

Fresh Fruit Guide



Focus on fruit

To benefit from the many vitamins and minerals in fruit, focus on eating whole fruits, not fruit juice.

Fruits are rich sources of vitamins A, B-6, C, folic acid (folate), potassium, magnesium, and/or fiber.

Research shows eating fruits lowers risk of chronic diseases and certain types of cancer.

Focus on consuming a variety of different colors of fruits. Each color has unique nutrients and health benefits for a healthier you!

Blue/Purple—Decrease risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and cancer.

Yellow/Green—Decrease risk of cancer and high blood pressure; promote eye health.

Orange/Yellow—Decrease inflammation; promote eye health and immune system.

Red—Decrease risk of heart disease and cancer.



Buy local in season

Buy locally grown fruit during local season for best quality and lower cost.

June: blueberries, cherries, strawberries

July: apples, apricots, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, raspberries

August: apples, apricots, blueberries, cantaloupes, honeydew, muskmelons, peaches, pears, plums, raspberries, watermelon

September: apples, blueberries, cantaloupes, grapes, honeydew, muskmelons, pears, plums, raspberries, watermelon

October: apples, cantaloupes, grapes, pears, raspberries, watermelon

When fresh is not available or high in cost, remember canned and frozen fruit can be a tasty option.



Wash them first

Raw produce can carry bacteria or viruses that will make you sick. The bacteria can come from the soil, people who handle the produce, or from the knives and cutting boards in your home.

Steps to prepare fresh fruit:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Clean work area and utensils.
3. Wash fruit thoroughly under running water. Washing fruits with soap, detergent, or commercial produce wash is not recommended. Scrub firm produce, such as melons, with a clean produce brush.
4. After washing, dry produce with a clean cloth or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present on the surface.
5. Prepare fresh produce on a separate cutting board to prevent cross contamination from raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

Many pre-cut, bagged, or packaged produce are pre-washed and ready-to-eat. It will be stated on the package and can be used without further washing.

Source: Schaefer, J (2008) Color Me Healthy – Eating for a Rainbow of Benefits. Today's Dietician 10(11):34.

Additional Resources

Fruits and Veggies More Matters

(www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/fruit-nutrition-database)

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

AnswerLine (www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline)

Spend Smart. Eat Smart. (spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu)

Preserve the Taste of Summer (www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/preserve-taste-summer)

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Farmers Market Directory

(www.idalsdata.org/fmnp/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.formFarmersMarketDirectory)

Revised by Ruth Litchfield, state extension specialist. Originally prepared by Catherine Strohbehn, retired specialist; Maria Peterson and Emma Vsetecka.

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| FRUIT | SELECTION | STORAGE TIPS |
|--|---|---|
| Apple | Firm, good color for apple variety, smooth skin. Avoid mealy, bruised, or soft. | Store in refrigerator in sealed plastic bag up to 3 weeks, place in coldest part of fridge, keep away from strong smelling foods like onions. |
| Apricots | Firm, plump, yield to slight pressure and orange-gold in color with some hints of redness. Avoid fruit that are green in color, bruised, or shriveled skin. | Store at room temperature until ripe. Store ripe apricots in the refrigerator in a plastic bag for 3-5 days. |
| Avocado | Firm skin and no soft spots. Yield to gentle pressure when ripe. | Store unripe avocados in paper bag at room temperature. Refrigerate when ripe for 2-3 days. |
| Banana | Firm, yellow with some green. Avoid selection of bruised or mushy skinned fruit. | Store ripening (green/yellow) bananas at room temperature, store ripe (yellow/brown spots) bananas in refrigerator up to 2 weeks. |
| Blackberry | Firm, plump, shiny and even deep purple color. Avoid berries that are bruised or leaking. | Store in refrigerator up to 1 week in a ventilated container. Wash prior to use. |
| Blueberry | Firm, plump, uniformly round, dry, deep purple/blue with dusty looking white coating, called the bloom. Avoid shriveled or wet looking berries. | Store in refrigerator up to 1 week in a ventilated container. Do not stack containers. Wash prior to use. |
| Citrus <i>(Grapefruit/Lime/ Lemon/Orange)</i> | Heavy for size, firm, smooth skin with pleasant, citrus smell. Avoid rough, thick, blemished, or unevenly colored skins. | Store in refrigerator up to 2 or 3 weeks. |
| Cherry | Firm, fresh appearance, bright color, stems attached. Avoid shriveled or soft fruit. | Store in refrigerator up to 10 days. Keep away from strong smelling food. |
| Fig | Dry, smooth, unbroken skin. Yield to gentle pressure, but not mushy. | Store in a plastic bag in the coldest part of the refrigerator. Use within 2 days. |
| Grape | Firm, plump, well attached to green stems with dusty looking white coating, called the bloom. Avoid green coloring in dark varieties. | Store in refrigerator up to 1 week in vented plastic bag. Keep away from strong smelling foods. Wash just prior to use. |
| Nectarine | Firm, smooth skinned, heavy, with yellow background coloring. Avoid fruit with green background color. | Store at room temperature in brown paper bag to ripen. Store ripe nectarine at room temperature up to 3 days. |
| Peach | Firm, fuzzy skin, look for yellow background coloring. Avoid green background color. | Store at room temperature in paper bag to ripen. Store at room temperature up to 2 days once ripe. |
| Pear | Firm, ready to eat when fruit yields to gentle pressure at stem end. Color of green to yellow or red, depending on variety. Avoid bruised skin. | Store at room temperature in paper bag to ripen. Store in refrigerator up to 4 days once ripe. |
| Pineapple | Dark green leaves, heavy for size, slight give when pressed, ripe when leaf is easily removed and a pineapple aroma is detected. Avoid dry leaves or soft textured fruit. | Store at room temperature to ripen. Store cut pineapple in refrigerator covered up to 5 days. |
| Plum | Plump, smooth skin, yields to slight pressure. Avoid shriveled, bruised, or hard plums. | Store at room temperature in paper bag to ripen. Store in refrigerator up to 5 days once ripe. |
| Raspberry | Firm, plump, even colored. Appearance of dry, little hairs, called styles, are natural. Avoid wet, moldy, or bruised. | Store in refrigerator 1-2 days. Keep dry and store in shallow and ventilated container. Wash just prior to use. |
| Strawberry | Firm, plump, rich red color, dry with green stems. Avoid seedy tips, white shoulders, and wilted leaves. | Store in refrigerator up to 3 days. Keep in ventilated container or partially open plastic bag. Wash prior to use. |
| Smooth Skinned Melon <i>(Honeydew/ Watermelon)</i> | Honeydew: Creamy/yellow colored rinds, pleasant aroma, heavy for size, waxy surface. Avoid fuzzy surface. Watermelon: Symmetrical shape, cream/yellowish colored undersides, heavy for size, dried stem. | Store whole melon at room temperature. Store cut melon in refrigerator up to 1 week in container with lid. |
| Netted Melon <i>(Cantaloupe)</i> | Delicate/sweet aroma, tight netting, yellow-tinged skin under netting, slight give under pressure. | Store whole melon at room temperature up to 1 week. Store cut melon in refrigerator up to 1 week. |