



# NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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As summer slowly winds down and schools around the region are back in session, parents are overjoyed to be back in a routine. This is the perfect time to consider meal planning and after school snacks using fruits and veggies from your local Farmers Market.

“Farmers Market produce is in season and at its peak in flavor and nutrition,” said Janelle Hansen, Health Educator with Panhandle Public Health District. “Apples, raspberries, peaches, watermelons, and pears are all delicious after school snacks and provide kids with key nutrients.”

Vegetables make excellent additions when meal planning. The ongoing joke is to lock your cars or you will find a carload of squash or zucchini! Be excited with this find as zucchini can be shredded and added to meals like Sloppy Joes, casseroles, or sliced and used as a replacement to noodles.

The natural antioxidants in fruits and veggies help keep your body working at its best, so be certain to include 2 ½-3 cups of vegetables in your diet each day. It helps to give your body a strong defense and protect against heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers.

If you find yourself with an abundance of garden fruit and veggies or purchased a large supply, canning, freezing, or drying are great ways to preserve items at their peak so you can enjoy year-round.

“Make your own healthy tomato sauce with extra tomatoes that are sure to provide less sodium and sugar,” Hansen said. “Salsa is another favorite as tomatoes, onions, peppers, and jalapenos are commonly grown in the area.”

An excellent resource for preserving is the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension website [food.unl.edu/preservation](http://food.unl.edu/preservation). It provides important tips, instructions, and recipes.

A complete listing of Farmers Market locations can be found at [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org) or call Hansen at 308-487-3600 extension 105. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle community.