

## *Frozen Foods: Convenient and Nutritious*

Frozen foods are an affordable way get your daily dose of fruits and vegetables. In fact, families who incorporate frozen foods into their normal routine may have better diet quality. With so many choices in the frozen foods aisle, there are plenty of opportunities to find something you like.

### **Benefits of Frozen**

Fruits and vegetables are picked at peak ripeness and often frozen within hours, locking in nutrients and flavor. Generally, frozen foods retain their vitamins and minerals and there is no change to the carbohydrate, protein or fat content. In some cases, frozen foods have more vitamins and minerals compared to fresh because fresh foods lose vitamins and minerals over time while freezing preserves nutrients. Frozen foods can be a convenient and affordable way to incorporate healthful foods from every food group, including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy. In addition to a time-saving convenience, frozen foods can be a benefit for individuals with limited kitchen space or utensils. Not only can frozen foods be more affordable in price, but they also can aid in reducing food waste.

## *Support Your Health With Nutrition*

Good nutrition is essential to a strong immune system, which may offer protection from seasonal illness and other health problems. No one food or supplement can prevent illness but you may help support your immune system by including these nutrients in your overall eating plan on a regular basis. **Protein** plays a role in the body's immune system, especially for healing and recovery. Eat a variety of protein foods including seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products and unsalted nuts and seeds.

**Vitamin A** helps regulate the immune system and protect against infections by keeping skin and tissues in the mouth, stomach, intestines and respiratory system healthy. Get this vitamin from foods such as sweet potatoes, carrots, broccoli, spinach, red bell peppers, apricots, eggs or foods labeled "vitamin A fortified," such as milk or some cereals.

**Vitamin C** supports the immune system by stimulating the formation of antibodies. Include more sources of this healthy vitamin by choosing citrus fruits such as oranges, grapefruit and tangerines, or red bell pepper, papaya, strawberries, tomato juice or foods fortified with vitamin C, such as some cereals.

**Vitamin E** works as an antioxidant and may support immune function. Include vitamin E in your diet with fortified cereals, sunflower seeds, almonds, vegetable oils (such as sunflower or safflower oil), hazelnuts and peanut butter

**Zinc** helps the immune system work properly and may help wounds heal. Zinc can be found in lean meat, poultry, seafood, milk, whole grain products, beans, seeds and nuts.

**Other nutrients**, including vitamin B6, B12, copper, folate, selenium and iron also may support immune response and play a role in a healthful eating style.