

Think Spring!

Add Some Greens to Your Plate

Try These Questions:

1. What are six vegetables that you frequently use in your home?
2. What are four ways that you prepare vegetables?
3. If liquid is left on your cooked vegetables, what do you do with it?

How did you do?

1. Did you have any trouble coming up with six vegetables that you serve? Aim for a variety of colorful veggies in your diet.
Try some unusual vegetables or grow some this summer in a garden or a container garden. Canned, fresh, frozen and dried all count toward the recommended servings (about 4.5 cups per day for most adults).
2. Do you always prepare vegetables the same couple of ways? Try some different ways to prepare vegetables. How about stir-fried, grilled or roasted veggies?
3. Do you pour the liquid from cooked vegetables down your kitchen drain? The "vegetable broth" contains vitamins and minerals. Try substituting the broth for water in soup, stew or gravy. You can refrigerate the broth for a few days or freeze it for later use.

Cook Vegetables for Best Nutrition With the "3 R's"

Reduce the amount of water used.

Reduce the cooking time. Overcooking will destroy color, crispness (texture) and some nutrients in the vegetable.

Reduce the amount of exposed surface by limiting cutting, paring and shredding.

Save \$\$\$ on Vegetables

Buy in season. Vegetables that are purchased in season usually will give you the best quality and best buy.

Consider the intended use. For example, canned tomatoes may be less expensive than fresh, can be kept on hand and take less time to prepare.

Consider the storage available. Buy only what you can store and use within the recommended time.



For more information, visit these Web sites:

www.ndsu.edu/eatsmart
(nutrition information and recipes)

www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/vegetable.html
(growing a garden)

This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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My vegetables seem to go “bad” before I have a chance to use them. My potatoes get sprouts, my lettuce gets limp and my frozen vegetables get frosty. What do you suggest?

To maintain food value, flavor, color and texture in your vegetables, be sure to handle and store them carefully. Start at the grocery store by selecting vegetables (and fruits) without bruises. Shop for frozen vegetables last so they don't begin to thaw in your grocery cart.

Do not refrigerate potatoes, sweet potatoes and hard-shelled (winter) squash. Cold temperatures convert the starch into sugar, which affects the flavor. Store them at cool room temperatures; about 50 degrees Fahrenheit is best. Potatoes should be kept in a dark, dry place to delay sprouting.

Sort vegetables before storing and remove any with bruises or soft spots. Most fresh vegetables should be kept cold and humid. To increase storage humidity, keep vegetables in a plastic bag or in the hydrator (crisper) compartment of the refrigerator, or both.

Check your freezer temperature. Store frozen vegetables at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Frozen vegetables can be stored for eight to 12 months if kept at the proper temperature.



Best Produce Buys for Spring

Asparagus

Spinach 

Broccoli

Spring baby lettuce

Green beans



Strawberries

Honeydew melon

Sugar snap peas

Oranges



Chicken and Vegetables Stir-fry

- 4 small chicken breasts
- 1 package frozen stir-fry vegetables*
- Cooking spray
- ¼-½ c. teriyaki sauce (reduced-sodium)
- 2 c. brown or white rice

Menu Idea

Chicken and Vegetables Stir-fry
Brown rice
Strawberry and vanilla yogurt parfait
Milk

Prepare the brown or white rice as the package indicates. Cut chicken into bite-sized pieces. While the rice is cooking, add cooking spray to the skillet and cook the chicken over medium heat, stirring often. When chicken is fully cooked, add the package of vegetables to the pan and continue to stir-fry until vegetables are tender. Add sauce to the vegetables and chicken and heat through. Serve the chicken and vegetables over rice.

* You can use fresh or frozen vegetables.

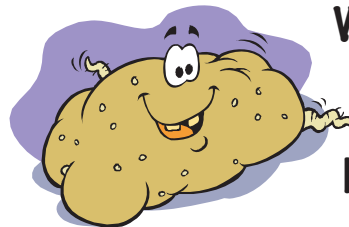
Makes four servings.

Per serving: 330 calories, 3 grams (g) fat, 44 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 400 milligrams sodium

Just for Fun

Why do potatoes make good detectives?

Because they keep their eyes peeled!



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Please call for more information on nutrition, food purchasing or food safety.



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