

Nutrition Notes

SPRING-SUMMER 2025

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

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Add a Dash of **Red** to Your Diet for a Healthier Tomorrow

As we age, paying attention to the nutrients we get from food becomes even more important. One nutrient you maybe have not heard of is Lycopene. It's a natural compound that gives many red and pink fruits and vegetables their color making foods more eye appealing but also offers many health benefits as well.



So, what is Lycopene? It is an antioxidant found in red fruits and vegetables. Antioxidants help protect our cells from damage caused by "free radicals," which can contribute to aging and disease. Unlike some vitamins and minerals, lycopene isn't essential to survive but can help support health as we age. Below are five benefits of lycopene.

1. Heart Health - lycopene may help lower "bad" LDL cholesterol and reduce blood pressure — two key risk factors for heart disease, which is common among seniors.
2. Cancer Prevention - some studies have shown a link between lycopene and a reduced risk of prostate, lung, and stomach cancers. While it's not a cure and not guaranteed to prevent these illnesses, it can certainly help in lowering our cancer risk.
3. Eye Health - lycopene's antioxidant properties may help protect against age-related eye diseases like macular degeneration.
4. Skin Protection - it may help protect your skin from sun damage and improve overall skin texture - a good thing to know with warmer weather here.
5. Brain Function - emerging research suggests lycopene may help reduce the risk of cognitive decline by protecting brain cells from damage.

You may now be asking, "where can I find Lycopene?". It is in many foods — and you likely are already eating some of them! Some common sources include tomatoes - and lycopene actually increases with cooking in things such as tomato sauce, tomato paste and tomato soup for example. Some other good sources are watermelon, pink grapefruit, red bell peppers, papaya, red grapes, apricots, and red cabbage for example. A tip to help better absorb lycopene is adding a heart healthy fat - such as adding olive oil to spaghetti sauce.

As you can see, adding more lycopene-rich foods to your diet doesn't require any big changes. A bowl of tomato soup, a slice of watermelon, or pasta with tomato sauce can make a difference. Before making any significant changes to your diet—especially if you're managing a chronic condition—consult with your registered dietitian or healthcare provider to ensure it's appropriate for your individual needs.

Why are Eggs So Expensive? **And What You Can Do About It**



If you've noticed that eggs are pricier than usual at your local grocery store, you're not alone. As of early 2025, egg prices have surged to record highs, with some stores charging over \$6 per dozen. So why the spike in price? There are several factors contributing to this high cost. First, Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) has led to the loss of millions of egg-laying hens, drastically reducing supply. In addition to this, the demand for eggs has gone up.

While there's hope that egg prices will decrease, the timeline is uncertain. The USDA projects that prices may begin to decline by the second quarter of 2025, but this may not happen. In the meantime, there are some substitutes for eggs you can consider:

For Baking:

- Mashed Banana: use $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of mashed ripe banana to replace one egg. Ideal for muffins and pancakes.
- Unsweetened Applesauce: swap $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for one egg. Works well in cakes and brownies.
- Ground Flaxseed: mix 1 Tablespoon of ground flaxseed with 3 Tablespoons of water. Let it sit for a few minutes to thicken. Suitable for cookies and breads.
- Baking Soda and Vinegar: combine 1 teaspoon of baking soda with 1 Tablespoon of vinegar to replace one egg, providing leavening in baked goods.

For Cooking:

- Silken Tofu: blend $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of silken tofu to substitute one egg in recipes like quiches or custards.
- Commercial Egg Replacers: products like JUST Egg or Bob's Red Mill Egg Replacer are available in many stores and can be used in various recipes; however, some of these can be pretty pricey.

Rising egg prices have stretched grocery budgets and while it's unclear exactly when costs will come back down, exploring egg alternatives may help you stretch your food budget.

