

News column for use week of June 13, 2022
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River Valley Extension District
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June is National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month

With the start of June, we celebrate National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month. It's perfect timing as the growing season is in full swing and there is an abundance of fresh produce available locally. The goal of National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month is to increase the daily consumption of fresh produce.

Fruit and vegetables provide a list of valuable nutrients your body needs:

Calcium is essential for healthy bones and teeth. It is also needed for the normal functioning of muscles, nerves, and some glands.

Diets rich in dietary fiber have been shown to have several beneficial effects, including decreased risk of coronary heart disease.

Healthful diets with adequate folate may reduce a woman's risk of having a child with a brain or spinal cord defect.

Iron is needed for healthy blood and the normal functioning of all cells.

Magnesium is necessary for healthy bones and is involved with more than 300 enzymes in your body! Inadequate levels may result in muscle cramps and high blood pressure.

Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure.

Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps protect against infections.

Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy.

Thankfully, adding more fruit and vegetables to your diet is easy right now with all the fresh selection at your local supermarket, roadside stand, or farmer's market, here are some ideas:

Bake peaches for a sweet snack. Slice in half, drizzle on some honey and sprinkle with ginger and pecans.

Boil diced or crushed tomatoes in a vegetable or chicken broth for the base of a homemade tomato soup! Add fresh herbs and spices to make your own unique recipe.

Stir-fry onions, peppers, zucchini, corn and jicama. Throw in some red or black beans. Season with your favorite salsa to give it a Southwestern flair. Serve over rice.

Sauté green and yellow summer squash with onion and garlic. Season with salt and pepper, and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. For a different twist, add chopped tomato and basil.

Roast Brussels sprouts drizzled lightly with olive oil, and sprinkled with salt.

Grill corn on the cob. Peel and coat in a mix of seasonings such as oregano, pepper, onion and chili powders and salt with a touch of butter to help it stick. Wrap in aluminum foil and grill until tender.

Grill pineapple, peaches or mango. Top with a dollop of low-fat ice cream, frozen yogurt or sherbet.

Microwave any of your favorite chopped veggies in a bowl with an egg or two for a quick, nutritious breakfast.

Microwave spaghetti squash by cutting in half lengthwise and putting face down in a dish with water. Scoop out squash and serve like spaghetti with tomato sauce and/or Parmesan cheese.

Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) is the only national 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to achieve increased daily consumption of fruits and vegetables for better health. PBH offers many educational resources including webinars, informative guides

on the benefits of fruits and vegetables and how to incorporate more of them into one's diet, recipes, and a database where one can research nutrition and storage information for a variety of fruits and vegetables. The information presented in this article was sourced from their website, fruitsandveggies.org. Sources: <https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/its-june-and-fresh-rules/>, <https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/key-nutrients-that-protect/>, <https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/top-10-ways-to-cook-almost-anything/>

Questions about increasing one's fruit and vegetable intake may be directed to the River Valley Extension District's Nutrition, Food Safety and Health Agent, Kaitlin Moore, at 785-243-8185 or kaitlinmoore@ksu.edu.

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