



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at National Insurance Services, Inc.

Freezing a fruit or vegetable does not necessarily affect its nutrition value. In fact, sometimes the frozen produce is a better choice! This is because the longer the fruit or vegetable sits around, the more nutrients it loses. Fruits and vegetables grown specifically for freezing are frozen right after being picked, not allowing time for them to lose any nutrients.

FOOD FACTS ... AND FICTION

You know it's important to eat plenty of whole grains, fruits and vegetables—but you may have some questions regarding certain foods in your diet.

Are avocados good or bad for you?

While it's true that avocados contain more calories and fat than other fruits or vegetables (one-fifth of an avocado contains 50 calories and 4.5 grams of fat), they also have many health benefits. Avocados contain heart-healthy unsaturated fat, which can help lower cholesterol. Plus, they are packed with vitamins, minerals and fiber that are part of a healthy diet.

Are some nuts better for you than others?

Yes. All nuts are rich in fiber, vitamin E and protein, but walnuts contain the highest levels of omega-3 fatty acids, almonds have the most vitamin E, cashews have the most iron and Brazil nuts contain the most magnesium and selenium (which works as an antioxidant). Opt for varieties without added salt for the most health benefits.

What's the difference between a vegetable and a fruit?

It's easy to get confused. Scientifically, "vegetable" is defined as all plant life or plant products; specifically, the edible portion of plants (roots, stems, leaves, flowers or fruit). A "fruit" is the ripened ovary and seeds of a flowering plant. However, most people don't define fruits and vegetables scientifically; instead, fruits and vegetables are often identified by how sweet they are or by how you cook with them.

Does eating grilled meat cause cancer?

The National Cancer Institute states that cooking meat at very high temperatures creates chemicals—called heterocyclic amines, or HCAs—not otherwise found in uncooked meat. Eating grilled meat on occasion is fine. However, excessive consumption of grilled meat at very high temperatures appears to increase the risk for cancer, which is why experts recommend that meat be cooked at low temperatures for longer periods of time. Research has also shown that microwaving meat before grilling decreases the risk of HCAs.

Which is better: margarine or butter?

Butter is full of saturated fat and cholesterol, but margarine often contains trans fat (though there are also trans fat-free margarine products available). While neither is ideal, it's generally better to opt for margarine. This is because you should be able to identify which margarine products contain the least amount of trans fat. According to Cleveland Clinic, the more solid margarine is at room temperature, the more trans fat it contains; for example, stick margarine has more trans fat than tub margarine.

Is sushi healthy?

Yes. Sushi is an excellent source of lean protein and omega-3 fatty acids, and is low in saturated fat. When eaten without rice, sushi is also low in calories. It is recommended that you do not eat store-bought fish as sushi—it is not intended to be eaten raw, and uncooked fish is more likely to contain bacteria and parasites. Buy fish that is specifically marked as safe to eat raw, or eat sushi at a restaurant.