



Helping you shop, Getting caught up in the details

On the shelf

When shopping the aisles of the grocery store you may encounter foods labeled as fortified foods or enriched foods. What are they? What does it actually mean?

Fortified foods such as juices with added Calcium or Vitamin D have nutrients added to them that did not originally exist in the product or contained very little. Fortified foods are common and are often seen in processed foods found on many grocery shelves such as cereal with iron or almond milk with calcium. (1)

Enriched foods are products that have lost nutrients during processing. Later those nutrients are added back in. Many breads on the store shelves are enriched with fiber as it gets striped from the grain during processing. (1)

Fresh, Frozen or Canned

You have a lot of options in grocery stores when it comes to buying fruits and vegetables. When you are shopping, should you buy fresh, frozen or canned? What is the difference between them?

Fresh is the preferred choice for overall freshness and getting all the nutrients that come naturally in your fruits and vegetables. Fresh is not always available in all areas and if not eaten or prepared in a timely manner it can spoil.

Frozen fruits and vegetables typically do not contain preservatives as the freezing process is the preservative instead of food additives. Frozen fruits and vegetables are a great option for getting quality food without eating added preservatives. One thing to watch for is frozen fruits or vegetables that have sauces or flavorings added. These added sauces and sweeteners can often carry high amounts of sodium, fat and sugar.

Canned foods are convenient, typically inexpensive and commonly have a 2-year shelf life (1). This extended shelf life is due to the canning process and preservatives used to prevent spoilage. These preservatives and additives often include increased sodium, sugar for taste, and some syrups (in fruits). Canned fruits and vegetables still offer nutrients we need, but they can include some unwanted additives that fresh and frozen options do not have.

Source:

Thompson, J., Manore, M., & Vaughan, L. A. (2011). *The science of nutrition*. San Francisco: Benjamin Cummings.

www.commonhealth.virginia.gov

The contents of the CommonHealth weekly emails may be reprinted from an outside resource in the area of health, safety, and wellness and is intended to provide one or more views on a topic. These views do not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth of Virginia, CommonHealth, or any particular agency and are offered for educational purposes. If you have questions or concerns about this article, please email us at wellness@dhrm.virginia.gov