

Health Bucks

Information for Shopping at Farmers Markets and Tips for Leading a Farmers Market Tour

Farmers Markets and Health Bucks

Farmers markets allow New Yorkers to shop outdoors for fresh, regionally grown produce. Health Bucks are \$2 coupons that can be used to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at all New York City farmers markets.

All farmers markets accept cash and Health Bucks, and most accept SNAP/EBT, WIC, debit and credit. To use SNAP/EBT, debit or credit at the market, customers should visit the market manager at the information tent. There they will swipe their SNAP/EBT card and get wooden tokens and Health Bucks to spend at the market.

People receiving SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, also known as food stamps, can get Health Bucks through the SNAP incentive at farmers markets. For every \$2 spent in SNAP benefits on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, participants get \$2 in Health Bucks up to \$10 in Health Bucks per day. **Remember, spend \$2 in SNAP benefits, get \$2 in Health Bucks up to \$10 in Health Bucks per day!**

Health Bucks expire on December 31, 2021.

Why Lead a Farmers Market Tour?

Farmers market tours are a great way to introduce community members to the benefits of farmers markets. Tours are also an opportunity to show people how to get more Health Bucks through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) incentive at farmers markets. Organizations that include farmers market tours in their Health Bucks distribution plans often have high rates of Health Bucks use.

Tips for a Successful Farmers Market Tour

Before the Tour

- Visit the farmers market in advance to see what types of products vendors are selling. Introduce yourself to the market manager and let them know when you plan to bring your group.
- Make sure you have enough materials for everyone who will be attending the tour including:
 - Health Bucks
 - Farmers market maps
 - Farmers market tour activities (included in the Health Bucks toolkit)
 - [Healthy eating tips](#) and include [seasonal recipes](#)

During the Tour

- Be aware of other shoppers and make sure your group does not get in the way while touring the market. It's best to speak with your group away from crowds and then have your group explore the market using one of the farmers market tour activities.
- If the market manager is available, ask them to talk to the group and explain how participants can use their EBT card at the farmers market and get more Health Bucks.
- Farmers are working hard to sell their items, so wait until they are finished with other customers before speaking with them.

Talking Points When Discussing Health Bucks and Farmers Markets with Program Participants

General Farmers Market Information

- Farmers markets are different than grocery stores and bodegas because you can talk to the person who grows your food. Shopping at farmers markets also supports the local economy.
- Farmers markets only sell items grown or produced in our region, such as upstate New York, New Jersey or Pennsylvania, and sometimes as far as Vermont. Since fruits and vegetables are grown locally, you will never see produce that grows in warmer regions, like oranges, bananas and avocados.
- Fruits and vegetables at the market are fresh from the farm and are picked at their peak ripeness, which is why you will see strawberries in June and corn in late August.
- Farmers markets also offer a variety of specialty products, including bread, honey, jam, dairy and pickles.

Healthy Eating Tips

- Buy fruits and vegetables when they are in season to save money and improve their taste. Enjoy your produce all year long by freezing or canning it.
- Snack on grab-and-go fruits and vegetables like apples, peaches, grapes, carrots, celery and cucumbers.
- Before you go to the market, plan your meals for the upcoming week. Buy items that will make more than one meal or that you can freeze and save for later.
- The Stellar Farmers Markets team is offering free, weekly Facebook Live nutrition and culinary workshops in both English and Spanish from July to November. The workshops are focused on [healthy eating tips](#) and include [seasonal recipes](#). To participate in the live workshops, go to Eat Healthy, Be Active NYC Facebook page via www.facebook.com/EatingHealthyNYC. All the workshops will be posted afterwards, so you can also watch at a time that is most convenient for you!