June 2024

Simply Produce

Fresh Produce Bundle $15

Produce Spotlight: MELONS

Melons come in many different varieties. The most common varieties of melons are watermelon, honeydew, and cantaloupe.

**HOW DO I MAKE A GOOD SELECTION?**

Choose melons that are symmetrical in shape and heavy for their size. They should be free from cracks, bruises, and soft spots. Smell may not be a good indicator that the melon is ripe and sweet.

**WHAT IS THE PROPER STORAGE?**

Store uncut melons on the counter for up to 10 days or in the refrigerator for up to three weeks. Cut melons should be covered in an air-tight container and refrigerated for up to five days.

**WHY SHOULD I EAT THIS?**

Honeydew, cantaloupe, and watermelon are good sources of vitamin C, which helps heal wounds and cuts. Cantaloupe and watermelon are good sources of vitamin A, which promotes eye health and cell growth. Cantaloupe also has potassium which helps regulate muscle contractions, and folate which helps prevent birth defects.

**HOW COULD I USE THIS?**

- Add melons to a salad
- Melons can be added to a fruit soup
- Chopmelon and add to a fresh salsa, serve with cooked chicken or chips
- Make watermelon lemonade
- Puree and add 100% fruit juice to make homemade ice pops
- Make a honeydew slushy
- Enjoy melons raw
- Make a drink with cantaloupe and orange juice
- Serve cubed or sliced with a fruit dip

*Source: food.unl.edu*

Simply Produce Ellsworth County increases access to fruits and vegetables while encouraging shopping local. Call Gene’s Heartland Foods in Ellsworth to order your basket 785.472.4111.
Stress and Your Brain

Stress happens every day and can appear in a variety of ways. You may feel stress from trying to juggle family, work, school, and caregiving. It can involve issues like money, health, and relationships.

Stress can lead to physical symptoms, such as headache and chest pain. It can cause you to feel anxiety or sadness, and stress could lead to outburst behaviors or changes in eating patterns.

While you may know that stress can harm your mind and body, you might not know how it affects your brain. When you face stress, your brain goes through a series of reactions. Some of these are good and some are not. Sometimes stress can help sharpen your mind and help you function at a higher level. Other times, stress can have negative effects on the brain and can lead to mental illness and even shrinking the volume of the brain. Stress can also hurt your memory. If you have been through a very stressful event, details may be hard to remember. And, we can all relate to this — minor stress can impact your memory immediately, as you struggle to remember where you left your car keys or briefcase when you are late for work.

Since we know that stress cannot be avoided, it is best to prepare yourself with a toolbox of ways to deal with stress. Here are some suggestions.

* Focus on what you can control in your situation. Stick to a routine as much as possible, even though stress can be unpredictable.

* Take care of yourself. Eat healthfully, get regular exercise, get good sleep (lack of sleep can make things even worse), limit alcohol to one 5-ounce drink/day (women) or two for men, avoid smoking, and engage in deep breathing exercises, stretching, and/or meditation.

* Exercise for stress-busting benefits. Exercise can help alter your mood as it bumps up production of endorphins, your brain’s feel-good neurotransmitters. It also provides stress relief for your body by improving your cardiovascular, digestive, and immune systems. Exercise can improve your mood, help relieve tension and anxiety, improve sleep, increase self-confidence, and give you a sense of command over your body and life.

* Connect with others and avoid isolation. Confide in people you trust about your situation and how you are feeling. Also, connect with your community and/or faith-based organizations. Get organized to better manage your situation. If you are feeling stressed by a large task, divide into small groups of tasks or layers. This can help you feel less overwhelmed.

* Get help if you need it. By reaching out for help, you can become more resilient and better able to manage stress. This, ultimately, can protect your brain health.

* Reframe your stress. It is impossible to live a life without stress and doing so would likely be uninteresting. Think about a negative situation that is stressful for you right now. Can you change your self-talk to be less negative? Can you view a potentially negative situation as a challenge rather than a threat? Try to look for a “gift” in each stressful experience. Reframing can have a big impact on the way you view stress, which ultimately benefits body and brain health.

Source: KSRE
B Vitamins Boost Brain Power

Your body needs 13 essential vitamins and 8 of these are B vitamins, which include: thiamine (B1), riboflavin (B2), niacin (B3), pantothenic acid (B5), pyridoxine (B6), biotin (B7), folate (B9), and cobalamin (B12).

Through research, we know that B vitamins support just about every aspect of brain health. They can help prevent or delay cognitive decline and memory loss and diseases such as Alzheimer’s. Research also suggests that B vitamins can improve your performance with tests that involve memory, problem-solving, and word and sentence formation. The B vitamins affect mental stability, mood, and your ability to cope with stress, and they appear to play roles in reducing heart disease and some types of cancer.

A good source of B vitamins is whole grains, eggs, and legumes. Leafy greens, citrus fruits, nuts, avocados, and mushrooms contribute B vitamins. Meat, poultry, and fish are excellent sources of vitamin B3, B6, and B12, and liver contributes thiamine and folate. Many types of breakfast cereals are also fortified with various B vitamins. The best way to get B vitamins is through your diet, so take a supplement only if your doctor recommends it.

By eating a varied and balanced diet, you should be able to meet the needs your body has for all of these very important B vitamins.

Source: KSRE

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available for 24/7 support by calling or texting 988.
**Fruit Chaat**

Serves: 6 | Serving Size: 3/4 Cup

**Ingredients:**
- 2 medium bananas, peeled and sliced
- 1 medium apple, chopped into small pieces
- 1 mango, peeled and cut into small cubes
- 1 cup halved red grapes
- 1 medium sweet potato
- 1 – 2 limes
- ½ teaspoon salt (adjust to taste)
- ½ teaspoon red chili powder (adjust to taste)
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper (adjust to taste)

**Nutrition Information per Serving:**
(Based on 2 limes, ½ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon red chili powder, and ¼ teaspoon black pepper)

- Serving Size: ¼ cup
- Vegetables: ¼ cup
- Fruits: ½ cup
- Calories: 104 calories
- Carbohydrates: 20 grams
- Fiber: 3 grams
- Protein: 1 gram
- Fat: 0 grams
- Sodium: 211 mg

**Directions:**
1. Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water.
2. Cook the sweet potato by poking holes in the potato and microwaving for 5-8 minutes, rotating halfway through. Allow to cool, peel, and cut into small cubes. Alternatively, you can roast the sweet potato. To roast, preheat your oven to 425°F and line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper for easy clean up. Cut the raw sweet potato into small cubes. On the baking sheet, toss the sweet potato in olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake until fork tender (about 30 minutes).
3. Combine banana, apple, mango, grapes, and sweet potato in a big mixing bowl.
4. Squeeze juice from limes into mixture and toss.
5. Mix in the salt, chili powder, and black pepper.
6. Refrigerate any leftovers within 2 hours of serving.
7. Consume or throw out food within 4 days of preparation.

---

*Source: medinsteadofmeds.com*