

NATIONAL FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MONTH

June is National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month! It's a great time of year – weather is getting warmer, the sun is shining, people are starting to get their gardens ready, and Farmers Markets are opening.

Studies have shown it is most beneficial if we have at least five servings of fruits and vegetables (fresh or frozen are recommended) per day. The benefits, just to name a few, include: protection against heart disease, boosts immune system, reduces the risk of chronic diseases, removes toxins from the body, keeps your mind sharp, provides essential fiber, protein, and vital nutrients and minerals, plus they taste fantastic!

Let's all join in and vow to do our best during June to add some color to our meals, try something new, different or exotic, and experiment with new recipes or methods of preparation. Get the whole family involved, spending time together – there's another benefit!

Here are some suggestions on how to incorporate and experiment with more fresh fruits and vegetables in your day:

- ♥ Smoothies – try adding some vegetables to your fruit smoothies.
- ♥ Have the family adopt “Meatless Monday”.
- ♥ Taco Tuesday – great, but one night forget about the taco shells and make taco lettuce wraps.
- ♥ Try spaghetti squash in place of pasta.
- ♥ Replace snacks of chips or pretzels with some sliced crunchy vegetables with dip or hummus.
- ♥ Let your kids pick a new-to-your family fruit each week.
- ♥ Try a new-to-your family vegetable each week; finding a recipe you can make as a family.
- ♥ Make your favorite vegetable in a new way. Instead of boiling or sautéing, try grilling or roasting; it could give it a whole new flavor.
- ♥ Add fruit to your morning oatmeal or cereal.
- ♥ Have you ever tried making brownies with beets? Chocolate cake made with avocados.
- ♥ As a family, spend some time at your local Farmers Market.

- ♥ Visit a pick-your-own-fruit-and-vegetable farm and bring home the fruits of your labor.
- ♥ Do some research and have your family plant your own garden; nothing more satisfying than harvesting your own fruits and vegetables.

Let's all enjoy and savor the goodness of fresh fruits and vegetables this month and every month. Use #FreshFruitAndVegetableMonth to share on social media.

Monthly Messages are brought to you by the Tompkins County Youth Services Department, a proud partner of The Community Coalition for Healthy Youth.

If you have further questions or comments about this message or would like information on how to become involved with the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth, please email bnugent@tompkins-co.org.

