SAUTÉING SECRETS

Hooray for summer - garden fresh veggies are back! If you're still cooking these nutritional storehouses by the old Southern method of boiling in water seasoned with meat fat, fast forward to sautéing. This method uses minimal fat and no water to maximize nutritional value. And the vegetables taste great . . . even to old Southerners.

To sauté, start by trimming off tough parts and cleaning the vegetables. If possible, cut all vegetables to the same size, so they will cook at an even rate.

Preheat an empty skillet over medium to medium-high heat. When the pan is hot, then add just enough oil or cooking spray to coat the bottom of the pan. This technique of “hot pan, cold oil” reduces the chances of hot oil spattering on the cook during cooking.

Add only enough vegetables that will fit in a single layer; overcrowding the pan will cause the veggies to steam rather than sauté.

I usually add some sort of seasoning when sautéing vegetables. I like just a touch of sugar (or artificial sweetener that can take heat) with yellow squash - plus some chopped basil. Italian or Greek seasoning mixtures are also good with yellow squash. With zucchini, try lemon pepper.

Cook vegetables, stirring frequently, to desired degree of doneness. Aim for “crisp-tender,” not limp; longer cooking destroys vitamins. Start checking for doneness after 3 minutes of cooking by removing and sampling the vegetables.

Now practice your new sautéing skills with this recipe:

FARMSTAND SAUTÉ

2 large ears fresh, white corn
2 teaspoons olive oil
3 cups of 2-inch sliced green beans (about 1 pound)
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
2½ cups halved cherry tomatoes or chopped and seeded regular tomatoes
1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil (wait and chop just before using)
2 teaspoons white wine vinegar

Cut corn kernels from cob and set aside. Heat skillet over medium-high heat; when hot, add oil. Add green beans to pan and sauté 7 minutes. Reduce heat to medium; add corn, salt, and pepper to beans and cook 5 minutes more. Remove skillet from heat and stir in remaining ingredients. Yields 5 (1-cup) servings at 111 calories.
**Bag Salad Alert**

Dole has recently recalled their bagged precut salads due to an outbreak of E. coli bacteria making several people extremely sick. Should you stop using this very handy convenience product?

While the cause or source of the E. coli in this case has not yet been determined, most experts seem to believe the incidence is a rare occurrence and not a recurring situation that would warrant giving up bagged salad. However, it would be wise to take precautions when using these products.

The next time you're shopping for bagged salad, check expiration dates and buy the bag with the most time remaining. Do not use salad that is past its date as deteriorating lettuce is more likely to have bacteria problems.

Also, even though these products are marketed as ready to use, do rinse before using. But then you've got wet lettuce which waters downs your salad dressing. To avoid this problem, I give bagged salad a whirl in a salad spinner after rinsing.

**Be Sun Smart**

Cases of skin cancer in women under 40 have tripled in the past 30 years. With all the sun protection products on the market, what's causing this increase?

According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, one reason is that we are not using sun protection products correctly. Women should apply sun protection product first, so it's closest to the skin, and then apply moisturizer or makeup over it.

You are using a sun protection product, aren't you???

And now, while you're showing more skin than in the cold of winter, get in the habit of checking moles for signs of skin cancer. Asymmetry, uneven borders, more than one color, and diameter wider than a pencil eraser are problem signs. If you would like a free bulletin on skin cancer with photos to help you better detect problems, call me at 671-3276.

**Lead in Your Grill?**

Some folks have purchased George Foreman grills and been surprised when they read the fine print later at home. The grill carries a lead warning and users are instructed to wash their hands after handling the cord. Should the grill be tossed?

Most likely not. The lead is in the insulating plastic for the wires. The warning label is likely given because of California law requiring that any product with a certain percentage or more of lead must be labeled if sold in California. Because Foreman grills are sold nationwide, they must carry this label. The amount of lead is usually quite minimal, but due to the extra-strict California law, the product must be labeled.

Even though the amount of lead associated with the Foreman grill is small, do follow the instructions about hand washing. With any product containing lead, keep it away from children as they are more susceptible to lead poisoning due to their small size.

**Smart Bean Tricks**

Many current recipes are featuring dried beans for their health benefits – lots of fiber and little fat. Cooking dried beans from scratch takes time, so you may be tempted to substitute canned beans in these recipes. After all, it's summer – who wants to be tied to the stove? But how to substitute? Since dried beans swell as they cook, would cup for cup be right?

Stop straining your brain – here's the formula. To substitute canned beans for dry, use 2 cups drained canned beans for every cup of dried beans in a recipe.

Do take time to rinse canned beans before using. They are higher in sodium than the dry.
Some bean names can also strain the brain. Many recipes with beans call for cannellini or fagioli beans. These are white, kidney-shaped beans popular in Italy. If you can't find these - canned or dry - at your grocery store, use Great Northern or navy beans.

**WHAT'S GOING ON?**

**Don't Be a Raisin** – As part of the summer reading program conducted by the public library for children, my co-worker, Christy Strickland, and I will be doing a session on preventing skin cancer. Using fun stories and crafts, we will “persuade” children to wear hats and sunscreen without too much of a fuss. Bring your little person and join us at the library location best for you:

- **Lumberton** Monday, July 24 10 a.m.
- **St. Pauls** Monday, July 24 4 p.m.
- **Pembroke** Wednesday, July 26 2 p.m.
- **Maxton** Wednesday, July 26 3:30 p.m.
- **Fairmont** Thursday, July 27 2:30 p.m.
- **Rowland** Thursday, July 27 4 p.m.

**Eat Smart, Move More** – If you'd like to find ways to eat smart and move more where you live, learn, earn, play, or pray, check out our new consumer web site at:

www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com

and click on “I want to Eat Smart and Move More in the Real World.” Do it today!

The use of brand names in this newsletter does not imply endorsement of the products or services named or criticism of similar ones not mentioned.

**Susan Noble**

Susan Noble
Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences

**NEWSLETTERS**

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