



Nutrition Edition

Your Guide to Child Health and Nutrition



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CCFPRoundtable.org

Lengthen the Life of Produce

THIS PANDEMIC has taught us a few things, such as the importance of hand washing, to never pass up toilet paper and it has certainly changed the way we shop for groceries. Many people are trying to minimize their exposure and time behind a mask inside a supermarket by making a grocery run only every few weeks. However, this can create the challenge of keeping perishable produce fresh, delicious and safe to eat. Try the following tips to maximize your produce dollar.

Prioritize and Plan

Use shorter life produce first. In general, the softer the produce, such as tender greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, broccoli, corn, mushrooms, summer squashes and eggplants, the shorter the lives. Heartier greens like kale and cabbage, plus apples, citrus, carrots, celery, parsnips, beets, potatoes and winter squashes, will stay fresh longer.

Keep Them Cold, Give Them Space

A general rule is to refrigerate most fruits and vegetables, uncrowded, unwashed and separated in plastic or cloth produce bags.

- If there are 2 crisper drawers in your fridge, reserve one for fruits and the



other for vegetables, because they require different conditions.

- If you can adjust the humidity in the drawers,

veggies like a bit of humidity, while fruits do best with a low humidity setting.

SPECIAL HANDLING TIPS

- Leafy greens and herbs** will stay fresh longer if rinsed and stored wrapped in paper towels and kept in a plastic bag.
- Asparagus and scallions** (green onions) should be stored upright, roots down in water or stems wrapped in a moist paper towel and plastic bag.
- Celery** wrapped in aluminum foil will stay crisp.
- Corn** should be stored in husks, and can be left unrefrigerated if using within a couple of days.
- Mushrooms** are best stored unwashed in a paper bag.

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Farmer Fran's Fun Facts



Tomatoes

- The first tomatoes can be traced back to the Andes in Peru, where they grew wild as cherry-sized berries. As early as 700 A.D., the Incas and Aztecs began cultivating tomato plants.
- There are more than 4,000 varieties of tomatoes ranging in size, shape and color. Varieties are: cherry, plum (also called Italian or Roma), slicing and beefsteak.
- Botanically, the tomato is a fruit. However, in 1893, the U.S. Supreme Court declared it a vegetable. This came about as a result of tariff laws in 1887, which imposed a duty on vegetables but not fruits.
- Add tomatoes to sandwiches for a healthy punch to your lunch. Cherry tomatoes are a tasty addition to grilled kabobs, salads or just popped straight in your mouth!
- Look for plump, slightly firm tomatoes with smooth skin, and a sweet smell. Place firm tomatoes in a paper bag until ripe. Keep ripe tomatoes at room temperature; the refrigerator makes them mealy and flavorless.
- Tomatoes are a good source of vitamins C and A and a great source of lycopene, a powerful antioxidant.

INSIDE:

- How to Address Children's Mental Health during COVID-19
- Yoga Pose of the Month
- Recipes

Lengthen the Life of Produce

—Continued from front page

- **Citrus fruits** in a bowl on the counter looks appealing, but they will stay juicier and last longer in the fridge.
- **Berries** will resist molding if removed from crowded boxes and stored dry in a single layer on paper towels in a storage container.
- **Tomatoes** in abundance? Make a fresh sauce and freeze in zipper bags.
- **Avocados** are problematic to store once cut, however you can wrap in plastic or submerge in citrus water overnight in the fridge.
- **Banana** stems can be wrapped in plastic or foil to slow ripening.

ETHYLENE GAS EMITTING PRODUCE

Apples, bananas, pears, stone fruits, melons, tomatoes and potatoes produce ethylene gas which accelerates the ripening of other produce. This is a good thing to know when you want the rock hard avocado on your countertop to ripen more quickly. However, keep this in mind when you are trying to prolong the life of your produce by separating these fruits and vegetables from ethylene sensitive produce.

RIPEN AT ROOM TEMP

- Some fruits and vegetables, such as avocados, tropical fruits, melons and pineapple are best ripened at room temperature and then refrigerated.
- Others don't belong in the fridge ever, such as stone fruits, tomatoes and bananas because the texture will become mushy with refrigeration.

THESE ROOT VEGGIES LIKE IT COOL, DARK AND DRY

- Alliums such as garlic, onions and shallots
- Thick skinned winter squashes like acorn, butternut and kabocha
- Potatoes (except new potatoes), sweet potatoes, pumpkins and rutabagas
- Be sure to always store onions and potatoes separately to prevent sprouting

Long-Lasting Fruits & Veggies to keep on hand!



 produceforkids.com

PRESS PAUSE BY FREEZING

- Enjoy the taste of summer all year long. Peel and cut tropical or stone fruits, bananas or berries and freeze in a single layer on parchment lined trays, then store in plastic bags in the freezer.
- Vegetables should be blanched momentarily in boiling water then plunged in ice water, dried and frozen. This technique is not recommended for artichokes, eggplant or greens.

Purchasing perishable produce to last for a few weeks only to have to throw it out because it's past its prime wastes time, food and money. We hope this storage guide will help keep precious produce fresh and safe to eat at the peak of deliciousness.

