

Fitting in Fruits and Veggies

Eat your vegetables. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Since childhood you've heard these sayings. Carrots help us see in the dark (thanks to beta-carotene, which our bodies convert to vitamin A); while orange juice provides vitamin C to help us stay well and keep our immune systems healthy. That's just the start of the good-for-you—and delicious—benefits from fruits and vegetables!

Fruits and Veggies: More Really Matters

Fresh, frozen, canned or dried, fruits and vegetables are naturally nutritious because they offer a substantial amount of nutrients and phytonutrients without a lot of calories. Their nutrient package includes many that often come up short: potassium, folate, vitamin C and fiber. Some vegetables, such as broccoli, spinach, asparagus and kale, also contribute small amounts of vitamin E—a nutrient many fall short on. Another benefit: fruits and vegetables are naturally cholesterol free and *trans*-fat free, and most have little, if any, fat unless it's added during preparation.

Today, science recognizes even more health benefits from the phytonutrients in fruits and vegetables. Many of these plant components, including lycopene (in tomatoes, processed tomato products and watermelon), and lutein (in dark green vegetables, eggs and grapefruit), work as antioxidants in the body. As part of healthy eating and a healthful lifestyle, they may help protect against some age-related health problems caused by oxidation.

Fruits and vegetables also owe their sensory qualities to phytonutrients. Their unique and varied colors, flavors and aromas that add meal appeal come from the thousands of phytonutrients they provide.



**BBQ Chicken &
Fresh Strawberry Salad**

Getting Enough, Varying Your Choices

As you eat more fruits and vegetables, how much is enough? If you eat about 2,000 calories daily, make this your goal: 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables. That's not a lot, yet most people come up short. (Hint: Choose mostly whole fruits and vegetables; limit juice to one cup per day.)

The total amount for a day is what really counts, not how many servings you eat.

After all, portion sizes differ. As a general rule, a cup portion is: 1 cup cut-up, cooked, or canned fruits or vegetables; 1 cup 100% fruit juice; ½ cup dried fruit; or 2 cups raw

leafy greens. Use these visual cues to quickly estimate amounts: 1 cup is about the size of a baseball; ½ cup is the size of a small computer mouse.

Make variety your goal; not just for nutrition, but also for food appeal. Choose different color vegetables over the course of a week. For example, if you eat 2,000 calories daily, strive for: 3 cups dark-green, 2 cups orange, 3 cups dry beans and peas, 3 cups starchy vegetables and 6½ cups of other vegetables each week.

Fruits and Vegetables Throughout Life

The easiest way to fit in fruits and vegetables is to keep them on hand so they're available, visible and ready to eat when you are. Look for convenience products that take less prep and clean up. Check the deli and salad bar if you need speed, small portions or prefer to assemble a meal with prepared items. Following are some ways to make fruits and vegetables appealing to people of all ages.

Convenient and Available for the Family Table...

- *Go undercover.* Mash cooked carrots, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, beans and other vegetables with cooked potatoes.
- *Add to prepared, convenience foods:* cut-up tomatoes to macaroni and cheese; red, green or yellow peppers to pasta sauce or chili; and any veggies or canned beans to soup.
- *Top frozen pizza with colorful veggies.* Try shredded carrots, chopped bell peppers, sliced zucchini and mushrooms or broccoli florets.
- *Sweeten up toaster waffles, pancakes and yogurt* by topping with pureed fresh, frozen or canned fruit.

Yummy Fun for Kids...

- *Pack “three-color” sandwiches for school.* Add leafy green spinach, grated orange carrots and red tomato slices to their favorite meat or cheese sandwich.
- *Create a funny face salad.* Serve up fruit and veggie “smiles”: banana circles, orange segments, apple and pear wedges, shredded carrots, cherry tomatoes, sprouts, raisins, dried cranberries and more.
- *Keep fruits and veggies prepared and available for snacking.* Put a bowl of bananas on the counter, offer apple slices or celery sticks with peanut butter for dipping or add dried fruit to whole-grain cereal for a quick snack mix.

Grab and Go Ideas for Teens...

- *Whirl a smoothie in a blender:* yogurt with cut up fresh, canned or frozen fruit, or canned pumpkin. Carry it in an insulated mug.
- *Pack a snack-to-go.* Fill a clear plastic cup with sliced raw veggies or a plain ice cream cone with colorful, cut-up fruits.

Economical and Simple for Starting Out...

