

BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program

A Collaborative Program of

ActNow BC

With Funding From

BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

BC Ministry of Education

BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Administered by

BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation

Sourcing and Distribution of BC Fruits and Vegetables

Save-On-Foods/PriceSmart Foods/Overwaitea Foods/Cooper's Foods

Bulkley Valley Wholesale

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Welcome to the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program

Your school is part of this innovative Program that provides fresh fruit and vegetables to you and the children in your class.

The BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program is part of ActNowBC¹, an initiative to improve the health of BC children and families. The Program is a first in British Columbia. Similar programs in the UK and US² have been very successful and positively received by children, parents and teachers.

The BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program is a unique collaboration between ActNow BC and funded by BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, BC Ministry of Education, and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and is administered by the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation.

Objectives of the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program

The main objective of the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program is to increase the consumption of local fruits and vegetables.

Also, participants in this Program will gain awareness of

- the health benefits of fruits and vegetables
- fruits and vegetables grown in BC
- the safe handling practices of fruit and vegetable snacks

Supporting enjoyment of foods in the classroom

The actions of adults, such as parents and teachers, often influence children. Classroom teachers can assist student participation by:

- Providing the opportunity for students to eat the snack during class time. This shows commitment to this program
- Eating the snack with students. Role modeling is so important
- Allowing students to make their own decision whether to taste or not

This tells students that they have the ability to choose healthy foods for themselves.

The fresh and nutritious fruits and vegetables to be served in the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program will be grown in BC, subject to availability. Serving BC grown fruits and vegetables enhances the market for locally produced food products, contributes to the sustainability of rural communities and economies and raises awareness of the importance of maintaining local agriculture as a source of food.

1 ActNow BC: <http://www.actnowbc.ca>

2 For US information: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/November03/findings/freefruitandveggies.htm>
 For UK information: <http://www.foodinschools.org/>, <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/FiveADay>

Managing Food Allergies in School Settings

Many children in BC schools with food allergies have their specific allergens identified and have treatment plans in place for accidental exposure to the food/s to which they are allergic. However, not all severe allergic reactions can be predicted or avoided. Some children will have their first severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) in the school setting.

The BC Ministry of Education has implemented the British Columbia Anaphylactic and Child Safety Framework, and the Anaphylaxis Protection Order (HYPERLINK <http://aaia.ca/en/activity-BCAnaphylacticStudentProtectionAct.htm> <http://aaia.ca/en/activity-BCAnaphylacticStudentProtectionAct.htm>) to support protection of children with anaphylaxis.

Core Anaphylaxis Resources are available to assist school administrators, teachers and parents to promote a safe school environment. Teachers and other school staff who distribute BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program produce to children should have access to Anaphylactic Student Emergency Procedure Plans in place for allergic children, adhere to the Teacher/Staff/Supervising Adult Responsibilities in Anaphylaxis Awareness/Avoidance Strategies & Checklists, and participate in the school anaphylaxis training, which includes the identification of students at risk and how to use an epinephrine auto-injector.

Food-allergic children should only be offered food approved by their parents. Assumptions about foods can put allergic individuals at risk.

Precautions to restrict foods in schools due to food allergy concerns should be individualized to student needs and implemented in accordance with the BC Ministry of Education Core Anaphylaxis Resources.

The Key Messages of the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program are

- Pick local fruits and vegetables
- Pick a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables

- Wash hands before eating
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating

- Enjoy the taste of local fruits and vegetables
- Enjoy eating 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables every day

