



# FRESH FRUIT & Vegetable Program



**A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FRESH  
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, FREE OF CHARGE,  
TO ALL PRE-K TO 5TH GRADE STUDENTS. TRY SOMETHING NEW!**



## **SERVICE DATES 2025:**

### **JUNE:**

- 3<sup>rd</sup>** (Red, Green, & Yellow Peppers),
- 5<sup>th</sup>** (Strawberries),
- 10<sup>th</sup>** (Celery Sticks),
- 12<sup>th</sup>** (Cantaloupe),
- 17<sup>th</sup>** (Petit Bananas),

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Food Services Dept: 845-563-3424  
or [DJackson@necsd.net](mailto:DJackson@necsd.net)

WEB: <https://www.cn.nysed.gov/ffvp>



#### BACKGROUND:

- All selected schools are expected to widely publicize within the school the availability of free fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (FFV) cannot be served as a component of the reimbursable meal or during meal service, or at the same time as the service of the breakfast or lunch or afterschool/ extended day snack program.
- **All FFV are served free of charge to all enrolled children in pre- kindergarten-5th grade.**
- Other products on their own or commingled with other foods, such as in trail mix, are not allowed.
- FFV must be available to ALL students (PK-5) any time during the school day.
- Leftovers may be recycled; however, every effort should be made to use fresh fruit and veggies in the FFVP.
- FFV must be served at least two days a week
- FFV cannot be used as a reward or gift.
- Children cannot be denied access to the FFVP for disciplinary reasons.
- Teachers directly responsible for serving the fruit or vegetable to their students in a classroom setting may consume the FFV since they are role models. The FFVP is not available to the general teacher population and other adults in the school.
- The FFV must be consumed at school, not taken home.
- Mixed fresh fruit salads made by the school **are allowable.**
- Dips for fresh vegetables **are allowed** but should be low fat and in minimal portion. (A maximum serving size of 1-2 tablespoons of dip is recommended.)
- Salsa made at the school as part of a nutrition lesson is allowed.

Nutrition Education Schools that participate in the program are expected to implement or continue nutrition education. There are several ways that FFVP can be incorporated into the existing nutrition education curriculum. Activities should fit the students and the school community. For example:

- Plant a school garden or participate in a community garden.
- Schedule the service of fresh fruits and vegetables as classroom nutrition education activities where children can prepare the FFV with their classmates and teachers.
- Plan assemblies and/or health fairs. Have students create displays or newsletters.
- Promote FFVP on monthly menus.
- Adopt school lesson plans to include nutrition education.
- Use student address systems and student broadcasts to share educational information about the importance of eating healthy.
- Consult FFVP partners to obtain low cost or no cost promotional items (posters, banners, fliers, pamphlets, buttons).
- Hold a poster contest to promote healthy eating.

#### IMPACT ON STUDENTS:

- Students ate more fruits and vegetables.
- Students consumed less high calorie, high fat vending machine snacks.
- Students had better attention spans and were less hungry throughout the day.
- There were fewer discipline problems.

NYSED would like to hear about the impact FFVP has on schools throughout NYS. Please send in pictures and best practices: [FFVP@nysed.gov](mailto:FFVP@nysed.gov)



## ALL ABOUT Bell Peppers!

### DID YOU KNOW?

The bell pepper is a variety of capsicum annum, a family that also includes varieties like jalapeño, cayenne pepper, chili pepper, and a few other hot peppers. While there are plenty of other pepper types that are red in color, only the red bell pepper is colloquially known as "red pepper."

Capsicum annum is native to Central and South America, and has existed for more than 7500 years. Over time, several varieties took shape and continue today as cultivars. Bell peppers were one of those varieties and were actively cultivated before Spanish exploration in the 1400s.

Bell peppers, sometimes called sweet peppers since they lack the spicy capsaicin, are technically a type of fruit that's treated as a vegetable.

### HOW DO THEY GROW?

Bell peppers need lots of sun, water, and space to grow! Bell peppers are heat-loving summer vegetables that are pest-resistant and disease-resistant.

### FUN FACTS:

- Paprika is a spice made from dried and ground red peppers from the Capsicum annum plant, which is native to Central Mexico
- A bell pepper has the highest levels of Vitamin C of any produce item. A large red pepper provides more than 300% of your daily requirement of Vitamin C and has three times more Vitamin C than an orange. Eat one today!
- Red/yellow/orange bell peppers are simply green bell peppers that have been left on the vine to continue to ripen.

### GREAT TO EAT!

Bell Peppers are loaded with nutrients!

