

AFTER YOU PICK THEM... NOW WHAT?



If you haven't seen vegetables grow in a garden, you might not know what you do with them after they're picked. Some can be eaten raw. Others may be cooked or steamed. With some, you have to prepare them before you eat them.



Depending on the vegetable, you may need to do some preparation. For example:

- **Corn:** You'll have to "shuck it." Tear off the outer green part, "the husk," away from the cob. You'll also have to remove the fine hairs, or "silk," you'll see at the top of the cob. You can pick them off or use a vegetable brush. After washing, the corn can be cooked in hot water, or prepared in a variety of other ways.
- **Green beans:** People prepare green beans in a variety of ways, one of the most common methods is to snap off each end of the bean, and snap the bean stalk itself into two or three pieces. Then, they're ready to cook.
- **Lima beans:** These are protected in an outer covering, called a "hull." Peel apart the hull to find the beans inside. Pull them out and cook them in hot water.
- **Broccoli or cauliflower:** These grow on their plants as large "heads." After you cut the head off the plant, you can break them apart into small pieces or florets. These can be eaten raw or cooked.
- **Squash or eggplant:** Once you pick these, they may be sliced, peeled or diced and cooked or put into a variety of casseroles.

BE SAFE! The first and most important thing to know is: you need to thoroughly wash the vegetables. Don't try to eat them right out of the garden. There may be dirt or chemicals on the vegetables that need to be washed off.

- Spinach or kale: When these are ready, you simply cut off the top leaves, wash and place in salads or cook them.
- Cucumbers: Once you pick these, you can slice and eat them, or use in other dishes. You can even create pickles from them. One hint: Cucumbers grow fast. The bigger they get, the tougher they are. You may want to pick them when they're smaller and more tender.
- Carrots, onions and potatoes: These may surprise you because they grow under ground. You'll have to pull or dig them up when ready, wash them off and prepare them.
- Pumpkins: These are especially fun because you can watch them grow, and they will break away from their stems when they're ready.

COLORFUL EATING:

As you pick your vegetables think about separating them into color groups. Each color group offers different phytochemicals, antioxidants and nutrients that help you stay healthy.

When you grow, your body needs vitamins, minerals, amino acids and other important nutrients. Luckily, you can find most of them in various vegetables that you eat everyday.

Here is some of the “good stuff” you’ll find in your veggies:

Calcium – necessary for healthy teeth and bones.

Fiber – good for your heart and digestion.

Iron – needed for healthy blood.

Magnesium – helps with healthy bones and muscles.

Potassium – great for your blood pressure.

Vitamins – provide a variety of help for every part of your body, from head to toe. Vitamins help your entire body grow and remain healthy.

It's good to eat a variety of vegetables, so you'll get the right balance of all the “good stuff” that will help you grow.



Get the blues (and purples)

For brain/memory, healthy aging, and urinary tract.



Great greens

For vision, bones and teeth.



Wonderful whites

For heart and healthy cholesterol levels.



Outstanding oranges (and yellows)

For vision, immune system and heart.



Radiant reds

For heart, urinary tract and brain/memory.