



Aging Healthfully Newsletter

Illinois Department on Aging



June is National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month!

Growing season for fresh fruits and vegetables is in full swing and now is the perfect time to celebrate and enjoy the abundance of local fruits and veggies just waiting to be gobbled up!

Fruits and vegetables provide a variety of essential nutrients like vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants, which are known to help fight harmful free radicals in the body.

Older adults need more of certain vitamins and minerals to promote good health and combat health issues associated with aging like osteoporosis, age-related eye conditions, constipation, high blood pressure, and many more!

Here are some of the key nutrients and the fruits and veggies that provide a good/great source of them to keep you healthy:

- **Calcium** – ½ cup cooked collard greens, turnip greens, green soybeans (edamame), or spinach, and calcium-fortified orange juice
- **Iron** – lentils, spinach, white beans, lima beans, pinto beans
- **Vitamin A** – fresh or dried apricots, asparagus, cantaloupe, carrots, celery, collard greens, romaine lettuce, mango, spinach, sweet potato, tomato, watermelon
- **Vitamin C** – apricots, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cantaloupe, cauliflower, kiwifruit, lemon, lime, honeydew melon, okra, orange, pineapple, potatoes, strawberries, sweet potato, tomatoes, watermelon
- **Fiber** – Apples, blackberries, blueberries, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, lima beans, oranges, pears, pinto beans, raspberries, spinach, sweet potato
- **Potassium** – lima beans, bananas, broccoli, sweet cherries, kiwifruit, sweet potatoes, tomatoes
- **Magnesium** – pinto beans, ½ cup cooked spinach, artichoke hearts, butternut squash, lentils, lima beans, soy beans





Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for Best Flavor

Store in the refrigerator

<u>FRUIT</u>	Berries	<u>VEGETABLES</u>	Belgian Endive	Cauliflower	Leafy Vegetables	Radishes
Apples (more than 7 days)	Cherries	Artichokes	Broccoli	Celery	Leeks	Spinach
Apricots	Cut Fruit	Asparagus	Brussel Sprouts	Cut Vegetables	Lettuce	Sprouts
Asian pears	Figs	Green Beans	Cabbage	Green Onions	Mushrooms	Summer Squashes
	Grapes	Beets	Carrots	Herbs (not basil)	Peas	Sweet Corn

1. Place fruits and vegetables in separate, perforated plastic bags.
2. Use within 1-3 days for maximum flavor and freshness.
3. Store each group in different produce drawers in the refrigerator to minimize the detrimental effects of ethylene produced by the fruits on the vegetables.

Ripen on the counter first, then refrigerate

Avocados Kiwi Nectarines Peaches Pears Plums Plumcots

1. To prevent moisture loss, store fruits and vegetables separately in a paper bag, perforated plastic bag, or ripening bowl on the counter away from sunlight. Ripening fruit in a bowl or paper bag can be enhanced by placing an apple with the fruit to be ripened.
2. After ripening, store in refrigerator and use within 1-3 days.

Store only at room temperature

<u>FRUIT</u>	Citrus fruits	Persimmons	<u>VEGETABLES</u>	Garlic*	Peppers [†]	Tomatoes
Apples (fewer than 7 days)	Mangoes	Pineapple	Basil (in water)	Ginger	Potatoes*	Winter Squashes
Bananas	Melons	Plantain	Cucumber [†]	Jicama	Pumpkins	
	Papayas	Pomegranates	Eggplant [†]	Onions*	Sweet Potatoes*	

1. Many fruits and vegetables should only be stored at room temperatures. Refrigeration can cause cold damage or prevent them from ripening to good flavor and texture. For example, pink tomatoes ripen to a better taste and red color if they are left at room temperature. In the refrigerator, they do not turn red, and even red tomatoes kept in the refrigerator lose their flavor.
2. Keep away from direct sunlight.
 - *Store garlic, onions, potatoes, and sweet potatoes in a well-ventilated area in the pantry.
 - [†]Cucumbers, eggplant, and peppers can be refrigerated for 1-3 days if they are used soon after removing from the refrigerator.

