

Live Healthy Georgia – Seniors Taking Charge!

June 2008 Newsletter

National Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Month

By Mindy Bell, BS



It's that time of year again! Many of our favorite fruits and vegetables come into season during the summer months, from sweet, juicy watermelon to crisp bundles of leafy greens. Summertime wouldn't be the same without the rich colors, flavors and smells of fresh fruits and vegetables to enjoy. If you are a regular *Grapevine* reader, you probably know that fruits and vegetables are not only delicious, but they also contribute valuable nutrients and are an important part of an overall healthy diet.

There are many different ways to get in the recommended 7 to 10 daily servings of fruits and vegetables, and although canned and frozen produce make excellent choices, try taking advantage of seasonal fresh varieties when they are available. Fresh fruits and vegetables not only deliver peak flavor and quality, they can also be purchased at the best price when they are in season.

An abundance of fresh produce is grown year round right here in Georgia, with a wide variety available in the summertime. Freshly shucked corn on the cob, sweet strawberries and blueberries, crisp Vidalia onions, and plump, juicy tomatoes right off the vine are just a few of the fresh fruits and vegetables that abound in Georgia. Maybe you even grew up on a farm in Georgia and remember helping to plant seeds, pick okra pods, shell peas – or even battle fat green worms that cling to the tomato vines! Maybe you tend your own small herb or vegetable garden at home.



Even if you aren't as familiar with farming, did you know that there are many farmers in Georgia that work hard to bring fresh crops to the dinner table? Many farmers sell their fresh-from-the-farm produce at local farmer's markets, where consumers can directly access these fresh goods. Farmer's markets help to connect consumers to the farmers, and showcase locally grown produce.

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Depending on where you live, local markets may be set up at specific sites where shoppers can come regularly to purchase fresh crops from local farmers. Some farms are set up so that consumers can pick their own fruits and vegetables. Purchasing local produce helps to support Georgia farms and farmers, and can help save on fuel costs needed to transport food from other areas of the country.

Nationally, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) allocates funds to support state farmer's market programs. These programs help Americans young and old to access locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables, and to receive education about these important foods.

Remember to include fruits and vegetables throughout the day as part of meals and snacks. For example, have fruit for a sweet snack or dessert, or add vegetables to casseroles and stews. Be sure to store your fresh produce properly to get the longest life and nutrition from it.

For more information, see:

United States Department of Agriculture

(USDA), www.fns.usda.gov

Local Harvest, www.localharvest.org

Georgia Organics,

www.georgiaorganics.org

Department of Foods and Nutrition, The
Division of Aging Services, Georgia Department

****Recipe Spotlight****

Have a favorite healthy recipe you'd like to share? The *Grapevine* newsletter would love to showcase your recipe in an upcoming issue. We invite you to submit an original recipe and short narrative explaining why it is special to you. Include your name and hometown if you'd like. Recipes should be fairly simple to make and healthy. For example, recipes may contain your favorite fruits or vegetables, or may demonstrate creative ways to reduce fat, salt, and/or sugar.

(Give to your senior center director or wellness coordinator, or email it to grapevine@livewellagewell.info.)

Summer Blueberry Crisp (Serves 3)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup blueberries
- ¼ cup uncooked oats (old-fashioned)
- 2 Tbsp whole wheat or all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 Tbsp chopped pecans or walnuts
- 1½ Tbsp soft tub margarine (cold)

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 375°F. Place blueberries into a small baking dish (~ 15-oz size).
- In a small bowl, mix together oats, flour, sugar, cinnamon, and nuts.
- Add the margarine to the oat mixture, and work it in with your fingertips until the mixture becomes crumbly.
- Sprinkle the oat mixture evenly over the blueberries; place the dish into the oven.
- Bake for about 15 minutes, or until the top is crisp; let sit for 5 minutes before serving.