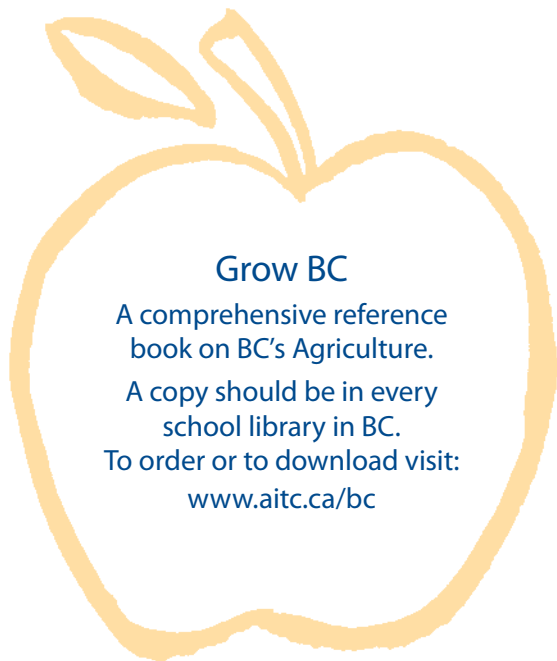
The fruits and vegetables provided in the Nutritional program are washed and ready to eat. No preparation is required. If it is possible, have students wash their hands before eating. If not, emphasize the importance of hand washing especially after using the toilet.

Examples of the fruits and vegetables that may be included in this program are: plums, pears, mini cucumbers, several varieties of apples, tomatoes, carrots and oranges.

Classroom Materials

To assist with meeting the objectives of the program, the following materials are included with this teacher package for you to display and use in your classroom. Additional materials are available for printing from the BCAITC website www.aitc.ca/bc

- Information on each of the fruits and vegetables served in the Program
- Monthly Newsletter Articles
- Agriculture Fish & Food in British Columbia Map Poster
- What Does It Take to Produce Food? Poster English/French



Grow BC

A comprehensive reference book on BC's Agriculture.

A copy should be in every school library in BC.

To order or to download visit:

www.aitc.ca/bc

Sources of Information

If you are interested in resources related to the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, agriculture in British Columbia, and the safe handling of food, some key links are provided below.

Nutrition and Health

Dietitians of Canada – <http://www.dietitians.ca>

The *Eat Well Live Well* section has many useful healthy eating tips

Dial-a-Dietitian – <http://www.dialadietitian.org>

Toll free Nutrition Hot Line 1-800-667-DIET or check the *Healthy Eating* section of their website

Health Canada – <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>

See Food and Nutrition – Canada's Guide to Healthy Eating and Healthy

Living - Canada's Guide the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

Canadian Cancer Society – <http://www.5to10aday.com>

Provides additional information on why we should eat more fruits and vegetables

BC Ministry of Education – <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health>

Information on Health Promoting Schools

Food Products and Agriculture

BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

<http://infobasket.gov.bc.ca>

<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/aboutind/products>

Both have alphabetical indexes of BC Farm Products

Food Safety

Canadian Partnership for Food Safety Education – Outlines ways to avoid foodborne illness <http://www.canfightbac.org/english/indexe.shtml>

Save-On-Foods Clean Hands Dirty Hands © – Program for 3 – 8 year olds

<http://www.saveonfoods.com/1/brightlife/safety/cleanhands.htm>

For more information on the BC Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program and Curriculum Materials on BC Agriculture contact

BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation – <http://www.aitc.ca/bc>

Background – Why a BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program?

Most British Columbians are not consuming even the minimum recommended daily amount of fruits and vegetables. For example

- The *Adolescent Health Survey II* conducted by The McCreary Centre Society in 1999 reported that only a quarter of BC youths ate the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables³.
- *The Heart and Stroke Report Card on the Health of Canada's Kids, (1999)* reported that only one out of five Canadian children (20%) aged 6 to 12 ate the recommended daily minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables⁴.
- The *BC Nutrition Survey* of adults (1999) recommended that people increase their intake of fruits and vegetables⁵.

Consumption of fruits and vegetables is essential for good health. Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Recognizing that eating habits established in childhood are important for long-term health, the three ministries—the Ministries of Healthy Living and Sport, Education and Agriculture and Lands—collaborate to create the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program.

