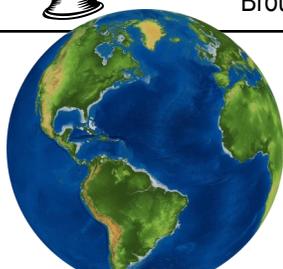


S.T.A.H.L. NEWS

STUDENTS TALKING ABOUT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Brought to you by the Nutrition Connection in the Center for Health and Well-Being

April 22, 2024



Earth Friendly Foods

**Earth Day! Monday
April 22nd**

Sustainability is the way to the future and has its place in almost all aspects of human life including diet and agriculture. Sustainability in the food system is not only up to farmers and large commercial companies but includes the consumer, like you, as well!

Below are some ways YOU, the little consumer, can contribute to large sustainability practices! And what perfect timing, considering Earth Day is this week!

• **Adopt a flexitarian diet.**

Most people do not love the idea of a meatless diet, and that is okay. However, there are ways you can eat more sustainable without having to go completely plant-based. A **flexitarian diet is plant-rich, however does not require restrictions.** The focus for this way of eating would be to emphasize fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, utilize plant-based proteins, but also occasionally consume dairy, eggs, poultry, fish, seafood, and red meat in moderation.¹

• **Choose locally grown, in-season fruits & vegetables.²**

Purchasing local produce is important in supporting local revenue but it will also contribute to decreasing agricultural transportation. Produce from your grocery store is utilizing larger trucks and major factories to process and transport the produce to your town especially when it is not in season for your area. By utilizing local farmers and produce grown during the current season you **put money back into your community** as well as **eliminate the need for cross country travel.**

• **Minimize food waste.²**

Be inventive by using seemingly unusable food "scraps" in different ways instead of throwing them away. For example, beets are often bought with the greens, although the actual red beet may be the reason for the purchase, the beet greens can also be washed, sauteed, and consumed as well. Another helpful habit, is to **plan your meals** that way you have exactly what you need and will be less likely to waste bought food due to spoilage.

• **Buy food items in bulk.²**

The more items you can buy in one package the **less packaging** waste you will produce. For example, if you really enjoy oatmeal, instead of buying single serve pouches, purchase a large bag and make your own single serving containers. If you use a lot of oregano, buy a bulk size less often rather than buying small jars more often. You might even **save a buck or two** as well.

• **Grow your own food.**

This **DOES NOT mean you need a large yard.** Growing our own produce **can be as simple as a small, potted tomato plant by your window or back door.** Other plants that do well in containers include herbs, lettuce, , kale, peppers, bush beans, spinach, chives, scallions, radishes, and turnips.³ There are seemingly endless possibilities just by utilizing some containers.



Check out the **Indiana County Farmer's Market** to support your local food supply.



But, if you aren't local to Indiana County...



...Use this website to find available **local food all over Pennsylvania.**



What's "In-Season"?

This will depend on your region of the world and country however, below are Pennsylvania's in-season produce.⁴

Spring

- Apples 
- Chives
- Mint
- Mushrooms 
- Parsnips
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Asparagus 
- Cabbage 
- Onion (most varieties)
- Lettuce
- Peas
- Rhubarb
- Mint 
- Sprouts

Summer

- Beets
- Asparagus
- Apples
- Broccoli
- Celery
- Cauliflower
- Cherries 
- Peppers
- Cilantro
- Kale
- Lettuce 
- Mint
- Mushrooms
- Snap peas
- Radishes 
- Strawberries
- Squash
- Tomatoes
- Arugula
- Basil
- Apricots
- Carrots
- Corn 
- Cucumber
- Garlic/shallots
- Green beans
- Raspberries
- Blackberries
- Zucchini
- Bok choy 
- Leeks
- Currents
- Peaches 
- Plums
- Potatoes
- Melons 

?? Did you know?

Practically all **nutritional habits that support sustainability** efforts will **ALSO positively impact your health.**

Not only is sustainability good for the Earth it is also good for you as well!

References:

1. McCullum-Gomez C. Healthy people, healthy planet: A flexitarian approach to sustainable healthy diets. *Today's Dietitian*. 2022; 1-10.
2. Esposito L & Howley EK. Best diets of the environment. *USNews* website. <https://health.usnews.com/wellness/food/articles/best-diets-for-the-environment>. Published Dec 2023. Accessed April 2024.
3. Hailey L. 16 vegetables that are easily grown in pots or containers. *Epic Gardening* website. <https://www.epicgardening.com/container-vegetables/>. Updated Oct 2023. Accessed April 2024.
4. Seasonal Food Guide. Grace Communications Foundation Website. <https://www.seasonalfoodguide.org/>. Updated 2024. Accessed April 2024.