

### Pasta used in variety of versatile dishes, can last a year



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Pasta is one of those dishes that is versatile — used in hot and cold dishes, enjoyed year round, and includes all forms of macaroni, noodles and spaghetti.

Pasta can be considered as 1 ounce-equivalent from the Grains Group. Be sure to store uncooked pasta in a cool, dry place. Unopened pasta will keep up to one year.

After opening, store in a tightly covered plastic container. It is recommended that pasta not be stored above the refrigerator, stove, or next to soap products with strong odors.

Typically made from wheat flour; there are also 100 percent whole wheat varieties available.

Regarding general nutrition, ½ cup of cooked pasta

In regarding to cooking the perfect pasta be sure to follow package directions along with the following general tips:

- 1 cup uncooked pasta

equals 2 cups cooked pasta

- Use at least 6 cups water for 2 cups uncooked pasta.

• Add 1 teaspoon oil to water to keep pasta from sticking and foaming. Bring water to a full, rolling boil before adding pasta.

- Add pasta gradually, so water does not stop boiling.

- Leave pan uncovered.

- Stir occasionally to keep from sticking.

- Cook just until tender (al dente). Read directions for cooking time.

Regarding the storage of cooked pasta, it can be kept in a tightly covered plastic container in the refrigerator. Be

sure to use within five days.

When reheating pasta, place in a saucepan with a small amount of water and slowly heat. Drain off water before eating.

Shorten cooking time slightly if pasta is to be used in a casserole that needs further cooking. Drain pasta in a colander.

If cooked pasta is to be used cold in salads, add the salad dressing while the pasta is hot as it helps prevent sticking and blends the flavors.

With the many varieties of pasta shapes, the dish creations are endless. So enjoy pasta during any season.