

## Tidbits, Tips, and Treasures for Healthier Eating – August 2010

### Enjoying Summer's Bountiful Vegetables

*Summer is a time of abundant fresh vegetables. Purchased soon after they are picked - or perhaps picked from your own garden - they have tremendous flavor and great nutritional value. Better yet, they can be enjoyed raw, or when cooked quickly, keeping down the time that your oven is heating up the kitchen. This month's TTT focuses on ways to maximize the flavor of summer's bounty. These ideas are also incorporated in our [Feature of the Month](#).*

**Tip:** When stir-frying or sautéing, put the **aromatics** (e.g., garlic, onion, leek) in the oil first and allow them to "sweat" over medium-low heat until fragrant. This allows their flavors to infuse the oil and flavor the entire dish. (Hint: since many of the health benefits of garlic deteriorate as it cooks, add a bit of minced garlic near the end of cooking time as well to get their full benefit.)

**Tidbits:** When **steaming** vegetables, use a steamer basket or steam in a very small amount of water (the goal is to have little or no water to drain when done). This allows the vegetables to retain both their nutrients and their flavor. Avoid boiling vegetables because the flavors and nutrients leach into the water, resulting in nutrient-rich, flavorful water and nutrient-depleted, flavorless veggies!

**Roasting** or **grilling** vegetables are other wonderful ways to get great flavors from vegetables. (Drizzle with high heat oil and lightly season, then grill or roast at temperatures between 400 and 500 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 to 45 minutes, depending on the type and size of the vegetable.)

Corn-on-the-cob is a super example of a vegetable that is traditionally boiled, but can be made healthier in a very simple way: place corn in a steamer basket or insert a steel disc in the bottom of your kettle. Corn can rest on disc, raised out of the water. The steam will cook the corn and the nutrients and flavor will remain mostly in tact. Yum!!!

**Treasure:** Use **herbs and spices** to enhance and add variety. For instance, roasted vegetables can take on very different flavor profiles depending on whether they are seasoned with cayenne pepper & cumin, chives & dill, or garlic & thyme. This is an easy and inexpensive way to add variety to your meals. Better yet, the flavors of the herbs and spices allow you to get by with less salt, less oil, and less butter. Healthy flavor that makes common summer vegetables taste grand - that's treasure! (For a few tips on getting great flavor from five different herbs, check out this month's edition of the free [Healthier Eating Newsletter](#).)