Banana Oat Muffins (no eggs)

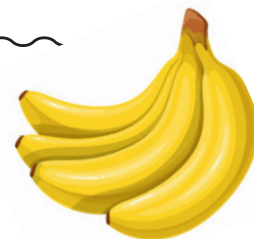
Makes: 12 muffins | Prep Time: 10 minutes | Bake Time: 20–25 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 ripe bananas, mashed - about 1 cup (replaces 2 eggs)
- 1 cup milk (dairy or plant-based)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable oil or melted butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar or honey
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups rolled oats
- 1 cup all-purpose flour (or whole wheat)
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ salt
- Optional: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped walnuts or raisins

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a muffin tin with paper liners or grease lightly.
2. Mix wet ingredients: in a large bowl, stir together mashed bananas, milk, oil, sugar (or honey), and vanilla.
3. Add dry ingredients: add oats, flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. Stir until just combined. Fold in nuts or raisins if using.
4. Scoop into muffin tin, filling each cup about $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
5. Bake for 20–25 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean from the center.
6. Cool for 5–10 minutes before serving. Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 5 days or freeze for later.



Shop Local Produce in Southern Ohio

After a long, cold winter, many of us are looking forward to warmer weather and longer days. One of the enjoyable activities summer brings is visiting your local farmers market or even doing some gardening yourself. Choosing locally-produced foods has many benefits to our health, community, environment, and budget.



Fruits and vegetables lose nutrients the longer they sit on shelves or travel from far away. Local produce is often picked within a day or two of being sold, meaning it can retain more of its nutrients and quality better than fresh produce shipped from afar. When you buy produce from far away, it travels hundreds (sometimes thousands) of miles by truck, plane, or ship — burning fossil fuels along the way. This means that local food is more environmentally friendly because it travels a shorter distance from farm to plate. Less single use plastic is another benefit of locally grown foods at Farmers Markets. That means less plastic and trash ending up in landfills or waterways.

There are many community benefits to Farmers Markets. One highlight is that you can talk directly to the farmer — ask how the food was grown and even get tips for storing or preparing it. Additionally, shopping local supports small farms and strengthens your community's economy. It also helps preserve farmland in your area for future generations. These markets also are a chance to get out, connect with neighbors, and enjoy a friendly atmosphere.

Worried about cost with Farmers Markets? Many local markets participate in programs like:

- Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) – offers free produce benefits for eligible seniors. See below for more information about how to apply.
- SNAP/EBT Matching Programs – some markets will double your SNAP benefits, so \$10 can buy you \$20 worth of fresh food.

To learn more about what is available in your area, log on to the Ohio Farmers Market Network at ohiofarmersmarketnetwork.org



Nutrition Program

Applications are available! Scan the QR Code to apply or call our Farmers Market Hotline if you have questions.

1-800-343-8112

or email FarmersMarket@aaa7.org



SCAN ME



Word Find

Find these words:

Antioxidants	Light
Avocado	Melon
Berries	Picnic
Cherries	Popsicle
Citrus	Protein
Corn	Salad
Cucumbers	Seasonal
Electrolytes	Smoothie
Energy	Snack
Fiber	Tomatoes
Fresh	Vitamins
Grilled	Watermelon
Hydration	Wholegrain
Ice	Yogurt
Leafy	Zinc

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Creamy Mayo-Free Broccoli Salad

Ingredients (for the Salad):

- 1 medium head broccoli, cut into bite-size florets (about 5½ cups)
- ¼ cup finely-diced red onions
- ½ cup cheddar cheese, cubed (optional)
- ⅓ cup raisins or dried cranberries
- 4 slices bacon, crisp-cooked and chopped
- ¼ cup dry roasted and salted sunflower seeds

Ingredients (for the Dressing):

- ¾ cup plain whole milk yogurt* (see Note if using Greek yogurt)
- 3 Tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon fine salt
- Pinch of black pepper

Instructions:

1. Place the broccoli, onion, cheese and raisins in a large bowl.
2. Whisk together the yogurt, vinegar, garlic powder, salt and pepper until smooth. Taste and add more salt and pepper as desired.
3. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss well to coat.
4. Stir in the bacon and sunflower seeds just before serving.



Nutrition Information:

- Servings: 6
- Serving Size: 1 cup (1/6 of salad)
- Calories: 115
- Fat: 5 g (Sat Fat: 2 g)
- Sodium: 360 mg
- Carbohydrate: 13 g
- Fiber: 3 g
- Sugar: 8 g
- Protein: 6 g
- Cholesterol: 7 mg

Note: if using Greek yogurt, stir in 2-4 Tablespoons of milk to achieve a dressing-like consistency.