

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES: WEEK 11

Beyond fresh

Part of making healthy choices is understanding the difference between fresh, frozen and canned foods. The key to making healthy choices that are also low cost is knowing the advantages of buying one type over another and making the differences work for you.

Fresh, Canned or Frozen?

Fresh produce is always a great option. Produce in season is at its lowest cost and full of nutrients. Fresh options lessen in nutrient quality the longer they sit on your kitchen counter or in your refrigerator. If you are not going to eat your produce right away, consider buying canned or frozen varieties. You could also purchase fresh options when they are on sale, and can or freeze them yourself.

Canned fruits and vegetables can last much longer than fresh varieties. You may have heard that canned food has less nutritional value than fresh food does. This is partly true. The initial canning process reduces the nutritional value but after that, the nutrient value is more stable than fresh produce. This makes canned fruits and vegetables a healthy choice, especially when on a budget.

When choosing canned vegetable options, look for “no-salt-added,” “low-sodium” and “reduced-sodium” on the label. Choose fruit varieties canned in 100% fruit juice or water. You can rinse canned varieties in cool water to remove much of the added sugar and salt.

Frozen fruits and vegetables are a great option if you have the freezer space for them. Frozen produce is picked at its peak and then frozen right away to keep the nutrient value. You can purchase already frozen foods or freeze them yourself when you harvest your garden or find a good sale at the store. Freezing them yourself allows you to package them into single or family-sized servings for easier preparation later. For example, look for strawberries on sale in early June when they're in season. Then portion them into 1 cup bags, freeze and use to make smoothies later.

Remember that each option has pros and cons, and all varieties are not created equal. Canned and frozen options often contain added sugar, salt, saturated fat and trans fat. Make sure to look at the label, read the ingredients list and compare items before making a decision.



© istock.com/ etienne voss

Did you know?

MSU Extension offers low-cost in person and online food preservation classes. Contact your local MSU Extension office. Find details on the back of this newsletter.



© istock.com/ kot63

WEEKLY RECIPE

Remember to wash your hands and prepare food safely.

Quick Skillet Lasagna (serves 8)

1. In a 10-inch skillet, cook **1 pound lean ground meat** over medium-high heat for 5 minutes, stirring to break up.
2. Add **1 cup chopped onion, 3 cloves minced garlic** and **1 cup chopped green pepper**. Cook until meat is browned and cooked through (about 10 minutes). Then drain off fat.
3. Add **one 28-ounce can of low-sodium tomato sauce**. Bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Add a sprinkle of **salt, pepper** and **Italian seasoning**. Taste and add more if desired.
5. Turn heat to low and add 6 cups of cooked whole-wheat pasta to the mix.
6. Mix **1 cup low-fat cottage cheese** and **1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese** in a separate bowl. Drop cheese mixture, by spoonfuls, into the sauce. Cover and heat over low heat until cheese melts.

Recipe adapted from Michigan State University Extension. (2015). *Eating Right Is Simple Recipe Set*.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Find the entire series online at: msue.msu.edu/healthychoices

MSU Extension programming has something to offer every member of your family

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge and resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses.

To help you be healthy at every stage of life, MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to serve the needs of adults, youth and families in urban and rural communities. Programs focus on helping you gain the skills you need to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods, increase your physical activity and stretch your food dollars.

MSU Extension's children and youth programs address needs and issues from birth through age 19, providing parents with educational resources related to your child's development and giving youth the opportunity through 4-H programs to build leadership and teach practical life skills.

For more information or to join a class, contact your local MSU Extension county office or visit www.msue.msu.edu.

FIND YOUR LOCAL MSU EXTENSION COUNTY OFFICE

With a presence in every Michigan county, Extension faculty and staff members provide tools to live and work better. From a personal meeting to information online, MSU Extension educators work every day to provide the most current information when people need it to ensure success – in the workplace, at home and in the community.

To find your local county office visit msue.msu.edu/county.

Acknowledgements

Developed by Erin E. Powell, MS, RDN; Tom Cummins; Elizabeth Dorman and Denise Aungst, MS; for MSU Extension. Based on a concept created by Denise Aungst and Layne Schlicher for MSU Extension. Produced by ANR Creative for MSU Extension.



In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutrition foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local MSU Extension office.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jeffrey W. Dwyer, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned. 1P-WEB-1:2017-TC/MR