



## Canned vegetables, fruits stack up well

### Are canned fruits and vegetables as nutritious as fresh or frozen?

For the most part, research says, canned foods are quite comparable to their fresh or frozen counterparts.

In fact, a comprehensive, two-part review of the literature comparing fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables, published in the *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture* in 2007, revealed that fresh produce loses more nutrients than you might think during storage and cooking. Because of that, canned or frozen products often contain as many or more nutrients than the fresh produce you might find at the grocery store.

In fact, according to the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Nutrition, fresh fruits and vegetables could lose nearly half of their vitamins within a few days if they're not chilled or preserved properly. Even when produce is kept refrigerated, vitamin content can deteriorate over one to two weeks.

But it's not all cut and dried. According to the 2007 study, different nutrients behave differently in different foods and under different conditions. For example, vitamins A and E, carotenoids, minerals and fiber all appear to be similar whether a piece of produce is fresh, frozen or canned.

On the other hand, vitamin C and the B vitamins are more vulnerable — at least initially — to the heat

used in the canning process, but then stabilize and appear to retain more of those vitamins during storage than fresh or frozen products.

Frozen produce tends to retain more nutrients initially because of the short heating time used for blanching, the researchers found, but they lose more nutrients during storage because of the effects of oxidation.

What does all this information mean for you? Basically, the focus for most people should be on consuming more fruits and vegetables — whether they're fresh, frozen or canned. Do you enjoy fresh produce more? Then by all means, make that a staple in your grocery cart. Is it your habit to check the freezer first? Then keep it well-stocked with your favorite fruits and vegetables. Do you appreciate the convenience of a well-stocked pantry for quick snacks and meals? Then pack it full with canned tomatoes, green beans, pineapple and peaches.

For the most healthful options, be sure canned fruit is packed in juice or water, not syrup. And try low-sodium versions of your favorite vegetables. You may not notice a difference in taste, but you could notice a drop in your blood pressure by reducing the amount of sodium you consume.

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu).*



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

---

For the week of  
Feb. 17, 2008

---

By Martha Filipic  
(614) 292-9833  
[filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu)

**Editor:**  
February is Canned Food Month.

This column was reviewed by Lydia Medeiros, and specialist with Ohio State University Extension, researcher with the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, and professor in the Department of Human Nutrition in the College of Education and Human Ecology

To receive Chow Line by e-mail, send a message to [filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu) or sign up at <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~news/subscribe.php>.

---

**Section of Communications and Technology  
News and Media Relations**  
2021 Coffey Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1044  
(614) 292-2011

208 Research Services  
Building  
1680 Madison Ave.  
Wooster, OH 44691-4096  
(330) 263-3780

Ohio State University Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all research and related educational programs are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or veteran status. This statement is in accordance with United States Civil Rights Laws and the USDA. *Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension*  
TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868