

# Cent\$ible Nutrition News

Helping Families Eat Better for Less

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## 5 Ways to Eat the Rainbow

MyPlate recommends that everyone make half their plate fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables provide important nutrients that keep us healthy and thriving. Eating enough fruits and vegetables can help lower blood pressure, aid in weight management, and reduce your risk for heart disease, stroke, and some cancers. If enjoying this much produce seems like a challenge to you, you are not alone! In fact, up to 90% of Americans do not eat enough fruits and vegetables daily. The good news is, all forms of fruits and vegetables- fresh, frozen, canned, and dried- count. We have some simple, affordable tricks to make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Plus, you'll enjoy every bite!

### 1. Sip the Rainbow

Smoothies are an excellent way to add a variety of fruits and vegetables to you day. Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables work well in smoothies. Smoothies can also be a good way to use produce that is very ripe and at the end of its shelf life. Ripe bananas make a good smoothie base. Try adding a handful of spinach and whatever other fruits you have on hand. Berries, peaches, pears, melon, oranges, pineapple, and mango are all tasty in smoothies. Frozen fruit makes smoothies thicker and colder. Canned fruits and their juices can provide a good liquid to make a smoothie sip-able. Adding milk or yogurt can provide calcium while

adding creaminess. Play around to create your new favorite flavor! Smoothies make a delicious and nutritious snack or side with your main meal.

### 2. Fresh, Colorful Meal Planning

All forms of fruits and vegetables are healthy. That means we have so many ways to make half our plates fruits and vegetables. In the summer, many people focus on fresh produce. It is available, delicious, and often at a good price. Choosing seasonal produce is good for you budget, but it can be easy to forget about it in the refrigerator during busy weeks.

When planning your meals and grocery list, think about cost as well storage ability. Plan to eat delicate produce, like tomatoes, cucumbers, greens, bell peppers, or berries earlier in the week. This will prevent them from going bad. Heartier vegetables like carrots, beets, potatoes, sweet potatoes, apples, oranges, cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower are good options for later in week. They will last longer, if stored properly, and can keep produce on the menu all week long.

### 3. Colorful Nutrition on the Go

Fresh produce is tasty, but it also has a short shelf-life and usually requires preparation to cook it. If these concerns sound familiar, think about frozen produce. Frozen fruits and vegetables are flash frozen when they are ripe and can be as healthy as fresh. They are often less expensive per ounce and

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last several months in the freezer. They are also convenient to use. Frozen fruit can be added to smoothies, yogurt, cereal, or oatmeal with no washing and cutting necessary. Frozen vegetables are simple to heat in the microwave, usually with no other preparation needed. They also work well in stir-fry casseroles, skillet meals, and soup.

### 4. Protein Powerhouse Vegetables

When most of us think of vegetables, things like carrots and broccoli likely come to mind. But, did you know that beans, peas, and lentils also count? These are powerhouse vegetables because they provide some of the same nutrients as other vegetables along with lots of protein. We call them plant proteins and they can be used in a variety of recipes.

Plant proteins are also budget-friendly, often costing less than many animal-protein sources. They are a great choice as the main protein in dishes like soups, stews, and curries. Beans, peas, and lentils are usually available canned and dried. This makes them a perfect pantry staple that can be kept on hand for when you need them.

### 5. Snack the Rainbow

To make half your plate fruits and vegetables, think about enjoying them as a snack. While fresh fruits like apples, bananas, and oranges are good choices, don't forget about dried fruit. Dried fruit is shelf-stable and it is a good source of fiber. Try making a snack mix of dried fruit, nuts, and cereal for an easy on-the-go snack. When time and space allow, a vegetable tray or snack bag is a healthy snack option. Carrot and celery sticks, broccoli crowns, cauliflower, and bell peppers can be washed and cut ahead of time. They should last 3-4 days in the refrigerator. Store in individual containers or bags and you'll have an easy option to pull out when you need a snack.



## Summer Fruit Crisp

### Ingredients

- 3 cups old fashioned oats
- 2 15-ounce cans apricots (or peaches, pears, apples, etc.)
- ½ – 1 Tablespoon cornstarch or flour
- 1½ cups coarsely crushed whole-wheat cereal
- ½ cup flour
- ¼ cup sugar
- 3 Tablespoons margarine, melted
- ⅓ cup chopped nuts, sunflower seeds, or peanuts (optional)

### Directions

1. Wash hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F.
3. Drain fruit, saving 1 Tablespoon of juice. Arrange fruit in 8×8-inch baking pan.
4. Mix fruit juice with cornstarch or flour and pour over fruit.
5. Mix cereal crumbs, sugar, flour, and margarine. Stir in nuts or seeds. Sprinkle evenly over fruit.
6. Bake at 350°F for 20-30 minutes.
7. Cut into nine pieces. Serve warm with low-fat frozen yogurt, if desired.

