Why should I eat fruits and vegetables?

Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can provide you with many of the nutrients needed to maintain a healthy body.

Incorporating a wide variety of fruits and vegetables can play an important role in reducing your risk for chronic diseases including heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. It can also promote bone health and immune system function and may reduce your risk for various cancers. And if that's not enough, eating fruits and vegetables may also help with weight management.

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Nutritional Powerhouses

We're frequently exposed to stories and anecdotes of "super" fruits and vegetables, when the reality is they're all good for you! When choosing fruits and vegetables, the best thing you can do to ensure a wide range of nutritional benefits is to "eat the rainbow."

How many servings should I eat per day?

The general recommendation for fruits and vegetables is a minimum of 5 servings per day. A good way to ensure you meet this recommendation is to make half your plate at each meal fruits and/or vegetables.

What counts as a serving?

A serving of fruit equals:	A serving of vegetables equals:
1 cup chopped fruit	1 cup raw or cooked vegetable
8 ounces of 100 percent fruit juice	8 ounces of 100 percent vegetable juice
½ cup of dried fruit	2 cups of leafy greens
1 medium-sized piece of fruit	¼ cup of legumes, like beans or lentils

How can I eat more?

Try these tips to eat more fruits and vegetables:

- **Start your day with blueberries, bananas or strawberries** in your cereal or oatmeal.
- **Drink a smoothie.** They're a great way to get multiple servings of fruits/vegetables.
- Rather than buying flavored yogurt, **opt for the plain version and stir in your favorite fruit.**
- **Bring an apple, orange or banana** as a snack to eat between your breakfast and lunch.
- **Eat a salad!** They are a great way to get a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- **Make a broth-based soup that's loaded with veggies.** Soups are a great way to eat a lot of vegetables.
- **Snack on broccoli, celery or carrots** with low-fat dressing or hummus before dinner.

- **Always have a bowl of fresh fruits on your kitchen counter**—reach for one when you're hungry for a snack.
- **Enjoy a glass of 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice** with no added sugar.
- **Stash non-perishable fruit and vegetable options** in your desk at work, like dried fruit, fruit cups or a can of 100 percent vegetable juice.
- **Swap pasta for spaghetti squash.** It looks similar to spaghetti when cooked, but it's a vegetable.
- **Use fresh fruit as a healthy topping** on frozen yogurt or ice cream.

Short on time? Frozen fruits and vegetables can be just as good for you as fresh. When fruits and vegetables are harvested, they begin to lose their nutrients. In some cases, frozen produce may actually have greater nutritional value—they are picked ripe and immediately frozen, which preserves their nutrients.

Turn to us—we can help.

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