



easy ways to eat more fruit and vegetables

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Do you eat at least *five* servings of fruit and vegetables daily? Or, like most people, did you fall short of the minimum amount recommended by nutritionists?

Says American Dietetic Association spokesperson Jackie Berning, “We need to eat fruit and vegetables because they’re jammed full with so many vitamins and minerals, as well as being an excellent source of fibre.”

Fruit and vegetables contain substances called phytochemicals that help maintain health and prevent disease. In fact, research has demonstrated that diets high in fruit and vegetables reduce the risk of cancer and help prevent

coronary heart disease. They’re also an important part of your diet if you’re trying to lose (or maintain) weight, because most fruit and vegetables are nutrient dense and kilojoule light.

But while it’s easy to know *why* you need to consume more fruit and vegetables, the *how* may sometimes seem a little more daunting. So here are some easy ways to get more of these healthful foods into your daily diet.

make a fruit smoothie

Smoothies are a great way to get in two or three servings of fruit at once and they taste great too! Not only that, they are really easy to make. Toss a banana and some

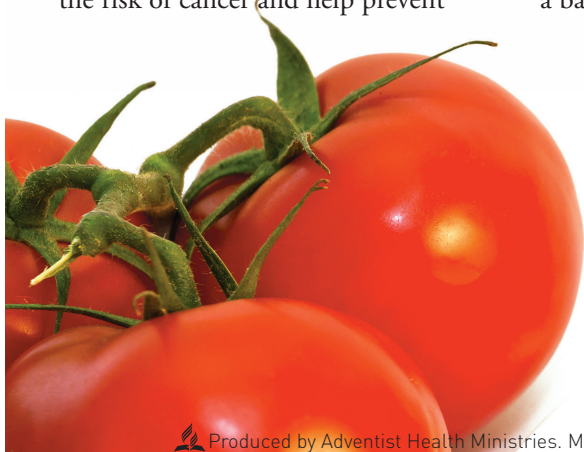
blueberries, strawberries or raspberries into a blender, add some soy milk or low-fat yoghurt and ice, and blend everything together.

add them in

Look for ways to include more vegetables when you’re cooking. For example, opt for spinach lasagne over meat or add an extra cup of mixed vegetables to soup.

count them up

Make a mental note of the number of fruit and vegetable servings you’re eating each day and aim for five by dinner.





Take it along

Buy “portable” fruit like apples, bananas and grapes that you can toss in your gym bag or briefcase to eat during your commute or at your workplace.

Other options are apple sauce and dried apples.

Juice it up

A quick glass of fruit or vegetable juice will help you get in a serving and you can keep bottles at work for a healthy snack.

Fill your freezer

Frozen fruit and vegetables are almost as good for you as the fresh variety and they’re easier to store. Keep a few bags of frozen produce around for smoothies or to add to your lunch and dinner menus.

Go for variety

The more kinds of fruit and vegetables you choose, the less likely you’ll be to get bored eating them. And because each kind contains different nutrients, you’ll get a wider variety of vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals as well.

Soup it up

Soups such as minestrone and gazpacho are loaded with vegetables or you can make your own with fresh ones. Reheat the leftovers for lunch the next day, when they will actually taste more flavourful.

Dress up your salads

Don’t settle for a bowl of just iceberg lettuce and a few tomatoes and carrots. Add spinach, cos lettuce, mushrooms, chickpeas, capsicums and other vegetables for a more filling and vitamin-filled meal.

Stir it up

Stir-fry fresh or frozen vegetables like squash, mushrooms, capsicums, bean sprouts and water chestnuts. Then serve the finished product over rice. It’s fast and healthy.



Build a better sandwich

Add sliced tomatoes, capsicums, sprouts and cucumbers to your usual sandwiches.

Plan ahead

If you’re often rushed and don’t have the time to cut up vegetables for yourself, add bags of prewashed, precut vegetables to your grocery store list. This makes it easy to add a handful of baby carrots, sugar snap peas or green capsicum slices to your lunch.

Try a new twist

Are you tired of eating apples? Try baking them with a little cinnamon.



Get in early

Don’t wait for dinner! Include a glass of orange juice and a banana with your breakfast and a spinach salad with mushrooms and tomatoes with your lunch, and you’ve already met the minimum!

■ Sure, eating more fruit and vegetables can take some extra thought and planning, but it quickly becomes second nature. Make the effort and soon it will become a healthy habit. ↻