

Be a Food Hero this Summer

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The 2020 U.S. dietary guidelines continue to recommend making half your plate fruits and vegetables for each meal. However, more than 80 percent of people have eating patterns low in vegetables and fruits. Summer in the Willamette Valley brings a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Be a food hero by eating the season's fresh bounty.

Frozen fruits and vegetables are harvested and preserved at the height of season and nutrition is maintained. Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or dehydrated all forms of fruits and vegetables are good choices.

Fruits

There are many methods of purchasing fruits including fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100 percent fruit juices. We want to aim for eating the whole fruit (examples: apples, pears, bananas, berries, citrus fruits). There are some fruits that are available year round, while some are seasonal. Typically, purchasing seasonal produce is less expensive. Here are a few tips for eating more fruits throughout the day. Increase consumption by having easy access. Keep fruit visible in your kitchen or on hand in your refrigerator. Have fruit with your breakfast or on the go as a snack. Add to meals and top salads with berries, peaches, and apples.



Vegetables

When eating vegetables, it is important to vary them and try new vegetables. Check your local farmer's markets ([https://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/find a market](https://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/find-a-market)). One way is to spruce up your sandwich by adding spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, or avocado slices. Although it may be more costly, a time saver tip is to look for pre washed and pre cut vegetables in the produce section. Also, by storing frozen vegetables in the freezer this can be an easy way to add a vegetable to your meal. A stir fry dish is an easy, quick meal to incorporate a variety of vegetables. You can add vegetables to a pasta dish. Vegetables can increase your intake of fiber and potassium.

For more information check out this link: <https://www.myplate.gov/>

Snacks

Snacks are a great way to eat fruits and vegetables during your day. Having snacks prepped in your refrigerator is an easy way to have them on hand. If you have children, have a list and let them choose one or two snacks for the week (example: peanut butter and apple, carrots and hummus).

To find recipe ideas to include fruits and vegetables visit www.foodhero.org and <https://fruitsandveggies.org/>

To learn about Oregon's produce and harvest season visit:

<https://www.thespruceeats.com/oregon-fruits-and-vegetables-2217194>