How to Use Fruits and Vegetables to Help Manage Your Weight

Fruits and vegetables are part of a well-balanced and healthy eating plan. There are many different ways to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight. Using more fruits and vegetables along with whole grains and lean meats, nuts and beans is a safe and healthy one. Helping control your weight is not the only benefit of eating more fruits and vegetables. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some types of cancer and other chronic diseases. Fruits and vegetables also provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber and other substances that are important for good health.

To lose weight, you must eat fewer calories than your body uses. This doesn’t necessarily mean that you have to eat less food. You can create lower-calorie versions of some 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. Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories, yet are filling.

As people become less active, their bodies need fewer calories. Even if you do not need to lose weight, you may still need to reduce calories simply to maintain your current weight.
Here are some simple ways to cut calories and eat fruits and vegetables throughout your day:

**Breakfast: Start the Day Right**
- Substitute some spinach, onions or mushrooms for one of the eggs or half of the cheese in your morning omelet. The vegetables will add volume and flavor to the dish with fewer calories than the egg or cheese.
- Cut back on the amount of cereal in your bowl to make room for some cut-up bananas, peaches or strawberries. You can still eat a full bowl, but with fewer calories.

**Lighten Up Your 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, wrap or burrito. The new version will fill you up with fewer calories than the original.
- Add a cup of chopped vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots, beans or red peppers, in place of 2 ounces of the meat or 1 cup of noodles in your favorite broth-based soup. The vegetables will help fill you up, so you won’t miss those extra calories.

**Dinner**
- Add in 1 cup of chopped vegetables such as broccoli, tomatoes, squash, onions or peppers, while removing 1 cup of the rice or pasta in your favorite dish. The dish with the vegetables will be just as satisfying but have fewer calories than the same amount of the original version.
- Take a good look at your dinner plate. Vegetables, fruit and whole grains should take up the largest portion of your plate. If they do not, replace some of the meat, cheese, white pasta or rice with legumes, steamed broccoli, asparagus, greens or another favorite vegetable. This will reduce the total calories in your meal without reducing the amount of food you eat. Remember to use a normal or small size plate—not a platter. The total number of calories that you eat counts, even if a good proportion of them come from fruits and vegetables.

**Smart Snacks**
Most healthy eating plans allow for one or two small snacks a day. Choosing most fruits and vegetables will allow you to eat a snack with only 100 calories.

Instead of a high-calorie snack from a vending machine, bring some cut-up vegetables or fruit from home. One snack-sized bag of corn chips (1 ounce) has the same number of calories as a small apple, 1 cup of whole strawberries AND 1 cup of carrots with ¼ cup of low-calorie dip.


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**How Much Dietary Fiber Do I Need Each Day?**

Most Americans greatly under consume dietary fiber. Breads, rolls, buns and pizza crust made with refined flour are not among the best sources of dietary fiber, but currently contribute to a large portion of our diets. To meet the recommendations for fiber, most people need to increase the consumption of vegetables, fruits and whole grains, and other foods with naturally occurring fiber.

Total dietary fiber intake should be 25 to 30 grams a day from food, not supplements. Currently, dietary fiber intakes among adults in the United States average about 15 grams a day. That's about half the recommended amount.

At first, you may find it challenging to eat all of your daily fiber grams. Just take it slowly and try to choose higher-fiber foods more often. Over time, you’ll gradually be eating more fiber!

Try these tips to jumpstart your intake of dietary fiber:
- Choose whole fruits more often than fruit juice. Fresh, frozen or canned—it doesn’t matter—they all count!
- Try to eat two servings of vegetables with your evening meal.
- Keep a bowl of veggies already washed and prepared your refrigerator—try carrots, cucumbers or celery for a quick snack.
- Make a meal around dried beans or peas (also called legumes) instead of meat.
- Choose whole grain foods more often. A good guide is to make at least ½ of your grain choices be whole grains.

Start your day with a whole grain breakfast cereal low in added sugar. Top your cereal with fruit for even more fiber. While bananas may come to your mind first, you can add even more variety by also trying sliced peaches or berries. You can often find these fruits year-round in the frozen foods section of your grocery store.

Note on serving sizes: One serving of fruit is one whole, medium-sized fruit or \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup of fruit; one serving of vegetables is 1 cup of raw vegetables or \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup cooked vegetables; one serving of whole grain food is \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup cooked whole wheat pasta or cereal (such as old-fashioned oatmeal), or one slice of whole wheat bread; one serving of legumes is \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup cooked lentils or beans.


