



# YOUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

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## Healthy Eating

### From Garden to Table

Despite all of the things that may be out of your control right now, one thing that you may have control over is what you put into your body. Why is this important? Your body requires anti-inflammatory foods to decrease the inflammation in your body and to support a healthy nervous system. Anti-inflammatory foods are those that are not processed, are naturally grown, and free of genetically modified organisms (GMO). Anti-inflammatory foods include fruits, vegetables, omega containing fish, nuts, and olive oil. These foods contain antioxidants and polyphenols that help our bodies fight or reduce inflammation. Many chronic diseases are linked to chronic inflammation in the body, such as dementia, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson's disease.

Many get excited over summertime local produce and visit farmer's markets throughout summer and fall. Not only do fresh fruits and vegetables taste better, but the benefits are much greater. You are essentially eating fruits and vegetables right from the harvest with minimal handling. The produce are not preserved in any way and are less likely to have harmful pesticides. However, you should verify the use of pesticides with your local farmer when purchasing. Eating vegetables and fruits right from the harvest, have the most health benefits. When purchasing from the grocery store, you don't know how long fruit or vegetables have been sitting on the shelf losing nutrients. Due to this, it is recommended to eat fruits and vegetables in season.

The growing season in Michigan is quite limited. There are ways to eat local produce all year round. You can order larger quantities from your local farmer and freeze. Vegetables generally require blanching prior to freezing. You can also freeze fruit to blend in smoothies, add to oatmeal or yogurt. Vegetables can be steamed or quickly sauteed from frozen state.

## Eating Well (Continued)

If blanching and freezing is not practical in your situation, you can also check with your local farmer to see if they sell "farm to freezer" option. When a vegetable or fruit is not in season, buying from the frozen section may be the next freshest option available.

Vegetables may be a side dish for many, but can also be a main dish. Vegetables can be added a stir-fry or pasta. The recipe below is a simple dish that incorporates your summer vegetables. You can easily swap out or add different vegetables to your liking.

### Pesto Gnocchi

1 medium zucchini (or 2 baby zucchini), sliced 1/4 inch thick  
1 medium summer squash, sliced 1/4 inch thick  
1 sweet bell pepper (red/orange/yellow), sliced 1/4 inch thick  
6 ounces of cherry tomatoes or 2 roma tomatoes, diced  
Your favorite vegetable seasoning (I prefer Adobo)  
1/4-1/2 cup of your favorite pesto (homemade or store bought)  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
16 ounce gnocchi cooked per package instructions, there is gluten free gnocchi available  
4 oz goat cheese crumbled (optional)

1. Cook and strain gnocchi per package instructions.
2. Add olive oil to pan over medium heat. Add zucchini, summer squash, bell pepper, with your favorite seasoning or Adobo seasoning to taste.
3. Sautee vegetables until tender. Add tomatoes and pesto. Cook until tomatoes are starting to cook down, but remove from heat to avoid vegetables going to mush.
4. Serve over prepared gnocchi. Optional: add goat cheese to taste

