

Buying and Using Produce

Follow these tips and save the nutrients from wasting.

Whether you buy fruits and vegetables in peak season or in the off season, there are a few things you should keep in mind to get the most for your money.

First, buy only the amount you need because fresh fruits and vegetables are perishable.

Select carefully...

Select fruits and vegetables that are mature, ripe, well-colored, and free of bruises, punctures and decay. At the produce counter, you are your own best judge of quality... there you can smell and hold the product before you make your choice.

You should shop for fruits and vegetables carefully. Don't buy damaged fruits and vegetables even if the price is low. Handle produce carefully because someone must pay for produce the grocer loses. In the long run, it may be you.

Try to make the most of the produce you buy. Important nutrients can literally evaporate



Fresh produce is especially healthy, if you know how to get the most from it.

if you keep fruits and vegetables too long. This is why it's so important for you to store your produce as soon as possible.

Watch cooking time.

Your vegetables can lose a lot of vitamins and minerals if they're cooked for too long in too much water. Remember, cook your vegetables for as short a time as possible in as little water as possible. Vitamin C is especially water soluble and more likely to be lost if you're not careful. Try to save the water that you cook the vegetables in and use it in gravies, sauces and soups.

Whenever you can, cook vegetables such as potatoes in their skins and serve cucumbers with the peeling. Nutrients in vegetables and fruits are stored close to the skin or peel. If you absolutely must peel your produce, make the peeling as thin as possible.

For more information on buying and using produce; contact your local county Extension office.