Children who eat more fruits and vegetables

- eat fewer high calorie, high fat foods⁶
- have better attention spans and have fewer discipline problems at school⁷
- decrease their risk of cancer and other chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes⁸

For optimal health, children need to eat a minimum of 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

A serving is

- A medium-sized piece of fresh fruit
- ½ cup (125 mL) raw, cooked, frozen or canned fruits or vegetables
- 1 cup (250 mL) raw leafy vegetables
- ¼ cup (50 mL) dried fruit
- ½ cup (125 mL) fruit or vegetable juice

3 http://www.mcs.bc.ca/rs_ahs_2004_regional.htm

4 <http://www.heartandstroke.ca>

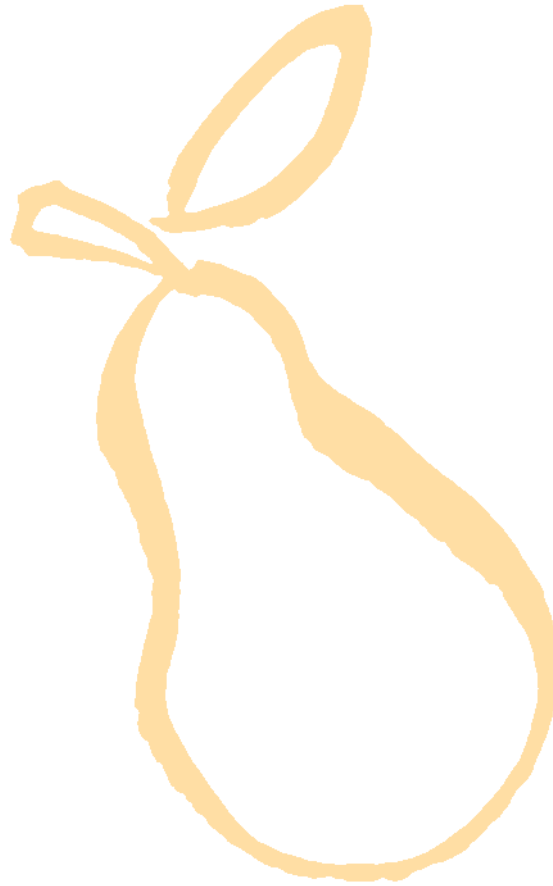
5 <http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/prevent/nutrition>

6 <http://www.5aday.com/pdfs/research/78-0503hires.pdf>

7 <http://www.5aday.com/pdfs/research/78-0503hires.pdf>

8 <http://www.5to10aday.com>

Information on Fruits and Vegetables Served in the Nutritional Program



The following list of fruits and vegetables reflect what may be served in the School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program this year. Produce will vary on an annual basis depending on availability and the growing season. For more information on BC grown produce please visit our website at www.aitc.ca/bc

Apples

Basic Facts

Apples are pome fruits. They have seeds in the middle protected by a core. There are many different kinds of apples each with a slightly different shape, colour and taste. Some common apples grown in BC are: Red and Golden Delicious, McIntosh, Royal Gala, Fuji, Ambrosia, Jonagold, and Spartan.

Where are they grown in BC?

Apples are grown commercially mainly in the Okanagan-Similkameen Valleys. It is not unusual to find apple trees in other locations. Many people even have apple trees in their yards.

What other ways can you enjoy this food?

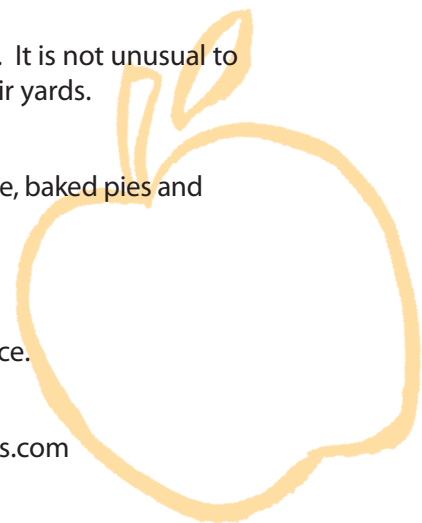
Apples have many delicious uses. They can be made into apple juice, applesauce, baked pies and other desserts. Dried apples or apple leather are also sweet treats.

