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Reach Out and Connect: Workshop # 35 Child Nutrition What to Know Part 2

GROW^{NYC}

Last time, we talked to Dr. Aneeka Babar about why it is important to make healthy food choices for your young child's growth and development. This week we have Susie Spodek with GrowNYC to talk about where to buy and tips on how to purchase local foods in your area. GrowNYC is an environmental organization based in NYC that works in conservation, Green spaces, education work, and food access and agriculture.



Finding Healthy Affordable Foods:

GrowNYC offers many different kinds of markets in our food access and agriculture program.

They have greenmarkets where our farmers are selling directly to the public. They have farm stands where the GrowNYC staff sell local foods to the public. And they have fresh food boxes where you prepay for a box and get Farm fresh Foods for anywhere between \$12 to \$15 a box, but they are worth about \$25 to \$30.

How to pay for your fresh fruit and vegetables:

You can use cash and credit cards in farmers markets. SNAP or EBT Cards used to be called Food Stamps. Almost all farmers markets will accept SNAP benefits. There are many benefits to using SNAP cards. And you can use your WIC card.

For every \$2 you use on your SNAP/EBT card, you get a \$2 benefit. In a GrowNYC market you will receive tokens like this. The tokens never expire, and you can use them on any product. For every \$2 you take off your EBT card you get a \$2 health buck that is good for a year. You can use them on any fruits, vegetables, or any fruit bearing plants like tomato plants or basil plants. Other parts of the state's benefits vary. Visit the information tent to figure out the benefits in your area.

WIC benefits are available for parents with young children and some older adults on a limited income. WIC benefits are distributed at WIC centers during the summer months. You receive booklets with checks that can be used to purchase fruits/vegetables in farmers markets through NYC.

What types of fresh foods grow in New York?

In winter, finding local fresh fruits and vegetables is much more difficult. The food GrowNYC sells is seasonally available, so in the winter, the options are limited. Ask a local market farmer what's in season and when your favorite fruits and vegetables are in season.

There are not a lot of fruits available. Apples and some pears are available in the winter because they store well. In terms of vegetables, there are roots and storage vegetables like potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, beets, garlic, and more. All types of squashes store very well with their tough skin in the winter.



Hardy greens can actually grow outside when it is cold, like spinach, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, collard greens, and brussels sprouts.

Food that's in season will taste better and cost less. Talk to local farmers to find out what is in season in your area.



How do I cook fresh fruits and vegetables?

- Microwave
- Boil
- Pressure Cooker or Slow Cooker
- Steam
- On the Stove
- In the Oven

The smaller you chop something up, the faster it will cook. It may take longer to chop it up, but it will speed up the cooking process. Most cooked vegetables will freeze very well.

It's great to have fresh foods ready to eat when you might be hungry, like in the late afternoon. Prepare healthy foods ahead of time so they are easy to grab when you do get hungry, so you don't grab a bag of chips or a less healthy snack.

Here is a very basic recipe for cooking vegetables on the stove. Heat oil in a pan. Add onions, garlic, or ginger if you want to. Cook the greens with other vegetables you like. Then adjust the seasoning to taste. Add spices, some sour flavors, and salty flavors. Some people like heat, so add hot sauce or peppers. Be careful with young children who are sensitive to spicy foods.

If you have any questions about this information or have a workshop topic you would like to see, please reach out to krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org.