

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Garden Grilled Delights!

Coldwater, MI. It's that time of year when Michigan's fresh produce is starting to become abundant. Here, at the **Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency**, we would like to provide you a few techniques you can use to prepare and grill garden produce that is sure to delight your taste buds.

According to David Fowler, WIC Coordinator for the tri-county health department, "Grilling is an excellent way to enhance natural flavors, while maintaining the presence of important vitamins and minerals. And grilling can be done anywhere - public parks, at the beach, or in the comfort of your own home!" To assist you in grilling your fruits and vegetables, the health department offers the following tips:

Preparing the Grill:

- 1) Turn heat on high and let it build for 10 minutes (barely gray coals with ash for the charcoal grillers out there).
- 2) When the grill produces a faint smoke, the grill is ready!
- 3) After achieving temperature, clean the grill with a wire brush to remove excess waste from the previous grilling event.
- 4) Apply a light amount of vegetable oil (but not so much that it drips) to grilling surface with a brush or soft cloth. This will reduce sticking or burning.

Preparing the Produce:

- 1) Rinse the produce under cold water to remove surface grime. For potatoes, squash and other similar types of produce, you won't need to peel or remove the outer skins which are a good source of nutrients and fiber.
- 2) Make sure the produce is cut into equal sizes to ensure even cooking.
- 3) Try slow cooking the produce first by blanching it or steaming it. This will reduce cooking time on a grill.

- 4) Also basting the produce with olive oil and adding salt/pepper or other seasoning to it can add an extra kick of flavor!

Cooking on the Grill:

- 1) Sear the produce on all sides. You are looking for nice grill marks to get the process started.
- 2) Reduce temperature to medium or low heat and place produce on grill. Even and consistent cooking is achieved best when applying produce to an indirect source of heat.
- 3) Every 1-2 minutes, turn produce with tongs or other cookware.
- 4) As a general rule, when a piece of produce can be pierced with a knife with little to no resistance, cooking is complete!
- 5) Remove from grill and place on a clean/dry dish. More seasonings can also be added at this time.
- 6) Enjoy your delicious produce!

The chart below summarizes preparation and grilling time for an assortment of fruits and vegetables.

Fruits/Vegetables	Preparation	Grilling Time
Apples	½ inch slices	4 to 6 min.
Apricots, pitted	Halved	6 to 8 min.
Artichokes	Trim tough outer petals, halve lengthwise; blanch until tender	8 to 10 min.
Asparagus	Trim tough end	6 to 8 min.
Bananas	Halved lengthwise	6 to 8 min.
Corn	Soak ears in water 20 to 30 min (leave in husks)	30 to 40 min.
Eggplant	Slice ¾ inch thick	8 to 10 min.
Fennel (Anise)	Remove leaves; cut bulb into quarters	10 to 12 min.
Leeks	Halve lengthwise; rinse well	10 to 12 min.
Garlic	Wrap whole bulb in foil; place over indirect heat	30 to 40 min.
Mushrooms	Leave whole	6 to 8 min.
Onions	Peel; cut n halves or quarters; skewer	15 to 20 min.
Peaches, pitted	Halved	8 to 10 min.
Pears	Halved	8 to 10 min.

Peppers	Cut in halves or quarters; remove seeds	10 to 12 min.
Pineapple	½ in. rings	7 to 10 min.
Potatoes (white, yams)	Slice ½ inch thick	15 to 20 min.
Squash, summer	Halve lengthwise or slice 1 inch and skewer	8 to 10 min.
Tomatoes	Skewer quarters and cherry tomatoes; halve plum tomatoes lengthwise	3 to 5 min.

Source: Wegmans Foods, Taste of Home

David Fowler adds “Eating fresh fruits and vegetables is easy and affordable, thanks to Project FRESH!” Project FRESH! is an educational program that provides eligible participants with coupons to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmer’s markets. Families receiving WIC benefits are eligible for Project FRESH! Certain income eligible seniors (60 years of age or older) are eligible for Senior Project FRESH! All participants receive \$20 in coupons that can be redeemed at any participating Michigan farmers markets that have a yellow laminated sign stating “Project FRESH Coupons Accepted Here.”

To learn more about Project FRESH! and how to qualify, please contact the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency. To learn more about Senior Project Fresh, please contact your local Commission on Aging. Garden grilled delights – whether from your garden or from another’s – one more sure way to enjoy all the tastes of summer!

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