Choosing vegetables as part of a healthy diet adds variety to your meals and your family’s meals. Vegetables add a variety of flavors (think sweet potatoes) and textures including soft and crunchy. And vegetables add color to your plate: purple, red, green, orange, blue and yellow. Including vegetables helps reduce your and your family’s chance of developing heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

Vegetables can be prepared in more than one way, which makes them perfect for different meals. Take carrots: You can cut them into coins, matchsticks, leave them whole or shred them. Preparing butternut or other winter squash? Cut in half and roast, puree, dice, cook and add to stew, stir-fry or salad. Get the idea?

Let your kids be “produce pickers.” Help them pick veggies at the store.

Wash and rinse to be food safe

Remember to rinse fresh vegetables under running water before using them. Scrub firm-skin veggies with a vegetable brush while rinsing.
**Recipes**

**Wonderful winter squash**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 winter squash (butternut or acorn)
- 2 teaspoons low sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup or honey

**Directions:**
1. Wash hands and surfaces.
2. Peel squash, cut in half and remove seeds. Cut into 1-inch cubes.
3. Place squash in large pot with ½ cup water. Add soy sauce and syrup/honey. Cover and simmer over medium heat until squash is tender, about 15 to 30 minutes. Serve and enjoy!
4. Refrigerate leftovers.

*Source: MSU Extension Project Fresh*

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**Summer squash and corn**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 ½ tablespoons light olive oil
- 1 large red bell pepper, diced
- 2 medium summer squash, halved lengthwise and sliced ¼-inch thick
- 1 cup fresh corn kernels
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- Salt and pepper to taste

**Directions:**
1. Wash hands and surfaces.
3. Add the squash and corn. Sauté until all vegetables are tender and crisp.
4. Add tomatoes and sauté 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Refrigerate leftovers.

*Source: University of California Cooperative Extension Nutrition BEST and Food Security Project*

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**What can you do to help your child choose vegetables?**

- Use fresh, local veggies. Go online to find a farmers market at agebb.missouri.edu/fmkt-dir/index.htm OR http://seasonalandsimple.info/
- Help your kids pick veggies at the store, farmers market or pick-your-own farms. Pick different colored vegetables.
- Many farmers offer free samples at farmers markets; sample new vegetables with your child.
- They learn from watching you. Eat veggies and your child will, too.
- Children love to be involved in choosing food. Make the recipes in this newsletter together.

Sign up for a free e-newsletter at missourifamilies.org/newsletter/

View videos to see how moms are helping their families eat healthier foods, get more information at http://www.fns.usda.gov/core-nutrition/online-communication-tools