**Makes 9 servings**

## News & Updates

Harvest season is nearly here! That means fresh, local produce going to food pantries. For the 3rd year, CNP is partnering with the Wyoming Hunger Initiative and local gardeners on Grow a Little Extra. Together, we'll be donating fresh produce to food pantries across the state. Many pantries may also be receiving microgreens, wheat berries, and spelt through the Food Bank of Wyoming. See something new at your food pantry? Contact your local CNP educator for recipes and resources (see back).



## Summer Seasonal Produce Guide

Summer is a great opportunity to explore fresh fruits and vegetables. Seasonal produce adds new colors, textures, and flavors to our meals. It also tends to be less expensive than out-of-season fruits and vegetables. Roasted summer squash, delicious grilled watermelon or fresh, snappy, green beans are all excellent ways to add variety to your summer food routine. Keep in mind that if fresh options are not available or not manageable on your current budget, dried, frozen or canned can all be added in to create even, balanced meals.

**Bell Peppers-** Bell peppers come in a variety of sizes and colors. They are a versatile veggie that provides vitamins C and A, potassium, and fiber. Try them stuffed, in stir-fry, or on tacos!

**Beets-** Beets are a root vegetable best known for their distinctive purple color. They can also be white or yellow. Beets are a food source of fiber and folate. Try them roasted, mashed, pickled, or steamed.

**Green Beans-** Green beans are a versatile veggie that are often a star in side dishes this time of year. Full of fiber, vitamin A, and potassium, green beans are delicious in casseroles, soups, stir-fry, and on their very own.

**Tomatillos-** Tomatillos are type of fruit similar to tomatoes that originated in Mexico. They are a member of the nightshade family, which includes tomatoes, potatoes, and eggplants. They look like tomatoes and have a dry, papery husk on the outside. They can come in green, purple, or yellow varieties. Tomatillos are a good source of potassium and vitamin K. Try them in salsa and soup!

**Zucchini-** Zucchini is a type of summer squash that grows well in Wyoming. It has a soft green skin that can be eaten. Zucchini can be eaten raw, but has the best flavor when cooked. Zucchini is a good source of fiber, folate, and potassium. Try Zucchini or other summer squash roasted, baked, grilled, sautéed, or sliced and served raw.

**Apricots-** Yellow-orange with a little fuzz on the skin, apricots are one of the juicy fruits of summer. They are high in vitamins A and C, as well as fiber. Enjoy apricots just as they are, or get creative by baking or grilling them. Dried apricots also make a great addition to trail mix and granola.

**Peaches-** Juicy, sweet, and tender, peaches are a favorite summer fruit. Peaches are a good source of vitamins A and C, fiber, and folate. While they are perfect just as they are, they are also delicious grilled and baked, added to smoothies, and in parfaits.

**Strawberries-** With their bright red color, strawberries are beautiful and delicious. Strawberries are a good source of vitamin C, fiber, and potassium. Try them added to salads, oatmeal, cereal, smoothies, and parfaits. They are also delicious in crisps and cobblers.

**Raspberries-** Perfect for little fingers to grab, raspberries are bursting with a sweet tartness that tickles the taste buds. They are high in fiber, vitamin C, manganese, and antioxidants. Try them on their own, in baked goods or smoothies, added to salads, or in yogurt parfaits.

**Blueberries-** Plump and dusty blue, blueberries are a nice contrast to more colorful berries. Blueberries are a good source of vitamins K and C as well as fiber. Try blueberries in muffins, quick breads, pancakes, smoothies, toppings for vegetable salads, fruit salads, in popsicles, parfaits, or eaten as a snack plain with some nuts or cheese!

Check out the links for more on seasonal produce.

- Summer Seasonal Produce Guide: [https://uwyocnp.org/in\\_the\\_kitchen/summer-seasonal-produce/](https://uwyocnp.org/in_the_kitchen/summer-seasonal-produce/)
- Shopping in season: Why buy seasonal produce?: <https://uwyocnp.org/newsletters/shopping-in-season-why-buy-seasonal-produce/>



# Join CNP!

## Free cookbook, kitchen tools, & cooking classes!

The Cent\$ible Nutrition Program (CNP) is a resource that can help you eat better for less. Through the series of 8 lessons, you can learn how to save money and time at the grocery store, cook quick and healthy meals, and stretch your food dollars.

CNP is free to those who income qualify and participants receive a free cookbook and kitchen tools. Classes are now available online and in-person. Find out more at: <https://uwyocnp.org/cnp-qualify/> or call your local CNP educator to learn more about CNP in your county.

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