

## WAYS TO PROTECT THE NUTRIENTS IN FOOD

The way food is handled, stored, and prepared - from the time it is harvested until it is eaten - will affect its nutritional value. To make sure you and your family get the most nutrients from the food you eat, follow these simple practices:

1. When eating raw fruits and vegetables, eat the skin - if it is edible.
2. When cooking fruits and vegetables, leave them in their skin when possible.
3. When peeling, remove only the thin outer layer.
4. Use just enough water in cooking to prevent sticking. It usually takes only 1/2 to 1 cup of water for most foods. Some nutrients dissolve in water and will be lost if cooking water is drained away.
5. If a cooked or canned food contains too much liquid, reduce by boiling instead of draining off.
6. Cook vegetables and fruits just until tender, in a covered pot. If you do not have a pot lid, a heavy plate may work.
7. Do not rinse rice and pasta before or after cooking, as some nutrients will be washed away.
8. Use fresh or cooked foods as soon as possible, as nutrients are lost during long storage -even when placed in the refrigerator. Be sure to check the "sell by" date when buying food and use by that date or within a few days.
9. When food is stored in refrigerator or freezer, wrap in air-tight plastic wrap or freezer bag, or put in a closed container. Air causes loss of nutrients and flavor.
10. After a meal or snack, do not allow cooked or peeled fruits and vegetables or milk and meat products to remain outside of the refrigerator for long periods. This can cause loss of nutrients. Foods containing milk and meat may become unsafe.
11. If food is hot, cool until you can handle the container - then refrigerate. Hot food does not have to cool completely before refrigeration. Time out of refrigerator should be less than 2 hours.

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