



Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults
Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences
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Getting the Most Out of Your Local Farmers Market

Shopping at the farmers market can have a surprising range of benefits, including for older adults. Take the time to visit all the markets in your area, as they can be very unique. Markets change over the season too, as new types of produce come into season. Therefore, there's no excuse to not explore them! Here are some tips to make the most of your trip: Dress comfortably for the weather: Most farmers markets are outdoors, either under a wooden structure or in tents. This means you get the added benefit of outdoor exercise as you peruse the delicious produce and goods for sale. Make sure to wear comfortable shoes and take precautions to protect yourself from the sun including sunscreen and hats. Early birds get the produce: Getting to the market near to its opening time helps to ensure that you are able to buy the most popular seasonal items such as strawberries, asparagus or peaches. These items are so popular they may sell out quickly! Make it a family event: Meeting loved ones at the market is a great way to take advantage of all the market has to offer. Farmers markets often have live music as well as fun programs for children and families. Meet your grandchildren at the market, choose some ingredients, and make a meal together! Get a jump on your garden: The farmers market is a great spot to pick up vegetable and herb seedlings in the spring and fall. Don't forget that SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits can be used to purchase herbs and food bearing plants. Plan ahead to get your items home safely: Bringing your own shopping bags is something most people know to do, but you may also want to consider bringing a soft-sided cooler with some ice packs and/or a small shopping cart to help you get your purchases home safely. Ask about food access programs: Many farmers markets accept SNAP and some have even more extensive food access programs such as giving discounts to people with a Medicare card. Ask at the market information booth or market manager tent about any special programs to increase access to healthy food.

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Steps to support local food and farming

Virginia's Farm Market Fresh for Older Adults program, also known as Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, provides eligible seniors fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruit, vegetables, and herbs. It also supports local farmers. If you qualify, you will receive 10 vouchers (\$5 each), totaling \$50 worth of farmers market vouchers to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs during the growing season.

To qualify, you must be:

- 60 years or older
- a resident of a participating locality
- meet program income requirements
- not live in the same household or be an immediate family member of farmers who grows the produce.

Make sure to submit an application each year; applications are accepted on a first come-first serve basis. To find a program near you, contact your local Area Agency on Aging or visit <https://www.vda.virginia.gov/sfmnp.htm>

Achieving Physical Activity Guidelines Step 5: Flexibility and Balance

Fall risk reduction is an important priority as we age. Balance training can improve your ability to perform activities of daily living and reduce falls. They can also reduce the risk of injury, if a fall does occur.

Examples of balance training include:

- Heel-to-toe walking
- Standing from a sitting position
- Using a balance disc

Flexibility training is very important to ensure joints have the ability to move through full range of motion. A warm up and cool down with exercise is a great way to incorporate flexibility practices.

Strawberry Spinach Salad

Source: <https://eatsmartmovemoreva.org/recipes/strawberry-spinach-salad/>

Ingredients (Makes 8 Servings):

- 1-pound spinach, torn
- 2 cups strawberries, diced
- 1/2 onion(s), diced
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon yellow mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 cup pecans, chopped (optional)

Instructions:

1. For the salad, add spinach and strawberries to a mixing bowl.
2. To make the dressing, add onion, sugar, vinegar, oil, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, and paprika to a separate bowl. Whisk until sugar is dissolved.
3. Drizzle dressing lightly over the salad and toss to coat. Sprinkle pecans on top, if using.

Resources

Find a Farmers Market near you: <https://vafma.org/virginia-markets/>

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Virginia Grown

<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown/index.shtml>

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs <https://www.vda.virginia.gov/sfmnp.htm>

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