

June: National Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Month

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Eating fruits and vegetables is a great way to get the most nutrition out of your calories. They are packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients. June is National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month, a great time to consider whether you're getting enough fruits and vegetables. Choosing fresh produce that is in season will help insure the best tasting and highest quality produce. Proper food storage helps maintain food quality by retaining flavor, color, texture and nutrients, while reducing the chance of contracting foodborne illness.

Fruits & Vegetables - Selection and Storage:

Select produce in season. Examples of produce in season during summer include bell peppers, blueberries, cantaloupe, corn, cucumbers, grapes, peaches, strawberries, watermelon, and zucchini. Fall produce includes broccoli, cauliflower,



cranberries, pears, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, and turnips. During winter look for dates, kiwi, Brussels sprouts, oranges, tangerines, kale, and

squash. Produce in season during spring includes apricots, artichokes, asparagus, mango, pineapple, and snow peas.

Buy fresh fruits and vegetables. When buying fresh produce, buy only what you will use within a few days. Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged. When selecting pre-cut produce, such as a



half a watermelon or bagged salad greens, choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice. Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat,

poultry and seafood products when packing them to take home from the grocery store.

Store produce safely. Storing fresh produce properly helps prevent foodborne illness. Store perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (such as strawberries, lettuce, carrots, and mushrooms) in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit (F) or below. Refrigerate pre-cut or peeled produce to maintain quality and safety. Wash produce thoroughly with clean, cool, running water just before they are to be prepared or eaten. For produce with thick skin, use a vegetable brush to help wash away hard-to-remove microbes. Refrigerate all cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables within 2 hours (within 1 hour if temperatures are above 90 degrees F).



Separate for safety. Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from other foods such as raw meat, poultry or seafood and from kitchen utensils used for those products. Wash your hands



with hot soapy water before and after preparing food.

Take avoid cross-contamination wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops with soap and hot water between the preparation of raw meat, poultry and seafood products and the preparation of produce that will not be cooked. If you use plastic or other non-porous cutting boards, run them through the dishwasher after use.

The potential benefits associated with eating more fruits and vegetables stack up quickly, and reducing your risk of certain chronic diseases is only the beginning. Check out food.unl.edu/nep/materials and www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/ for more information and resources.



Fruit & Vegetable Recipe Ideas!

All recipe ideas came from *Food Fun for Young Children* at <http://food.unl.edu/fnh/food-fun-for-young-children>



Berry Funny Face

- Blueberries and raspberries*
- 1 grape*
- Low-fat cream cheese
- ½ of a whole-wheat mini bagel

Spread cream cheese on bagel. Decorate with berries for eyes and mouth and a grape for the nose!

*Cut berries and grape in half to reduce choking hazard for young children.



Cucumber Bites

- Cucumber slices – about ¾” thick
- Cottage cheese
- Shredded cheese

Use a spoon to remove part of the seeds from the cucumber slices, leaving a small “dip” in the slice. Fill the “dip” with cottage cheese. Sprinkle with shredded cheese. Try using other fillings such as finely chopped fresh veggies mixed with ranch dressing. Be creative!

Additional Resources & Links:

- *What Fruits & Vegetables Are in Season?* Get a list of what fruits and vegetables are in season for fall, winter, spring, and summer. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/whats-in-season>.
- *UNL Extension Calendar* – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for June. <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/june>
- *Food Storage, Extension Circular EC446*. For more information on storing perishable, semi-perishable, and non-perishable foods check out <http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/ec446/build/ec446.pdf>.

- *USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, 2009 Revision* http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html

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