

# Dehydrating

**PREPARATION:**

Fruits and vegetables should be: high quality, fresh, fully ripe and good to eat raw

**PRETREATING:**

The purpose of pretreatment is to slow down or stop enzyme activity which is responsible for color and flavor changes during ripening.

Pretreating Fruits:

Pretreatment prevents fruit from browning and losing some Vitamin A and C. This is optional. Any of the following pretreatment methods may be used.

- Ascorbic Acid/Citric Acid Dips  
Combine 1/2 tsp. Ascorbic acid crystals, or 3 crushed, 500 mg. tablets Vitamin C with 1 quart water. Soak fruit about 5 minutes, then drain.
- Salt Solution Dip  
Combine 2-4 Tbsp. of salt per gallon water. Soak fruit 2-5 minutes, then drain.
- Syrup Blanching  
Mix 1 part sugar to 2 parts water. Bring to boil. Add fruit and simmer 5 minutes. Drain fruit.
- Honey Dip  
Mix 1 part honey to 4 parts water. Soak fruit 5 minutes, then drain.
- Sulfiting  
CAUTION: This may cause allergic reaction in some people. For directions check PNW397 "Drying Fruits and Vegetables" pages 7-8.

Pretreating Vegetables:

Most vegetables should be treated before drying. Blanching is the recommended method and is done to:

- Save some of the vitamin content
- Set the color
- Hasten drying by relaxing the tissues
- Help prevent undesirable changes in flavor during storage
- Help insure satisfactory reconstitution during cooking

**DRYING:**

Vegetables and fruits at 140-150 degrees F. Vegetables lose flavor and tenderness if the drying time is prolonged.

Testing for Dryness:

- Dried fruits should be leathery and pliable.
- Dried vegetables should be hard and brittle.
- To test for dryness, the foods need to be cool because foods that are warm or hot seem to be soft.

**CONDITIONING:**

Most fruits should be allowed to "sweat" or condition for a week after drying. This equalizes the moisture. Place fruit in non-porous, non-aluminum container in a warm, dry protected area. Stir gently each day. Follow by pasteurizing.

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### **PASTEURIZING:**

This is done to kill insects or insect eggs.

- Heat on trays in oven at 175 degrees F. Fruits - 15 minutes. Vegetables - 10 minutes. Cool before storing.

### **STORAGE:**

Cool completely. Then pack into clean, dry, insect-proof containers such as glass jars, freezer containers, or bags. Store in a cool, dry, and dark place. Top quality on the shelf is 3 months, in the freezer is 6 months, and in the freezer in vacuum sealing packages is 2-3 years.

For more information call WSU Skagit County Extension:

360-428-4270

Or visit:

<http://skagit.wsu.edu/FAM/MFP.htm>

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