

## 25 Ways to Eat More Fruits and Veggies

Consuming at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day is not only incredibly good for your health, but it also earns you points on your LifeSteps personal scorecard!

Fresh produce is so important to good health – most importantly for its role in preventing cancer and heart disease – that The National Cancer Institute advises **men to consume nine servings a day**, while **women should aim for seven**. But it's a lot easier than you think – here are some sneaky ways to get your daily dose:

*Tips for Cooking*

*Tips for Snacks*

*Tips for Sandwiches*

*Tips for Kids*

### Cooking/Baking

- When making muffins or cakes, substitute applesauce or pureed fruits (such as prunes) in place of some of the butter or margarine in the recipe.
- Add grated carrots, chopped celery and frozen peas to spaghetti sauce; roasted red pepper to pizza sauce; finely grated carrots or red pepper to salsa; spinach or peas to lasagna; and frozen mixed vegetables or canned tomatoes to macaroni and cheese.
- Add handfuls of frozen vegetables to noodle soups or pasta mixes.
- Add shredded carrots, frozen spinach, or grated zucchini to ground beef or turkey and make into burgers or meatloaf.
- Puree a package of frozen spinach or grate zucchini and add it to your favorite brownie or devil's food cake mix. No one will taste it—really!
- Make a shish kebab by skewering bite-sized pieces of meat and vegetables onto a stick.
- Melt a favorite cheese – or grate fresh parmesan – over cauliflower or broccoli.
- Make macaroni & cheese healthier by mixing pureed cooked carrots, sweet potatoes or butternut squash into the cheese sauce. The colors blend beautifully – and pack a vitamin A and beta carotene punch!

### Snacks

- Keep cut-up veggies (such as celery, baby carrots, broccoli florets and bell pepper slices) in the fridge – washed and within easy reach.
- Spread peanut butter on apple slices.
- Always keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the counter.
- Stuff celery with shredded vegetables mixed into peanut butter, cream cheese or tuna salad.
- Top an ice cream or frozen yogurt sundae with fruit or berries.
- Serve dried fruit as a treat rather than candy or cookies.

### Sandwiches

- Try fresh spinach leaves instead of lettuce.
- Skip the mayonnaise in favor of fresh mashed avocado.
- Go light on lunch meat and load up with veggies – tomatoes, grated carrots, cucumbers.
- Top cheese sandwiches with pizza sauce and thinly sliced peppers, tomatoes and mushrooms.
- Top peanut butter sandwiches with raisins, bananas or apples slices.

### Getting Kids to Eat their Veggies

- If your child doesn't like vegetables, offer fruit instead.
- If texture is an issue, serve vegetables in a very smooth puree. To save time, consider using jars of baby food and add them to gravies, soups, tomato sauces and macaroni & cheese.

- Top hot cereal with a smiley face made out of fruit, such as bananas, apples, oranges or plums.
- Limit the amount you offer to a picky eater. Give them just one to two teaspoons and they'll be more likely to finish and try again.
- For older kids (age 4 and up) serve applesauce, fresh fruit or Waldorf salad (made from apples, nuts and raisins) for dinner instead of a cooked vegetable.
- Mix raisins or chopped dried fruit with presweetened cereal for an on-the-run snack.

*Sources: National Cancer Institute, Wegmans*