

Nutrition News

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A COMMUNITY NUTRITION PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER

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Eat Vegetables, Move More: Enjoy Vegetables in Season this Summer

Spring is almost over, which means summer will be here soon. Summer not only brings sunny days but also fresh, ripe vegetables for us to enjoy.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables provides lots of phytochemicals and fiber, which help protect us from heart disease and cancer. So, take advantage of fresh summer vegetables at a farmer's market or produce stand.

Take a trip to your local farmer's market or produce stand to find in-season vegetables. These vegetables are fresher and have more

nutrients than those that have been sitting in supermarkets for a long time. Vegetables from a farmer's market or produce stand also taste better and are usually less expensive because they are freshly picked.

Featured Vegetables: A few of the MANY vegetables that are in season during summer

- Bell pepper
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Zucchini
- Many more – visit your local farmer's market or produce stand to see what they have to offer.

Quick tips for using the featured vegetables:

Vegetables	What to Look For:	Storage & Preparation	Great Uses
Bell pepper	Choose deep-colored (red, yellow or green) peppers with a green stem and smooth, shiny skin that is free from soft spots and bruises.	Store in the vegetable compartment of the refrigerator for up to 1 week. Wash the pepper under running water before cutting. Cut around the stem with a paring knife, and then gently remove it. Next remove the seeds. Cut into desired shapes and sizes.	Bell peppers can be eaten raw or cooked. Use chopped or diced raw bell peppers on salads; dip bell pepper strips in salad dressing for a quick, healthy snack; or stuff cooked whole bell peppers with rice dressing for a hearty entree.
Cucumber	Choose firm, unwaxed cucumbers with rounded edges that are bright to dark green. Try to choose cucumbers that have been stored in a cool place highly.	Can be stored in the refrigerator for several days. Wash all cucumbers before eating or cutting. Waxed cucumbers always should be peeled. Cucumbers can be sliced or diced. If you do not like the seeds you can cut the cucumber lengthwise and use a spoon to scoop them out. Leftover cut cucumbers should be wrapped tightly in plastic or placed in a sealed container.	Cucumbers are best served cold. Cut into stick for snacks; slice, dice or chop for salads; or mince and add to cream cheese to make a sandwich spread.
Eggplant	Choose a firm, heavy eggplant with a smooth, shiny, skin that is purple, white or green. Avoid eggplants with discoloration, scars and bruises.	Store uncut eggplant in a plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper. It will keep for a few days. Do not cut eggplant before you are ready to use it. Always wash the eggplant before cutting. The skin on most eggplants can be eaten. If you do not like the skin you can peel it before cutting, or you can scoop out the flesh once it is cooked.	Eggplant can be oven roasted, baked or steamed. Use in place of meats in casseroles such as lasagna.
Zucchini – (summer squash)	Choose medium size, heavy zucchini that has a shiny, unblemished skin.	Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. It will last for about 7 days. Wash under cool, running water before cutting. It can be cut it into any size and shape.	Zucchini can be eaten raw or cooked. Cut into sticks and dip in your favorite salad dressing. Saute with onions and yellow squash for a great side dish.



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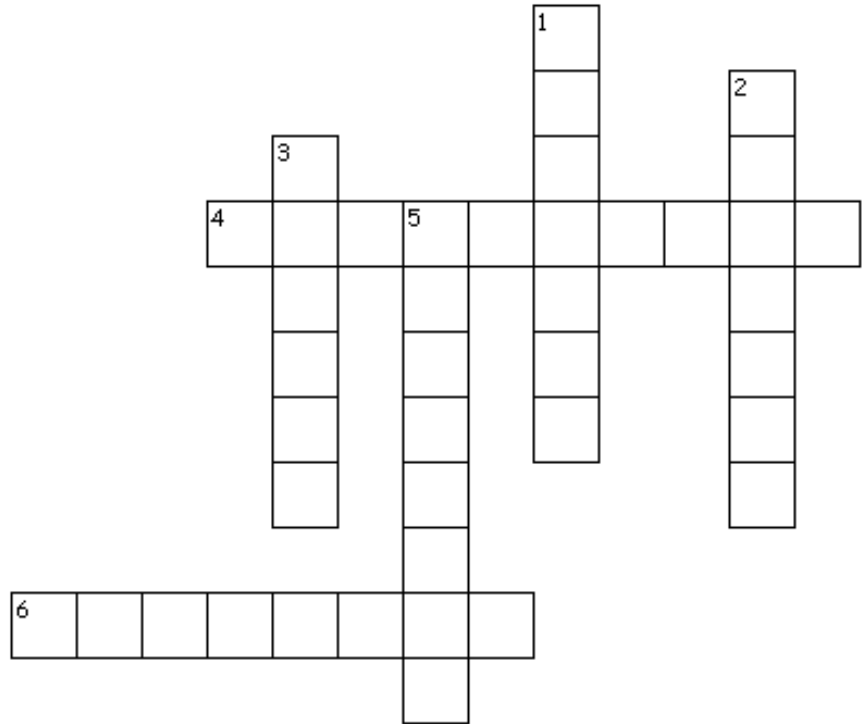
Summer Vegetable Fun

Across

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 5 to 9 servings of fruits and _____ every day.
- What summer vegetable is also a type of “summer squash”?

Down

- Vegetables from a farmer’s market or produce stand also taste better and are usually _____ because they are freshly picked.
- Vegetables from a produce stand or a farmer’s market are _____ than vegetables that sitting in supermarkets for a long time.
- Bell peppers are summer vegetables that can be red, green or _____ .
- What summer vegetable can be purple and is often used in place of meats in casseroles?



Resource:

Home and Garden Bulletin #258: *How to buy fresh vegetables*, USDA, Agricultural marketing service.

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To find out more, contact your parish agent.