



# KEYS TO BETTER HEALTH™



## Summer Fruits and Vegetables

Now is a wonderful time to purchase and enjoy delicious, fresh fruits and vegetables, as the arrival of summer means the arrival of a season of abundant produce. Buying produce in-season not only provides you with the freshest product, it also saves you money. Consuming fruits and vegetables has been linked to lowered risk of chronic disease.<sup>1</sup> Dietary guidelines for Americans recommend filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables, but research shows that more than 75% of the population does not get the recommended amount of fruits and veggies daily.<sup>2</sup> Below are some tips to help you enjoy the many fruits and vegetables summer has to offer.



### Know what's in season

- Seasonal summertime fruits include berries, melons, peaches and plums. In-season vegetables include beets, sweet corn, cucumbers, tomatoes and summer squash such as zucchini.<sup>3</sup>

### Buy in bulk

- Now is the time to take advantage of lower seasonal prices on the many fruits and vegetables. Purchase in-season produce in bulk to freeze or can for later. With freezing and canning, you can have summer fruits, vegetables, jams, salsas, sauces to enjoy all year long.
- Select the best
- Choose berries that are ripe and ready to eat. Berries should be brightly colored and free of mold and bruises.

- Some fruits and vegetables can ripen at home, like peaches, plums, and avocados. When they are ready to eat, they should be just slightly soft to the touch, but not mushy.
- Melons are a great, refreshing summer choice. For honeydew and cantaloupe, the best indicator of ripeness is smell, with no bruising or dents.

### Try something new

- Consider enjoying new flavors each week and add variety to your diet by trying a fruit or vegetable you've never had before.
- Try something new like adding extra veggies to a tried-and-true recipe your family enjoys. Cook up a spaghetti squash with some homemade tomato sauce or use eggplant instead of noodles for lasagna.
- Properly store produce
- Some fresh, whole fruits and vegetables, like tomatoes and watermelon, do not need refrigeration. Produce that needs refrigeration should be stored at below 40 degrees within two hours of purchase.<sup>1</sup> Always wash fruits and vegetables under water before eating.

### Sources:

1. Fruit & Veggie Info. Fruits and Veggies More Matters website. <https://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>. Accessed 2/27/18.
2. Usual Dietary Intakes: Food Intakes, U.S. Population 2007-10. Epidemiology and Genomics Research Program. <https://epi.grants.cancer.gov/diet/usualintakes/pop/2007-10/>. Accessed 2/15/18.
3. Seasonal Produce Guide. USDA website. <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/seasonal-produce-guide>. Accessed 2/15/18.

Keys To Better Health™ offers a nutrition shelf-edge labeling program, which makes it easy for you to quickly identify healthy choices regardless of what diet you follow. When you're in our store, be on the lookout for our nutrition tags!

