grapefruit  
Grapes  
Green Beans  
Green Peas  
Honeydew Melons  
Jalapeno Peppers  
Lima Beans  
Limes  
Loganberries  
Lychee  
Nectarines  
Olallieberries

Okra  
Passion Fruit  
Peaches  
Persian Melons  
Plums  
Radishes  
Raspberries  
Strawberries  
Sweet Corn  
Summer Squash  
Tomatillo  
Tomatoes  
Watermelon  
Zucchini

*Sources: Fruit & Veggies Matter and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

### **Are You Eating Enough of This Super Food?**

Research shows that on average, Americans are eating only half the daily recommended servings of dairy. The USDA MyPyramid recommends that most people consume 3 cups of milk or milk products a day. Dairy provides nine essential nutrients including: calcium, potassium, phosphorus, protein, vitamins A, D, and B12, riboflavin, and niacin. One serving of dairy is 8 ounces or 1 cup of milk, 1 ½ ounces of cheese, and 6-8 ounces of yogurt. Milk, cheese, and yogurt are available in a variety of low-fat and fat-free options to meet your taste and nutritional needs.

*Sources: Smart Choices- Nutrition News and the National Dairy Council*

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Visit our Web site:  
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