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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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REDUCING FOOD WASTE

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As more and more Americans focus on improving their health by increasing fruit and vegetable intake, they also face the difficulty of using fresh produce before it goes bad and reducing overall food waste.

A recent study found that Americans are wasting nearly 150,000 tons of food each day, with most of that coming in the form of fresh produce. Dairy and meat products were a close second.

Knowing how to prep and store fresh fruits and vegetables can be essential in decreasing the amount of food that ends up in the trash can at the end of every week.

Spending a few minutes washing, drying, peeling and cutting fruits and vegetables immediately after purchase is one of the best ways to reduce waste and increase healthy snacking. If foods are prepared ahead of time, it is easy to reach for them as a quick after school snack or side dish, and it helps lessen the chance of that bell pepper or cucumber being pushed to the back of the refrigerator and forgotten.

Certain varieties of produce have a shorter lifespan than others. Things like fresh berries, apricots, herbs, cucumbers, mushrooms and leafy greens can go bad more quickly than other foods, so create a meal plan that utilizes these foods within the first few days of purchase. Other foods such as apples, blueberries, carrots and winter squash have a longer shelf life.

Be aware that some produce can give off ethylene gas during ripening, which can contribute to the ripening of other foods stored nearby. Avocados, under-ripe bananas, and tomatoes give off this gas and are typically stored at room temperature, so be aware of quick ripening if these foods are kept together. Apples, cantaloupe and kiwis do the same, so be sure to store these in a crisper separate from vegetables and quick-ripening fruits such as berries.

Making a meal plan and taking inventory of the refrigerator before a trip to the supermarket is essential for reducing food waste. Do your best to stretch ingredients throughout the week and plan around what you already have on hand.

Even with increased vigilance, it may be impossible to use up all produce before it begins to wilt, bruise and soften. Instead of throwing it out, use it in soups, smoothies and baked goods.

Making an effort to reduce food waste will help you eat a healthier diet, save money and keep the earth healthy.

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Green Julius Smoothie

Source: www.superhealthykids.com

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 medium – orange
- 1 medium – banana
- ½ cup – milk
- ½ cup – Greek yogurt, plain
- 1 teaspoon – vanilla extract
- ½ cup – ice
- 2 cup – spinach

DIRECTIONS:

Peel oranges and banana. Place all ingredients in a blender.

Blend well, until smooth and frothy. Enjoy right away!