

Nutrition News

Information for Senior Citizens

*Developed by Colorado State University Extension
Department of Food Science & Human Nutrition*

Fruits and Vegetables: 5-A-Day for Better Health

Fruits and vegetables have gained a lot of attention and respect in the last few years, and rightly so. They are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber, and they are naturally low in fat. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables will decrease your risk of cancer and heart disease.

Despite all of these benefits, many of us still do not eat enough fruits and vegetables. Why? For some, cost is the issue, and for others, taste appeal. The purpose of this newsletter is to show you that vegetables and fruits can be an exciting, economical, and tasty part of your diet!

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Why are Vegetables Important?

Vegetables are good sources of potassium, vitamins A and C, iron, magnesium, and fiber. You should get 2½ cups of vegetables every day.



Why are Fruits Important?

Fruits provide vitamins A and C, potassium, and fiber. They are naturally sweet and make great snack and dessert foods! You should get 2 cups of fruits every day. Vary your choices, vary your colors and enjoy fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit, as well as fruit juices.

Remember that only juices that are made with 100-percent fruit juice count as a fruit serving. Punches, ades, and soda such as grape and fruit drinks are high in sugar and contain little juice.



Best Bet for Vitamin C: Fruit vs. Supplement

Vitamin C, or ascorbic acid, is a water-soluble vitamin. It is one of the most popular vitamin supplements. However, if you take a supplement, don't be fooled into thinking that it is a substitute for vitamin C-rich foods. Vitamin C pills do not offer the variety of nutrients and healthful components that foods do. Great food sources of vitamin C are oranges, kiwi, guava, papaya, mango, cantaloupe, grapefruit, broccoli, cauliflower, strawberries, tomatoes, and bell peppers.

Beta Carotene and Pumpkin Pie

Beta carotene is converted into vitamin A in the body. It is most noted for its role as an antioxidant in cancer prevention. Although there is not a Recommended Dietary Allowance, a safe intake range is estimated to be 15 to 50 mg a day; four medium carrots provide 30 mg of beta carotene.

It is easy to get your beta carotene around the holidays, especially if you love to eat sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie (see page 4 for lower fat pumpkin pie). Other great sources include carrots, dried and fresh apricots, winter squash, spinach, collard greens, cantaloupe, mango, and papaya.

Phytochemicals

Phytochemicals are another reason to eat fruits and vegetables. Phytochemicals are substances found in fruits and vegetables that may have additional health benefits. Examples include indoles, isothiocyanates, and sulforaphane, which are found in broccoli and allylic sulfides, which are found in onions and garlic.

Shopping Tips for Fruits and Vegetables



- Choose a variety of different fruits and vegetables such as dark-green leafy vegetables (spinach, broccoli).
- Buy fresh fruits in season.
- Choose fresh fruits, fruit juices, and frozen, canned, or dried fruit instead of fruits canned in heavy syrups, sweetened fruit juices, and fruit drinks.
- Eat whole fruits - they are more filling than fruit juices and have more fiber.

Top 5 Reasons to Eat Fruits and Vegetables

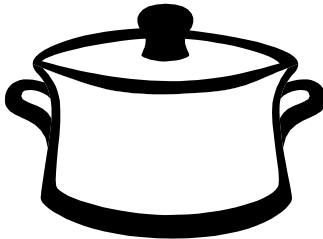
1. They are low in fat. The added bulk will make you feel full so you are less inclined to overeat.
2. Taste great! Who can resist a fresh, juicy strawberry, orange, or peach?
3. Decrease your risk for cancer and heart disease.
4. 100 percent natural! Fruits and vegetables provide more nutrients and benefits than any vitamin and mineral supplement.
5. You are a role model! Be a positive example for your family and friends. Serve dishes rich in fruits and vegetables, and try to eat at least 5 servings each day.

Questions and Answers



Q: How much of the vitamins are destroyed by cooking?

