



Fall 2006 Edition

Thanks for continuing to be a part of the Veggies for ME! program. Staying with the program shows that you care about your family’s health. This will be the last letter, but we hope you keep up the good work!

In the last letter, we talked about how to have good family meals and how to be a role model at mealtimes. We hope that you have been able to have meals that have been less stressful. If you have had a hard time, keep trying. Remember, setting small goals is the way to succeed in making changes at home.



Now that you have learned some ways to have better mealtimes, we hope you and your family can find ways to try new, great tasting, locally grown and fresh vegetables.

Locally Grown and Fresh Vegetables

We have said before that canned and frozen vegetables can be just as good for you as fresh vegetables. Canned and frozen vegetables are often cheaper. So why are we talking about fresh vegetables?

It’s simple. In summer and early fall, fresh vegetables are cheaper than they are at any other time in the year. Even better, you can find vegetables that were grown right here in Maine. What’s the difference between local vegetables and vegetables from away?

Vegetables from other parts of the country are picked before they are ripe so they will still be fresh when they get to the grocery store. Vegetables grown in Maine are picked only a few days or even hours before you buy them. That means local vegetables are really fresh and taste great! You can also be proud that the money you spend on local vegetables is going to other working Maine people.

Summer may be over but you can still find fresh and local produce at your grocery store and at Farmers’ Markets. Look for these tasty vegetables all fall:

- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Winter squash
- Turnips
- Potatoes
- Greens
- Pumpkins

Keep Up the Good Work!

For help with preparing and serving vegetables call the University of Maine Cooperative Extension at:

- Cumberland County:
1-800-287-1471
- Hancock County:
1-800-287-1479
- Waldo County:
1-800-287-1426
- Washington County:
1-800-287-1542



Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Here is a great activity you can try with your kids after making a Jack O’ Lantern. They taste great too!

1. Empty the seeds out of the pumpkin.
2. Wash the seeds and spread them on a cookie sheet. Bake them in the oven at 375 degrees until they are dry (about 20 minutes).
3. Dot the seeds with butter or margarine and bake them for another 5-10 minutes at 400 degrees. Be sure to stir them every few minutes.
4. For extra flavor, sprinkle garlic powder, onion powder, parmesan cheese, or any other seasoning on the seeds.

You may be called and asked to be in a focus group to help us find out how to make Veggies for ME! better. It is your choice to take part or not to take part in the groups.

Veggie Spotlight: Tomatoes

Availability

Tomatoes can be found at grocery stores all year long. They can also be grown locally and found at farmers' markets from mid summer through fall.



Nutrition Information

Tomatoes are a source of vitamin A and vitamin C.

Selection

Choose firm tomatoes with a full red color and a good smell. Buy tomatoes that are not bruised, soft, too hard, or have scabs.

Storage

Keep tomatoes at room temperature. Do not refrigerate tomatoes that are not ripe yet. Tomatoes ripen faster when they are not in direct sun. Once the tomatoes are red and just a little soft, they will keep for a day or two at room temperature.

Preparation

Wash tomatoes well. If you want to peel tomatoes, first take out the core. Next dip the tomatoes in a big pot of boiling water for 30 seconds and then dip them in ice-cold water. The skins will fall off easily. You can then use the tomatoes for sauces and other recipes where tough skins would not be good.

Cooking

Raw: Slice for sandwiches and salads or eat tomatoes whole!

Broil: Cut tomatoes in half and sprinkle the top of each half with oil and black pepper. Cook for four or five minutes on a broiling pan.

Bake: Cut tomatoes in half. Bake the tomato halves in the oven at 400 degrees for eight to 15 minutes.

Microwave: Cook whole tomatoes in a covered dish. One pound of tomatoes will take three to four minutes. These tomatoes can be used in stews, soups and casseroles.

Broiled Tomatoes and Cheese

Serves: 6

- 3 large tomatoes, cut in half
- 8 ounces low-fat cottage cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 cup plain bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon margarine

Mix the cottage cheese, basil and black pepper. Spread the mixture on to the tomato halves. Lightly sprinkle the top with the bread crumbs. Put a dot of margarine on each tomato. Broil for 10 minutes on a lightly greased broiler pan.

From: University of Maine Cooperative Extension

Northern Bean Salad

Makes 7- 1 cup servings

- 12 cherry tomatoes
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 1/2 cup red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped or 1/4 cup dried
- 2 -15 oz. cans Great Northern beans
- 3/4 cup Italian salad dressing
- 1 cup chopped carrots or green pepper (optional)

Mix the beans, parsley, and vegetables. Toss with the dressing. Cover tightly and refrigerate several hours.

From: Eat Well Recipes, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

This material was adapted from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension "Vegetables for Health the Pyramid Way" bulletin 4178 which was originally developed for educational purposes.

Thank you being in the Veggies for ME program. The Veggies for ME program is done for this year. By being a part of the program, you have helped the Maine WIC Nutrition Program and the Maine Nutrition Network learn what helps WIC parents serve and eat more vegetables. We hope that you liked the program and that it was helpful to you.