Welcome Summertime Produce!

It’s that time of year when we can indulge our love of fresh fruits and vegetables without going over our food budget. Virginia has a large variety of locally grown produce to enjoy this summer. But while people always assume that “fresh is best,” that may not always be the case.

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
Fresh produce is best nutritionally, if it is picked locally and eaten soon afterwards. It can take some produce 14 days to travel across country or from halfway around the world. It may then sit in storage before it goes to the produce section of your grocery store, causing further loss of nutrients. (See “Buy Fresh, Buy Local, page 2).

Fresh produce may also spoil if not eaten soon enough. Purchase what you need in small amounts and purchase it frequently to prevent spoilage. Then fill in with frozen or canned produce if you run out.

Frozen Fruits and Vegetables
Frozen fruits and vegetables are just as healthy, and may be even healthier than fresh ones. They’re picked and processed directly after they’re harvested. They don’t travel long distances until after they’re packaged, so they retain their nutrients. Frozen ones allow more flexibility during seasons when fresh ones have limited availability or are too expensive. Frozen produce will keep up to 3 months in your freezer, so stock up when they’re on sale! Save more money by selecting less processed ones. For example whole strawberries are cheaper than pre-sliced ones, and plain ones are cheaper than those with a sauce. But limit frozen vegetables with added sauces as they tend to have higher amounts of sodium.

Canned Fruits and Vegetables
Canned fruits and vegetables provide another way to save money or add variety when your favorites are out of season or too expensive. Like frozen varieties, they’re picked at the peak of ripeness and have as much as or more nutrition than some fresh produce. Some nutrients, like the anti-cancer nutrient lycopene, are better absorbed after processing, making canned tomatoes a better choice than fresh ones. You can still enjoy those tomato sandwiches this summer, but also include tomato sauces in your menus. Canned vegetables are higher in sodium and canned fruits may be higher in sugar than fresh. Look for canned vegetables that are reduced sodium, or no salt added. Or you can decrease the sodium content of canned vegetables up to 30% by pouring out the water, rinsing them and starting with fresh water. Look for fruits that are packed in juice or are labeled no sugar-added.

The average person needs to eat at least 2½ cups of vegetables and 1½ cups of fruit daily. To see what counts as a “cup” or serving, visit www.mypyramid.gov. You can meet or exceed that goal, and stay within your food budget, by having a variety of fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables.
Virginia is part of the “Buy Fresh Buy Local” program across the country. Why should you buy local produce?

You’ll Get Exceptional Taste and Freshness
Food grown locally is fresher and tastes better than food shipped long distances. Local farmers offer varieties that are bred for taste and freshness instead of those bred for travel and long shelf lives.

You’ll Strengthen Your Local Economy
Local food purchases keep your money circulating in your community, and ensure that more of that money goes directly to the farmer.

You’ll Safeguard Your Family’s Health
You can choose safer food when you know where it comes from, and how it is grown. Select local farmers who you trust and know they avoid or reduce use of chemicals, pesticides, hormones, or antibiotics in their operations.

You’ll Protect the Environment
Food grown locally doesn’t travel very far. Less transportation reduces carbon dioxide emissions and packing materials.

Buying Local is Easy
Check out that local produce stand or farmer’s market. Some local grocery stores feature local produce, as well as some local restaurants. To find out where you can find local produce in Richmond and the surrounding counties, click on http://www.buylocalvirginia.org/ass/library/16/bfb_l_richmond_10.pdf

To find “Pick your own farms,” picking tips and local fruit and vegetable festivals, click on http://www.pickyourown.org/VA.htm

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org
This site covers everything from nutrition information, cooking tips, recipes, and shopping to how to plant your own garden. The following list shows summer produce in season, many of which are grown locally in Virginia. Click on the underlined produce to find out more about selection, storage, nutritional benefits, plus a nutrition facts label of that produce. (Some examples are given).

Summer Produce Tips
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Apricots
Beans
Beets
Bell Peppers
Select firm peppers rather than those that are shriveled or pitted. They should be brightly colored and heavy for their size. Refrigerate and store in a plastic bag for up to 5 days. One medium pepper provides 20 calories, 0 gm fat, 6 gm carbohydrate and 2 gm fiber.

