

Vegetables & Fruits—The Bottom Line

By Beth Bates on Apr 19, 2013 12:06 am



HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH—SEARCH THE NUTRITION SOURCE

Choose more vegetables & fruits. Go for color & variety—dark green, yellow, orange, & red.

It's hard to argue with the health benefits of a diet rich in vegetables & fruits: Lower blood pressure; reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, & probably some cancers; lower risk of eye & digestive problems; & a mellowing effect on blood sugar that can help keep appetite in check.

Most people should aim for at least nine servings (at least 4½ cups) of vegetables & fruits a day, & potatoes don't count. Go for a variety of kinds & colors of produce, to give your body the mix of nutrients it needs. Best bets? Dark leafy greens, cooked tomatoes, & anything that's a rich yellow, orange, or red color.

5 Quick Tips: Eating More Vegetables & Fruit

- 1. Keep fruit out where you can see it.** That way you'll be more likely to eat it. Keep it out on the counter or in the front of the fridge.
- 2. Get some every meal, every day.** Try filling half your plate with vegetables at each meal. Serving up salads, stir fry, or other vegetable-rich fare makes it easier to reach this goal. Bonus points if you can get some fruits & vegetables at snack time, too.
- 3. Explore the produce aisle & choose something new.** Variety is the key to a healthy diet. Get out of a rut & try some new fruits & vegetables.
- 4. Bag the potatoes.** Choose other vegetables that are packed with more nutrients & more slowly digested carbs. Read the "Carbohydrates" section of The Nutrition Source to learn how to add good carbs to your diet. Or try one of these delicious whole grains recipes as an alternative to potatoes.
- 5. Make it a meal.** Try some new healthy recipes where vegetables take center stage, such as Mollie Katzen's asparagus with warm tarragon-pecan vinaigrette, or Nina Simonds' spicy broccolini with red pepper.

More information can be found at www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource