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# HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Thursday, October 5, 1944

## Questions and Answers

Winter vegetables rich in vitamin C?  
Food value of pickles?  
Storage of apples?

Information from nutrition  
scientists of State Experiment  
Stations.

Let's see what's in the mail bag today. We've time for three questions. And here they are. They're all on food. Well, food's an eternal topic of conversation where homemakers are concerned. And lately we've talked more and more about eating the right things. About getting the vitamins and minerals our families need for good health. I'm sure that was what this homemaker had in mind, when she asked, "Which of the winter vegetables are rich in vitamin C?"

The cabbage and turnip families rate highest in vitamin C, according to food specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture, Rutabaga, broccoli and brussels sprouts top the list. Cauliflower, cabbage and canned tomatoes rate a "very good" for vitamin C. Other vegetables rating "good" for vitamin C are cooked turnips, sweet potatoes, sauer kraut, spinach, parsnips, potatoes, winter squash and canned peas.

And of course, one of the best sources of vitamin C is fruit - oranges and grapefruit. You need twice as much tomato juice as citrus juice to get the same amount of vitamin C. And you'll get more vitamin C from eating an orange than from drinking the juice.

The body can't store large amounts of vitamin C. You must get your supply, day by day. You may need more of it at one time than another. Any extra strain seems to increase the body's demand for vitamin C.

A fresh crisp salad of raw vegetables is one of the best dishes for vitamin C.



But you'll cheat yourself out of much of that C if you put the dressing on the salad well ahead of the meal. Mix your salad just before serving. The same rule holds for cold slaw. You lose valuable vitamin C when you shred the vegetables and let them stand.

And while we're on the subject of vitamins, we'll take up the next question which asks, "Just what is the food value of pickles?"

Well, pickles are useful for flavor. Their tart, spicy, salty or sweet flavor may enliven an otherwise monotonous winter meal. But pickles can't take the place of fresh and canned fruits and vegetables that are good sources of vitamin C.

Nutrition workers on the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station made a study of pickles. They tested 13 kinds of pickles and relishes made by Maine housewives as well as 3 kinds of pickles and relishes put up in the laboratory. All ranked low in vitamin C. The sample testing highest was a relish made from fresh green pepper and raw cabbage.

Sauer kraut, on the other hand, is a pretty good source of vitamin C. Nutrition workers at the Wisconsin State Experiment station found that after two months storage, sauer kraut, put up at home in half-pint jars, tested a third as rich in vitamin C as fresh raw cabbage. And fresh cabbage, you know, is one of the richest sources in vitamin C.

Now, for our last question. A homemaker wants to know about storing apples. With an abundant crop this year, a lot of us plan to store a basket or two of apples for winter eating.

For information on storage, we again turn to food specialists of the state experiment stations.

To begin with, select apples for storage that are about of the same ripeness. Over-ripe apples should not be stored with freshly picked fruit. Storage specialists of Cornell University have recently made a study to show the effect of storing apples of different stages of ripeness. They found that the more mature apples



give off a volatile gas that may have a stimulating effect upon the fresh picked fruit. In other words, may cause the freshly picked apples to ripen too rapidly.

At the Maryland Experiment Station, fruit specialists have found that waxing Grimes Golden apples will help them maintain their weight and color. They let the apples pre-ripen a week before waxing them.

If you're storing a few baskets of Jonathans, Grimes Golden or Golden Delicious Apples, I suggest you write the Maryland Experiment Station for the waxing formula. Maryland horticulturists say that waxing is particularly valuable for storing these varieties of apples under home conditions. And the formula is quite simple and easy to use at home. Write the Maryland Experiment Station at College Park, Maryland for directions for waxing apples if you plan to store Jonathans, Grimes Golden or Golden Delicious.

It goes without saying that you'll handle the apples tenderly. Even so, as a reminder, bruising hastens decay. And speaking of decay in storage, a study made at the Ohio State Experiment Station shows that large apples - say those of 3 and a half inches in diameter - are more likely to break down or decay in storage than those of medium size .

As for the temperature for storing apples, workers at the Missouri Experiment Station say that apples keep best at a temperature as near the freezing point as possible. They advise plenty of ventilation. And they say too, that since air temperatures are cooler than ground temperatures, it's better to store apples in the open air until severe winter. Perhaps you can keep them on the back porch.

Summing up these studies made at the various State agricultural experiment stations on the storage of apples, we suggest that you store fruit that is medium-sized and firm. The apples with a bright clear color. Try to store apples of the same degree of ripeness. Wax Jonathans, Grimes Golden and Golden Delicious apples to prevent loss of weight and color. Handle the apples carefully. And finally, keep the apples in a cool, well-ventilated place.

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