

## Food & Fitness

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Enjoy Nebraska Foods!

Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

Many of you have grown your own pumpkins or might like to buy a pumpkin and make a pumpkin dish from scratch. One-third cup of baked pumpkin provides 100% of the vitamin A recommended daily for adults. Pumpkin is also low in calories if added fat and sugar are kept to a minimum. A half cup of baked pumpkin only contains 40 calories. Pumpkin is also an excellent source of dietary fiber and potassium.

The best pumpkins for cooking are not the large bright ones that are popular for making jack-o-lanterns. Rather, smaller pumpkins are more flavorful and far less stringy. Choose pumpkins that have a hard rind and are heavy in relation to their size. Once cut cover the pumpkin tightly with plastic wrap. It can be stored in the refrigerator for up to about two days.

DO NOT eat a pumpkin that has been cut up and used for a jack-o-lantern.

Here are some general ideas for preparing pumpkin. If you have Internet access, you can find hundreds of recipes by using a computer "search engine." A simple technique is to type in the search blank: "pumpkin recipes." Put these two words in quotes—for most search engines, this will assure that you find only recipes, not information about growing pumpkins, etc.

### Basic Pumpkin Preparation

Pumpkin can be used in nearly any winter squash recipe. Pumpkin puree can be used in pies, breads and desserts and also in soups and stews, or in place of mashed potatoes in shepherd's pie. It can be steamed, sauteed, and stir-fried. Baked pumpkin halves are delicious stuffed with meat, rice, or vegetable mixtures.

The easiest method is to bake it. To prepare a pumpkin for baking, wash and cut it in half lengthwise. Be careful when cutting the pumpkin open. Use a strong, sharp knife. It may help to set the pumpkin on a thick towel. Insert the tip of the knife first. If you can't saw your way through, you may have to keep lifting the knife out and inserting it again.

Scoop out the seeds and stringy pulp. Place pumpkin, shell side up, in a greased, rimmed baking pan. Bake in a 325 degree F oven for about one hour or until it is tender when pierced with a fork. Leave as halves or cut into smaller portions. For a quick pumpkin dish, serve brushed with a little butter or margarine and sprinkled with brown sugar or a mixture of sugar and cinnamon.

To use the pumpkin in a pureed form: After baking, scrape the pulp from the shell and put it through a blender or food processor.

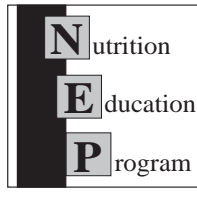
### No-Crust Pumpkin Pie

- 2 large (or 3 medium) eggs
- 1 (16 oz.) can or 2 cups cooked pumpkin
- 1 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 2/3 cup brown or white sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1-3/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice\*
- 1/4 cup whole wheat or white flour
- 1 cup water

\*or substitute a combination of: 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon ginger and 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg.

Mix all ingredients except water together in a large bowl. Stir in water gradually until well mixed. Pour into a greased 9-inch pie plate. Bake at 350 degrees F for 45-55 minutes or until a knife inserted 1 inch from center comes out clean. If pie isn't eaten within about two hours after baking, refrigerate. (AH)

# Finding facts about vegetables and fruits



**Nutrition Education Program**  
for Limited Resource Families  
**Mary Abbott**  
Extension Assistant

Not all youth took a summer vacation from learning. Three hundred ninety-three children were introduced to the "Five-A-Day" plan. Almost half of the children learned that they should be eating three vegetable and two fruit servings each day, a total of "Five-A-Day."

Students learned that vegetables and fruits provide many benefits to our bodies.

- Fiber aids in digestion.
- Vitamin A increases night vision.
- Vitamin C strengthens cells.
- Iron helps in oxygen transport.

Most participants were introduced to fruits and vegetables that were new to them, such as: kiwis from Australia, jicamas from Mexico and mangos from Asia.

After learning about the vitamins and minerals in some of the fruits and vegetables, one young boy asked, "Does an orange really have all that in it?"

One youngster told of the benefits vegetables and fruits provide. He simply added, "I know all that stuff is in there because I read about it on the

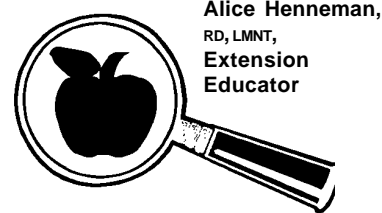
food labels!"

When youth completed the hour-long program, it was time to prepare snacks. They enjoyed making and eating "Apple Smiles."

Sponsoring agencies include: Belmont Community Center, Carol Yoakum Center, Cedars Youth Services, Family Service, Good Neighbor Center, Hispanic Center, Malone Community Center, Parks and Recreation, Salvation Army and Willard Community Center. (MA)



## Focus on Food



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

### Q: How often should I change my dishrag?

**A:** Probably more often than you think. Bacteria need four factors to grow: food, moisture, the right temperature and enough time. Once a dishrag has been used, it can easily have all four criteria for growing bacteria.

If conditions are right, bacteria can grow rapidly. If you have 100 cells of bacteria on your dishrag and each divides every 15 minutes, you'll have 1,600 bacteria in an hour. Within two hours, you'll have 25,600

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## Preparing for the winter food olympics!

Alice Henneman, M.S. R.D., Extension Educator

Jaime Ruud, M.S. R.D.

*Note: This article is co-written with Jaime Ruud, a local sports nutrition consultant in private practice and author of "Nutrition and the Female Athlete." Jaime has analyzed diets of Olympic athletes and written position papers for the U.S. Olympic Committee. This article offers a lighthearted look at holiday eating as if it were an Olympic event!*

Starting with Halloween in October through Super Bowl Sunday in January, there's one eating event after another. The average weight gain over the holidays ranges from seven to ten pounds. If there were an

"Olympics for Eating," this would be it.

The games begin with the HALLOWEEN CANDY KICKOFF. Halloween candy collected by your kids . . . candy unloaded at the office . . . candy stockpiled from last year . . . In this kickoff, you have to be careful or it could be pounds, not yards gained!

Following is the THANKS-GIVING GOBBLE. Though many of us have stopped stuffing our turkeys, we're still stuffing ourselves!

Next is the DECEMBER DECATHLON—a series of holiday get-togethers where we get together with our friends over food! "Try this, try that," our munching friends encourage, and suddenly, we're caught in trying times!

Then, the NEW YEAR'S

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