

# MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES FOR SENIORS: WEEK 11

## Beyond fresh

Part of making healthy choices is understanding the difference between fresh, frozen and canned foods. The key to making healthy choices that are also low cost is knowing the advantages of buying one type over another and making the differences work for you.



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### Fresh, Canned or Frozen?

Fresh produce is a great option. Produce in season is at its lowest cost and full of nutrients. Fresh options lessen in nutrient quality the longer they sit on your kitchen counter or in your refrigerator. If you are not going to eat your produce right away, consider buying canned or frozen varieties. You could also purchase fresh options when they are on sale and can or freeze them yourself.

While fresh is great, canned fruits and vegetables are also a healthy choice. Canned fruit and vegetables last much longer than fresh, are usually cheaper and cut down on cooking prep. When choosing canned vegetable options, look for “no-salt-added,” “low-sodium” and “reduced-sodium” on the label. Choose fruit varieties canned in 100% fruit juice or water. You can rinse canned varieties in cool water to remove much of the added sugar and salt.

Frozen fruits and vegetables are a great option if you have the freezer space for them. Frozen produce is picked at its peak and then frozen right away to keep the nutrient value. You can purchase already frozen foods or freeze them yourself when you harvest your garden or find a good sale at the store. Freezing them yourself allows you to package them into single-sized servings for easier preparation later. For example, look for strawberries on sale in early June when they’re in season. Then portion them into 1-cup bags, freeze and use to make smoothies later.

Remember that each option has pros and cons, and all varieties are not created equal. Canned and frozen options can be softer to chew, but often contain added sugar, salt, saturated fat and trans fat. Make sure to look at the label, read the ingredients list and compare items before making a decision.



### Did you know?

**MSU Extension offers low-cost in person and online food preservation classes. Contact your local MSU Extension office. Find details on the back of this newsletter.**

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Find the entire series online at [msue.msu.edu/healthychoices](https://msue.msu.edu/healthychoices).



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## WEEKLY RECIPE

Remember to wash your hands and prepare food safely.

### Quick Skillet Lasagna (serves 8)

1. In a 10-inch skillet, cook **1 pound lean ground meat** over medium-high heat for 5 minutes, stirring to break up.
2. Add **1 cup chopped onion, 3 cloves minced garlic** and **1 cup chopped green pepper**. Cook until meat is browned and cooked through (about 10 minutes). Then drain off fat.
3. Add **one 28-ounce can of low-sodium tomato sauce**. Bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Add a sprinkle of **salt, pepper** and **Italian seasoning**. Taste and add more if desired.
5. Turn heat to low and add 6 cups of cooked whole-wheat pasta to the mix.
6. Mix **1 cup low-fat cottage cheese** and **1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese** in a separate bowl. Drop cheese mixture, by spoonfuls, into the sauce. Cover and heat over low heat until cheese melts.

Recipe adapted from Michigan State University Extension. (2015). *Eating Right Is Simple Recipe Set*.

## MSU Extension programming

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge and resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses.

To help you be healthy at every stage of life, MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to serve the needs of adults, youth and families in urban and rural communities. Programs focus on helping you gain the skills you need to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods, increase your physical activity and stretch your food dollars.

MSU Extension's children and youth programs address needs and issues from birth through age 19, providing parents with educational resources related to your child's development

and giving youth the opportunity through 4-H programs to build leadership and teach practical life skills.

With a presence in every Michigan county, Extension faculty and staff members provide tools to live and work better. From a personal meeting to information online, MSU Extension educators work every day to provide the most current information when people need it to ensure success – in the workplace, at home and in the community.

**For more information or to join a class, visit [www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/](http://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/). To find your local county office, visit [www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/county](http://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/county).**

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