

Health Promotion Series-Nutrition

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Eat 3-5 Servings of Vegetables Daily

Three servings of vegetables a day is the minimum requirement, but 5 or more is the ideal. While research suggests eating enough fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of many diseases, most people don't eat enough. In fact only one in ten people in America meet the requirement. If you find yourself in the majority of the population eating less than the minimum 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, then try some of these tips:

*Consider it an adventure to walk down the produce aisle trying to find a new fresh vegetable to try. Find a recipe on the internet or cookbook if you need advice on how to prepare it.

*Opt for a variety of vegetables to include red, orange, dark green colors. Colorful meals are more tempting to the eye and appealing to the senses, and they provide more phytonutrients to improve health.

*If convenience is desired use bagged salads, precooked vegetables and microwaveable steam-in-the-bag frozen veggies. There may be an added cost, but consider your own health upkeep as important as you would your own car maintenance or pet health.



*If you are unable to make it to the store often, keep some root vegetables in dark, cool storage, stock up on dried beans or dried peas, or buy plenty of frozen or low sodium canned vegetables to keep on hand.



*During season changes your food preferences may change from salads to outdoor grilling. Grilling or Sautéing your greens is an option. Another option is roasting your vegetables. Try roasting more than the usual potatoes, onions and carrots. Experiment with olive oil tossed cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, eggplant, beets, mushrooms, and squash.

*Soups and stews are another way to add vegetables to your meal. Try a green pea or bean soup, minestrone soup, or vegetable soup. You can also start with a noodle soup and add some peas, carrots, mushrooms, or any vegetable on hand to improve the nutrient content. Or start with a low sodium broth and add a few bags of a variety of frozen vegetables to the pot for a quick vegetable soup. There are also COLD soup recipes that can be wonderful.



*If your family refuses vegetable sides, add vegetables to your usual chili, spaghetti, macaroni, pizza, meatloaf, or morning scrambled eggs/ frittata. Adding vegetables gives these dishes more flavor, fiber, and nutrition. Even topping your meat or burger with a large portion of caramelized onions can be of benefit.



*To any sandwich consider adding spinach leaves, a slice of sweet onion, tomato, mushrooms, or bell peppers. For those inclined to hot and spicy flavor, fresh jalapenos are also a nutrient rich vegetable side.

Here are some website links to give you more tips and ideas.

<http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/nutrition/healthy-eating/fall-produce-picks>
<http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2015/adm/diabetes-plate-method/16-veggie-ideas.html>
<http://www.diabetesforecast.org/2015/adm/diabetes-plate-method/no-more-vegetable-excuses.html>

<http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/vitamins-and-supplements/nutrient-rich-foods/the-beginners-guide-to-cruciferous-vegetables>

<http://www.diabetesforecast.org/videos/canned-beans-are-budget-friendly.html>

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