



HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

Eat Your Veggies

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Turns out, your mother was right about this one – vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet. According to The Centers for Disease Control, “Fruits and vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber that may help protect you from chronic diseases. Compared with people who consume a diet with only small amounts of fruits and vegetables, those who eat more generous amounts as part of a healthful diet are likely to have reduced risk of chronic diseases, including stroke and perhaps other cardiovascular diseases, and certain cancers.” This is a good reminder that we can make our moms proud and prevent disease by simply adding more vegetables into our daily lives.

Vegetables don't have to be another chore to add to your growing to-do list. Start where you are – if you are on the go, grab a bag of carrots, celery, or snap peas for your drive. Add red peppers, avocado or cucumbers to your afternoon sandwich. Add a few leaves of spinach to your smoothie at breakfast. Sweet potatoes can liven up a dinner plate and add a new option to the rice or potatoes dilemma. If you are already eating vegetables regularly, challenge yourself to try something new. Adding new colors to a plate is a fun way to add new vegetables. Luckily, we live in an area where it is easy to find fresh, local produce or grow your own!

Farmers markets are great ways to connect with the people who grow your food. They offer seasonal produce picked at its peak, often just a few hours before you purchase it. Vegetables purchased in season are less expensive and tend to taste better. They also store better than those that have traveled great distances to reach you. The Olympia and Tumwater Farmers Markets are great local options for the freshest vegetables around.

- Visit their web sites for more information at www.olympiafarmersmarket.com and www.tumwaterfarmersmarket.org

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is another great way to purchase fresh, delicious seasonal vegetables directly from a local farmer. By purchasing a share in a CSA, you pay for several months' worth of weekly boxes filled with whatever is fresh that week. Supporting local economics and preserving the rural areas of Thurston County never tasted so good!

- For more information on local CSA opportunities, look for the 2010 farm map at many fine establishments around town or find it online at www.communityfarmlandtrust.org

For those of you that are ready to get your hands dirty and your feet muddy, growing your own vegetables is a great way to bring inexpensive fresh vegetables into your kitchen. It's also a great, fun activity to do with your kids! Farmers Markets carry plant starts that

you can plant directly into a prepared area and seed packets are sprouting at most grocery stores, hardware stores, and nurseries this spring. Many local resources are available to help you start planting.

- Check out the free workshop series sponsored by GRuB, Sustainable South Sound, Olympia Food Co-op and Thurston County Health at www.sustainsouthsound.org or call 360-357-2380.
- Seattle Tilth has an easy to use growing calendar that can be purchased online at www.seattletilth.org (under the get involved link) or from either of The Olympia Food Co-ops.
- Thurston County Public Health also has a handy vegetable rotation fact sheet available online at www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehcsg or call 360-867-2674 to request a copy.

Spring is a great time to get started eating well -see you in the produce aisle!

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