— *Donna Green*
Co-Editor of the Nutrition Edition

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

How to Address Children's Mental Health during COVID-19

THESE TIMES are unlike any we have ever experienced. The stress and uncertainty we feel is, no doubt, felt by children too. Children may worry about themselves or their family getting ill, struggle with the loss of normalcy or have questions. Parents, family members and other trusted adults can help children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate and minimizes anxiety or fear. It is important we teach the little ones in our lives coping skills, acknowledge their feelings and answer their questions. Here are some helpful tips to help the children in our lives:

- **Remain calm.** Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from conversations you have with them and with others.
- **Reassure children** that they are safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- **Make yourself available to listen and to talk.** Let children know they can come to you when they have questions.
- **Avoid language that might blame others** and lead to stigma. This is not anyone's fault.
- **Pay attention to what children see or hear** on television, radio or online. Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information can lead to anxiety.
- **Provide information that is truthful and appropriate** for the age and developmental level of the child. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.

Practice healthy habits to help protect against the spread of COVID-19.

- **Teach children everyday healthy actions** to reduce the spread of germs. Remind children to wash their hands frequently and stay away from people who are coughing, sneezing or sick. A great handwashing strategy is to put a stamp or marker on children's hands at each activity or station during the day, then make sure they wash it off completely before they move to the next activity. Also, remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash and wash hands.

- **Eat healthy**, it is more important now than ever. Offer plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and lean protein. Stay hydrated with water.
- **Encourage children to play outdoors**—it is great for physical and mental health. Take a walk, run around outside or play outdoor games.
- **Use indoor activity breaks** that are geared toward physical movement like yoga, stretching or a mini dance party to help children stay healthy and focused.

As a result of measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19, children may grieve the loss of routines, such as going to school and playing with friends. Caregivers play an important role in helping children process their grief.

- **Give children permission** to grieve by allowing time for children to talk or to express thoughts or feelings in creative ways.
- **Take care of yourself** and model calming and coping strategies for children. Taking a few deep breaths works wonders.
- **Maintain routines** as much as possible. A sense of normalcy can help relieve anxiety and stress.
- **Help foster a sense of connection**, reach out to friends and family via phone or video chats.

During this stressful time, some children may need additional assistance. Some signs that indicate more help may be needed include:

- Persistent anxiety, worry or sadness
- Changes in sleeping and eating habits
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Acting out
- Not interested in daily activities

In this challenging time on our planet, it is important children have a feeling of safety and security and know that we are all in this together and collectively we will get through this.

— Adapted from www.cdc.gov

Mediterranean Salad with Tomatoes & Chickpeas

Red cherry tomatoes 2 (10.5 oz) containers
Yellow cherry tomatoes 1 (10.5 oz) container
Chickpeas, drained & rinsed 2 (14.5 oz) cans
Cucumbers, peeled & cubed 2
Avocados, diced 2
Parsley, fresh, chopped 1/4 cup
Feta cheese, crumbled 4 oz
Kalamata olives, sliced (optional) 1/3 cup

DRESSING
Olive oil 1/2 cup
Lemon juice 1/4 cup
Dijon mustard 1 tsp
Garlic, minced 2 cloves
Salt 1/4 tsp
Fresh basil chopped 1 Tbsp
Oregano, dried 3/4 tsp

1. In a salad bowl, toss together tomatoes, chickpeas and cucumbers. Add avocado, herbs, feta and olives and gently toss.
2. Whisk all dressing ingredients together. Add as much as you like to salad and gently toss. Best served the same day.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for vegetable and meat/meat alternate

— *Cooking Classy*

Quick Fresh Tomato Sauce

Olive oil 2 Tbsp
Shallot, minced 1
Garlic, minced 1 clove
Tomatoes 5 pounds

Salt 3/4 tsp
Tomato paste 1 Tbsp
Basil sprig 1
Bay leaf 1

1. Cook shallot and garlic in olive oil very slowly in a wide skillet, while prepping the tomatoes.
2. Cut tomatoes in half horizontally, lightly remove seeds and discard. Press the cut sides of the tomato against the large holes of a box grater and grate the flesh into a bowl. Discard skins.
3. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, basil and bay leaf to the onion/garlic mixture and mix well. Bring to a boil, then lower heat to a brisk simmer.
4. Reduce the sauce by almost half, about 10-15 minutes. Remove herbs. Freezes well.

Yield: 5 (1/2 cup) servings

Meets requirement for vegetable

A delicious way to use the sauce is to coat whole grain pasta with a little olive oil and sauce. Serve with dollops of ricotta and a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese.

— *NY Times Cooking*

Food Q. Why does yogurt love going to museums?
Funny A. Because it's cultured.

ACTIVITY CORNER

Yoga Pose of the Month



WARRIOR I

Channel your inner warrior, find strength and a sense of stillness in this powerful pose.

- 1 Begin standing with your feet hip-width apart.
- 2 Hop or step your feet apart, about as far as the length of your leg.
- 3 Turn your left foot in about 45 degrees, right foot out 90 degrees.
- 4 Rotate your hips and torso forward toward your right foot.
- 5 On an exhale, bend your right knee over your right ankle, thigh bone parallel to the floor. Keep hips pointed forward.
- 6 Raise your arms straight overhead toward the sky, palms facing each other.
- 7 Hold for 3–5 breaths.
- 8 Return to standing, both feet side by side. Repeat on the other side.

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