

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Send the Kids Back to School Healthy**

With schools days once again right around the corner, it's time to start thinking of school lunches. Many folks opt out of the school-provided lunch in an effort to give their kids better nutrition, often at better cost. One great way to do that is to pack lunchboxes with a variety of fresh vegetable snacks. **The Berthoud Farmers' Market** provides nine more weeks of freshly grown vegetables to stuff those kids healthy. The Market is held every **Thursday, 3-7, at Mountain and Third in historic downtown Berthoud.**

Serving healthy snacks to children is important to providing good nutrition, supporting lifelong healthy eating habits, and helping to prevent costly and potentially disabling diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity.

Since snacking is so pervasive among children, adults should emphasize and buy healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables instead of convenience foods high in fat, salt, and sugar, said Dr. Barry Popkin, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at the University of North Carolina schools of public health and medicine.

Most of the snacks served to children should be fruits and vegetables, since most kids do not eat the recommended five to thirteen servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Eating fruits and vegetables lowers the risk of heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure. Fruits and vegetables also contain important nutrients like vitamins A and C and fiber.

Though some think fruits and vegetables are costly snacks, they are actually less costly than many other less-healthy snacks on a per-serving basis. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average cost of a serving of fruit or vegetable (all types – fresh, frozen, or canned) is 25 cents per serving. This is a good deal compared with a 69-cent single-serve bag of potato chips or an 80-cent candy bar.

Some ways to tempt kids with vegetables is to cut many types of raw vegetables into matchsticks and serve with salad dressing, hummus, guacamole, or peanut butter as a dip. Another is to set up bowls of veggies and let the kids pretend they have their own salad bar, or have a taste-test contest with veggies.

One great way to sneak vegetables into a child's diet is to grate vegetables onto a sandwich or tortilla roll, steam and then puree vegetables for soup or dip, or as a last resort, make zucchini snack cake (recipe below.)

## **Zucchini Snack Cake**

3 cups flour  
4 tablespoons cocoa  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 cup oil (like canola)  
1 3/4 cup sugar (or other sweetener)  
2 eggs, beaten  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1/2 cup milk  
2 cups grated zucchini  
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips (may omit if too sweet)  
3/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sift flour, cocoa, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. In a large bowl beat the oil, sugar, eggs, and vanilla. Add the dry ingredients to the oil mixture, along with the milk and zucchini. Mix until blended. Pour into greased and floured 11 x 14 inch pan. Top with chocolate chips and nuts if desired. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Makes very moist cake.

At the Berthoud Farmers' Market this week are summer squashes, tomatoes, melons, onions, cucumbers, green beans, cabbage, carrots, peppers, lettuce, okra, potatoes, corn, basil, dill, peaches, and pears. In addition, Pope's Farms will again roast fresh peppers ready for recipe additions. You can also find cheese spreads, fresh-baked loaves of bread and pastries, hot kettle corn, cool and creamy gelato, tomato choka (similar to salsa only thicker), fresh batches of barbeque sauce, honey, natural beef, a variety of mushrooms, frozen salt water fish and shellfish, emu products and soap, beaded flowers, fresh fudge, and vitamin supplements.

Berthoud non-profit organizations, community growers, or artisans within the town and county who wish to sell either home grown produce or home made crafts may attend the market twice during the season at no charge.

A volunteer-driven, lunch packing, non-profit organization, The Berthoud Main Street Program encourages the community to volunteer with its many upcoming activities and events. For questions, please contact Eric Boyd at 532-5199. Visit the Berthoud Main Street Program website at [www.berthoudmainstreet.org](http://www.berthoudmainstreet.org).

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