

## PRODUCE ITEMS OF THE MONTH ARE PEARS & PARSNIPS

At St. Vincent we believe in treating the whole person - mind, body and spirit. Therefore, you will find that these newsletters do the same thing...you'll be offered information addressing all three aspects of a person. We hope you enjoy the newsletters and that you find them useful for keeping your family healthy and happy. Thank you for reading!

### PRODUCE SELECTION:

**Pears:** There are two main categories of pears: fall or winter. Winter pears (like Bosc) do not mature properly unless they are left in cold storage for two to six weeks after picking.

- When buying pears, look for ones that are smooth, free of bruises, and firm. Pears should have bright, shiny skin.
- Pears are often sold unripe, but that's not a problem because they ripen just fine on the countertop. Leave them unwashed and stand them on their bottoms to ripen at room temperature. To speed up the ripening process, put pears in a paper bag with a ripe banana or apple.
- You can tell a pear is ready to eat when the flesh near the stem yields easily to pressure. One they are ripe they will keep in the refrigerator for 3-5 days.

### Parsnips:

- Select only firm parsnips. Limp ones are a sign that they are not fresh.
- Parsnips like cool temperatures and dark places. Store them in perforated plastic bags in the refrigerator where they can last from two to four weeks.



Pears	
<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 small 148g (148 g)	
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
Calories 86	Calories from Fat 1
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 1mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 23g	8%
Dietary Fiber 5g	18%
Sugars 15g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A	1% • Vitamin C 10%
Calcium	1% • Iron

Parsnips	
<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 cup slices 133g (133 g)	
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
Calories 100	Calories from Fat 3
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 13mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 24g	8%
Dietary Fiber 7g	26%
Sugars 6g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A	0% • Vitamin C 38%
Calcium	5% • Iron 4%

### HEALTHY BODY FOCUS: SAFE TOYS & GIFTS MONTH

The National Safe Kids Campaign and the National Safety Council have designated December as Safe Toys & Gifts Month. Here are some tips for selecting safe toys for your child:

- Consider the child's age, interests and skill level. Look for quality design and construction, and follow age and safety recommendations on labels.
- Use a small parts tester to determine whether small toys may present a choking hazard to children under age 3. Small parts testers can be purchased at toy or baby specialty stores or you can use the cardboard core of a toilet paper roll - if a toy can pass through, it is too small for young children and may cause them to choke if swallowed.
- Avoid toys with sharp points or edges, toys that produce loud noises, and projectiles (such as darts).
- Avoid toys with strings, straps or cords longer than seven inches that may pose a risk for strangulation for young children.
- Avoid electrical toys with heating elements for children under age 8.
- Avoid cap guns that use caps that can be ignited by the slightest friction and can cause serious burns.

Consider these scary facts:

- Falls and choking cause most toy-related deaths and injuries in children. Choking alone causes one third of all toy-related deaths - most often from balloons.
- Children 4 years old and younger account for almost half of all toy-related injuries and almost all deaths.
- Children younger than age 3 are at the greatest risk of choking because they tend to put objects - especially toys - in their mouths.

Toys can sometimes be recalled for safety reasons. Check the National Safe Kids Campaign website [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org) for updates and information on recent toy recalls.

### HELPING YOUR CHILD EAT HEALTHY

- Cook parsnips as you would carrots and sweeten with a bit of honey.
- When making a stew, add parsnips in place of potatoes.
- Baked parsnip fries - yes, you heard that correctly. Simply peel parsnips and cut into the size of fries that you like, add some olive oil, salt and pepper and bake for 20-30 minutes at 400 degrees.
- Add diced pears to your dinner salad for a touch of sweetness.
- Pears slices make a nice (and healthy) addition to toasted ham and cheese sandwiches.
- Bake pears at 375 degrees until soft and top with a bit of cinnamon and nuts for a yummy dessert.

### RECIPE CORNER

#### CREAMY PARSNIPS & PEARS

Believe it or not, this month's recipe features both of our produce items together in one yummy treat. Rather than sticking with mashed potatoes for your holiday dinner, this recipe might be a nice variation. This recipe freezes well and can even be made into a nice soup when thinned with some broth and enriched with sour cream.

#### Ingredients

- 2 lbs. parsnips, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 large pear, peeled, cored and halved
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- Fresh ground pepper to taste

#### Preparation:

Place parsnips, pear and garlic in a large saucepan and cover with lightly salted water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer until the parsnips are tender and can be easily pierced with a knife, about 20-25 minutes.

Drain & transfer to a food processor. Add remaining ingredients and process until smooth. Scrape into a serving bowl and serve hot.