

The Wellness News

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Eat More Fruits and Vegetables!

Produce and Nutrition:

Increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables is almost always beneficial – no matter what your health goals are. Produce provides us with many healthful nutrients including:

Fiber- Promotes digestive health and decreases risk of cardiovascular disease.

Potassium- Where sodium can increase blood pressure, potassium works to decrease blood pressure.

Vitamin A- Keeps eyes and skin healthy, protects against infection.

Vitamin C- Keeps teeth and gums healthy, helps heal wounds.

In addition, substantial intake of produce is associated with a decreased risk of suffering a heart attack or stroke, prevention of some types of cancers, and increased protection against developing diabetes.

On top of all that, produce is a tasty way to add texture and flavor to any dish! However, many adults do not get the recommended 5-9 servings of produce each day.

Increase Dietary Produce:

Here are some tips for increasing your daily intake of fruits and vegetables:

Make it Convenient:

- Put fruit out on your counter so it is easy to grab. Bananas, apples, oranges, tomatoes, and avocados do not need to be refrigerated.
- Buy produce that is already cleaned and cut, or clean and cut your own produce before you put it away. Doing this makes the produce more accessible and makes you more likely to eat it!
- Keep dried fruit in your desk at work for an easy snack. Look for dried fruit without added sugar.
- Purchase frozen and canned fruits and veggies to ensure that you always have produce on hand. Try to choose options without added sugar and limited amounts of sodium.

Don't think you have to stick with fresh produce. Frozen fruits and vegetables are flash frozen at their most nutritious point. Sometimes frozen produce is even more nutritious than the fresh produce because fresh produce often travels cross-country and sits on the shelf.

The Wellness News

More...

Increase Dietary Produce

Produce at Meals:

- At every meal, aim to fill at least half of your plate with veggies and fruit.
- Try making the vegetable or fruit the focus of the meal, rather than a side dish. Examples include portobello mushroom burgers or broiled fruit kabobs.
- Eat baby carrots or apple slices instead of chips with your sandwich. Same crunch, way more nutrients!
- Order veggie wraps, pizzas, or sandwiches at the lunch counter to easily include several servings of produce.
- Sneak pureed or shredded vegetables into soups, chilis, breads, and pastas for an additional vitamin boost.

All the Colors of the Rainbow:

- Aim to include different colored fruits and vegetables each week. Doing so will ensure that you eat a variety of nutrients.
- Produce tends to be fresher and more affordable when it is in season. Check out www.eattheseasons.com to find out what is in season and to get recipes.
- There are so many different fruits and vegetables out there, so have fun attempting to try them all.

Snack Time:

- Enjoy cut up veggies with hummus or salsa.
- Mix dried fruit with nuts and whole grain cereal for a homemade trail mix.
- Layer low fat yogurt with chopped fruit/berries.
- Spread a tablespoon of natural peanut butter over a banana and wrap in a whole grain tortilla.
- Cut up cucumber, bell pepper, and tomatoes. Toss with low fat cottage or feta cheese and cracked pepper.
- Sprinkle an apple with cinnamon and a tsp of honey. Microwave for 30 seconds or so.
- Slice fresh tomatoes. Top with a thin slice of mozzarella cheese and chopped basil.
- Keep berries and bananas in the freezer for instant healthy sorbet or popsicle.
- Smooth natural peanut butter over celery sticks and add raisins for ants on a log.
- Roll lettuce leaves with turkey and bell pepper slices.
- Steam edamame in the microwave and sprinkle lightly with salt.

Serving Sizes

Five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day can sound intimidating. It may surprise you that a serving is not as big as it sounds. The following all count as one serving of produce:

- A rounded handful = ½ cup of fruit, raw vegetables, or cooked greens
- A baseball = 1 cup of raw leafy greens
- A woman's fist = 1 medium sized piece of fruit
- A golf ball = ¼ cup of dried fruit or vegetables



Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-800-433-2320

