



## Eat Smart With Fruits and Vegetables

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### Apples

- ◆ Select apples that have a good color; a fresh, bright appearance; and that are firm to the touch.
- ◆ Store apples in the refrigerator.
- ◆ Try adding chopped apples to salads; have dried apples for an on-the-go snack; sprinkle with brown sugar and bake for dessert.

### Apricots

- ◆ Choose golden yellow apricots that are plump and fairly firm. Look for dried apricots, as well.
- ◆ Store fresh apricots in the refrigerator for up to three weeks.
- ◆ Enjoy raw apricots as a snack; blend with yogurt and other fruits for a smoothie; chop dried apricots and add to your cereal.

### Artichokes

- ◆ Choose compact, heavy, and plump artichokes. They should be green, but will have some color variations in the fall and winter.
- ◆ Sprinkle with water and refrigerate in a sealed plastic bag in the crisper. They will keep up to a week.
- ◆ Steam, boil, or microwave, and dip in lemon juice or yogurt. Add artichoke hearts to your favorite pasta or stew.

### Avocado

- ◆ A ripe avocado will yield to gentle pressure in the palm of your hand. Depending on the variety, avocados will be light to dark green and even black.
- ◆ Store unripened avocados at room temperature in a paper bag. They will keep for two to five days.
- ◆ Peel, slice, sprinkle with lemon juice, and serve avocados for a tasty snack. In addition to being the main ingredient in guacamole, this versatile fruit can be used in salads, soups, dips, and in a variety of dishes.

### Bananas

- ◆ Choose bananas that are fully yellow or with slight brown spots. Ripen green bananas in a brown paper bag with an apple or tomato.
- ◆ Store at room temperature, preferably on a banana hanger or hook.
- ◆ Slice bananas and add to cereal or yogurt; cook with a little bit of brown sugar for dessert; add to fresh fruit salad.

### Bell Pepper

- ◆ Choose firm, glossy peppers with unwrinkled skins and green stems.
- ◆ Refrigerate peppers unwashed in a plastic bag.
- ◆ Add red, green, or yellow peppers to salads, stir fry, or stuff with cooked rice and bake for a healthy main course.

### Broccoli

- ◆ Choose broccoli with green or purplish-green heads, never yellow.
- ◆ Refrigerate fresh broccoli unwashed in a plastic bag in the crisper. It should last up to 16 days.
- ◆ Use fresh with low-fat dips; stir fry and toss with pasta; or serve with lemon or reduced-fat cheese sauce.



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### **Brussels Sprouts**

- ◆ Shop for firm, compact green sprouts.
- ◆ Store fresh brussels sprouts in the refrigerator.
- ◆ Brussels sprouts can be steamed, simmered in water, or sautéed until tender. Serve with lemon.

### **Cabbage**

- ◆ Choose a heavy compact head that has no discoloration.
- ◆ Store cabbage in the crisper for one to two weeks.
- ◆ Use in coleslaw or stir fry; red cabbage jazzes up fresh salads.

### **Cantaloupe**

- ◆ Look for cantaloupe that has a sweet aroma and that has a stem end that is slightly soft. Do not choose those that still have part of the stem still attached.
- ◆ Let stand at room temperature for two to three days, then refrigerate in a tightly sealed plastic bag (the gas given by ripening melons will spoil other produce).
- ◆ Serve fresh wedges for breakfast; stuff with chicken salad for lunch; or top with low-fat ice cream for healthy dessert.

### **Carrots**

- ◆ Look for firm carrots that are bright orange. When selecting a bag of baby carrots, check the “sell by” date on the package. If carrots become wilted, place in cold water for a few minutes.
- ◆ Store washed carrots in a plastic bag in the crisper. They should keep for several weeks.
- ◆ Enjoy fresh with a low-fat salad dressing dip; shred and add to casseroles, meatloaf, or zucchini bread; stir fry with your other favorite vegetables.

### **Cauliflower**

- ◆ Choose a heavy, firm cauliflower that is white with little discoloration.
- ◆ Keep cauliflower dry and refrigerate in a plastic bag. Before using fresh cauliflower, place head down in cold water with a teaspoon each of vinegar and salt to crisp it and draw out any insects.
- ◆ Serve raw with dip or in a salad; stir fry; or top with your favorite low-fat sauce.

### **Grapefruit**

- ◆ Shop for grapefruit that feels heavy for its size, and is firm and smooth textured. Avoid bruised fruit.
- ◆ Grapefruit will keep for a few days at room temperature. for longer storage, refrigerate in a plastic bag or in the crisper.
- ◆ Serve fresh in meals or snacks; combine different color grapefruit slices with leafy greens in a festive salad.

### **Grapes**

- ◆ Choose grapes that are plump, smooth, and even-colored.
- ◆ Store unwashed in a plastic bag in your refrigerator.
- ◆ Slice and add to chicken salad; pop into the freezer for a frozen treat; place on a toothpick with a piece of string cheese and a strawberry slice for a fruit kabob.



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### **Greens**

- ◆ Look for collard, mustard, or turnip greens that have the darkest green color.
- ◆ Store in the crisper bin of your refrigerator. Try using a little salt in your water when cleaning fresh greens to help get rid of the soil that tends to stick.
- ◆ Use in a salad, side dish, or as an edible garnish for your main dish.