Blackberries
Blueberries
Select berries that are firm, plump and uniform in size. They should be dry, with a dusty blue color. Refrigerate and use within 10-14 days. 1 cup blueberries provide 100 calories, 0 gm fat, 27 gm carbohydrate, 3 gm fiber.

Butter Lettuce
Cantaloupe
Select fragrant, round, and heavy melons with a yellow or cream undertone. The stem end should give to light pressure. Uncut cantaloupes should be stored at room temperature for up to 1 week. Cut melons will last up to 5 days when refrigerated in an airtight container. ½ medium melon contains 50 calories, 0 fat, 12 gm carbohydrate and 1 gm fiber.

Casaba Melon
Chayote Squash
Cherries
Cherries, Sour
Corn
Select ears that have green husks and fresh silks. The kernels should be in tight rows. You should refrigerate corn with the husks on and use within 1-2 days. 1 medium ear contains 90 calories, 2.5 gm fat (Before that butter!), 18 gm carbohydrate, 2 gm fiber.

Cucumbers
Eggplant
Select those that are smooth, without cracks, and uniform in color. They should be heavy for their size. They may be stored in the refrigerator crisper drawer for 5-7 days. 1/5 of an average size eggplant provides 20 calories, 0 gm fat, 5 gm carbohydrate and 3 gm fiber. (One average eggplant provides 100 calories, 0 fat, 25 gm carbohydrate, and 15 gm fiber).

Figs
Grapefruit
Select ones with thin, smooth and blemish free skins. They should feel heavy for their size. They may be stored at room temperature for 1 week, and up to 2-3 weeks when refrigerated. ½ grapefruit provides 60 calories, 0 gm fat, 15 gm carbohydrate and 2 gm fiber.

Grapes
Green Beans
Select well colored beans that snap easily when bent. They may be refrigerated for up to 1 week when stored in a plastic bag. ¼ cup of cut green beans contains 20 calories, 0 gm fat, 5 gm carbohydrate, and 3 gm fiber.

Honeydew Melons
Jalapeno Peppers
Select ones that are firm and smooth. (Stretch marks indicate a hotter pepper!) Place them, unwashed, in a paper towel, in a plastic bag and refrigerate for up to 10 days. Be sure to rinse before using. Be very careful when you cut the pepper as it will leave a burning sensation. Wash you hands immediately after cutting, or you can even wear gloves, especially if you have a cut. Be sure not to touch your face! For a helpful video, click on http://www.ehow.com/video_2339557_cut-deseed-jalapenos-pulled-chicken.html
1 cup sliced, provides 25 calories, 0.5 gm fat, 5 gm carbohydrate, 2 gm fiber.

Lima Beans
Limes
Nectarines
Okra
Passion Fruit
Peaches
Select fruit that has firm, fuzzy skins that are blemish free. The skins should yield to gentle pressure when they are ripe. Unripe peaches should be stored in a paper bag at room temperature. When ripe, remove from bag and use within 1-2 days. One medium peach provides 60 calories, 0.5 gm fat, 15 gm carbohydrate, 2 gm fiber.

Peas
Plums
Potatoes
Radishes
Raspberries
Strawberries
Select berries that are bright red, shiny and firm. The caps should be fresh, green and intact. Avoid mushy berries. Store them in the refrigerator for 1-3 days. Do not wash strawberries until you are ready to eat them. 8 medium strawberries provide 50 calories, 0 gm fat, 11 gm carbohydrate, 2 gm fiber.

Summer Squash
For all squash varieties, select those that are glossy, and small to medium-sized. They should be heavy for their size. You may store them in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days. ½ medium squash provides 20 calories, 0 fat, 4 gm carbohydrate and 2 gm fiber.

Tomatillo
Tomatoes
Select tomatoes with firm flesh, and bright, shiny skins. They should be used within 1 week after they are ripe. Store them at room temperature out of direct sunlight. Only refrigerate them if you can’t use them before they spoil. 1 medium tomato provides 25 calories, 0 gm fat, 5 gm carbohydrate and 1 gm fiber.