Cleaning Your Produce

Always keep produce separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Never use detergent or bleach to wash produce. Instead, rinse produce under running tap water immediately prior to use, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Washing too far in advance removes some of nature's natural preservatives. However, head lettuce or leafy greens remain crisper when washed right away and then refrigerated. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed," or "triple washed" need not be washed. Refrigerate all cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables within 2 hours.

For information on how to store other fruits and vegetables go to **FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org**

Source: UC Davis Postharvest Technology

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What You Need to Know About Illinois' Farmer Markets This Year Due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

- Farmers Markets are considered essential under the Governor's Executive Order.
- The Illinois Department of Agriculture also states that not only are farmers markets deemed essential, but they do not have to be certified to be essential.
- All farmer market vendors and participants will be required to practice social distancing and follow guidelines set forth by the state.
- Extra precautions are being taken to reduce risks at farmer markets.

Why Participate in Farmer Markets?

- Increased access to fresh, nutritious foods that are at their peak of ripeness.
- Ability to use **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and SNAP Match** at farmer markets to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables if you are an eligible participant.
 - *Eligibility requirements:* individuals/families with low income, depending on the number living and eating together (visit www.dhs.state.il.us/ for more information).
- Provides supports to your community and farmers.
- Ability to use **Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)** coupons/checks worth \$25 to eligible participants.
 - *Eligibility requirements:* Age 60 and above and household income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
- Short supply chain compared to fruits and vegetables you purchase at a supermarket or grocery store.
- Open air as opposed to enclosed spaces like supermarkets.



What to Expect if You Go to a Farmers Market This Year?

Due to COVID-19, farmer markets are transitioning from community gathering spaces to “In and Out” or transaction based farmer markets.

There will be:

- Increased sanitation procedures (e.g. handwashing stations for vendors and/or hand sanitizers).
- Social distancing guidelines (e.g. maintain at least a 6 foot distance while going in and out of the market, wearing masks, one way in and one way out, etc.).
- Vendor and customer safety guidelines.
- Contactless purchase of fresh fruits, vegetables, and agricultural products.
- Markets will offer a variety of options: some will offer “drive-thru” markets, pre-ordering and curbside pickup, time slots, and/or operate as “In and Out” markets.
- You will not be allowed to touch the produce and pick out what you want like before. *This is to ensure safety and reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19 virus.*
- You should use debit, credit, SNAP/LINK for purchases rather than cash. If you provide cash, do not expect change. *This is to reduce risk of exposure.*

Did You Know...

- Illinois ranks 3rd in the United States for the total number of farmers markets (more than 300+ statewide)!
- **Looking for a farmers market near you?**
 - Check out the Illinois Farmers Market Association Map:
<https://www.ilfma.org/illinois-markets/ilfma-markets>

How many hands have touched your food?

Follow your food's journey to find out:

FARMERS MARKET



Locally produced food means fewer intermediaries between the farmer and the consumer, and subsequently less handling of your food.

SUPERMARKET



Conventionally sourced produce travels about 27 times more distance than locally grown produce. Now that is a lot of hands touching your food!

Fewer hands touch your food from the farm to your table when you shop at a farmers market.

<https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/farmers-markets-promote-sustainability/>

LEARN MORE AT WWW.ILFMA.ORG



Attachments:

- IL Farmers Market Association In and Out Guidelines for Customers
- Add Color with Fruits and Vegetables Toolkit (American Heart Association)
- **Recipes:** Pina Colada Smoothie; 15 Minute Loaded Baked Potatoes

References:

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/add-color/celebrate-fresh-fruit-and-vegetable-month>

<https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/key-nutrients-that-protect/>

<https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/its-june-and-fresh-rules/>

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<https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/programs/nutrition/Pages/nutrition.aspx>