### **Kiwifruit**

- ◆ Look for plump kiwis that are slightly soft to the touch.
- ◆ Ripen kiwis at room temperature for 3 to 5 days. They are ready to eat when they are soft and have a pleasant aroma. Ripe kiwis can be stored in the refrigerator.
- ◆ Cut in half and eat with a spoon; slice them for desserts or appetizers; add to pancake or waffle batter.

### **Lettuce**

- ◆ Choose the more nutritious darker green varieties of lettuce.
- ◆ Store lettuce in a plastic bag in the crisper bin of your refrigerator.
- ◆ Mix several types of green leafy lettuce for a delicious salad; add to sandwiches; serve as a base for chicken salad or fresh fruit.

### **Oranges**

- ◆ Look for oranges that have a fresh appearance and feel heavy for their size.
- ◆ Oranges will keep at room temperature for a few days. For best results, store in the refrigerator in a plastic bag or in the crisper.
- ◆ Eat as a snack; toss in salads; add to poultry-based dishes. Valencia oranges make especially good juice!

### **Papaya**

- ◆ Look for ripe papayas that are yellow-orange in color. If no ripe papayas are available, a mostly green papaya will ripen in 5 to 7 days at room temperature. Half green, half yellow fruit will ripen in 2 to 4 days.
- ◆ Ripe papayas will keep in the refrigerator for a week.
- ◆ Enjoy as a snack; add to fruit salads; mix with other fruits and jalpeno peppers for a delicious fruit salsa.

### **Peaches**

- ◆ Select unripened peaches that are yellow or cream colored, and that have a mild aroma. Ripen in a brown paper bag at room temperature.
- ◆ Peaches are best when eaten as soon as they are ripe, but can be refrigerated for 3 to 5 days.
- ◆ Add to cereal or yogurt; blend with yogurt for a smoothie; use as a topping for pancakes or waffles.

### **Pears**

- ◆ To select pears, gently squeeze at the skinniest end; it will be slightly soft on a ripe pear. To ripen, place in a brown paper bag at room temperature.
- ◆ Store ripe pears unwashed in the refrigerator. Handle gently to avoid bruising.
- ◆ Serve in salads; add to gelatin; slice and dip in chocolate sauce for an elegant dessert.



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### **Pineapple**

- ◆ Look for deep green leaves and a fresh, bright appearance. The color of the skin does not indicate taste, but avoid fruit with obvious bruising or soft spots.
- ◆ Refrigerate fresh pineapple.
- ◆ Serve fresh in salads; use on a fruit kabob with strawberries and grapes; slice pineapple lengthwise, remove the fruit, chop and add back to the shell with other mixed fruit for a creative presentation.

### **Potatoes**

- ◆ Choose fairly clean potatoes that are firm and smooth with shallow eyes, and avoid those with wrinkles, wilted skins or soft, dark areas.
- ◆ Store in a cool, dark, well-ventilated place; do not refrigerate. Potatoes can also be stored for 1 to 2 months in a burlap or brown paper bag with an apple to prevent them from sprouting.
- ◆ Top baked potatoes with steamed vegetables, salsa, or chili; add garlic or other favorite herbs and spices to mashed potatoes; steam red potatoes and top with fresh herbs.

### **Spinach**

- ◆ Select spinach with fresh, crisp leaves.
- ◆ Store washed spinach in the refrigerator. When cleaning fresh spinach, add a little salt to your water to help get rid of soil that has a tendency to stick in the leaves.
- ◆ Combine raw spinach, red onions, mushrooms, and raisins for a delicious salad; lightly steam for an excellent side dish.

### **Strawberries**

- ◆ Select fully colored berries that are firm, plump, have a sweet aroma and still have the stem attached. A stained strawberry container may mean the berries inside are soft.
- ◆ Eat fresh berries within a few days of purchase. Do not wash or remove stems until ready to use.
- ◆ Slice and add to cereal; blend with yogurt for smoothies; use on top of waffles, pancakes, reduced-fat ice cream, pies, and cakes.

### **Sweet Potatoes**

- ◆ Look for sweet potatoes that are thick and that taper toward the ends.
- ◆ Store in a cool, dark, well-ventilated place; do not refrigerate.
- ◆ Use in soufflés and casseroles; breads, biscuits, and muffins; and in desserts such as pies, cakes, and cookies.

### **Tomatoes**

- ◆ Ripe tomatoes are completely red or reddish-orange. They have a sweet aroma and yield slightly to gentle palm pressure.
- ◆ Most supermarket tomatoes are not fully ripe. Set in a bowl or ventilated paper bag and store at room temperature to ripen. Do not refrigerate.
- ◆ Add to salads and main dishes; use as a base for sauces and soups; try stuffing a large tomato with cooked corkscrew pasta and vegetables and baking in a muffin tin.



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### **Watermelon**

- ◆ Look for watermelon that is symmetrical and feels heavy for its size. Ripe watermelon will have a healthy sheen and butter yellow underside.
- ◆ Store uncut watermelon at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Cut watermelon should be loosely wrapped and refrigerated.
- ◆ Use in fresh fruit salads; scoop out fruit and cut rind like a basket for an even prettier fruit salad.

### **Winter Squash**

- ◆ Acorn squash (dark green with yellow-orange undercolor) and butternut squash (buff to light tan) should have a smooth hard rind. Lightweight squash may be dry or stringy.
- ◆ Winter squash can be stored in a cool, dry place for up to 2 months.
- ◆ Winter squash can be baked or steamed, or added to soups, casseroles, and other dishes.