Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables have the nutrients your body needs to stay healthy and prevent disease. Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables can assist with weight loss, help prevent stroke and some cancers, and decrease your risk of heart disease.

How Much Do I Need?

The amount of fruits and vegetables you need depends on your daily calorie goals. For example, a person who needs 2,000 calories a day should aim for 4½ cups of fruits and vegetables each day. Visit the MyPlate Web site (www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) to find your daily goals.

What Kinds of Fruits and Vegetables Should I Eat?

To get a full range of healthy nutrients, plan to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables each day:

• At each meal, fill half of your plate with a range of colorful fruits and vegetables. Eat fruits and vegetables for snacks, too.
• Choose fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables whenever possible. If these are not available, look for:
  ◦ Canned fruit packed in water or natural juices
  ◦ Low-sodium canned vegetables
  ◦ 100% fruit juice (Note: Fruit juice has about twice the calories of a single piece of fruit and provides little or no fiber. Only 1 cup of juice should count toward your fruit and vegetable goal for the day.)
• If you tend to eat the same fruits and vegetables all the time, aim to try one new fruit or vegetable each week. Encourage your kids to try new types, too. This will make them more likely to eat fruits and vegetables as adults!
• Follow the colors of the rainbow to guide your meals and snacks (see chart on next page). The more colorful your plate, the better.

What Counts as a Cup?

- 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables
- 2 cups of leafy greens
- 1 medium-size piece of fruit (size of a tennis ball)
- ½ cup of 100% vegetable juice
- 1 cup of 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup of dried fruit
- 1 cup of fresh, frozen, or canned fruit
Heart-Healthy Eating

Colors | Examples of Fruit and Vegetable Choices
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Red | Cherries, red apples, strawberries, radishes, tomatoes
Orange and yellow | Bananas, apricots, oranges, sweet potatoes, squash, pumpkins, orange and yellow peppers
Green | Green apples, green pears, kiwi, avocados, green peppers, broccoli, green peas, green beans, spinach and other dark, leafy greens
Blue and purple | Blueberries, plums, purple grapes, blackberries, eggplant
White | Onion, cauliflower, mushrooms, jicama

Sample Menu

What does a day filled with colorful fruits and vegetables look like? Here’s an example to get you started:

- **Breakfast**: Two slices of 100% whole wheat toast with 2 tablespoons of peanut butter and a small sliced banana
- **Snack**: 1 cup of low-fat yogurt with 1 cup of blueberries
- **Lunch**: A whole grain tortilla wrap filled with sliced chicken, 1 cup of mixed peppers, and sliced avocado
- **Snack**: A large orange
- **Dinner**: 2 cups of mixed salad greens topped with a small grilled chicken breast (3 ounces) and four large, sliced strawberries, lightly tossed in 2 tablespoons of balsamic salad dressing