

Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness



Harvest and Store Vegetables at Peak Quality

Harvesting vegetables at the right stage of maturity results in nutritious, high quality products. You can capture the peak flavors of vegetables by harvesting and storing them under optimal conditions. Find detailed information for storing more than 30 types of garden vegetables, including winter squash, in PM 731, *Harvesting and Storing Vegetables*, available for download from <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/>, the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach online store. This handout also includes recommended storage temperatures, relative humidity, storage life for fresh vegetables, suggested methods for extended preservation, and types of storage facilities.

Unlike its summer counterparts, winter squash is harvested at a mature age, which makes the skin hard and inedible. The skin, however, is protective and increases the storage life. Winter squash can be stored for three months or longer. The yellow and orange colored flesh of winter squash tends to be more nutritious and richer in vitamins, such as beta-carotene, than summer squash. Winter squash is always served cooked and, because of the tough skin, only the inner flesh is eaten. One type of winter squash that will be harvested soon is spaghetti squash. Please see the tasty spaghetti squash recipe on this page.

September is Food Safety Month

“Be Safe — Don’t Cross-Contaminate” is the theme for Food Safety month. Cross-contamination is the physical movement or transfer of harmful bacteria from one person, object, or place to another. Preventing cross-contamination is a key factor in preventing foodborne illness. Be sure to follow a game plan for food safety when you tailgate this fall:

- Before handling food, wash hands and utensils thoroughly with hot soapy water.
- When packing the cooler, be sure raw meat and poultry are wrapped securely to prevent their juices from cross-contaminating ready-to-eat food. Have separate coolers; keep beverages separate from food.
- When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter. Don’t put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry.



Remember—“Be Smart, Keep Foods Apart.”

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Spaghetti Squash Supper

Serves: 4

Ingredients

- 1 2-3 pound spaghetti squash
- ½ cup water
- 1 16-ounce jar spaghetti sauce
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese



Directions

1. Cut the squash in half lengthwise and remove seeds with a spoon.
2. Place halves, cut side down, in a microwavable casserole dish. Add the water. Cover dish with plastic wrap, leaving corners uncovered. Microwave on high 15 minutes until squash is tender when pierced with a fork.
3. While squash cooks, heat spaghetti sauce in saucepan over medium heat. When heated through, remove from heat, cover, and set aside.
4. Remove squash from microwave and cool for 5 minutes. Remove plastic wrap.
5. Using a fork, scrape the inside of the squash into long strings and place in a bowl.
6. Add heated spaghetti sauce and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Serve warm.

Optional: Add ½ pound cooked lean ground beef or ground turkey.

Nutrient information per serving (without ground beef)

223 calories, 8 g total fat, 2 mg cholesterol, 657 mg sodium, 38 g total carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 5 g protein.

(with ground beef)

373 calories, 19 g total fat, 45 mg cholesterol, 696 mg sodium, 38 g total carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 15 g protein.





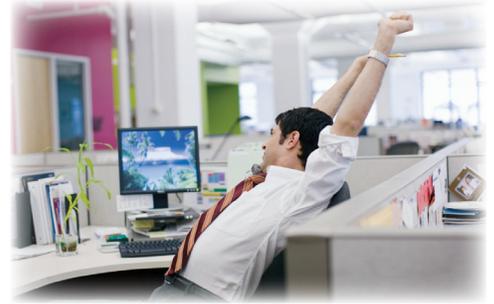
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Time to S-T-R-E-T-C-H

Cats do it, and it's good for people, too! Stretching is good anytime, but especially...

- First thing in the morning—wake up your muscles
- After sitting or standing—relieve muscle tension and work out the kinks
- Before exercise—reduce the risk of joint and muscle injury
- After exercise—prevent muscle shortening and tightening; improve flexibility
- During or after driving—improve your alertness
- When you feel tense or stiff—relax your mind, reduce your stress level, and promote circulation throughout the body

Remember these guidelines when stretching—focus on slow, smooth movements; remember to breathe; hold a stretch for 8 to 10 seconds; move only as far as you can without experiencing discomfort (stop if you feel pain). Bouncing to stretch farther can cause injury; remember that frequent stretching is more important than trying to stretch so far that it hurts.



Back-to-school Nutrition

Nutrition plays an important role in assuring your child has a successful school year. Many children do not eat breakfast every day; others grab a soda and high-fat, high-sugar pastry—definitely not a “breakfast of champions” relative to cost or nutrition.

Studies have shown that those who eat a morning meal perform better in school; they have higher test scores, higher attendance, less tardiness, better concentration, and more muscle coordination. Also, children who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight.



If your child doesn't like traditional breakfast foods, don't worry—breakfast can be most any food, even a slice of pizza. If your child claims not to be hungry, offer 100 percent juice and toast. If the school has a midmorning snack time, pack healthy snacks like yogurt, cheese stick, or bagel. Remember to use an ice pack and insulated lunch bag to keep foods at a safe temperature. As for lunch, school meal regulations are new this year and have improved the nutritional quality of lunch. School meals have always supplied one-third of a child's nutrition needs; however, tighter regulations mean lower fat and sodium limits and a greater variety of fruits and vegetables (including fresh). If you choose to pack your child's lunch, let your child help plan and prepare the lunch. Include meals that are easy to prepare and fun to eat as well as nutritious. A few examples are sandwiches, raw veggies, crackers, string cheese, whole fruit, and yogurt.



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...and justice for all

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