



**Heart  
&Stroke™**

# Fresh from the field: Your best picks for healthy summer eating

Get ready to make the most of locally grown produce. Just grab this guide and head to your nearest farmer's market

## **What's inside:**

- tips for picking, storing and enjoying fresh produce
- how to make this a family affair
- 4 delicious, heart-healthy summer recipes



Imagine the sun-warmed sweetness of ripe tomatoes, the juicy burst of fresh berries and the crisp crunch of just-picked vegetables.



With summer here, there's no better time to pile your plate high than with your local farmer's market's finest produce.

After all, **Canada's Food Guide** recommends filling half your plate with vegetables and fruit at each meal. Plus, a balanced diet rich in fresh, whole foods is essential for reducing your risk of **heart disease** and **stroke**.

Vegetables and fruit are powerful sources of antioxidants such as vitamin C and beta-carotene, which help protect your arteries from plaque buildup.

**Foods high in Vitamin C:**

- broccoli
- red peppers
- strawberries
- cantaloupe

**Foods high in beta-carotene include:**

- carrots
- tomatoes
- squash
- sweet potatoes
- Swiss chard

By prioritizing fresh, whole foods, you'll take an important step toward protecting your health and fostering a healthier future.



**Bonus:** Your heart will thank you for reducing your intake of ultra-processed foods. According to **research** funded by Heart & Stroke, people in Canada consume about 50% of their daily calories from these products — including candy, soft drinks, pizza and chips. Most are high in salt, fat and sugar, and don't contain enough of the beneficial nutrients that our bodies need. Eating fewer **ultra-processed foods** is one of the best ways to improve heart and brain health.

Check out the tips and recipes on pages 5-8, grab your shopping bags and head to the farmers' market.

# Tips on picking fresh

Farmers' markets offer a unique opportunity to connect with local growers and learn from their expertise. You can smell the fresh produce, feel its texture and even brush the soil from a bunch of carrots or beets.

- **Choose variety:** Select vegetables and fruit in different colours, shapes and textures to bring a range of nutrients and visual appeal to meals, like this one: **Roasted eggplant lentil mash with carrots and peppers.**
- **Focus on freshness:** Look for vibrant colours and firm textures; avoid foods with bruising or wilting.
  - Corn should have damp, pale-green stems for peak freshness.
  - Mushrooms should have an earth-like scent.
  - Raspberries and strawberries don't ripen after picking, so avoid ones with white or green patches.
- **Engage with farmers:** Ask about growing methods, seasonal tips, recipes and storage advice. Learn what's freshest and what grows best in your area.



# Smart shopping and storing

With a little planning, you can maximize the freshness of your ingredients, reduce waste and ensure you're ready for busy days and grab-and-go moments.

- Be open to impulse buys; a perfect eggplant could inspire a new dish (see recipe below).
- If you've got freezer space, consider buying extra to freeze. (Could you get a bulk discount? Can't hurt to ask.) Good fruit choices are berries and sliced apples, peaches, pears and plums. On the veggie side, beans, peas and tomatoes can freeze well, as can heavier greens such as kale or Swiss chard. **Find how-to's here.**
- Keep peaches, pears and tomatoes on the counter.
- Potatoes, onions, garlic and squash do best in the pantry.
- Hardier veggies such as cabbage, beets, beans and broccoli should be stored in the fridge then washed just before using.
- Cool water is best for washing fruit and vegetables — no commercial washes, baking soda or vinegar required. Just make sure your hands are clean first. Learn more at [halfyourplate.ca](https://halfyourplate.ca) and follow these tips for specific items:
  - **Mushrooms:** Refrigerate in a paper bag, not plastic. Just before using, wipe clean with a cloth.
  - **Produce with rinds or thick peels:** Scrub items like oranges, cantaloupe, melon, carrots and potatoes with a clean brush to remove bacteria before eating or cooking.
  - **Berries:** Wash just before eating to avoid spoilage.



## Get the whole household involved

Involving your family in meal planning, shopping and preparation can make mealtimes more fun, while encouraging healthier eating habits. Visiting a farmers' market together lets kids learn about seasonal produce and the people who grow it.

Encourage them to explore or make a game of it. For example, everyone chooses one item they've never eaten before. Or try a scavenger hunt: find something purple, something sweet, something that grew underground.

In the kitchen, **assign kids simple tasks** like washing vegetables, arranging ingredients or tossing salads. You may find they're more excited to try the meals they've helped create and may even discover new favourites.





## Summer lovin' strawberry pancakes

 7 servings

 25 min

### Ingredients

- 1 cup (250 mL) diced fresh strawberries
- 1 cup (250 mL) whole wheat flour
- ½ cup (125 mL) all purpose flour
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) granulated sugar
- 2 tsp (10 mL) baking powder
- Pinch ground cinnamon
- 1½ cups (375 mL) skim milk
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) canola oil
- 2 tsp (10 mL) vanilla

### Directions

- 1.** Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Clean and dry all food preparation surfaces.
- 2.** Gently rinse fresh strawberries under cool running water before preparing them.
- 3.** In a large bowl, whisk together whole wheat and all-purpose flours, sugar, baking powder and cinnamon.
- 4.** In another bowl, whisk together milk with egg, oil and vanilla. Pour over flour mixture and stir to combine. Stir in strawberries.
- 5.** Spray griddle or nonstick skillet lightly with cooking spray. Heat over medium heat. Using ¼ cup (50 mL) measuring cup, pour batter onto hot griddle. Cook for about 2 minutes or until bubbles start to appear on top. Flip over and cook for another minute or until light golden brown. Repeat with remaining batter.


