



"Your Local
Health Department"
June 12, 2018

Branch - Hillsdale - St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Amp Up Your Vegetables

Coldwater, MI. It's only June and you're already tired of baby carrots and dip? Your celery slices just aren't cutting it anymore? You know how important vegetables are for you and your kids, but sometimes they are just boring! It's time to fire up your grill and amp up your veggies! The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency has some quick tips for grilled vegetables this summer.

1. Oil Them Up. Vegetables can dry out when they hit the heat without a little oil. Before they hit the grill, toss them with a light coating of oil. Don't use too much—it not only adds unnecessary calories, but dripping oil causes flare-ups and off flavors. Plus tossing them in oil helps your seasoning stick more uniformly.

2. Know Your Veggies and Prevent Burning. Some vegetables take a minute or two to cook and others take longer. Denser vegetables like potatoes will take the longest to cook. Keeping them over too high a heat for too long will char them on the outside while keeping them raw on the inside. To prevent burning, sear vegetables over high heat, then move them to a cooler part of the grill to finish cooking.

3. Use a Skewer or a Grill Basket. Cherry tomatoes are great on the grill, but they're a little clumsy. To keep smaller vegetables like cherry tomatoes from rolling around and falling through the grate, put them on a skewer or use a grill basket. If you don't have a grill basket, fold a piece of heavy-duty foil in half and crimp up the edges to create a lip; this "basket" will prevent the food from falling through.

4. Size Matters. How you prep your vegetables determines how they will cook. Cut them into smaller pieces if you want your vegetables to cook more quickly (and use a skewer to keep them on the grill). Cut round vegetables like onions or eggplant into thin “rounds”—you’ll get more surface area, which allows for a crispier outside, and because they’re thin, they’ll cook quickly. Chopping your veggies in uniform pieces will also help them to cook at the same rate.

As always, when you are using your grill, make sure that it is far enough away from the house to prevent your siding from melting. Keep small children away and always keep your eye on it to catch a potential fire before it gets out of hand. Grilling is a wonderful way to mix up the way you cook in the summer, but always be conscious of the dangers that it may present.

Don’t forget that **Project FRESH** coupons are available at the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency offices. If you are a WIC participant, you are eligible to receive five \$5 coupon booklets to use at any participating farmers market in the state of Michigan between June 1 and October 31. To redeem the coupons, participants can look for the laminated yellow poster stating, “Project FRESH Coupons Accepted Here.” For further information on Project FRESH, please visit the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency’s web site at: www.bhsj.org or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bhsjwic, or stop in at one of our 3 locations:

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