



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Family Matters

Improving Health Together

When Fresh is Not an Option: Consider Canned and Frozen Fruits!

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Including more fruits and vegetables in our diets is at the core of most nutrition messages. However, sometimes, fresh produce may not be an option for your family for a variety of reasons. Do not let this discourage you! Today, let's focus on fruit. While canned fruit may be considered an unhealthy option, that is not always true! When fresh fruits are not an option, canned and frozen fruits can be great alternatives. They are often more affordable, store a long time, convenient, available year-round, and can provide good nutrition.



While the processing of canned and frozen fruits may lead to some nutrient loss, it is minimal. The canning and freezing of these foods take place within just a few hours after harvesting. This process can help preserve the taste and most nutrients. Because canning requires high heat, some canned fruits may have less water-soluble vitamins, like vitamin C and B vitamins. Yet, for other nutrients and antioxidants found in fruits, the heat can actually increase the body's ability to absorb and use those nutrients.



Select Variety

Getting a variety of fruits in a variety of forms is the key to assuring you are getting all the nutrients fruits have to offer. By eating a wide variety of fruits – fresh, frozen, or canned – in all shapes and colors, we are getting a wider variety of nutrients to help support all our body's different functions.

Tips for Purchasing and Using Canned and Frozen

Fruits:

- When purchasing canned fruits, look for fruit that is packed in 100% fruit juice and that does not have added sugar, syrup, or other high calorie ingredients.
- Avoid cans with dents, cracks, bulges, or leaks. This may be a sign of bacteria that causes botulism.
- Choose the larger cans of canned or jarred fruits for the best value, rather than individually packed fruit cups.
- For the best quality, consume canned fruit by the "best by" date printed on the can or label.
- Frozen fruit can last for up to a year or longer in the freezer if properly kept frozen.
- Just like with fresh fruit, one serving of frozen or canned fruit is ½ cup.



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Ideas for Using Canned Fruits	Ideas for Using Frozen Fruits
Eat plain	Thaw or keep frozen and eat plain; thawing is easy and quick
Top yogurt or layer in a parfait	Keep frozen and add to smoothies
Top bread and cheese with slices of canned pear	Mix berries or other small chopped fruits into yogurt the night before, they will be thawed by the next day
Mix to make a fruit salad; add fresh herbs like cilantro, basil, or mint	Keep frozen and add to muffins or quick breads
Top cottage cheese	Keep frozen, if small, and add to pancakes
Add to a fruit crisp	Thaw and top a waffle
Stew to make a warmed spicy dessert	Add to oatmeal at the beginning of cooking; the heat will thaw the fruit

Let's Talk

My child's favorite food group is fruit. Due to their natural sweetness, fruits are generally gladly accepted by children. Explain to children that fruits contain many important nutrients, like minerals and vitamins that help their body grow and stay healthy. If your child has ever had issues with going poop, be sure to tell them the fiber in fruit can help with that, making it easier and less painful to go.

Challenge your family to come up with ideas to include more fruits, whether fresh, frozen, or canned, in your family's meals and snacks each day. Aim for about 2-3 servings of fruits a day.

Recipe for Health

Spiced Stewed Fruit (made with canned fruit)

This recipe is great for colder months. Experiment with a variety of different combinations of canned fruits.

Serves: 3-4

Ingredients:

- 1 (15 ounce) can mixed fruit, canned in its own juices (or a combination of different canned fruits)
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon orange zest (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon ginger or allspice (optional)

Directions:

1. Wash hands and food preparation surfaces with soap and water.
2. Drain canned fruit.
3. Add fruit, orange juice, and cinnamon to a small saucepan. Add orange zest and ginger, if using.
4. Heat fruit over medium heat. When fruit starts to bubble, reduce heat to low. Cook for 10 minutes.
5. Store leftovers in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days or freeze.

Serve warm or cold, as a side dish or dessert. Optional toppings to add flavor, texture and nutrients could include yogurt, whipped cream, chopped nuts, or granola.



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