Did you know?

Apples are the most important tree fruit crop in Canada.
If you want to prevent sliced apples from going brown, dip them in lemon juice.

For more information consult

- <http://www.bctree.com>
- <http://www.bcfuit.com>
- <http://www.bcappples.com>
- *Grow BC* - <http://www.aitc.ca/bc>



Carrots

Basic Facts

Carrots are a root vegetable. They grow down into the soil in various shapes from long and thin to short and fat.

Where are they grown in BC?

Carrots are grown in large fields in the Okanagan Valley, the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island. Because they are easy to grow, home gardeners often include them in their vegetable gardens.

What other ways can you enjoy this food?

Grated fresh carrots add colour to salads. Grated carrots are used in carrot cakes and carrot muffins. Canned or frozen carrots are also available at the grocery store.

Did you know?

Some unique varieties of carrots are red and purple. Baby carrots are either immature carrots or large carrots that are peeled and chopped into small pieces.

For more information consult

- <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/aboutind/products>
- *Grow BC* - <http://www.aitc.ca/bc>



Cucumbers

Basic Facts

The cucumber belongs to the same family as the pumpkin, zucchini, watermelon and other gourds. They grow on vines. They are cylindrical in shape and usually have dark green skins with white flesh and seeds on the inside.

Where are they grown in BC?

Cucumbers are grown in the Lower Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, and in the Kamloops/Okanagan areas. Most of the cucumbers grown in BC are grown in greenhouses. This way they can be grown almost all year round. But cucumbers can also be grown outside in the summer and many home gardeners plant cucumbers for their own use.

What other ways can you enjoy this food?

Cucumbers are always great in salads. Grated cucumbers combined with garlic and yogurt makes a low fat dip called Tzatziki.

Did you know?

Christopher Columbus brought cucumbers to North America.

The phrase “cool as a cucumber” came about because the cucumber’s interior flesh is 6° Celsius cooler than the outside air temperature on a hot summer’s day, making it cool to eat.

For more information consult

■ <http://www.bchothouse.com> ■ <http://www.bcgreenhouse.ca> ■ *Grow BC* - <http://www.aitc.ca/bc>

Mandarin Oranges

Basic Facts

Mandarin oranges are citrus fruits grown on small trees. They have orange skins like other oranges but the skin is loose and peels very easily.

Where are they grown in BC?

Mandarin oranges are not grown commercially in BC but BC residents look forward to them as a special treat during the Christmas/winter holiday season.

What other ways can you enjoy this food?

Mandarin oranges are usually eaten plain but can be added to a fruit salad. Canned mandarin oranges are also found at the grocery store.

Did you know?

There are different types of mandarin oranges called Clementine, Dancy, Satsuma and Tangerine. The Clementine is the smallest and has a thin peel and the fewest seeds. Dancy oranges are similar in size and colour as Clementines but have lots of seeds. The small Japanese Satsuma oranges are almost seedless. Most of the canned mandarin oranges are Satsumas. Tangerines are the most common type of mandarin grown in North America. They have a thick, rough skin and sweet flesh.

For more information consult

■ <http://www.cpma.ca/Nutrition/en/fruits.asp>

Pears

Basic Facts

Pears are a tree fruit that can be shaped like an apple or like a teardrop. The outer skin can be light green, yellow, or even reddish or brown. They have a core in the middle like an apple. Like apples, pears are called pome fruits.

Where are they grown in BC?

Most of the pears are grown in the Okanagan, Similkameen region and Kootenay Valley although it is not unusual for people to have a pear tree in their own yard.

What other ways can you enjoy this food?

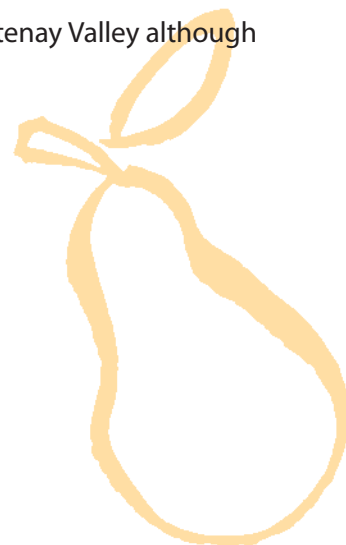
Canned pears make a tasty dessert when fresh pears are not available.

