



# HEALTH CORNER

**April 2015**

*Did you know?*

Spring is a great time to clean your home — and clean up your diet. Take advantage of spring fruits and vegetables at the peak of their freshness and nutritional value. Some examples of fruits and vegetables that are “in season” are apricots, asparagus, broccoli, chives, fennel, greens, mango, oranges, spinach and strawberries.

Seasonal food is a great food choice for several reasons. First, seasonal fruits and vegetables are at optimal flavor and quality. Second, they’re in abundance, so they cost less at the grocery store or farmer’s market. And third, they are more nutritious because they don’t sit around. Seasonal foods don’t have to travel as far or as long to our table as those grown in faraway locations.

Check out the following website for more information on preparation ideas and how to Spring-Clean Your Diet: <http://www.everydayhealth.com/health-report/spring-nutrition-and-fitness/spring-clean-your-diet.aspx>

Another way to enjoy fresh produce while in season is to plant your own garden. Gardening can be good exercise: Planting, hoeing, and weeding all require bending and stretching. Gardening also has other rewards — the freshest, tastiest foods. Vine-ripened tomatoes are a classic garden staple, and research has shown that the lycopene in tomatoes may boost immunity and prevent diseases, as well as reduce the risk of prostate cancer. If you plan your garden well, you can enjoy a healthy harvest into the fall, and a healthier body, too. Currently in Dubuque there are opportunities throughout the city to be involved in this aspect of local food. Please visit this website for more information on the Community Gardens: <http://dbqcommunitygardens.com/>

Also, to learn more about gardening, contact your local county ISU Extension and Outreach office or visit the online ISU Extension store at <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/> to check out these and other gardening publications:

PM 870B—Container Vegetable Gardening

PM 819—Planting a Home Vegetable Garden

PM 534—Planting and Harvesting Times for Garden Vegetables