

Extension

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PEACHES

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Colorado peach season is here! What a great snack or dessert! With their juicy inside flesh, which ranges in color from white to bright yellow, and their sweet flavor, it is not surprising that peaches are the third most popular fruit grown in the United States, right behind apples and oranges. Whether fresh, frozen, dried or canned, they can be used in a variety of ways – eaten on their own as a snack, or added to salads, desserts, cereals, and cooked dishes. Peaches are a good source of vitamin C. They are low in calories and sodium. Eating peaches with the skin on increases the amount of fiber you get.

When you buy local peaches in season, you'll find they are softer, sweeter tasting, and sweeter smelling than you'll find in the grocery store during other seasons. Peaches don't get any sweeter after they have been harvested, but they will become softer and juicier as they mature.



Shopping Tips: When buying peaches, look for skins that show a background color of yellow or warm cream – the amount of pink or red “blush” on their cheeks depends on the variety, and is not a good sign of ripeness. Green skins, however, mean that the peach was picked too soon and will not be sweet. Once peaches are picked, their sweetness will not increase, so choose fruits that smell like a peach. Look for plump, medium to large-sized peaches with unwrinkled skins. Avoid the rock-hard fruits and choose those that yield slightly to pressure along the seam, even if they may otherwise be fairly firm. Peaches will soften if kept at room temperature for a few days.

Storage: If you bring home firm peaches, leave them at room temperature for a few days to soften; place them in a paper bag to speed up the process. If peaches are ripe and you will not eat them within a day, store them in the refrigerator. They should keep for three to five days.

Serving Suggestions: Try adding peach slices to cold cereal, or make a parfait by layering peaches, low-fat yogurt and crunchy cereal in a tall glass. Add chopped fresh, frozen, or canned peaches to waffle batter, or use them as a topping for waffles or pancakes. Arrange thin, peeled peach slices on hot toast that has been spread with a little low-fat cream cheese; dust with cinnamon and serve immediately.

Not All That's Sweet Is Sugar!

It is not necessary to deprive yourself or your child of an occasional treat, but use creativity to provide healthy snacks that are naturally sweet. Use fruit!

- Serve fruit juice instead of soda pop. Water down the juice by adding 1/3 cup water to 2/3 cup juice.

- Try fruit leather or dried fruit as an alternative to candy *
- Blend frozen fruit with milk to make a healthy shake
- Serve peaches and cottage cheese, chopped nuts on top
- Serve peach slices with yogurt and a sprinkle of cinnamon
- Serve peach slices mixed with other fresh fruits with sour cream, sprinkle of nutmeg

A recent study found that sugar cannot be blamed for hyperactivity in children. However, sugar does contribute to cavities and poor dental health. *Dried fruit and fruit leathers can stick to teeth and contribute to tooth decay as well, so proper teeth brushing after eating these is important. Also; foods containing added sugar often contribute very few nutrients to your child's diet besides calories.

Let's Talk

Small children are unable to understand the concept of nutrition, so focus on the importance of eating a variety of food like peaches and other fruits, not the nutrients. A parent's responsibility in teaching nutrition to a young child is to expose the child to a wide range of foods and make a variety of foods available. Try the following activity to teach your child about trying and eating a wide variety of fruits.

Activity for Health:

I Can Eat a Rainbow

Supplies:

- o Colored construction paper: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple
- o Pictures of fruits the children have cut out of magazines, etc.

Directions:

1. Have kids arrange colored construction paper in rainbow shape (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple).
2. Have kids take pictures of fruits that they've cut from magazines and catalogs and place them on the rainbow.
3. Discuss how many different colors fruits can be and how a food's appearance can make us enjoy eating it. Are the inside and the outside of a fruit always the same color?
4. Follow with fruit tasting activity; encourage kids to try a fruit of every color. You could also serve a different fruit each day and add it to the rainbow that you have posted on the wall.

Adapted from The Kitchen Magician: A children's guide to nutrition and health. Texas A&M



Colorado Peach Slush

- 1 cup sliced peaches (skin on)
- ½ cup milk
- 4 ice cubes
- 1 c. low-fat yogurt or ice cream

Whirl ingredients in a blender and serve for breakfast or dessert. Makes 6 servings

