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A Season for Healthy Eating

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Since the beginning of time, our human existence thrived on earth because our species ate the foods of the season. The way plant and life forms grow from spring to winter or summer to fall is essential for balancing the earth's resources. Paying attention to this natural rhythm of the earth could just be the key for you and the way you feed your family to prevent many of the nutritional deficiencies we see today.

Recent studies support this theory that the healthiest way to eat is to eat what is in season. Unfortunately this practice goes much unnoticed since modern production and world-wide distribution make the same foods available year-round. The grocery shelves can look the same in the summer as they do in the winter. But looks can be deceiving.

In 2001, researchers in Japan found that spinach harvested in summers' natural harvest had three times more vitamin C than the artificial induced winter harvest. In another study by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in London, England, significant differences were found in the nutrient content of pasteurized milk in the summer verses the winter. Beta-carotene was higher in the summer and iodine was higher in the winter due to the seasonal diets of the cows.

Eat Seasonally! - In different regions of the country, and different parts of the world, foods that are in season vary greatly. But here are some principles to follow to

ensure that you are getting optimal nourishment in every season:

- Purchase locally grown produce from small farms where the soil is nutrient rich and closely monitored.
- In spring, choose the green leafy vegetables that represent the fresh new growth of the season. These nutrient packed foods include spinach, romaine lettuce, parsley, basil, and swiss chard.
- In summer, focus on the cooling foods which are a seasonal practice in traditional Chinese medicine. These foods include apple, pear, plum, strawberries, and vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, corn, and seasonings like mint and cilantro.
- In fall, warm up the menu with foods of the harvest. Include carrot, sweet potato, onions, garlic, and the spices of ginger, peppercorns, and mustard seeds.
- In winter, turn more exclusively to the slow growing warming foods such as the root vegetables. These are carrot, potato, onions and garlic. Animal foods are in this category including fish, chicken, beef, lamb, and venison. Eggs and nuts are also healthy choices for the season.

Eating healthy any time of year is easy. Just let the nature of the season be your guide.



Family Wellness Center

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