

Ways to Decrease Calories and Eat More Fruits and Veggies Throughout the Day

Breakfast

Try substituting spinach, onions, or mushrooms for one egg or half the cheese in your omelet in the morning. These vegetables will add volume on top of flavor to your dish with fewer calories than having egg or cheese in it.

Additionally, cut back on the amount of cereal in your bowl and try adding some cut-up bananas, peaches, or strawberries.

Lunch

Substitute vegetables such as lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, or onions for 2 ounces of the cheese and 2 ounces of the meat in your sandwich or wrap. This will fill you up with fewer calories and satisfy you.

Also try replacing 2 ounces of meat or 1 cup of noodles in broth-based soup with 1 cup of chopped vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots, beans, or red peppers.

Dinner

Add in 1 cup of chopped vegetables such as broccoli, tomatoes, squash, onions, or peppers, while eliminating 1 cup of the rice or pasta in your evening dish. The dish with the vegetables will be just as filling but have fewer calories than the original version.

When it comes to your dinner plate, vegetables, fruit, and whole grains should take up most of your plate. If not, replace some of the meat, cheese, white pasta, or rice with legumes, steamed broccoli, asparagus, greens, or another favorite vegetable. This will decrease the total amount of calories in your meal without decreasing the amount of food you eat. The total number of calories you eat counts, even if a good proportion of them come from fruits and vegetables.



Simple Green Smoothie

Ingredients

- 1 cup kale or spinach
- 1 banana, medium
- 1 cup low fat milk (or substitute any nondairy milk of choice)
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 apple, medium (cored and sliced)
- 1 cup frozen fruit (all one fruit or a combination of mixed frozen fruit)
- flax seeds, 1 Tablespoon (optional)
- chia seeds, 1 Tablespoon (optional)

Directions

1. In a blender, blend the kale or spinach and the liquid of your choice.
2. Add in the rest of the ingredients, blending after each item.
3. Serve and enjoy cold.
4. Store any leftover smoothie in the refrigerator for later or the next day.

Serves: 2 | Source: myplate.gov

References:

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Fruits & Veggies!

TOP REASONS TO EAT MORE



Fruits and vegetables ...

contain essential vitamins, minerals, plant chemicals and fiber. There are many varieties of fruits and vegetables available and numerous ways to prepare, cook and serve them. It is recommended that adults consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day, excluding starchy vegetables.



Top Reasons to Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

- Fruits and vegetables are a wonderful source of vitamins and minerals.**
Fruits and veggies are packed with vitamins A, C and E, as well as magnesium, zinc, phosphorous and folic acid.
- Did someone say fiber?**
Most fruits and vegetables have plenty of fiber to fill you up and improve your gut health.
- Low-calorie and low-fat.**
Commonly, fruits and particularly vegetables are extremely low in calories and fat; this means you can eat more without stressing about extra calories or fat.
- Protects against cancer and other diseases.**
Various fruits and vegetables contain phytochemicals, which are a active biological substance that can help protect against some diseases. Higher intakes of fruits and vegetables have been shown to decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure and cancer by adding them into your diet.
- Helps keep the pounds down.**
Being low in saturated fat, salt and sugar, fruits and vegetables are part of a well-balanced diet that can help you lose weight or avoid weight gain. Additionally, they can help decrease inflammation, and lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure.
- Fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.**
While eating fresh fruits and vegetables may be your preference, there is not much of a nutritional difference when you compare frozen, canned, or dehydrated products. Most frozen and canned products are processed within hours of harvest, so the nutritional value is locked in quickly.



Fruit and Vegetable Suggestions for Your Family's Health

Fruits and vegetables are convenient snack foods and can be easily carried to work or school. They can be included in everyone's meals and snacks for a healthy, well-balanced diet. Some suggestions include:

- Keep snack-size fruit and vegetable portions readily available in your refrigerator.
- Keep fresh fruit out on the table.
- Include fruit and vegetables as add-ons to your usual menus.
- Use the color and texture of a variety of fruits and vegetables to add interest to your meals. Think of new creative ways to serve fruits and vegetables.

Some simple ways to serve fruits and vegetables include:

- fruit and vegetable salads
- vegetable or meat-and-vegetable stir-fries
- raw fruit and vegetables
- vegetable soups
- snack pack, canned fruits, or dried fruits.

Limit the intake of fruit juices - they do not contain the same amount of nutrients as fresh fruit. Fruit juices also contain a lot of sugars that are not essentially good for your health. Instead, have a drink of water and a serving of fresh fruit!



Types of Fruit

Fruits are the sweet, fleshy, edible part of a plant. It commonly contains seeds. Fruits are typically eaten raw, although some variations can be cooked. They come in a wide variety of colors, shapes, and flavors. Common types of fruits that are readily available include:

- Apples and pears
- Citrus – oranges, grapefruits, mandarins, and limes
- Stone fruit – nectarines, apricots, peaches, and plums
- Tropical and exotic – bananas and mangoes
- Berries – strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, kiwifruit, and passion fruit
- Melons – watermelons, rock melons and honeydew melons
- Tomatoes and avocados.

How to Use Fruits and Vegetables to Help Manage Your Weight

Using more fruits and vegetables, along with whole grains, lean meats, nuts, and beans, is a safe and healthy way to lose or maintain your weight.

To lose weight, you must eat less calories than your body uses. Don't worry, this does not mean you have to eat less food. You can create lower-calorie varieties of your favorite dishes by substituting low-calorie fruits and vegetables in place of higher-calorie ingredients. The water and fiber in fruits and vegetables will add volume to your dishes, so you can eat the same amount of food with fewer calories.



Smoothies

Smoothies are a progressively popular wellness trend and frequently promoted as a health food. Smoothies are usually fruits, vegetables, juices, yogurt, nuts, seeds, and/or dairy or nondairy milk blended into a thick, creamy beverage. They start with two essential ingredients — a base and a liquid. From there, you can combine ingredients to your liking. These popular meals and snacks can suit almost any taste or dietary preference but their healthiness is mainly determined by the ingredients you add. Smoothies high in protein and fiber may even aid weight loss by keeping you full. If you are looking for a healthy way to boost your fruit and veggie intake, smoothies may be the way to go.

Types of Vegetables

Vegetables are available in many variations and can be classified into biological groups or "families", including:

- Leafy green – lettuce, spinach, and silver beet
- Cruciferous – cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and broccoli
- Marrow – pumpkin, cucumber, and zucchini
- Root – potato, sweet potato, and yam
- Edible plant stem – celery and asparagus
- Allium – onion, garlic, and shallot.