Shopping with the Seasons
From the Healthy Kids Blog

With the help of modern grocery stores, most produce is available to us year-round. Although it may not seem like it, shopping with the seasons can make a pretty big impact on your wallet, your health, and even the environment.

It's better for your wallet.

Pay attention to the price of your favorite fruits and vegetables throughout the year. When in season, you'll likely be able to find certain produce in abundance and snag a great sale. When out of season, you might find yourself grumbling at the price. Why is that?

If you've ever grown your own fruits and vegetables at home, you know that they all require a specific set of resources (amount of water, hours of sunlight, time to harvest, etc.). When in season, foods can essentially grow on their own, without any excess resources making them time and labor intensive. Purchasing out of season means putting a little extra money towards the support needed to help those fruits and vegetables thrive in less-than-ideal conditions.

Tip: Purchase your favorite fruits and veggies nearing the end of their season, then prepare and freeze them to carry them into the next.

It's better for your health.

Shopping with the seasons means eating with the seasons! It can be easy to add the same fruits and veggies to the grocery list each time. When you're shopping from a seasonal produce list, you'll be trying something new every few months! This also means you're eating foods that are packed with their highest amount of nutrients. Out-of-season foods come from places all around the world, where in-season foods can be grown locally. Take tomatoes, for example: In the off-season, they are picked green so they can be shipped to the grocer without rotting. When in season, they are picked at their peak and often from a local grower, requiring less travel.

Tip: Set up a family taste test at home! Scope out seasonal produce and see how many new fruits and veggies you can add to your 'favorites' list.

It's better for the environment.

By shopping in season, you're lessening your environmental footprint. Seasonal foods are more often grown locally or regionally, meaning they have less distance to travel. Remember, it takes more time and energy to grow foods in a less-than-ideal climate. This means growing is more labor-intensive and might require unsustainable practices. Shopping in season means your fruits and veggies can grow on their very own, taking the time that they need. With less distance to travel, this also means less emissions and less of an impact on our environment.

Tip: Produce varies for each region. What's in season in December for Southern California may look a little different than what's in season for Minnesota.

Explore shopping and eating seasonally on your next grocery trip. You may also consider locating farmers markets near you or joining a CSA (community-supported agriculture). Have fun and take this as an opportunity to try something new–you may be surprised what fruits and veggies may become your new go-to!

Not sure where to find local growers or what's in season where you live? Check out the Seasonal Growers Guide (https://www.seasonalfoodguide.org/about) – a comprehensive database for seasonal foods around the U.S.!

Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Apricots	Apricots	Acorn Squash	Apples
Artichokes	Avocados	Apples	Bananas
Asparagus	Beets	Broccoli	Brussels Sprouts
Avocados	Blackberries	Beets	Cabbage
Beans (Green)	Blueberries	Brussels Sprouts	Carrots
Broccoli	Cantaloupe	Butternut Squash	Celery
Cabbage	Cherries	Cauliflower	Clementines
Carrots	Corn	Cranberries	Collard Greens
Celery	Cucumbers	Grapes	Dates
Chayote	Edamame	Green Beans	Grapefruit
Collard Greens	Eggplant	Lettuce	Kale
Corn	Figs	Mushrooms	Kiwifruit
Honeydew	Grapefruit	Pumpkin	Leeks
Lettuce	Grapes	Pears	Mandarins
Mango	Honeydew	Pomegranate	Onions
Oranges	Nectarines	Sweet Potatoes	Oranges
Peas	Peaches	Swiss Chard	Pears
Pineapple	Peppers (Bell)		Persimmons
Strawberries	Plums		Potatoes
Spinach	Raspberries		Sweet Potatoes
	Strawberries		Tangerines
	Summer Squash		Turnips
	Tomatillos		Winter Squash
	Tomatoes		
	Watermelon		
	Zucchini		