



Save Vitamin C and Avoid Mushy Broccoli

You may be tired of trying to get children to eat limp, mushy, olive-green broccoli. Vegetables are much more appealing to children when they are cooked correctly. Not only are children more likely to eat the bright-green broccoli, but it will also provide them with more important nutrients. Storing and cooking vegetables correctly help them retain more vitamins and minerals.

Factors that Lead to Nutrient Loss

Some nutrient loss is inevitable, but most can be minimized by limiting these:

- Soaking or cooking in water
- High temperatures
- Prolonged cooking
- Alkalis (baking soda, hard water)
- Plant enzymes
- Exposure to air

Selecting Produce

Choose produce that has the maximum amount of nutrients by:

- Buying in season
- Picking produce in good condition
- Selecting locally-grown produce from your own garden, a farmer's market, or the grocery store

Store it Right

Nutrients in vegetables begin to decrease as soon as they are picked and continue to decline until eaten.

- Store for a short amount of time to prevent loss of nutrients, flavor, and texture
- Keep vegetables cool
- Store potatoes, onions, garlic, and winter squash in a cool, dark, dry place
- Refrigerate other vegetables in a covered container to prevent drying
- Wash just before using
- Tightly cover peeled or cut vegetables to prevent drying and discoloration



Best Cooking Methods

Retain the most nutrients with faster cooking times, less water, and larger pieces. Use these methods:

- Steam
- Microwave
- Sauté
- Stir-fry
- Serve Raw

Fresh, Canned, or Frozen?

Canned and frozen vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh produce.

Besides no need for washing and chopping, an advantage of canned and frozen vegetables is that they are ripe when harvested and are quickly processed to maintain more vitamins and minerals.

One of the major disadvantages is added salt. Look on the packaging for no-salt added vegetables.



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