Did you know?

The two main varieties of pears are Bartlett and Anjou.
If you pull on the stem and it comes out easily, the pear is ripe.

For more information consult

■ <http://www.bctree.com> ■ *Grow BC* - <http://www.aitc.ca/bc>



Plums

Basic Facts

Plums are fruit with a smooth skin and a stone or pit in the centre. Prune plums have dark blue skins with yellow flesh. Other plums can be red, golden, or black on the outside and red or yellow on the inside. Prune plums will arrive with a natural powder-like haze covering the fruit. This is produced by the fruit for protection, has no flavour, and does not wash off easily. The plums are safe to eat with the bloom and very delicious.

Where are they grown in BC?

Plums are grown in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Kootenay Valleys. Many people have plum trees in their backyard.

What other ways can you enjoy this food?

Canned plums and dried plums are available all year round.

Did you know?

Dried plums are called prunes.
Birds love eating plums. This can be a problem for farmers so they use noisemakers or scarecrows to scare the birds away.

For more information consult

■ <http://www.bctree.com> ■ *Grow BC* - <http://www.aitc.ca/bc>

Tomatoes

Basic Facts

Tomatoes are a round fruit of a plant that grows on a vine. It has a skin that protects a juicy flesh with lots of seeds inside. Tomatoes are usually red but some varieties are yellow. They come in many sizes and shapes.

Where are they grown in BC?

Most of the commercially grown tomatoes come from greenhouses in the Lower Fraser Valley where they can be grown all year round. Field tomatoes are grown in the Kamloops/Okanagan area and are only available in summer and fall. Many people plant tomatoes in their vegetable gardens.

What other ways can you enjoy this food?

Fresh tomatoes are commonly used in salads. Canned tomatoes are the main ingredient of spaghetti and pizza sauce.

Did you know?

Tomato plants grown in a greenhouse can grow up to 35 feet long.

When tomato plants are grown in greenhouses they can produce 15-20 times as much as if they were grown in a field.

For more information consult

- <http://www.bchothouse.com>
- <http://www.bcgreenhouse.ca>
- *Grow BC* - <http://www.aitc.ca/bc>

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

September

The Trucks are Rolling Bringing Fruit and Vegetable Snacks to Our School!

Did you know that our school is participating in the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program?

Students will receive a free snack. This snack is not meant to replace food normally consumed at recess or lunch. The goal is to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. Fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, antioxidants, and fibre that promote health and prevent disease. Studies show that Canadians in general are not eating enough fruits and vegetables.

Eating one more fruit or vegetable a day can make a difference.

Get the school year off to a good start with healthy good tasting fresh fruits and vegetables. For back to school lunches:

- * Pick freshly harvested BC fruits like apples, pears, plums, grapes and vegetables like carrot and celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, and colourful pepper slices
- * Wash fruits and vegetables before packing in lunch bags
- * Enjoy the great taste of local fruits and vegetables

October

Autumn is Harvest Time in BC

Many communities are having fall fairs or apple festivals to celebrate the harvest. Farmers markets are still open and many farms offer tours of corn mazes and pumpkin patches. Try to take advantage of these opportunities to explore the bounty of food produced in our province.

Farm Tour Listings

www.aitc.ca/bc/farmtours.aspx

Traditionally Thanksgiving was a time to give thanks for the food that was harvested and would sustain families through the winter. Think about featuring BC fruits and vegetables for your Thanksgiving dinner

(e.g., mashed BC Russet potatoes and turnip, locally grown Brussels sprouts or beans, carrot and cabbage coleslaw, fresh BC fruit salad, apple or pumpkin pie).

