



Eat More Fruits and Vegetables for Good Health



Our need for fruits and vegetables never ends. In the past, the Food Guide Pyramid told you to eat a certain number of “servings” every day. We all know that what we think of as a serving is different than what others think.

Today, MyPyramid tells you how many cups of fruits and vegetables you need to eat every day. That makes knowing how much to eat a whole lot easier. If you like to use a computer, you can go to www.MyPyramid.gov and make an eating plan tailored to your specific needs.

There are some general guidelines to follow if you do not use a computer. For women age 51 and over, it is recommended that you eat 1 ½ cups of fruit and 2 cups of vegetables every day. For men over age 51 it’s 2 cups of fruits and 2 ½ cups of vegetables every day. That makes it pretty easy.

But, if you are eating whole pieces of fruit or vegetables, how do you know when you have ½ cup? Some general guidelines are that a large orange or a small apple is about 1 cup. A large ear of sweet corn is about 1 cup. A large sweet potato is about 1 cup. Six baby carrots or 15 grapes are

about ½ cup each. You get the picture – if it looks like it will fit in the measuring cup, you can count it pretty easily.

The only difference is when you eat lettuce salads. We think a cup is a cup – not in this case! A cup of lettuce counts as ½ cup of vegetables.



If 3 ½ cups of fruits and vegetables seems a lot for women to eat in a day – think about how good they taste and how fruits and vegetables can fill you up. Choosing sweet in-season strawberries is better than eating other sweet foods that contain lots of sugar. Other reasons to eat more fruits and vegetables are:

- * Add color and “crunch” to your meals
- * Easy to fix
- * Add fiber to help keep your body working
- * Naturally low in calories
- * Rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants
- * Low cost when in season
- * Taste good!



As we get into summer, more communities sponsor farmers' markets where you can find fresh fruits and vegetables that have been grown locally. Grocery stores are also full of fresh in-season produce. When buying fresh produce, buy only what you can use in a few days. Fresh fruits and vegetables lose nutrients when they are stored for long periods of time.

Do not discount buying canned or frozen vegetables. They are also great sources of vitamins and minerals and are a good choice during the colder months and when you cannot buy fresh.



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EXTENSION
FAMILY NUTRITION PROGRAM

Fresh Spinach and Strawberry Salad

For two servings:

- 2 cups of washed, cleaned spinach torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 cup fresh strawberries, sliced length-wise
- 2 tablespoons walnut pieces

Place the spinach in a mixing bowl. Sprinkle strawberries and walnuts on top of the spinach.

Dressing:

With a wire whisk, mix together:

- 1 tablespoon honey
- ½ teaspoon poppy or sesame seeds
- ½ teaspoon minced onion
- Dash Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar

Pour over salad and toss to coat.

Nutrient analysis per serving: 150 calories, 4 grams carbohydrates, 10 grams fat, 0 milligrams cholesterol, 1 gram fiber, 81 milligrams sodium.