Watermelon
Zucchini

More helpful produce web sites:
“Veggie Monthly” (Fresh Veggies)
http://www.hiddenvalley.com/yourveggies/

“Frozen...just as nutritious”
http://www.bettycrocker.com/Products/Green-Giant/

“Canned Produce”
http://solutions.delmonte.com

To view back issues of this newsletter, go to this website:
http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/education/health/nutrition_news.html

To subscribe to this newsletter, email: msawyer@mcvh-vcu.edu

Summer Produce Recipes

Simple Summer Fresh Fruit Pie
(Reprinted with permission from “Lickety-Split Meals for Health Conscious People on the Go!” Available at bookstores, by calling the publisher toll-free at 1-888-884-LEAN, or by visiting http://Zonya.com to see similar recipes)

1 (0.6 oz.) package sugar-free strawberry gelatin
2 cups boiling water
1 (5.1 oz.) package instant vanilla pudding
1½ cups skim milk
2 large (9 oz. each) graham cracker crusts, regular chocolate.
1 quart fresh strawberries, cleaned and left whole
2 bananas, sliced
4 fresh peaches or nectarines, sliced into wedges
1 pint fresh blueberries, washed and drained

Prepare this recipe at least 3 hours before serving, or the night before:
Place gelatin in a medium bowl, add boiling water and stir to dissolve. In a separate, large bowl, mix vanilla pudding and skim milk together. (It will be thicker than usual). Add in the dissolved gelatin and mix until smooth. Set aside.
Place the fruit attractively to fill each pie crust, using in order listed. Pour ½ of the pudding mixture over each pie. The pudding mixture will seep between each piece of fruit. Refrigerate until firm, about 2 hours.

Makes 2 pies, 8 servings per pie. Per serving: 250 calories, 8 gm fat, 3 gm protein, 41 gm carbohydrate, 3 gm fiber, 372 mg sodium.
Pasta Slaw
(Reprinted with permission from “Lickety-Split Meals for Health Conscious People on the Go!” Available at bookstores, by calling the publisher toll-free at 1-888-884-LEAN, or by visiting http://Zonya.com to see similar recipes)

2 oz whole-wheat spaghetti, dry (1 cup cooked)  
2 cups shredded cabbage  
2 cups shredded carrots (Purchase cabbage and carrots already shredded or shred using a food processor).  
1 green bell pepper, chopped  
1 red bell pepper, chopped  
½ red onion, or 4 green onions, chopped  
1 TBSP lemon juice  
2 TBSP Balsamic or red wine vinegar  
½ tsp salt  
½ tsp oregano  
1 TBSP olive or canola oil  
½ tsp chopped garlic (or 1 clove, or 1/8 tsp garlic Powder)  
dash of pepper, to taste

Prepare pasta in a medium-size pot of boiling water. When water is boiling, add pasta, and set timer for 10 minutes.

In a large bowl, combine cabbage, carrots, green and red peppers, and red onion.

In a small bowl, combine lemon juice, vinegar, and spices.

At the sound of timer, drain pasta and add to vegetables while still hot. Toss all together with dressing. Serve warm or chilled.

Makes 16, ½ cup servings. Per ½ cup: 34 calories, 1 gm fat, 1 gm protein, 6 gm carbohydrate, 1 gm fiber, 85 mg sodium.

Zesty Chicken with Corn Salsa
(Courtesy of www.eatbetteramerica.com)

2 tsp chili powder  
2 tsp brown sugar  
1 tsp ground cumin  
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 ¼ pound)  
2 TBSP olive oil  
1 can (7 oz.) Green Giant® whole kernel sweet corn, drained  
½ small red bell pepper, chopped  
½ small cucumber, seeded and chopped  
½ cup Progresso® red kidney beans, rinsed and drained  
3 TBSP lime juice  
¼ tsp salt

In a cup, combine chili powder, brown sugar and cumin. Rub both sides of chicken breasts with the spice mixture.

In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Cook chicken in hot oil 12 minutes, turning occasionally, or until instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest portions reads 160° F, and juice run clear. (Alternate cooking suggestions: 1- Slice chicken into strips before cooking, or 2- Cook chicken on the grill instead of the skillet).

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, stir together corn, red pepper, cucumber, kidney beans, lime juice and salt.