- **Vitamin C.** One medium-sized red bell pepper provides 169% of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for vitamin C, making it one of the richest sources of this essential nutrient.
- **Vitamin B6.** Pyridoxine is the most common type of vitamin B6, which is a family of nutrients important for the formation of red blood cells.
- **Vitamin K1.** A form of vitamin K, also known as phyloquinone, K1 is important for blood clotting and bone health.
- **Potassium.** This essential mineral is noted for improving heart health.
- **Vitamin E.** A powerful antioxidant, vitamin E is essential for healthy nerves and muscles.
- **Vitamin A.** Red bell peppers are high in pro-vitamin A (beta-carotene) which your body converts into vitamin A, which helps with our eyesight.

You can slice up a red bell pepper into strips and use it to dip into a delicious hummus, or add to a salad for a sweet kick! You can cut the top, hollow out the seeds and make a classic stuffed pepper filled with cooked ground beef, rice, tomato sauce, and cheese. It's an easy way to make a healthy weeknight supper!

### RESOURCES:

- <https://www.webmd.com/diet/health-benefits-red-pepper>
- <https://www.inspiredtaste.net/15938/easy-and-smooth-hummus-recipe/>
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)



## ALL ABOUT Strawberries!

### DID YOU KNOW?

Strawberries are fruits that grow on small plants. They have been found in the woods, by the seaside, and on mountaintops. They are native to northern and southern hemispheres. Wild strawberries date back to the times of the Greeks and Romans. The average strawberry has around 200 seeds on it, and is not considered a **true** berry because its seeds are on the outside of the fruit. They range in color from a deep red, to light pink, to white!

### HOW DO THEY GROW?

Strawberries need lots of direct sunlight in order to grow. They need space to thrive and should not be planted too close to each other.

### FUN FACTS:

- The Strawberry is the official state red berry for North Carolina
- The name comes from the fact that strawberry plants are frequently mulched with straw to protect their delicate roots

### STRAWBERRY TYPES:

There are three types of strawberries: **June-bearing**, **everbearing**, and **day-neutral**.

- June-bearing varieties produce flowers and fruit once each year, usually in June.
- Everbearing varieties produce two crops per year, usually in July and August-September.
- Day-neutral varieties produce a continuous crop throughout the growing season. There are more than 70 varieties of strawberries in the world.

### GREAT TO EAT!

Strawberries are considered a superfood—packed with nutrients. Not only are strawberries deliciously sweet but they also help keep you healthy.

Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of fiber. Soluble fiber can help lower cholesterol. Insoluble fiber aids in digestion.

A cup of whole strawberries has around 50 calories and 140 percent of the vitamin C Daily Value. Strawberries are cholesterol free and low in fat and sodium. Vitamin C helps form collagen to hold muscles, bones and tissues together, protects us from infections and bruising, aids in healing, keeps our gums healthy, helps our body absorb iron and folate from plants, and acts as an antioxidant to prevent cell damage.

Strawberries have a variety of phytochemicals—flavonoids, ellagitannins, and ellagic acid. Anthocyanidins, a flavonoid sub-group, contribute to the blue, red and purple pigments of berries and other fruits. Phytochemicals act as antioxidants preventing or repairing cell damage. Anthocyanidins may help with maintaining brain and healthy immune function.

### RESOURCES:

- North American Strawberry Association, <https://www.nasga.org/>
- <https://strawberryplants.org/strawberry-varieties/>
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)



## ALL ABOUT Celery!

### DID YOU KNOW?

Celery is a cultivated plant that has been used as a vegetable since ancient times. Celery has a long fibrous stalk that tapers into leaves. Celery seed powder is used as a spice.

Celery originally came from the Mediterranean area (France, Italy, and Greece) and was transported around the world as celery seed. Now, California supplies over 80% of celery in the US, and other countries that are big producers of celery include Spain and Mexico.

### HOW DO THEY GROW?

Celery likes sun and shade. The roots of celery grow very close to the surface. The stalk sprouts upward of the root. The celery stalks form a thick base at the bottom and on the surface grows into solid stalks with large green leaves. The plant will grow to a height of 18 to 24 inches, and will also regenerate (regrow) after you cut it.

### FUN FACTS:

- Celery leaves were part of the garlands found in the tomb of Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun
- In ancient times, celery was used as medicine to treat toothaches, to calm nerves, and to help people sleep!

### GREAT TO EAT!

Celery has a high amount of fiber, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, and vitamin K. Vitamin K keeps our bones healthy and strong!

Celery has lots of water, which makes it a hydrating vegetable. Fiber is good for our body because it can make digestion easier, and it helps us feel full for a long period of time.

The stalks can be eaten raw, or chopped up in a salad, or as an ingredient in soups, Thanksgiving stuffing, and stews. Celery makes a great addition to juices, smoothies, and salads. Celery stalks can also be eaten dipped in hummus, ranch, or vegetable dip.