- * Pick BC fruits and vegetables
- * Wash fruits and vegetables before cooking or eating
- * Enjoy and celebrate the great taste of local fruits and vegetable

Which would you pick?

- * Juice box - 200 ml
100% Real juice
Natural sweetness
- * Drink box - 200 ml
Coloured sugar water with a bit of real juice for flavour
6-12 tsp. Sugar (30 - 60 ml)
- * 600 ml pop or beverage like Snapple
Coloured flavoured sugar water
14-20 tsp. Sugar (70 -100 ml)

Beware of words like beverage, cocktail, and punch when purchasing drinks for school lunches. According to Canadian labeling regulations only drinks that are 100% juice can call themselves juice. Other drinks sometimes try to look like juice with pictures of fruit or words like “real juice flavour” but most have very little real juice. Read the

ingredient list and look for 100% juice with no sugars added (hint: the following words are sugars - sucrose, glucose, fructose, corn syrup).

Frozen juice boxes will thaw out by lunch time and still be cold. They also keep the rest of the lunch cool and out of the danger zone for bacteria growth.

Real fruit juice counts as a serving for the Vegetable and Fruit Group of Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Living but you can get even greater health benefits if you eat fresh fruit, so...

- * Pick local fruits and vegetables
- * Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- * Enjoy eating 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day

November

Breakfast FAST

No time for breakfast? Try these:

Breakfast in a Drink

Make fruit smoothies in a blender or food processor. Blend, fruit juice, milk, yogurt, or soft tofu, and pieces of fruit. Experiment with different juices and fruit. For a thicker drink use chunks of frozen fruit. Pour into a travel mug and enjoy on the way to school or work.

Breakfast Wrap and Roll

Spread a tortilla with light cream cheese and add any vegetables on hand (left over cooked vegetables, shredded carrot or lettuce, alfalfa or mixed sprouts, strips of sweet

red or green pepper), season with your favourite dressing or salsa. Roll up and eat on the go.

Grab a muffin or a bagel, add a piece of cheese, and nature’s fast food - a piece of fruit - for a quick nutritious breakfast.

- * Pick local fruits and vegetables
- * Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- * Enjoy the great taste of local fruits and vegetables

The fruits and vegetables served in this program are washed and ready to eat. Handlers and students are reminded of the importance of regular hand washing.

According to the Fight BAC!® (bacteria) campaign the best way to reduce the risk

of foodborne illness is to follow these four simple steps:

- * **CLEAN:** Wash hands, utensils and surfaces with hot soapy water before, during and after preparing foods. Sanitize countertops, cutting boards and utensils with a mild bleach and water solution. Wash all produce thoroughly before eating or cooking.
- * **SEPARATE:** Keep raw meats and poultry away from other foods during storage and preparation. Keep separate cutting boards for raw meats and vegetables. Always keep

foods covered.

- * **COOK:** Cook food thoroughly -- cooking times and temperatures vary for different meat and poultry. Prepare foods quickly, and serve immediately so foods don't linger at room temperatures where bacteria can grow.
- * **CHILL:** Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours. Make sure the refrigerator is set at a temperature of 4°C (40°F), and keep the freezer at -18°C (0°F).

December

Fruit for Snacks and Desserts

Keep washed fresh fruits and canned fruit cups handy for instant, low-fat snacks.

Research shows that children tend to eat more fruit if it is cut up and peeled for them. So have a bowl of prepared fruit pieces in the fridge in easy reach for quick snacking. Some fresh fruits turn brown when exposed to air (e.g., apple and pear slices). You can prevent this by dipping the pieces in lemon juice.

Cut up fresh fruit and combine with canned and frozen fruit to make your own fruit cocktail. Serve with yogurt if desired.

Baked apples make a delicious dessert. So do crisps and cobblers made with a combination of apples and berries.

Eat Together

In recent studies, researchers have found that students in grade 4 to 6 who ate dinners with their family consumed more vegetables, more fruit and juice and less pop.

