



Get Up & Move!

Parent Newsletter

Series 2: July



Farmers Markets

July, August and September are all big months for vegetables and fruits in Illinois. Illinois growers produce many fresh vegetables and fruits, including peaches, strawberries, apples, pumpkins, tomatoes, greens, zucchini, beans and peppers. Farmers markets provide an accessible selection of fresh vegetables and fruits throughout the summer and fall. They allow consumers to have access to locally grown produce and also support local farmers. Going to a farmer's market can be a fun and educational family experience. Below are some tips for when you go shopping at a farmers market.

Shopping Tips

- Always bring cash. You will be paying at each individual farmer's market stand and they usually do not accept checks or credit cards.
- Bring large cloth or net shopping bags to consolidate purchases.
- Avoid carrying a purse. Fanny packs and pockets are the best way to carry money and keys.
- Dress for the weather; most markets are outdoors and not covered. Wear comfortable walking shoes.
- Leave pets at home. Just because the market is outdoors doesn't mean that pets should come too.
- When you first arrive at the market, see what's available and see what the prices are. Usually there is more than one vendor selling a product and prices can vary greatly. Make sure that when comparing prices you are taking into consideration production methods and package sizes.
- If you decide to bargain for a better price, it may not be well received on small quantities. Many times large quantities of a food will get a price break. Do not be afraid to ask.
- Don't be afraid to ask the farmer about the production practices they use.
- If you don't know what something is – ask! The average consumer is only familiar with a handful of fruits and vegetables. Expand your cooking horizons and try new fruits and vegetables at the market. If you are not sure how something should be eaten or prepared, ask for tips.
- Handle produce carefully. If you want to check the produce, ask the farmer about the proper technique for doing so.
- You may want to bring a cooler with a cold pack for your trip home, especially if you plan on purchasing greens, meat, dairy and/or eggs at the market.

Source: (www.urbanext.uiuc.edu; www.farmersmarket.msu.edu; www.ams.usda.gov)