

SENIOR NUTRITION NEWSLETTER

Nutrition Information, Recipes, and Resources for Seniors



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

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Spring is a time of renewal and growth.

Use resources in this newsletter if you're feeling inspired to enhance your health after a long winter.



Frozen Vegetables from Washington: A local option in soggy springs

Washington grows over 30% of the nation's supply of carrots, peas, and sweet corn for freezing, along with green beans, potatoes, onions, and lima beans¹. Vegetable freezing plants are located throughout the state near the fields where vegetables are grown, including in the Skagit and Chehalis valleys, Pasco, Connell, Ellensburg, and Warden. By freezing them at their peak ripeness and quickly after harvesting, frozen vegetables grown and processed in Washington have flavor and nutrition locked in. Sometimes frozen vegetables can be more nutrient-dense than fresh versions shipped from far away².

While many people think of fresh vegetables when they think of spring, the season can be challenging for Washington farmers. Extreme temperatures and rainy spring weather can flood farmers' fields, delay plantings, and encourage

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Days to Celebrate

MARCH

National Nutrition Month

22 As Young as You Feel Day

APRIL

4 World Carrot Day

19 Garlic Day

26 Stop Food Waste Day

MAY

17 World Baking Day

20 Pick Strawberries Day

31 Senior Health and Fitness Day



crop disease. Particularly in early spring, finding locally grown, fresh produce can be difficult and expensive. Using frozen vegetables grown in Washington is one way to support local farmers and get nutrients your body needs. Plus, since they're already chopped and ready to use, frozen vegetables are convenient too. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating 2 – 3 ½ cups of vegetables per day for adults aged 60 and over³.

Here are some ideas for using frozen vegetables in your home².

- » **Peppers and Onions** – Skip the tears and keep a bag of chopped onions in your freezer. Frozen onions and peppers can be flavorful additions to casseroles and omelets, as a pizza topping, or in a quesadilla.
- » **Peas** – Peas can add a colorful and sweet pop to virtually any dish. Add them to casseroles, pasta and noodle dishes, or serve them alongside baked chicken or fish.
- » **Chopped broccoli** – Frozen broccoli has a milder flavor than fresh. Sauté frozen broccoli with chopped garlic for a healthy side dish or try making a broccoli quiche with eggs.
- » **Cauliflower** – Frozen cauliflower (especially “riced” cauliflower that is chopped into rice-shaped pieces) is growing in popularity as a substitute for starches like white rice and pasta. Eat it on its own or make a cauliflower version of mashed potatoes.
- » **Mixed vegetables** – A frozen vegetable medley can be just the right choice for soups, stews, chilis, casseroles, stir frys, and countless other dishes. 🌱



Overcoming Social Isolation

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, so did a rise in social isolation and loneliness, particularly in older adults. Social isolation is defined as having few social relationships or infrequent social contact with others. Studies show that isolation can be worse for your overall health than obesity, and long-term health effects from isolation can be as bad as smoking 15 cigarettes per day⁴. Even now, it is still estimated that 17% of older adults are isolated, and therefore at risk for negative health consequences⁵. There are many factors affecting loneliness and isolation for seniors like living alone, access to healthcare and food, internet speed, and being a member of a social organization.



Are you or a loved one at risk for social isolation? Take a free assessment at connect2affect.org to find out. This can be the first step in getting help and improving your overall health and wellness.

If you feel lonely or isolated, increasing your social interactions can help. Even the smallest steps like learning about new opportunities to socialize in your area can make a difference. Volunteering in your community, enrolling in an art or cooking class, joining a local club, or engaging with others online can all be ways of building social connections. For many older adults, additional obstacles can get in the way, like not having transportation to attend a class.

With a little creativity, many of these barriers can be overcome. Asking your support network of friends, family, and healthcare providers can be a place to get ideas. For example, instead of attending a class, you could try learning a new skill online, and inviting friends over to share what you've learned. For information about public service programs (like assistance with high-speed internet bills), contact your local Area Agency on Aging by going to dshs.wa.gov/AL TSA/resources and choosing your county from the dropdown menu, or dial 211. 🌱

¹ Washivore. (2017). *Frozen vegetables* [Blog post]. <https://www.washivore.org/frozen-vegetables>

² UConn Health. (2019, March 26). “Enjoying Vegetables the Easy Way” [Blog post]. SNAP4CT. <https://www.snap4ct.org/snap4ct-blog/enjoying-vegetables-the-easy-way>

³ USDA. *Exploring MyPlate Food Groups*. <https://www.myplate.gov/>

Four Types of Exercise to Improve Health

According to the National Institute of Aging (NIA)⁶, most people focus on one type of exercise or activity that they find enjoyable. However, research shows that four types of exercise are important for maintaining your physical abilities and overall health. Read about each type of exercise below along with examples and safety tips. For videos of some examples and exercises below, visit the NIA's YouTube channel. For the most efficient physical activity routine, choose activities that combine the different types of exercise.

Endurance Activities – Build up to at least 150 minutes per week

Endurance (or aerobic) exercises make your heart pump faster and breathing increase. Endurance activities are good for the heart, lungs, and circulatory system. They can also help delay or prevent common diseases in older adults like diabetes, breast and colon cancer, heart disease, and others.