Also when adults and children eat together

- * Children do better in school
- * Children have fewer behavior problems
- * Communication improves between children and adults
- * Meals are more nutritious and healthful ^[1]

Eating together is a challenge for today's busy families but making an effort even a couple of days a week can make a difference to long-term health.

[1] Refer to the BC Agriculture in the Classroom website for current research references <http://www.aitc.ca/bc>

- * Pick a variety of local fruits and vegetables
- * Wash hands before eating
- * Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- * Enjoy the taste of local fruits and vegetables

January

Winter Salads

BC carrots and cabbage are available all winter. Combine grated carrots and dried cranberries, blueberries or raisins and a light mayonnaise or salad dressing for a quick winter salad. Or combine shredded carrots, cabbage and sunflower seeds in the same manner for a quick coleslaw. Apple and shredded cabbage also works well.

BC greenhouses provide fresh sweet peppers, tomatoes and cucumbers almost all year round. In the winter months combine these veggies with onion and feta cheese to create a Greek style salad. Drizzle with a little olive oil and lemon juice and seasoning such as oregano, salt and pepper or use your family's favourite bottled dressing.

Winter Vegetables

BC root vegetables store well and are available all winter. Look for BC grown carrots, turnips, parsnips, rutabagas, and beets. Peel, chop and combine with similarly prepared BC potatoes, toss with a bit of olive oil, balsamic vinegar and seasonings and bake in covered pan at 400° F (200° C) for about an hour or until tender. It's an easy accompaniment for a meal and roasting is a quick, easy way to bring out the best flavors of many vegetables.

BC grown winter squash (e.g., Acorn,

Butternut, Hubbard, Spaghetti) is also available. Winter squash can be baked with or without a stuffing. Cut them in half and remove the seeds. (Hint: microwave the whole squash for a few minutes to soften it just enough to make cutting it in half easier). Then fill the center with a mixture of diced apples, dried cranberries and cinnamon. Sprinkle them with a little fruit juice, cover and microwave or bake until they are tender.

Remember veggies are veggies, whether fresh or frozen. When fresh produce is canned or frozen at the peak of harvest, little is lost in the way of nutrients. The same is true for fruits. When buying canned or frozen fruit beware of those packed in heavy syrup. Look for those in their own juice or light syrup.

- * Pick local fruits and vegetables
- * Pick a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables
- * Wash hands before eating
- * Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- * Enjoy the taste of local fruits and vegetables
- * Enjoy eating 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day

February

BC Farmers Grow Food for You

More than 200 different commodities are produced on about 20,000 agricultural farms in BC.

Less than 5% of the land in BC is suited to agricultural production. It is included in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The ALR was put in place to preserve farmland and provide some guarantee that it would continue to be available to produce food for future generations.

Vegetables grown in BC include: asparagus, beans, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, Chinese vegetables, corn, cucumber, eggplant, fennel, green onion, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, onions, parsley, parsnips, peas, peppers, potatoes, rutabagas, spinach, sprouts, squash, tomatoes, and watercress.

Fruits grown in BC include: apples, apricots, berries, cherries, cantaloupes, grapes, kiwifruits, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, rhubarb and watermelons.

Look for Grown in BC when buying fruits and vegetables and support BC Farm families.

- * Pick a variety of local fruits and vegetables
- * Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- * Enjoy the taste of local fruits and vegetables

Colour Your World with a Variety of Fruits and Vegetables.

The wide range of vitamins, mineral and phytochemicals found in different colours of fruits and vegetables are used by the body to stay healthy and energetic. Also, they protect against the effects of aging, help maintain healthy body weight, and may reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease.

