

April, 2020



## Nutrition News for the Central Sierra

A monthly newsletter about food, nutrition, and healthy living in the Central Sierra.

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, you can help spread the word about Central Sierra resources to make sure everyone has enough to eat. **If your family, your neighbors, or anyone you know is in need of food, assistance is available!**

Links to information about Central Sierra food banks, WIC agencies, school meal sites, senior meals, how to [sign up for CalFresh/food stamps](#), and more are available on the following webpage, which will be regularly updated until the end of the crisis.

### COVID-19 Community Resources

[http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/CentralSierraNutrition/Community\\_Resources/](http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/CentralSierraNutrition/Community_Resources/)

As the State of California has issued a shelter-in-place order to reduce the spread of COVID-19, UC Cooperative Extension in the Central Sierra is now working remotely. We are still here to answer your questions and address needs during this unprecedented situation.

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## Supporting Farmers Markets in the Time of COVID-19



When California issued a statewide stay-at-home order to slow the spread of COVID-19 earlier this Spring, a handful of essential services were exempted from the order. Along with grocery stores and agricultural operations, farmers markets were included as essential sources of food. For the farmers and other vendors who sell at farmers markets, their businesses and sometimes their livelihoods depend on the markets. For many people, farmers markets are important social occasions as we all like to gather around good food to talk, share, and eat together. But the primary role farmers markets fill as sources of nutrient-dense, high-quality, fresh fruits and vegetables has become increasingly clear as bare produce shelves in stores have become an unfortunately common sight.

As the Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor for UC Cooperative Extension in the Central Sierra, my primary mission is to help connect foothill residents with healthy food, especially fruits and vegetables. One of the best ways to do that is to support farmers markets. I know that our foothill growers want to feed the people in their communities, and I know that many people want to eat locally and support local businesses. Especially now that the COVID-19 crisis has caused cracks in the national structures we use to distribute food, farmers markets' role as essential sources of healthy food has only increased.

In addition to being essential community food sources, farmers markets are important for promoting social connection, which is especially needed now in our small towns and counties. The risk of social isolation and disconnection is always present in rural areas, but it is especially pronounced in this time of social distancing. While it's essential to maintain physical distance to slow the spread of COVID-19, it is also critically important to maintain our relationships and sense of belonging in our communities. Purchasing locally grown food from a familiar producer, having the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the food in a physically distanced way, and knowing that each purchase supports the livelihood of people in our community are all important benefits of farmers markets in the time of COVID-19.

However, to some of us sheltering in place the thought of attending a typical farmers market right now is frightening. It's hard to imagine how physical distancing could be accomplished at a typical bustling market. Luckily for those of us in the foothills, we have the opportunity to learn from other year-round farmers markets across the state that have been operating throughout the COVID-19 crisis. While each market is unique, market managers and supporters have been working hard to test new approaches to crowd control, vendor layout, handwashing stations, and other strategies designed to keep vendors and the public safe. Many of these markets have successfully created shopping environments that respect physical distancing and the most current safety information, which indicates that COVID-19 is thought to spread primarily from person-to-person contact. While the [FDA](#) has no current evidence of cases acquired through contact with food or food packaging, evidence that the virus can survive on surfaces means that increased sanitation practices and caution around food handling are warranted.

I thank our local market associations and market managers for being proactive about planning a market environment that connects people with the nutritious food they need while working to provide the safest possible market experience. While our local farmers markets may look a little different this season than they have in the past, I hope they remain the essential sources of healthy food they have always been.

*~Katie Johnson, Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor*

## April Harvest of the Month



Springtime is strawberry time, and April is when an abundance of the berries begins to appear at farmers' markets and grocery stores. To get the most out of strawberries, wash them shortly before serving and eat them within a few days, as ripe berries are very perishable once picked. Strawberries are an excellent source of Vitamin C and also contain fiber, potassium, magnesium and Vitamin B-6. Plain strawberries are a quick and easy snack, and they also pair well with many other foods. See below for healthy recipe ideas, or learn more about strawberries and view their nutrition facts at the USDA's [Seasonal Produce Guide](#).

### Recipe Ideas:

- [Green and Red Salad](#)
- [Berry Good Banana Split with Yogurt](#)
- [Strawberry Spring Rolls](#)
- [Strawberry Pineapple Lemonade](#)

## New & Noteworthy

*Visit these links for a round-up of recent health and nutrition news, information, and events. For general healthy eating information based on an expert analysis of nutrition research, visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](#). For individual questions, consult a registered dietitian or medical provider.*

**Food Distribution 101: What Happens When the Food Supply is Disrupted by a Pandemic.** This article provides a good overview of some of the issues currently facing the food system.

This fact sheet on **Breastfeeding during COVID-19 (in English) (in Spanish)** provides information for families navigating pregnancy and breastfeeding during the pandemic.

This series of flyers features information on food safety topics relevant to COVID-19:

- [Is Coronavirus a Food Safety Issue?](#)
- [Is Coronavirus a Concern at Grocery Stores?](#)

- [Is Coronavirus a Concern with Takeout?](#)
- [Is Coronavirus a Concern on Fresh Produce?](#)
- [Handwashing](#) and COVID-19

## Nutrition Education Spotlight: Serving Up MyPlate Online

The CalFresh Healthy Living-UC program in the Central Sierra is currently offering the USDA nutrition education curriculum [Serving Up MyPlate](#) online to qualified school sites. This curriculum offers three sections for students in Grades 1-6. When delivered online, each section includes:

- A pre-recorded video lesson
- A worksheet to complete at home
- A healthy recipe idea to make at home
- A live virtual class lesson taught by a Nutrition Educator

Teachers interested in partnering with our program to offer this free education are invited to contact our Program Coordinator to determine if your class is eligible: [cmpadilla@ucanr.edu](mailto:cmpadilla@ucanr.edu).



The lesson videos are also available on the new Central Sierra CalFresh Healthy Living-UC [YouTube channel](#). More how-to videos on cooking at home and gardening at home are coming soon!

### About Us

Nutrition, Family and Consumers Sciences (NFCS) in the Central Sierra conducts education, outreach, and applied research to support nutrition, food security, and public health in Calaveras, Tuolumne, Amador, and El Dorado Counties. NFCS includes the CalFresh Healthy Living-UC program, which teaches free classes in local schools, community centers, libraries, and other public places. Our classes show people how to choose, grow, cook, and enjoy affordable healthy foods, and how to make physical activity a regular and fun part of life. We also work to create environments where it's easier for people to make healthy choices by supporting wellness policies, community and school gardens, walking clubs, and more. For more information, visit our [website](#), [Facebook](#), or [Twitter](#), or email NFCS Advisor Katie Johnson at [ckrjohnson@ucanr.edu](mailto:ckrjohnson@ucanr.edu).



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