

# Healthy Firsts by Health First

*A Newsletter Dedicated to Your Health & Wellness*



**In season and local foods are more nutritionally dense and also better for the environment than foods that are imported. Find a farmer's market close to you today!**

## Why Eating Seasonal & Local Food is the Best Way to Eat...

You may have heard all the hoopla about eating local and in-season foods on the news and food networks. But do you know why it's a good idea to eat foods that are locally grown? The answer to that question is that consuming fruits and vegetables that are in season and local is not only good for you, but also great for the environment.

When we consume foods that are NOT locally grown they have to be brought in from across the globe and must travel long distances to make it to your supermarket. In fact, your food may have to travel 1500 to 2500 miles to get to you! Doesn't quite bring to mind the word "fresh," does it? Because these foods have to travel from so far away, they have to be picked while still immature in order to prevent spoilage. This not only affects the fresh taste and aroma of your produce, but it also causes vitamin degradation and nutrient loss.

In fact, produce that is picked and frozen while still in season is actually higher in nutritional content than produce that is transported off-season from abroad.

Shipping produce over long distances also negatively impacts our planet. It causes an increase in green house gas emissions, pollution of the atmosphere, oceans and depletion of the earth's energy resources. So, become a part of the local foods movement today by choosing to purchase in-season, locally grown foods. The best way to do this is to find a farmers market close to you today!

**TIP:** Google "Schaumburg Farmers Market" to find a link to the Village of Schaumburg Farmers Market. Eggplant is in season in Illinois from June through October. See our feature recipe for a delicious, super nutritious, eggplant recipe.

## Losing Vitamin C - A Little Known Fact about Humans and Vitamin C Production

Did you know that humans are among the few animals that are incapable of synthesizing vitamin C in their own bodies? Humans, primates, guinea pigs and fruit bats are the only creatures on earth that lack L-gulonolactone oxidase, an enzyme that is needed to produce vitamin C in the body. Of the creatures that *have* retained the ability to make vitamin C in their own bodies, research has shown that they tend to make a lot more of the vitamin when under physical, mental, emotional or environmental stress. In fact, small amounts of stress can lead to a quadrupling of the vitamin! These same creatures also don't suffer from a wide range of stress related ailments that humans tend to suffer from. Various animal and human studies have lead scientists and physicians around the world to conclude that Vitamin C is an important nutrient for the management of stress.

**TIP:** Feeling stressed (mental, physical, emotional)? Up your Vitamin C. Top foods for natural sources of vitamin C include: Red and green hot chili peppers, guavas, bell peppers, dark leafy greens and herbs, kiwis, papayas, oranges, strawberries.



### This Month's Trivia:

What delectable fruit did Homer call "the gift of gods" in his epic "The Odyssey" ?

Hint: This fruit is in season in Illinois from August through October. See reverse for the answer to this month's trivia question.

### This Month's Green Thought...

#### Is your lunch healthy for you and your environment?

Bringing lunch to work in reusable containers is likely the greenest (and healthiest) way to eat at work. Getting delivery and takeout almost inevitably ends with a miniature mountain of packaging waste. If you do order delivery, join coworkers in placing a large order (more efficient than many separate ones). Also, bring in a reusable plate, utensils and napkins. If you do go out for lunch, try biking or walking instead of driving.



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## 4 Great Yoga Poses for Prevention of Low Back Pain



**1. Cobra Stretch.** Lay flat on your stomach. Come up onto your elbows or your wrists. Make sure your hips stay flat on the ground.



**2. Bird/Dog.** While on all fours, reach forward with one arm and lift the opposite leg and point with your toes. Hold for three seconds and then alternate. Continue for 1 - 3 minutes.



**3. Spiral Stretch.** Sit with one leg straight and the other foot crossed over to the other side of the opposite knee. Gently twist. Use the arm opposite to the knee that is bent in order to deepen the stretch.



**4. Cat Camel.** This is a two part stretch. Come on to all fours. Make sure your knees are directly in line with your hips and your wrists are directly in line with your shoulders. Tuck your tail bone in towards your head and tighten your abdominal muscles to arch your low back. Release your tail bone and hollow out your low back for the second part of the stretch. Repeat 15 - 20 times.



**Answer to this Month's Trivia Question: The Pear.** This fruit has been revered for centuries. It has been known to be served everywhere from the luxurious courts of Louise XIV to the White House. Despite its rich reputation, the pear is very affordable and can be found at your local grocer. The best time to buy it in Illinois is between the months of August and October, when it is in season. Pears are a good low calorie source of dietary fiber, vitamin C and other anti-oxidants.



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## Feature Recipe:

### *Eggplant Pepper Relish*

#### Ingredients

- 3 medium sweet red peppers, cut in half lengthwise
- 3 medium sweet yellow peppers, cut in half lengthwise
- 1 medium eggplant, halved lengthwise
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 cup minced fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

#### Directions

1. Place peppers skin side up on a broiler pan. Broil for 10-15 minutes or until tender and skin is blistered. Place in a bowl; cover and let stand for 15-20 minutes. Peel off and discard charred skin.
2. Broil eggplant skin side up for 5-7 minutes or until tender and skin is blistered. Place in a bowl, cover and let stand for 15-20 minutes. Peel off and discard charred skin. Cut peppers into strips and eggplant into cubes.
3. In a large bowl, combine the oil and garlic. Add peppers, eggplant, parsley, oregano, salt and pepper. Toss to coat. Serve at room temperature bruschetta style, or in a sandwich. Can also be added to a food processor or blender to puree and serve as a dip.

Health First Wellness is dedicated to each patients well being. We use chiropractic care, acupuncture, massage therapy, therapeutic exercise and nutrition counseling to provide our patients with optimum pain relief, disease prevention and an overall feeling of whole body wellness. If you are experiencing pain, call us today to set up an appointment. We promise to do everything we can to put your Health First.

This Newsletter is brought to you from the desk of Dr. Vishva M Desai, D.C. Dr. Desai is a Board Certified Chiropractic Physician and Acupuncturist. She also holds a degree in Health Promotion & Exercise Prescription from the University of Oklahoma.