There are five main colours:

Blue/purple - e.g., blueberries, prune plums, red cabbage, purple grapes, blackberries, purple carrots, purple peppers, eggplant

Green - e.g., green grapes, green pears, broccoli, romaine lettuce, spinach, green apples, kiwi fruit, brussel sprouts, green cabbage, green beans, green peppers, peas, zucchini

White - e.g., cauliflower, brown pears, mushrooms, onions, parsnip, white corn, potatoes, garlic

Yellow/Orange - e.g., peaches, nectarines, cantaloupe, oranges, winter squash, pumpkin, yellow peppers, carrots, turnip, apricots, yellow potatoes, corn, yellow beans

Red - e.g., tomatoes, strawberries, raspberries, red grapes, red potatoes, rhubarb, beets, cranberries, cherries, red peppers, red apples

March

Eat Your Colours Every Day

For Breakfast: sprinkle blueberries (blue/purple) on your cereal or add frozen strawberries or raspberries to your breakfast smoothie (red) or add green pepper to your scrambled eggs (green)

For Snacks: pack carrot sticks (yellow/orange), or a red apple, or some green grapes

For Lunch: try cherry tomatoes (red), a kiwi (green) or nectarine (yellow/orange)

For Dinner: have a green salad, some potatoes (white), corn (yellow), or beets (red)

For Dessert: make a multi-coloured fruit salad or try an apple and berry crisp.

You get the picture - try to eat a rainbow of colourful fruits and vegetables every day.

- * Pick a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables
- * Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating
- * Enjoy the taste of different coloured fruits and vegetables

April

Ways to Add More Fruits and Vegetables

- * Toss fruit into your green salad - try fresh or frozen blueberries, strawberries or raspberries, chopped apple or pear.
- * Try adding chopped apple or dried blueberries or cranberries to coleslaw or tuna/chicken salad.
- * Left over cooked vegetables can be transformed into a salad by tossing lightly with a low fat Italian dressing.
- * Don't serve ice cream naked - top with fresh or frozen berries or canned fruit.
- * Add extra chopped vegetables (carrots, broccoli, sweet pepper, potatoes, mushrooms) to soup, stews, chili, spaghetti sauce, and casseroles.

Make Fruits and Vegetables Convenient

- * Stock up on frozen vegetables - they are easy to do in the microwave, and great additions to canned soups or casseroles.

- * Stock up on frozen fruits - they make quick additions to fruit salads and smoothies.
- * Take advantage of the peeled and chopped and bagged salads, vegetables and fruit. They are ready to eat.
- * Keep canned fruit in the fridge ready to add to cereal or as the start of a fruit salad. Think about preserving your own peaches, apricots, plums, pears when they are at their peak of freshness and BC grown.
- * Individual packs of 100 percent fruit and vegetable juices are great for snacks.
- * Pick a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables.
- * Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- * Enjoy eating 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

May

Taste the First Veggies of Spring

Nugget potatoes, leafy lettuce, radishes, green onions, tender spinach ... are the first vegetables produced by BC farmers. They should be available soon in a store or farmers' market near you. Watch for them and enjoy the taste of spring.

Springtime is also Time to Plant a Seed for Good Health - Plant a Family Garden

A great way to introduce children to nutrient and fibre rich vegetables is to involve them in planting and caring for a family garden.

No space for a backyard garden - try a simple windowsill garden or gardening in pots on the balcony or patio. One pot could hold a variety of greens (lettuce, spinach, arugula, parsley, chard) for salads and sandwiches.

- * Pick local fruits and vegetables
- * Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating
- * Enjoy the taste of local fruits and vegetables

This program uses BC produce whenever possible.

Top Reasons to Buy Local

- * Locally grown food tastes better (it hasn't lost flavour in getting here from far away and long term storage).
- * Local produce is better for you (it hasn't lost nutrients during transportation and storage like produce that has spent a week getting here).
- * Local food preserves genetic diversity (local farms grown a large number of varieties).
- * Local food supports local farmers (consuming local food helps keep farm families doing the work they love).
- * Local food builds community (relationships develop with food producers when people seek out local foods, support farmers' markets, community gardens and other food projects).
- * Local food preserves open space (when farmers can make a living from their land it is less likely to be sold off for development).
- * Local food supports a clean environment and benefits wildlife (in general farmers are stewards of the land).
- * Local food is about the future (supporting local farmers ensures the farm will be there to produce nourishing, flavourful food in the future).

