

WHY SHOULD I BE INTERESTED IN LOCALLY AVAILABLE FOODS?

Shopping for locally grown produce allows you to purchase a variety of fruits and vegetables that are high in fiber, vitamins and nutrients and contain no artificial ingredients. They give you the flexibility to decide what looks good, what tastes good and what best fits into your healthy diet.

Some research suggests that freshly picked and eaten fruits and vegetables are more nutritious than those which have traveled many miles to reach your plate.¹ A lot of people also think that locally grown and distributed foods are better tasting and are priced reasonably.

Many communities also lack a full-service grocery store. If this is true in your neighborhood, you may be used to shopping at corner stores, bodegas, and convenience stores. These locations often charge higher prices than supermarkets and may not provide you with access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This may make it difficult for you to make positive changes to your diet. Accessing food through local sources, such as those listed below, can help you make good dietary choices based on recommendations from your Doctor or Registered Dietician.

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Locally grown and distributed food is a “growing” network! Many resources exist that will help you learn more and assist you in accessing this nutritious food.

In addition to the options presented here, consider looking into your local Food Policy Council. A Food Policy Council is a vehicle to make important things happen in your community—like increasing the number of farmers’ markets and community gardens. For more information about Food Policy Councils, visit www.statefoodpolicy.org/. Another helpful resource is the Community Food Security Coalition, www.foodsecurity.org.

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ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF NUTRITIOUS, AFFORDABLE FOOD



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¹ Prammer, Anita. *Growing Health: How Industrial Food Production and Handling Impacts Nutritional Quality*. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. Summer 2007.

WHAT SOURCES OF LOCALLY AVAILABLE FOOD MIGHT EXIST IN MY COMMUNITY?

■ **Farmers' Markets and Farm Stands:** With more than 4400 farmers' markets throughout the United States², your community may have a farmers' market or farm stand that allows you to buy produce directly from a local farmer. These seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables, like juicy ripe tomatoes, curly green kale, succulent peaches, and fragrant herbs are available for purchase just hours after being harvested. Many markets also accept food stamps and Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons (if you are an eligible senior or WIC qualified mother). Visit www.localharvest.org/farmers-markets/ to find a farmers' market or farm stand in your community. Visit www.fns.usda.gov/wic/SeniorFMNP/SeniorFMNPoverview.htm to learn about Senior FMNP and www.fns.usda.gov/wic/FMNP/FMNPfaq.htm to learn about WIC FMNP. Your local library can help with these web searches.

² USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

■ **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Programs:** When you join a CSA you buy a "share" in the harvest of a local farm and receive a box every week from the farm. Most CSAs offer vegetables, but many also include fruit, milk, bread, honey or eggs. If transportation is difficult for you, some CSAs have delivery options, which might include dropping the box at your house or at a central pick-up location in your neighborhood. Payment up front is usually expected, though many CSAs offer pricing options like payments over time, work shares, and sliding-scale prices based on income. Some also accept food stamps and sell shares directly to food-assistance agencies, like food banks or food pantries. Remember: The farmers harvest only the products that are ready to eat, so your CSA selection is fresh and healthy! For more information on locating a CSA in your community, visit: www.localharvest.org/csa/

■ **Community Gardens:** Are you interested in knowing exactly what's in your food? Do you miss a vegetable that you ate as a child but can no longer find in the grocery store? Do you want a bit of exercise and some time outside in the sun and fresh air? Then perhaps a community garden is for you! Joining a community garden in your neighborhood is an excellent way to get affordable, nutritious food that is often grown organically. One study estimates that gardening can add \$500 to \$1200 worth of produce per year to a household's diet. Consider joining a community garden on your own or with a friend, and nurture produce and herbs in your own small neighborhood garden. Visit www.communitygarden.org/

■ **U-Pick Farms:** Many communities have local food and farm guides/maps that allow for easy access to local farms, including the opportunity to pick your own fruits and vegetables. Visit the web page for your state department of agriculture, or www.pickyourown.org.

■ **Food Banks:** Food banks distribute billions of pounds of food every year to communities around the country. Working with food recovery organizations, nutrition services organizations, food pantries, and other anti-hunger groups, many food banks also offer nutrition education (like cooking classes) and easy access to fresh fruits and vegetables—often through food bank operated community gardens, CSAs, or farmers' markets. For example, in Washington, D.C., the Capital Area Food Bank operates a farm that grows and distributes chemical-free produce to underserved communities in the Washington Metro Area. In Atlanta, the Community Food Bank operates and supports community gardens that grow produce for gardeners and food bank partner agencies. To find a food bank near you, visit: www.secondharvest.org/.

■ **The Grocery Store:** Did you know that there may be a "locally grown" section of your neighborhood grocery store? Check with the store manager to find vegetables and other products from area farms.