NUTRITION QUESTIONS?
Ask the Dietitian

Q: When the weather gets colder and summer is over, I find myself eating fewer fruits and vegetables. What are some seasonal options I can incorporate into my meals?

A: It’s a natural reaction to reach for warm comfort foods when cold weather arrives. Having a better idea of winter fruit and vegetable options can enhance your nutrient intake, help reduce any added “winter weight,” and make you feel fuller.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce risks of chronic disease and also provide essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

Examples of seasonal fruits and vegetables include: cranberries, apples, kale, Brussels sprouts, pears, winter squash, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, legumes, and grapefruit.

Seasonal Winter Favorites and Cooking Ideas:

- Roast Brussels sprouts or kale in the oven with olive oil and seasoning
- Substitute sweet potatoes for white potatoes in recipes
- Bake apples with cinnamon, honey, and walnuts for dessert
- Add pumpkin puree and cinnamon to oatmeal
- Look for recipes including lentils and legumes
- Substitute spaghetti squash for traditional spaghetti pasta

Spotlight on Winter Squash:

Winter squash varieties such as butternut, acorn, and spaghetti squash contain many nutrients, including vitamins A and C, fiber, and B vitamins. Take a look at the recipe below for a healthy way to incorporate this seasonal vegetable into a meal. This dish contains butternut squash and cranberries, which are two delicious seasonal ingredients for the winter months.

Sources:
Written by: Anna McClean and Spencer Anderson, 2013 – 2013 Interns, The Dietetic Internship Program at Vanderbilt
Reviewed by: Diane Kuhlbre, MEd, RD, LDN, The Dietetic Internship Program at Vanderbilt, Educational Coordinator.