

Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

Gardening: Top 10 Vegetables to Grow and Eat for Health

Growing your own food doesn't have to be difficult. If you have never gardened, start small using containers or a small plot of land. Plant vegetables you really like to eat.

Several vegetables that grow well in Iowa made it to the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach "Top 10 Vegetables to Eat for Health" list. Choose to grow and eat the following vegetables to boost your health:

- Broccoli
- Brussels spouts
- Carrots
- Kale
- Pumpkin
- Red bell peppers
- Spinach
- Sweet potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Winter squash

These vegetables earned their ratings by providing at least 20 percent of the recommended dietary intake for one or more nutrients such as Vitamin A or potassium.

Each vegetable was also rated for its oxygen radical absorbance capacity (ORAC). This measures the total antioxidant power of foods and other chemical substances. Consuming high-ORAC foods may help protect cells from damage by oxygen radicals. This, in turn, may slow down the processes associated with aging in both the body and the brain.

Numerous publications are available to download and print as you plan and plant your garden. Go to the Extension Store at store.extension.iastate.edu and enter either the title or number of the publication of interest in the search box:

- Planting a Home Vegetable Garden (PM 819)
- Small Plot Vegetable Gardening (PM 870A)
- Container Vegetable Gardening (PM 870B)

If you have further questions, contact your local county extension office or enroll in classes to become a "Master Gardener."



Summer Bounty Salad

Serving size: 1 cup | Serves: 8

Ingredients:

- 7 cups vegetables (chopped) (carrots, zucchini, radishes, green onions, broccoli, cauliflower)
- 1 pepper (green, red, or yellow), sliced (1 to 1 1/2 cups)
- 2 tomatoes (red, yellow, or mixed)
- 2/3 cup light or fat free salad dressing

Instructions:

1. Wash and prepare the vegetables. (Cut the carrots, zucchini, radishes, green onions, and pepper in slices. Make the broccoli and cauliflower into florets. Slice or chop tomatoes.)
2. Combine all vegetables and salad dressing in a bowl, stirring to coat vegetables with dressing.
3. Cover and refrigerate 1–3 hours to blend flavors. Store any leftovers in refrigerator and use within 3 days.

Nutrition information per serving:

60 calories, 2.5g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 220mg sodium, 10g total carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 5g sugar, 2g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more recipes, information, and videos, visit www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/.



www.extension.iastate.edu

Clean Your Way to a Safer Kitchen

Shake off winter by doing some spring cleaning. It is a great time to target harmful bacteria that can hang out on kitchen surfaces and even in your refrigerator. You can't see bacteria, but they are everywhere! They especially like moist environments. A clean and dry kitchen protects you and your family from foodborne illness.

- **Always clean surfaces with hot, soapy water.** After thoroughly washing surfaces with hot, soapy water, sanitize them with a disinfectant kitchen spray or diluted chlorine bleach solution (1 teaspoon bleach to 1 quart of water). Let the solution stand on the surface for a few minutes, then blot dry with clean paper towels.
- **Disinfect dishcloths often.** Launder dishcloths and towels frequently using the hot water cycle of the washing machine. Then be sure they are thoroughly dry.
- **Rid your refrigerator of spills, bacteria, mold, and mildew.** Clean your fridge weekly to kill germs that could contaminate foods. Clean interior surfaces with hot, soapy water. Rinse well with a damp cloth; dry with a clean cloth. Some manufacturers recommend not using chlorine bleach because it can damage seals, gaskets, and linings.
- **Clean your kitchen sink drain and disposal.** Pour a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water down the drain once or twice per week. Food particles get trapped in the drain and disposal, creating the perfect environment for bacterial growth.

Sources: www.fightbac.org and www.foodsafety.gov

Your Brain on Exercise?

Exercise can boost brain health! A recent study by researchers at UC Davis Health System shows people who exercise have better mental fitness. Vigorous exercise increases the level of two brain chemicals: glutamate and gamma-aminobutyric acid, known as GABA. These chemicals help defend against depression.



Richard Maddox, a professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, states, "Major depressive disorder is often characterized by depleted glutamate and GABA, which return to normal when mental health is restored. Our study shows that exercise activates the metabolic pathway that replenishes these neurotransmitters."

Although results are preliminary, rigorous exercise may now become an important part of treating major depressive disorder and other mental illnesses because it naturally increases the level of these two chemicals. Maddox, the study's lead author, calls the findings "very encouraging."

Source: www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/publish/news/newsroom/10798

PM 2099P May 2016

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cathann A. Kress, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.