Evenly divide corn salsa onto 4 plates. Top each with a chicken breast.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 320 calories, 12 gm fat, 34 gm protein, 19 gm carbohydrate, 3 gm fiber, 380 mg sodium, 40 mg calcium.

Szechuan Beef Stir-Fry
(Recipe provided courtesy of John Wiley & Sons From the Healthy Beef Cookbook by National Cattlemen’s Beef Association & American Dietetic Association© 2006, John Wiley & Sons).

1 package (10 ounces) fresh vegetable stir-fry blend  
3 TBSP water  
2 beef shoulder center steaks (Ranch Steaks), cut about ¾ inch thick (about 8 ounces each)  
1 clove garlic, minced  
¼ tsp crushed red pepper  
2 cups hot cooked white or brown rice, prepared without butter or salt  
¼ cup dry-roasted peanuts

Combine vegetables and water in large non-stick skillet; cover and cook over medium-high heat 4 minutes or until crisp-tender. Remove and drain vegetables. Set aside.

Meanwhile, cut beef steaks into ¼-inch thick strips.

Heat same skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add half of the beef and half of the garlic; stir-fry 1-2 minutes or until outside surface of beef is no longer pink. Remove from skillet; keep warm. Repeat with the remaining beef and garlic.

Return beef and vegetables to skillet. Add stir-fry sauce and red pepper; cook and stir 1 to 2 minutes or until heated through. Serve over rice. Sprinkle with peanuts.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 351 calories, 11 gm fat, 32 gm protein, 29 gm carbohydrate, 3 gm fiber, 1,147 mg sodium.
**1-2-3 Peach Cobbler**

Non-stick cooking oil spray for baking dish

½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 TBSP vanilla extract
2 TBSP cornstarch
1 cup peach nectar
¼ cup pineapple juice or peach juice
2 cans (16-ounce) peaches, sliced, packed in juice and drained *(or 1 ¾ lb. fresh peaches)*
1 TBSP soft, tub, margarine
1 cup pancake mix, dry
2/3 cup all-purpose flour
½ cup sugar
2/3 cup fat-free evaporated milk

**Topping:**
½ tsp nutmeg
1 TBSP brown sugar

Combine cinnamon, vanilla, cornstarch, peach nectar and pineapple or peach juice in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly until mixture thickens and bubbles. Add sliced (peeled if using fresh) peaches to mixture. Reduce heat and simmer for 5-10 minutes.

In another saucepan, melt margarine and set aside.

Lightly spray an 8-inch square glass dish with cooking oil spray. Pour hot peach mixture into the dish.

In another bowl, combine pancake mix, flour, sugar, and melted margarine. Stir in milk. Quickly spoon this mixture over peach mixture.

Combine nutmeg and brown sugar. Sprinkle mixture on top of batter.

Bake at 400°F for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown. Cool and cut into eight squares.

_Makes 8 squares. Per square:_ 271 calories, 4 gm fat, 4 gm protein, 54 gm carbohydrates, 2 gm fiber, 263 sodium._

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**Fun Ways to Burn Calories this Summer**
*(Without Going to the Gym or Spending a Lot of Money!)*

Exercise plays a key role in losing or maintaining weight, and your overall health. During the colder months, it can just be easier to go to the gym. And while it’s still great to go to the gym in warmer weather, something tends to beckon us outside. This summer, look for ways to keep active on a daily basis in a variety of activities. Aim for at least 30 minutes daily of a mixture of activities (or more if you like) to help you meet your goals. Mix it up for just for fun.

- Playing in the pool, treading water, or swimming laps (not just floating)
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Biking around your neighborhood
- Gardening and yard work
- Jumping rope
- Rollerblading
- Hiking
- Throwing a Frisbee
- Tennis
- Canoeing or Kayaking
- Golf, walking and carrying clubs, at least part of the time
- Walking your dog
- Walking in your neighborhood, parks, or around our historic city!

Anthem and Richmond Sports Backers are sponsoring an exercise walk that just happens to go through historic downtown Richmond. What a great opportunity to explore your “own back yard,” exercise, and have some inexpensive fun.