A: Vitamin losses, such as vitamin C, can occur when the vegetable or fruit is cut, stored for a period of time and/or cooked. To reduce losses, minimize cutting (which can expose the fruit or vegetable to air). Instead of boiling your vegetables, steam or cook your vegetables in a small amount of water, or microwave them. Canned vegetables are already cooked. Some vitamins are lost in the cooking liquid. Frozen vegetables have almost the same amount of vitamins as their fresh counterparts. It is generally recommended that vegetables, except corn on the cob, remain frozen until cooked.



Q: How should I store my tomatoes?

A: For unripened tomatoes, store at room temperature, unwrapped. Ripe tomatoes should be stored uncovered in the refrigerator.

Food Stamps:

To find out if you or someone you know qualifies for food stamps, call 1-800-221-5689.

Q: Why do my apples, bananas, and potatoes discolor when cut?

A: The darkening results from a process called enzymatic oxidative browning. When you cut certain fruits or vegetables, their fleshy parts are exposed to air, causing them to turn brown. To prevent this, dip fruits in lemon juice or pineapple juice and soak potatoes in water until cooking.

Have a Fruit for Dessert!

Mix a variety of different fruits like strawberries, watermelon, and cantaloupe to make a fruit salad. Use yogurt as a topping. Add bananas to your cereal and ice cream. Make an orange freeze with orange juice, oranges bits, and yogurt or ice cream. Freeze strawberries and sliced mango for a nice, cool treat. Eat sliced apples with cream cheese. Try a peanut butter and banana sandwich (might be a hit with the younger members of your family).

To soften fruit, try poaching; combine 1½ cups sweet white wine with 4 whole cloves and 2 sticks cinnamon in a large saucepan - bring to a boil. Add fruit and simmer until fruit is soft. Remove fruit and boil remaining liquid until liquid is reduced to 1/2 cup. Discard whole spices and serve liquid with fruit.

Additional Information

Questions about cancer, diet, and nutrition? Contact the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) Nutrition Hotline. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., EST, Monday-Friday. Call toll-free at 1-800-843-8114, and ask for Nutrition Information.

CSU Extension Fact Sheets:
9.313- Nutrition and Cancer
9.332- Cancer's Effect on the Diet
<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/PUBS/FOODNUT/pubfood.html>

Pumpkin Pie

Pastry

2 cups flour
1/2 tsp salt

2/3 cup vegetable oil
3 Tbsp cold skim milk

Sift flour and salt. Combine oil and milk and pour into flour. Stir together and divide into two portions. Refrigerate for a few minutes to make the dough easier to work. Flatten one ball onto a sheet of wax paper and put another sheet on top. Roll out to form 11-inch circle. Place dough onto 9-inch pie plate. Refrigerate other dough for later use.

Filling

2/3 cup granulated sugar
1/2 tsp each of cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg
a pinch ground cloves
1½ cups canned or freshly baked pumpkin
1 tsp vanilla extract
1½ cups evaporated skim milk
1/2 tsp orange rind
3 egg whites, slightly beaten

Preheat oven to 450°F. Combine sugar, salt, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves. Stir in mashed pumpkin. Add vanilla, evaporated skim milk, orange rind, and egg whites. Beat until smooth. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake 10 minutes at 450°F. Reduce heat to 325°F and bake until knife inserted in filling comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Serves 8.

Nutrient analysis per serving: 398 calories, 17 gm fat, 2 mg cholesterol

Baked Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

3 whole sweet potatoes
1 orange, juice and grated rind
1/4 tsp ground ginger

1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
2 egg whites
1/4 tsp paprika

Wash the potatoes thoroughly and bake at 350°F for 1 to 1½ hours. Cut the potatoes in half lengthwise and scoop out the pulp. Save the skins. Mash the sweet potatoes. Add the orange juice, orange rind, ginger and nutmeg. Beat the egg whites until stiff peaks form and fold them into the sweet potato mixture. Spoon the mixture into skins. Sprinkle with paprika and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes. Garnish with parsley, if desired. Serves 6.

Nutrient analysis per serving: 98 calories, less than 1 gram of fat, 0 cholesterol