Why Are Immunization and Infectious Diseases Important?

The increase in life expectancy during the 20th century is largely due to improvements in child survival; this increase is associated with reductions in infectious disease mortality, due largely to immunization. However, infectious diseases remain a major cause of illness, disability and death.

Immunization recommendations in the United States currently target 17 vaccine-preventable diseases across the lifespan.

People in the United States continue to get diseases that are vaccine preventable. Viral hepatitis, influenza and tuberculosis (TB) remain among the leading causes of illness and death in the United States and account for substantial spending on the related consequences of infection.

The infectious disease public health infrastructure, which carries out disease surveillance at the federal, state and local levels, is an essential tool in the fight against newly emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. Other important defenses against infectious diseases include:

- Proper use of vaccines
- Antibiotics
- Screening and testing guidelines
- Scientific improvements in the diagnosis of infectious disease-related health concerns

Immunization

Vaccines are among the most cost-effective clinical preventive services and are a core component of any preventive services package. Childhood immunization programs provide a very high return on investment. For example, for each birth cohort vaccinated with the routine immunization schedule (this includes DTaP, Td, Hib, Polio, MMR, Hep B and varicella vaccines), society:

- Saves 33,000 lives.
- Prevents 14 million cases of disease.
- Reduces direct health care costs by $9.9 billion.
- Saves $33.4 billion in indirect costs.

Despite progress, approximately 42,000 adults and 300 children in the United States die each year from vaccine-preventable diseases. Communities with pockets of unvaccinated and under-vaccinated populations are at increased risk for outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. The emergence of new or replacement strains of vaccine-preventable disease can result in a significant increase in serious illnesses and death.

Infectious diseases are a critical public health, humanitarian and security concern; coordinated efforts will protect people across the nation and around the world.


National Infant Immunization Week is April 18–25, 2015

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrate the achievements of immunization programs and their partners in promoting healthy communities.

Since 1994, hundreds of communities across the United States have joined together to celebrate the critical role vaccination plays in protecting our children, communities and public health.

How to do Donkey Kicks:

1. Get on your hands and knees on a yoga mat, with your hands under your shoulders and your knees in line with your hips.
2. Turn your head to look over your right shoulder as you bring your right knee in to your chest. Kick your right leg backward and upward, extending it as high as you can. Bring the knee back to the chest before extending again.
3. Keep your back straight and in neutral alignment, pay special attention that you don’t arch your back. Use your muscles to create a slow, controlled movement—do not swing your legs.
4. Repeat 12-15 times then switch legs. Do 2-3 sets.

By Dana Marley, NFP

Baci di Dama or Hazelnut Meringue Kisses

- 1 cup hazelnuts
- 2 large egg whites, at room temperature
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ cup sugar
- ⅓ tsp. ground cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Spread nuts in one layer in shallow pan. Roast for five minutes, stir and roast nuts five minutes longer. Immediately wrap nuts in dish towel and rub together vigorously to remove as much skin as possible. Spread skinned nuts out and cool to room temperature.

Reduce oven temperature to 275 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with baking parchment and set aside.

Chop ½ cup of nuts very fine. Doing this by hand takes a few minutes but gives a nicer result than using a food processor. Place nuts in bowl. Coarsely chop remaining nuts and add to finely chopped ones. Set nuts aside.

In an immaculately clean mixing bowl, beat egg whites with electric mixer on medium-high until frothy. Add salt and beat on high until whites form soft peaks. While beating, add sugar one tablespoon at a time, beating for one minute after each addition. Continue beating until whites are thick and glossy, like marshmallow fluff. Fold in cinnamon and all nuts.

Drop meringue by tablespoon onto lined baking sheets, spacing kisses one inch apart. Use back of spoon to shape and smooth them, leaving some points and crags.

Bake for 50-60 minutes, if possible, place both pans side-by-side in the center of the oven. When meringues are crisp almost all the way through, turn off the oven and let kisses sit with the oven door ajar, for up to four hours. Transfer kisses to wire racks to cool completely.

These kisses keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to four days, though damp weather may soften them to be chewier.

Makes 15 servings. Per serving: two cookies

Per serving: 76 calories, 5 g fat (<1 g sat fat), 6 g carbohydrates, 2 g protein, 1 g fiber, 26 mg sodium.