**Anthem Stride Through Time, 6/5/10**
[http://www.sportsbackers.org/events/stride/stride_through_time.htm](http://www.sportsbackers.org/events/stride/stride_through_time.htm)

The 6.2-mile (10 K) course travels through nine historic districts in downtown Richmond, past numerous museums, historic sites and monuments. Along the way, you’ll be entertained with music, historical figures, and antique cars. _Online registration at the above website closes June 3. If you aren’t registered in advance you may register that day ($30 adults $20 under age 18). Many of the museums will be free during the walk._

The “Anthem Stride Through Time” passes by the following historical areas. If you can’t make it that day, check the online route map, and take a walk on your own to check out some

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VCU Women’s Health Care will be undergoing renovations this summer. _We will be open as usual during this time._ Nutrition classes will end June 14 but will resume in the fall. If you would like to receive individual nutrition counseling you may schedule an appointment by calling 560-8950. Please check with your insurance plan to be sure if it is a covered service. _Otherwise, payment is expected at time of service._
of those historic locations. Usual fees listed are for adults (seniors and children are less). Click on the name of the location for more information.

American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar
Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia ($5, adults)
Edgar Allan Poe Museum ($6 for adults)
First Fridays Artwalk
The Hat Factory (formerly known as "Toad's Place")
The Jefferson Hotel
John Marshall House (Private tours only inside, $$$)
Library of Virginia
Linden Row Inn
Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site (free)
Monumental Church (Historic Richmond Foundation) (Both, $12.00)
Richmond CenterStage
Richmond Hill
Richmond Visitor's Center
River District Canal Cruises ($5 for adults)
St. John's Church (tours $6 for adults)
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Valentine Richmond History Center ($8 for adults)
VCU/MCV Alumni House
Virginia Holocaust Museum (donations accepted)
Virginia State Capitol (self guided tours are free)
The Woman's Club (Bolling-Haxall House)

Be Active at Your Local Parks!

The Richmond area is blessed with a multitude of neighborhood parks. While many support that great American pastime of baseball, there are other activities as well. Some parks host bike trails, walking trails, boat landings, water sports, volleyball courts, basketball courts, and playgrounds for the younger tikes. While there may be a small fee for equipment or facilities usage, most of the activities are free. Check out the partial listings of county parks, and get you and your family moving!

Chesterfield County Parks
http://www.chesterfield.gov/content2.aspx?id=3136

Bensley Park, 2900 Drewrys Bluff Road
Richmond, VA 23237

Goyne Park, 5300 Ecoff Road
Chester, VA 23831

Harry G Daniel Park at Iron Bridge
6600 White Pine Road, Richmond, VA 23237

Henricus Historical Park, 251 Henricus Park Road, Chester, VA

Huguenot Park, 10901 Robious Road
Richmond, VA 23235

Rockwood Park, 3401 Courthouse Road
Richmond, VA 23236

Pocahontas State Park, 10301 State Park Road
Chesterfield, VA 23838

Richmond City Parks:

http://www.richmondgov.com/parks/index.aspx

Byrd Park, Boulevard and Idlewood Ave
Richmond, VA 23221

Bryant Park, Hermitage Road
Richmond, VA 23227

Forest Hill Park, 3900 Forest Hill Ave.
Richmond, VA 23225

Gillies Creek Park
4425 Williamsburg Ave., Richmond, VA

James River Park System
4301 Riverside Drive, Richmond, VA

Hanover County Parks:
http://www.co.hanover.va.us/parksrec/parkinfo.html (click on these links for details)

Ashland Trolley Line
Cold Harbor Battlefield Park/Gathright House
Hanover Courthouse Park
Montpeiler Park
North Anna Battlefield Park
Pole Green Park
Poor Farm Park
Taylor Park
Town of Ashland Parks
Hanover Wayside Park
Small Boat/Canoe Launch Sites
Washington-Lacy Park - Now Open

Henrico County Parks:
http://www.co.henrico.va.us/departments/rec/park-information/ (Click on these links for details)

Crump Park, Meadow Farm Museum & RFP Park
Deep Run Park & Recreation Center
Dorey Park & Recreation Center
Hidden Creek Park & Recreation Center
Osborne Park & Boat Landing
Three Lakes Park

Goochland County Parks:
http://www.co.goochland.va.us/ click on departments, the parks and recreation