### Nutrition info per serving (2 pancakes)

- Calories 187 • Protein 6 g
- Total fat 5 g: Saturated fat 1 g • Cholesterol 28 mg
- Carbohydrates 29 g: Fibre 5 g • Sugars 8 g • Added sugar 3 g
- Sodium 122 mg • Potassium 222 mg



## Salmon sliders on garlic spinach

 **2 servings**

 **15 min**

### Ingredients

- 1 green onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) fresh parsley, chopped
- 6 cups (1.5 L) baby spinach
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (213 g) wild sockeye salmon, drained
- 1 egg white
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) dried dill
- Pinch black pepper
- Pinch hot pepper flakes

### Directions

- 1.** Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Clean and dry all food preparation surfaces.
- 2.** Gently rinse green onion, fresh parsley, baby spinach and garlic cloves under cool running water before preparing the ingredients.
- 3.** In a bowl, using a fork, mash salmon. Stir in green onion, parsley, dill, pepper and egg white until mixture sticks together. Form into 4 small patties; set aside.
- 4.** Spray large nonstick skillet with cooking spray and place over medium heat. Add spinach, garlic, hot pepper flakes and 1 tbsp (15 mL) of water. Cook, stirring for 3 minutes or until spinach is wilted. Remove to 2 plates.
- 5.** Spray skillet with cooking spray and return skillet to medium heat. Cook salmon patties turning once for about 3 minutes per side or until golden and firm. Place 2 patties on each serving of spinach and serve.

### Nutrition info per serving (1 of 2)

- Calories 190 • Protein 25 g
- Total fat 7 g: Saturated fat 1.5 g • Cholesterol 70 mg
- Carbohydrates 9 g: Fibre 4 g • Sugars 0 g • Added sugar 0 g
- Sodium 500 mg • Potassium 750 mg



## Roasted eggplant lentil mash with carrots and peppers

 **6 servings**

 **55 min**

### Ingredients

- 4 carrots (about 12 oz/360 g), peeled and cut in half crosswise
- 1 small eggplant (about 1 1/2 lb/750 g)
- 3 green onions, cut into 2 inch (5 cm) pieces
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) canola oil
- Pinch pepper
- 1 can (19 oz/540 mL) no salt added lentils, drained and rinsed
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) tahini paste or other nut or seed butter
- Dash hot pepper sauce (optional)

### Directions

- 1.** Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Clean and dry all food preparation surfaces.
- 2.** Scrub carrots with a clean vegetable brush under cool running water. Also, gently rinse eggplant, green onions, bell pepper, garlic clove and fresh cilantro under cool running water before preparing the ingredients.
- 3.** Cut the eggplant in half lengthwise and spray with cooking spray. Place on parchment paper lined baking sheet.
- 4.** Cut carrots into 1/2 inch (1 cm) thick strips and toss with green onions, pepper, oil, garlic and half of the cilantro and pepper. Spread around the eggplant and roast in 400° F (200° C) oven for about 35 minutes or until eggplant is soft and carrots are golden.
- 5.** Scoop flesh out of eggplant into a bowl and stir in lentils, remaining cilantro and tahini. Spoon into shallow serving dish and top with roasted carrot mixture. Serve warm.
- 6.** Store any leftovers away in the fridge within two hours, or sooner if they're in a warm location.

### Nutrition info per serving (1 of 6)

- Calories 170 • Protein 8 g
- Total fat 6 g: Saturated fat 1 g • Cholesterol 0 mg
- Carbohydrates 25 g: Fibre 6 g • Sugars 6 g • Added sugar 0 g
- Sodium 181 mg • Potassium 505 mg



**In need of inspiration to get started on healthy eating?**

Check out these recipes for heart and brain health!

[Healthy living recipes](#)



## Berry Waldorf salad

 **8 servings**

 **10 min**

### Ingredients

- 1 large apple, cored and diced
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) each quartered strawberries and blueberries
- 2/3 cup (150 mL) chopped celery
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) chopped walnuts or pecans
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) raisins or dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) plain 0% Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp (5 mL) each liquid honey and lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) ground cinnamon

### Directions

- 1.** Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Clean and dry all food preparation surfaces.
- 2.** Gently rinse the apple, strawberries, blueberries and celery under cool running water before preparing the ingredients.
- 3.** In a large bowl, combine apple, strawberries, blueberries, walnuts, celery and raisins.
- 4.** In a small bowl, whisk together yogurt, honey, lemon juice and cinnamon. Stir into apple mixture and stir gently to coat. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

### Nutrition info per serving (1 of 8)

- Calories 86 • Protein 3g
- Total fat 3g: Saturated fat 0g • Cholesterol 0mg
- Carbohydrates 13g: Fibre 2g • Sugars 9g • Added sugar 1g
- Sodium 15mg • Potassium 200mg

More helpful articles:

**[Learn more healthy eating basics](#)**

**[Learn more about vegetables and fruit](#)**

**[Explore healthy habits for kids](#)**

