October is Apple Month!

Nothing says it is fall in Western New York more than the fresh, local apples being sold at farmers’ markets, farm stands and in the supermarket. Many orchards allow families to pick their own apples, which is a great way to spend a sunny, crisp weekend day together. To find U-Pick locations, visit http://www.nyapplecountry.com/pick.php.

Keep your apples crunchy and delicious by storing them in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. The cool air of your refrigerator helps to preserve apples and to keep them fresher than apples stored at room temperature. To keep apples fresh, store them away from foods with strong odors like onion, or with broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, cucumbers or leafy greens because apples give off a gas that can damage these vegetables and cause them to go bad more quickly.

Research shows that apples have lots of health benefits. Apples are a good source of fiber, vitamin C and pectin, soluble fiber that can help lower your cholesterol.

Apples make a great, on-the-go snack and are a great ‘fast food’ – just wash and eat! Try adding raw apples to salads and sandwiches, dipping slices in peanut butter for a healthy snack or cooking apples to make your own, fresh applesauce.

In Season: Fruits and Vegetables Galore

September is a bountiful month at the farmers’ market and produce is plentiful. New this month: Brussels sprouts, kale, grapes and watermelon. You will also find apples, peaches, pears, plums, green and yellow beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, herbs, onions, peppers, potatoes, Swiss chard, summer squashes and tomatoes.
Go to the public library with your child and borrow "Apples" by Gail Gibbons. This terrific book tells the reader about how apples are grown and harvested. After you read the book together, do an apple taste test. Choose a number of different apple varieties from the grocery store or farmers’ market. You only need to buy one apple from each variety you choose. Try varieties you are not familiar with to see if there are other varieties you might like to eat as a family. Rate each variety and decide what variety (or varieties!) is

Sweet Potatoes and Apples  
Serves: 6  
Serving size: 1/2 cup

**Ingredients:**
Cooking spray  
1–16 ounce can sweet potatoes (or 3 fresh sweet potatoes)  
2 large apples  
1/4 cup raisins  
1/3 cup pineapple or orange juice  
2 teaspoons packed brown sugar or 2 tablespoons granulated sugar  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 teaspoon cinnamon

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.  
2. Lightly spray baking dish with cooking spray.  
3. Wash, peel and slice apples (sweet potatoes too if using fresh)  
4. Drain canned sweet potatoes.  
5. Layer sweet potatoes and apples in baking dish.  
6. Sprinkle sweet potatoes and apples with raisins.  
7. In a separate cup, mix juice and sugar.  
8. Pour juice mixture over sweet potatoes, apples and raisins.  
9. Cut butter into small bits and distribute evenly across top of casserole. Sprinkle with cinnamon.  
10. Cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 10 more minutes or until potatoes are tender.  
Source: Cooking with EFNEP, N. Carolina EFNEP program

**Nutrition Facts:** Serving Size: 1/2 cup, 190 calories, 4g total fat, .5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 95mg sodium, 41g total carbohydrate, 4g dietary fiber, 2g protein. Excellent source vitamin A. Good source of vitamin C.