

References:

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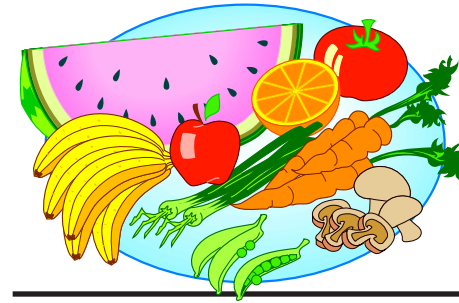
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K-State Nutrition PAGE — Practical Advice for Good Eating

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PAGE
Practical Advice for Good Eating

Eat Plenty of Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables provide many unique health benefits. Plus, you get to enjoy their wonderful tastes, textures and colors. Choose brightly colored fruits and vegetables, including dark green, red, orange, yellow, blue and purple ones, in order to get many nutrients.

Eat a variety. Enjoy them fresh, dried, frozen, or canned, or as 100% juice. Use only pasteurized juices and cider. (Pasteurization kills harmful levels of bacteria commonly found in food.)

Good Nutrition Value

Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in calories and fat, and high in carbohydrates. They contain no cholesterol. Some are good sources of soluble and insoluble fiber.

Fruits and vegetables have many healthful vitamins and minerals. Other chemicals are in plants that promote health and decrease the risk of many diseases. The term given to these compounds is

phytochemicals (phyto means plant). Phytochemicals differ from vitamins or minerals, since a lack of them does not cause a deficiency disease.

Health Benefits

Eating fruits and vegetables helps decrease the risk of having poor health and of getting cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, pulmonary diseases, stroke, cataracts, age-related macular

degeneration of the eye, constipation and diverticulosis.

Eating fruits and vegetables may help people live longer, because the antioxidants these foods contain help slow down the aging process. Antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables help protect cells from damage. Eating fruits and vegetables may also help protect mental capacity in older adults.

Fruits and vegetables with high levels of antioxidants include prunes, raisins, blueberries, blackberries, garlic, kale, strawberries, spinach, raspberries, Brussels sprouts, plums, alfalfa sprouts, broccoli florets, beets, oranges, red grapes, red bell peppers, cherries, kiwi fruit, pink grapefruit, white grapes, onion, corn, eggplant, cauliflower, and peas.

Enjoy Five to Nine Servings Daily

- Most adults would benefit from eating more fruits and vegetables. Each day, try to have three to five servings of vegetables and two to four servings of fruits.
- One serving is a medium piece of fruit; 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables; 1/2 cup fruit or vegetables (raw, cooked, canned, or frozen); 1/2 cup cooked or canned dried peas or beans; 3/4 cup 100% fruit or vegetable juice; or 1/4 cup dried fruit.
- Try choosing a vitamin C-rich and a high fiber fruit or vegetable each day, a vitamin A-rich serving every other day, and several servings of cruciferous (cabbage-family) vegetables each week.
- Even when eating a meal away from home, order a portion or two of fruits and vegetables.

- When cooking vegetables, remove them from heat just when they are tender enough to chew. You will retain more nutrients if you do not overcook them. If you have trouble chewing, try chopping or shredding your vegetables.

- The sodium content of most canned vegetables is high. Buy "no added salt" varieties if you are trying to reduce your sodium intake.

- The fiber content of fruits and vegetables changes depending on how they are prepared. For example: a piece of fresh fruit with skin has more fiber than the same fruit without skin, the same kind of fruit that is cooked or canned has less fiber, and its juice would have the least fiber.

Reduce Waste and Expense

- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season, in the amount you will use in three to six days. Buy both ripe and not-so-ripe ones, so that they will last a few days longer.

- Compare prices. Buy the cheapest brand.
- Buy canned, frozen or dried fruits and vegetables, and 100% juices, for later use, after you've eaten the fresh ones.
- Store fruits and vegetables where you will see them, so you will remember to eat them.

Handle Produce Safely

- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water. Before you eat the outer skin or peeling, you may want to scrub it with a clean dish brush. Do not use soap.
- Throw away the outer leaves of leafy vegetables, such as lettuce and cabbage.
- Store cut, peeled fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator.
- Avoid eating fruits and vegetables that look brownish, slimy or dried out.
- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh fruits or vegetables.