

## Delicious Ways to Maximize Your Health with Fruits and Veggies

In terms of health, all fruit and veggies are not created equal. Different items have different nutrients in varying amounts. For optimal health and lots of energy, your body needs the right balance of nutrients from the right mix of produce. Focus on getting 3 to 4 different fruits per day; then vary your vegetables throughout the week.

### Fruits

Children need at least 1½ cups of fruit per day, while most adults need 2 or more cups daily. Go easy on fruit juices and focus on brightly colored fresh, frozen, and canned choices, such as **apples, apricots, bananas, berries of all types, grapefruit, grapes, kiwi, mangoes, melons of all varieties, oranges, peaches, pears, pineapple, plums, and tangerines.**

### Dark green vegetables

Aim for about ½ cup per day - or about 3 cups per week. Enjoy them fresh and raw in salads, as cooked side dishes, or stir-fried with lean beef, pork, or chicken. Go for **dark leafy greens**, such as **spinach, beet greens, arugula, and kale**, as well as **Romaine and leaf lettuces**. Enjoy lightly steamed or microwaved **broccoli, broccoflower, and Chinese cabbages.**

### Orange vegetables

Serve bright orange vegetables several times per week - at least 1 cup per week for kids and 2 cups weekly for adults. **Carrots** - raw or cooked - are always a popular choice. **Sweet potatoes** (quick to oven-bake or microwave) are a nutrient-rich alternative to white potatoes. **Winter squash (acorn, butternut, and pumpkin)** are tasty and versatile choices.

### Starchy vegetables

The recommendation for this sub-group - **corn, green peas, fresh lima beans, and potatoes** (except sweet potatoes) - is 3 or more cups per week for adults and 2½ cups or more for kids. The concern about potatoes is how they are prepared. The healthiest methods are baked, microwaved, boiled in their skin, and mashed - with minimal amounts of added fat.

### Other vegetables

This includes all the veggies that do not fit into the categories above: **asparagus, beets, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, mushrooms, onions, peppers, tomatoes, zucchini**, and others. This group should make up most of your veggies choices - 4 to 5 cups per week for children and 6 to 7 cups for adults weekly.

### Beans and other legumes

Most of us are not getting enough beans, which are higher in protein and fiber than other veggies. Adults need 3 cups per week, while the goal for children is 1½ to 2½ cups weekly. **Black, garbanzo, kidney, navy, and pinto beans** work as side dishes and additions to entrées (casseroles, tacos, salads, etc.). **Lentils, split peas, soybeans, and tofu** also count here.

**Looking for more fruit and veggie information, including recipes and serving tips? Go to:**  
[www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/)