Examples: Walking or jogging, yard work (mowing, raking), dancing, swimming, biking, climbing hills or stairs, and playing sports like tennis or basketball.



Safety: Do a little light activity to warm up and cool down. Listen to your body – stop if you feel dizzy, chest pain or pressure, or a feeling like heartburn. Stay hydrated and wear appropriate safety equipment.

Balancing Activities – Aim to do balancing exercises at least three days a week

Along with strong muscles, good balance helps prevent falls and fall-related injuries.

Examples: Tai Chi (a type of “moving meditation”), standing on one foot, walking heel-to-toe, standing from a seated position.



Safety: Have a sturdy chair or person nearby if you feel unsteady. Talk with your doctor if you're unsure about a particular exercise.

Strength Activities – Workout all major muscle groups two times per week

Sometimes called “strength training” or “resistance training,” strong muscles make a difference. They help you stay independent and make everyday activities feel easier. Plus, strong muscles improve balance and can prevent falls.

Examples: Lifting weights, carrying groceries, gripping a tennis ball, arm curls, wall push-ups, and resistance band exercises.



Safety: Breath out as you lift or push, and breath in as you relax – don't hold your breath during strength exercises. Talk with your doctor if you're unsure about a particular exercise.

Flexibility Activities – Stretch after doing strength and endurance activities

Staying flexible helps maintain range of motion and keeps you moving freely.

Examples: Stretching, yoga, pilates, forward bend (reach your chest toward your toes while standing or seated).



Safety: Stretch when your muscles have warmed up. Breathe normally and move smoothly throughout flexibility exercises. Avoid holding your breath and bouncing during stretches. 🌱

⁴ AARP Foundation, & United Health Foundation. (2020, Oct. 6). *The Pandemic Effect: A social isolation report*. <https://connect2affect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/The-Pandemic-Effect-A-Social-Isolation-Report-AARP-Foundation.pdf>

⁵ Connect2Affect. *Tools to Overcome Social Isolation*. <https://connect2affect.org/>

⁶ National Institute of Aging. (2021, Jan. 29). *Four Types of Exercise Can Improve Your Mental and Physical Ability*. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/four-types-exercise-can-improve-your-health-and-physical-ability>

Dinner Around the World

Herbs and spices can take you all over the world without ever leaving your kitchen. When you are craving a dish from a particular place, use this spice guide as a tool to take you there.

Find more information about spices, flavor profiles, and printable infographics at cooksmarts.com/flavor.



Click on the 'Resources' header, or type 'Recipes' into the search box at the top of the page.

- ▶ **French Cuisine** – Nutmeg, thyme, garlic powder, rosemary, oregano, herbs de Provence (a spice blend)
- ▶ **Middle Eastern** – Bay leaves, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, ginger, coriander, oregano, garlic powder, za'atar (a spice blend)

- ▶ **Indian** – Bay leaves, cardamom, cayenne pepper, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, ginger, nutmeg, paprika, turmeric, garam masala (a spice blend), curry powder (a spice blend)
- ▶ **Caribbean** – Allspice, nutmeg, garlic powder, cloves, cinnamon, ginger
- ▶ **Mediterranean** – Oregano, rosemary, thyme, bay leaves, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, basil, ginger

- ▶ **North African** – Cardamom, cinnamon, cumin, paprika, turmeric, ginger, ras el hanout (a spice blend)
- ▶ **Cajun** – Cayenne pepper, oregano, paprika, thyme, rosemary, bay leaves, Cajun seasoning (a spice blend)
- ▶ **Thai** – Thai basil, cumin, garlic, ginger, turmeric, cardamom, curry powder (a spice blend)

Cut out this section and save it as a reference ✂

Black Bean Soup

Ingredients:

Time: 1 hour, Servings: 5

- 2 tablespoons vegetables oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery sticks, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons chili powder (or more to taste)
- 3 cans (15.5 ounce) low-sodium black beans (drained and rinsed, or use 6 cups of cooked black beans)
- 8 cups water
- 1 cube low-sodium chicken or vegetable bouillon
- 1 lime, juiced
- Plain low-fat yogurt (optional)

Directions:

1. Place a soup or stock pot over medium heat, and when hot, add the oil. Add the onion, carrots, celery, garlic, basil, oregano, and chili powder. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft.
2. Add the beans, water and bouillon cube. Raise the heat to high and bring the pot to a boil. Turn the heat down to low and cook about 2 ½ hours until the beans are very tender, and the mixture is uniform in color.
3. For a pureed soup, set the soup aside to cool for 20 minutes. Put 2 cups of soup in a blender and carefully blend until smooth. Transfer to a large container. Repeat with the rest of the soup.
4. Before serving, squeeze the juice of ¼ lime on each serving and add a tablespoon of yogurt.
5. Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 5 days.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 2 1/2 cups

Amount Per Serving
Calories 322

Total Fat	6 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	455 mg
Carbohydrates	51 g
Dietary Fiber	20 g
Total Sugars	4 g
Added Sugars incl.	0 g
Protein	17 g
Vitamin D	0 mcg
Calcium	147 mg
Iron	6 mg
Potassium	1044 mg

Find hundreds of healthy, budget-friendly recipes at myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Food Assistance

Phone: (360) 725-5640

Email: foodassistance@agr.wa.gov

On the internet at:

agr.wa.gov/services/food-access