

A diet rich in a variety of vegetables (and fruits) provides many health benefits.

- Supplies your body with numerous vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber.
- Reduces your risk of stroke and other cardiovascular diseases.
- Reduces your risk for type 2 diabetes.
- Reduces blood cholesterol levels.
- Aids in weight-loss since vegetables (especially high fiber ones) are naturally low in calories and provide a feeling of fullness.

Be creative in increasing the amount of vegetables in your diet.

- Enjoy a green salad everyday.
- Plan your dinner menu around a vegetable main dish like stir-fry or soup.
- Add vegetables to casseroles, meat-loaves, pizza, soups, kabobs, quick breads or muffins.
- Keep a bowl of cut-up fresh vegetables in the refrigerator ready for snacking with a low-fat dip.
- Try new vegetables and new recipes regularly. For new recipes, visit www.paveggies.org.
- Keep a variety of canned and frozen vegetables on hand to give you last-minute menu options.

Remember these tips for choosing and preparing vegetables.

- Fresh vegetables in season can be a real bargain. For sources of Pennsylvania vegetables, visit www.paveggies.org.
- Thoroughly wash fresh vegetables before eating or cooking them by rubbing them briskly with your hands under running water.
- Always keep vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Microwaving vegetables saves time and preserves nutrients – 2 to 4 on high minutes per serving is usually enough.
- Follow the three R rules to preserve both nutrients and flavor when cooking vegetables on the stove:
 - **Reduce** the amount of water
 - **Reduce** the cooking time (many vegetables are delicious just lightly steamed).
 - **Reduce** the surface area exposed by cooking vegetables whole or in large pieces.

Much of the nutritional information in this brochure is from www.MyPyramid.gov, a website developed by the United States Department of Agriculture that offers a wealth of information to help Americans eat a healthier diet.

Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program

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PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLES



YOUR KEY TO GOOD NUTRITION



Simply Delicious... Simply Nutritious

Over 3,400 hard-working Pennsylvania growers raise more than 30 different vegetable crops on more than 60,000 acres of farmland plus thousands of square feet of greenhouse space.

- Two-thirds of Pennsylvania vegetables are sold fresh in season at community farmers' markets and roadside farm markets across the Commonwealth as well as at your local supermarket.
- Some find their way to your favorite restaurant.
- The remaining third of Pennsylvania vegetables are canned, frozen or dried for your enjoyment year around.
- They are all "Simply Delicious" and "Simply Nutritious," offering farm fresh-taste, an abundance of variety, and essential nutrition.



REGISTERED PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

YOUR GUIDE TO PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLES



Health experts recommend that the average American should:

Choose a **variety of vegetables** each day to get a good mix of vitamins and minerals.

Eat between **2 and 2 1/2 cups of vegetables** each day.

Strive to eat the following amounts of vegetables from each of the five groups of vegetables each week:

dark green – 3 cups

broccoli, dark green leaf lettuce, kale, spinach, turnip greens

orange – 2 cups

carrots, acorn squash, butternut squash, pumpkin, sweet potato

legumes – 3 cups

dried beans and peas

starchy vegetables – 3 to 6 cups

corn, green peas, lima beans, potatoes

other vegetables – 6 to 7 cups

asparagus, beets, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, peppers, lettuce, onions, tomatoes

| Vegetable | When in Season | Shopping and Preparation Tips |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Asparagus | April to June | Select thick stalks with less than an inch of woody base. Prepare immediately after purchase. |
| Snap Beans | July to October | Select long, slender pods free of scars. Refrigerate in a plastic bag. |
| Lima Beans | July to October | Select well-filled, dark green pods. Refrigerate in a plastic bag. |
| Beets | July to December | Select firm, medium-sized beets with deep red color. Refrigerate in a plastic bag. |
| Broccoli | June to July and September to November | Select tight heads with dark green or purple buds. Refrigerate in a vegetable crisper or an open plastic bag. |
| Brussels Sprouts | September to December | Select firm green sprouts. Refrigerate in an open plastic bag. |
| Cabbage | June to December | Select firm compact heads. Avoid cutting until just before use. |
| Cantaloupe | July to September | Select melons with a thick netting, golden color and delicate aroma. Refrigerate only after fully ripe. |
| Carrots | July to December | Select firm orange to orange-red roots. Remove leafy tops and refrigerate in a plastic bag. |
| Cauliflower | June to July and September to November | Select heads with a white or cream appearance. Refrigerate in an open plastic bag. |
| Celery | June to February | Select light green stalks that are smooth along the inside. |
| Sweet Corn | July to October | Select fresh green husks with ears filled to the tip. Should be served immediately or refrigerated until cooked. |
| Cucumbers | July to September | Select firm cucumbers with a rich green color. Can be refrigerated for up to two weeks. |
| Eggplant | July to October | Select firm eggplant with a rich purple color. Serve immediately or refrigerate up to three days. |
| Leaf Lettuce | May to October,* Year-round** | Refrigerate in an airtight container or plastic bag. |
| Peas | May to June | Select well-filled, bright green pods. Refrigerate in an open plastic bag. |
| Peppers | July to October | Select firm peppers that are heavy for their size with glossy color. Can be briefly refrigerated. |
| Potatoes | August to March | Select firm, smooth, well-shaped potatoes that are free from sprouts. Store in a cool, dark, dry place but do not refrigerate. |
| Pumpkin | September To December | Select pumpkins with a rich orange color and no cracks or breaks. |
| Spinach | May to June and September to October | Select crisp leaves with solid green color. Refrigerate in a plastic bag. |
| Summer Squash | June to October | For tender flesh, select smaller summer squash. |
| Winter Squash | September to December | Select squash that are heavy for their size with no soft spots. |
| Tomatoes | July to October* April to July and October to December** | For the best flavor, tomatoes must ripen to a deep red color and be slightly soft. Store at room temperature until they ripen to this stage. Never refrigerate until fully ripened. Allow refrigerated tomatoes to come to room temperature before serving. |
| Turnips | August to February | Select firm, smooth-skinned turnips. Refrigerate in a plastic bag. |
| Watermelon | July to October | Select firm melons with a rich green color and waxy dull surface. |

*field **greenhouse