### SPICY LOADED CELERY STICKS

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 12 stalks celery cut into 1 inch pieces
- One 8oz. package of softened cream cheese
- 4 oz. blue cheese
- 1 dash of hot pepper sauce
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ¼ tsp black pepper

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Put the celery pieces on a plate. Mix the other ingredients in a bowl and blend well. Top the celery sticks with the mix.

#### RESOURCES:

- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)



## ALL ABOUT Cantaloupes!

### DID YOU KNOW?

The cantaloupe is a juicy, orange summer fruit that's related to the watermelon and honeydew melon. It also belongs to the same plant family as cucumbers, pumpkins, squashes, and gourds. The semi-sweet cantaloupes most familiar to people in the U.S. are a type of muskmelon.

People have grown cantaloupes for thousands of years. Most people agree it likely first grew in Persia (modern Iran). The fruit made its way to the New World with Christopher Columbus during his second voyage in the late 1400s.

### HOW DO THEY GROW?

Cantaloupes grow best in sunny locations and in fertile, well-drained soils. Cantaloupe require 35-45 days to mature from flowering, depending on the temperature and variety. The first flowers to appear on the vines are male. The female flowers, which open later, have a swelling at the base that forms the fruit. After bees pollinate these female flowers, the fruit develops.

### FUN FACTS:

- Cantaloupes are named after Cantalupo, Italy. Australians call cantaloupe "rockmelon."
- It has plenty of relatives! Cantaloupe are members of a vine-crop family known as Cucurbitaceae, which includes other melons, squash, cucumbers, pumpkins, and gourds.
- Cantaloupe tell you when they're ripe. The vine will naturally slip from the fruit when it's harvest time. You'll also notice the skin will turn creamy-beige under the "netted" pattern on the melon.
- Bees have to visit each melon 10-15 times to properly pollinate them.
- California is the leading producer of cantaloupes in the U.S.

### GREAT TO EAT!

The sweet and juicy orange flesh inside of the melon is the part we eat. A cup of cantaloupe has more than 100% of your recommended daily intake of vitamin A. It also has nearly 100% of your recommended daily allowance of vitamin C. Both these nutrients play a major role in maintaining skin health. Vitamin A helps protect the skin from sun damage, and vitamin C helps support your natural collagen production.

Cantaloupes hydrate you. They're filled with electrolytes. These minerals balance body fluids in your body and keep it working right. That helps you stay hydrated and full of energy. Compounds called phytonutrients in cantaloupes give them anti-inflammatory properties.

### MELON FRUIT SALAD WITH HONEY, LIME AND MINT DRESSING

#### Ingredients

- 1 mini seedless watermelon , diced into small cubes (5 cups)
- 1 cantaloupe , diced into small cubes (5 cups)
- 1 honeydew , diced into small cubes (5 cups)
- 1 pineapple , diced into small cubes (3 1/2 cups)
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint

#### Instructions

Dice fruit (drain of any excess liquid) and add fruit to a large salad bowl. In a jar or bowl whisk together honey, lime juice and mint. Pour over fruit and toss to evenly coat. Serve immediately.

### RESOURCES:

- CookingClassy.com
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)





## ALL ABOUT Bananas!

### DID YOU KNOW?

Bananas are a yellow fruit that are surrounded by a delicate peel. Bananas are not yet ripe when the peel is green. There are many varieties of bananas and originally grew in Southeast Asian jungles.

### HOW DO THEY GROW?

- Bananas grow on plants that look like trees but are not actually trees.
- Due to their need for a warm, tropical climate, bananas are not grown in the US.
- Banana bunches grow pointing up!

### FUN FACTS:

- Bananas have been growing on the Earth for millions of years.
- Bunches of bananas are called “hands” and each hand has about 20 “fingers.”
- Interestingly, banana plants are giant herbs, not trees.
- Bananas can be black, red and blue! Red and blue, long and thin, fat and short, round or softly squared, there are more than 300 varieties of the Banana, which is in the Musa family. The classic yellow banana found in supermarkets is called the Cavendish.
- **Bananas are not a tree, but a very big herb!** Bananas are such a majestic fruit, but they do not grow on trees as they have no woody trunk or bough. The “trunk” of the banana is rather a leafstalk, as it is a dense clump of leaves ready to curl out.

### GREAT TO EAT!

Bananas are most known for their potassium content but also contain B vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium, and fiber. These support heart health and digestive health. Bananas make for a good snack, cereal-topper, or a great addition to your favorite muffin or fruit bread.

You can slice up a red bell pepper into strips and use it to dip into a delicious hummus, or add to a salad for a sweet kick! You can cut the top, hollow out the seeds and make a classic stuffed pepper filled with cooked ground beef, rice, tomato sauce, and cheese. It's an easy way to make a healthy weeknight supper!

### RESOURCES:

- <https://ranchomastatal.com/blognewsletter/2020/4/8/10-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-banana>
- US Department of Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Service, [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)

