

Want To Eat Healthier?

Add some color to your diet.

Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a balanced diet. But getting the recommended 4-5 cups/day^{1,2} can be a challenge, especially when you're busy. However, produce-rich diets offer many benefits:³

- Lower blood pressure
- Reduced risk of heart disease and stroke
- Lower risk of problems with your eyes and digestive system
- Stable blood sugar



A rainbow of healthy and delicious foods

When you look at just how many different fruits and vegetables are out there – each with their own health benefits – getting your recommended servings each day is far from boring.

Red and Pink

Red and pink foods contain lycopene and anthocyanins, which can prevent cell damage and promote heart health.

Sources include:

- Tomatoes
- Watermelon
- Cherries
- Berries
- Red grapes
- Pomegranates
- Radishes
- Red cabbage
- Red peppers
- Red potatoes
- Rhubarb

White

White fruits and veggies can lower cholesterol and blood pressure as well as reduce your chances of stomach cancer and heart disease. Get potassium and anthoxanthins from:

- Cauliflower
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Parsnips
- Bananas
- Potatoes
- Turnips

Blue and Purple

Remember – blue means antioxidants. These nutrients protect cells from damage, reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, and stroke, and improve memory function. Blue and purple sources of antioxidants include:

- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Figs
- Prunes
- Raisins

Orange and Yellow

Carotenoids reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease, improve immune system function, and maintain healthy eyes and mucous membranes. Citrus fruits provide vitamin C and folate, which reduces the risk of birth defects. Find healthy doses of beta-carotene and vitamin C in:

- Apricots
- Butternut squash
- Cantaloupe
- Grapefruit
- Lemons
- Mangoes
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Papayas
- Peaches
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Sweet corn
- Tangerines
- Yellow apples
- Yellow peppers
- Yellow squash
- Yellow tomatoes

Green

Green foods are excellent sources of folate, lutein, fiber, Vitamin A and C and even calcium – which can help your eyes, fight birth defects, and even protect against diabetes and cancer. Look for green foods like:

- Asparagus
- Avocados
- Artichokes
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Brussels sprouts
- Green beans
- Green peppers
- Spinach
- Kale
- Arugula
- Honeydew
- Grapes
- Kiwi
- Zucchini

Best bet fruits and veggies

You'll get the most benefit from fruits and vegetables you like, because you'll eat them more. But if you're already a produce-lover, these heavy hitters deliver big health benefits.³

Sweet potatoes: Substitute these for white potatoes when possible. They're loaded with vitamin C, carotenoids, potassium and fiber. Eat them mashed with unsweetened applesauce, sliced and baked into fries, or baked with a crushed pineapple topping.

Mangoes: Eat a cup of mango in salsa or with yogurt to get 75% of your daily vitamin C, as well as vitamin A, potassium and fiber. Mangoes are among the fruits least likely to carry pesticide residue.

Broccoli: A great source of vitamin C, carotenoids and folic acid, broccoli is great raw, boiled or steamed. Brighten up the whole dish with a squeeze of lemon juice.

Butternut squash: Rich in vitamin A, vitamin C and fiber, butternut squash makes a tasty soup. It can also be baked and mashed, as an alternative to mashed potatoes.

Beans: These legumes should be part of every well-stocked pantry. Drain them, rinse them and toss them on a salad for added protein, fiber, iron, magnesium, potassium and zinc. Add them to vegetable soup or pasta sauce for a high protein meat substitute.

Watermelon: Popular with both children and adults, watermelon provides vitamin A, vitamin C and potassium. Bored with watermelon slices? Make it into salsa or a chilled soup for a twist.

Leafy greens: Don't get stuck in an iceberg rut. Kale, collards, spinach, turnip greens, mustard greens, Swiss chard and other leafy greens provide vitamin A, potassium, magnesium, vitamin C, calcium, iron, lutein, vitamin K, folate and fiber. Use them as a salad base, or serve them alone with lemon juice or red wine vinegar.

The information contained in this flier is provided for educational purposes only, and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your doctor for medical advice about changes that may affect your health and before taking any medications or beginning any lifestyle program. Some services may not be covered under your health plan. Please refer to your Group Certificate and Schedule of Benefits for details concerning benefits, procedures and exclusions.

Sneak more fruits and veggies into your diet

- 1** Microwave an egg and your favorite diced veggies for a quick omelette.⁴
- 2** Top oatmeal, granola, cold cereal or yogurt with fresh berries or sliced bananas.
- 3** Substitute lentils for half (or all!) of the ground beef in tacos, pasta sauce, stew, etc.
- 4** Make a smoothie with two cups of fresh/frozen fruit, half a cup of juice, and half a cup of milk or soy milk for protein.
- 5** Bring apples or celery and peanut butter to work for a filling snack.
- 6** Chop lettuce, grate carrots and wash grape tomatoes at the beginning of the week. Having the ingredients ready in your refrigerator makes it easier to prepare a salad.
- 7** If you snack while watching TV, substitute pepper spears or edamame for popcorn or chips.
- 8** Add lettuce, sprouts, cucumber slices or tomato slices to your sandwiches.
- 9** Use the week's leftover veggies to make soup. Add canned or frozen vegetables, lentils, and beans for an easy and filling meal.
- 10** Top pizzas with mushrooms, peppers, tomato slices, artichoke hearts or spinach instead of meat to boost the nutrition value.



Sources

¹ United States Department of Agriculture, Inside the Pyramid (September 11, 2008): mypyramid.gov

² United States Department of Agriculture, Inside the Pyramid (October 1, 2009): mypyramid.gov

³ Center for Science in the Public Interest, Best Foods (accessed August 9, 2010): cspinet.org

⁴ Produce for Better Health Foundation, Top 10 Healthy Ways to Cook Fruits & Vegetables (accessed August 9, 2010): fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org