- *Master the microwave for quick veggie cooking.* Top microwave “baked” potatoes with salsa, roasted peppers, stir-fried veggies or vegetarian chili.
- *Serve as party food or dessert—casual or chic.* Complement everyday favorites or artisan cheeses with berries, cherries, figs, grapes or dried fruit.

Sensible and Quick for One or Two...

- *Assemble a fabulous salad.* Toss packaged pre-cut, pre-washed greens with sliced mushrooms, kidney beans, stir-fry veggies, citrus segments, fresh berries or dried cranberries or cherries. Top with grilled chicken, shrimp, salmon or tuna for an easy main-dish salad.
- *Flavor grilled chicken breasts or fish steaks with salsa.* Try traditional tomato-based choices or fruit options made with mango, pineapple or peaches.

Easy and Flavorful for Older Adults...

- *Thicken soups and stews (without adding fat).* Puree cooked or canned beans, sweet potatoes and other starchy vegetables, and mix them in. As a quick and easy alternative to pureeing, stir in a jar of baby food vegetables.
- *Make over your omelet.* Fill an omelet for one or two with sliced asparagus, bell pepper, green beans, onions, eggplant, mushrooms, tomatoes or zucchini.
- *For a quick dessert,* top frozen yogurt or angel-food cake with your favorite sliced fruit or berries.

Colorful fruits and veggies add good taste and nutrition to these delicious recipes. Check out the nutrition information and see how a serving fits into your healthy eating plan.

BBQ Chicken & Fresh Strawberry Salad

Prep: 30 min.
Total: 30 min.

- 4 small boneless skinless chicken breast halves (1 lb.)
- 1/3 cup KRAFT Original Barbecue Sauce
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) mixed salad greens
- 2 cups strawberries, cut in half
- 1/2 cup sliced red onions
- 1/2 cup KRAFT Light Ranch Reduced Fat Dressing

PREHEAT greased grill to medium-high heat. Grill chicken 10 min. on each side or until cooked through (165°F), turning and brushing occasionally with the barbecue sauce for the last 5 min. of the grilling time.

CUT chicken into strips. Cover serving plate with greens; top with strawberries, onions and chicken.

SERVE with the dressing.

Makes 4 servings.

Substitute:

Substitute blueberries or blackberries for the halved strawberries.

Nutrition Bonus:

This low-calorie, low-fat main-dish salad is rich in vitamin C from the strawberries.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 270 calories, 8g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 75mg cholesterol, 730mg sodium, 24g carbohydrate, 3g dietary fiber, 12g sugars, 26g protein, 20%DV vitamin A, 90%DV vitamin C, 6%DV calcium, 10%DV iron.

Exchange: 1 Starch, 1 Vegetable, 3 Meat (L), 1 Fat

Dietary Exchanges based on *Choose Your Foods: Exchange Lists for Diabetes* © 2008 by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association.

Veggie Pasta Toss

Prep: 15 min.
Total: 30 min.

- 1 pkg. (16 oz.) whole wheat penne pasta, uncooked
- 1/2 cup GOOD SEASONS Italian Vinaigrette with Extra Virgin Olive Oil Dressing
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 lb. butternut squash, peeled, cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 1 lb. broccoli florets
- 8 oz. mushrooms, stems removed, caps thinly sliced
- 1 red pepper, cut into strips, halved
- 1 can (14-1/2 oz.) fat-free reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 cup KRAFT Shredded Parmesan, Romano, and Asiago Cheeses, divided

COOK pasta as directed on package.

MEANWHILE, heat dressing in large skillet with tight-fitting lid on medium-high heat. Add onions and squash; cook 5 min., stirring frequently. Stir in broccoli, mushrooms and broth. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover. Simmer 8 to 10 min. or until vegetables are tender.

DRAIN pasta; place in large serving bowl. Add vegetable mixture and 1/4 cup of the cheese; toss lightly. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Serve warm.

Makes 8 servings, about 2-1/4 cups each.

Serving Suggestion:

Serve with grilled salmon.

Nutrition Bonus:

This vegetable-packed whole-wheat pasta dish is rich in vitamin A from the butternut squash. And as a bonus, the vegetables team up to provide an excellent source of vitamin C.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 310 calories, 6g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 5mg cholesterol, 340mg sodium, 56g carbohydrate, 8g dietary fiber, 8g sugars, 15g protein, 150%DV vitamin A, 80%DV vitamin C, 15%DV calcium, 20%DV iron.

Exchange: 3 Starch, 1 Vegetable, 1 Fat

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