

There are many products that claim to make you feel better, look better, improve your health and increase your energy. For a timeless, tried and true source straight from Mother Nature, look no further than the produce aisle of the grocery store. Vegetables are low-calorie foods that provide folate, Vitamins A and C, potassium, fiber and many phytochemicals. Eating a diet rich in vegetables offers many advantages:

- Reduced risk for stroke, coronary heart disease, and other cardiovascular diseases
- Reduced risk of type 2 diabetes
- Reduced risk of certain types of cancer
- Reduced risk of developing kidney stones
- Increased protection from bone loss
- Help with weight management.

Despite the health benefits vegetables bring to the table, typically, Americans eat only 59 percent of the recommended amount of vegetables daily. Eating a diet rich in vegetables does not have to be taxing on your budget. Take these simple steps to enjoying vegetables daily without breaking the bank:

- Plan to use fresh vegetables during the first four days of the week, opt for canned or frozen during the last three days. This will reduce wasted food due to spoilage.
- Food that is processed less is less expensive. For example, whole carrots cost about one third of cleaned baby carrots.
- Children who help select vegetables at the grocery store are more likely to eat them.
- Dry beans or legumes are a healthy, cost friendly choice at approximately 10 cents per half-cup serving.

Remember the rainbow when planning your menu. Dark green, red, and orange vegetables as well as dry beans provide your body with the vitamins, minerals, and fiber that your body needs to stay healthy.

To learn more about adding vegetables to your diet, visit your local UNL Extension Office and ask for the NebGuide "MyPlate:Vegetable Group" (G1605) or on the Internet at <http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs>.