

Family Nutrition Program in Pasco

Nutritious Nibbles of Information

December 2009
to January 2010



Fruits & Vegetables

Bottom Line: Everyone Needs to Eat More!



The fact is that Americans are not eating enough fruits and vegetables. The following is a table with recommended daily amounts starting with children at age two and ending with adults:

Age	Fruits	Vegetables
Children 2-3 years	1 cup	1 cup
Children 4-8 years	1 to 1 ½ cups	1 ½ cups
Children 9-13 years	1 ½ cups	2 to 2 ½ cups
Teen girls 14-18 years Women 19-50 years	1 ½ to 2 cups	2 ½ cups
Teen boys 14-18 year Men 19-50 years	2 cups	3 cups
Women 51+ years	1 ½ cups	2 cups
Men 51+ years	2 cups	2 ½ cups

Note: These amounts are based on MyPyramid and take into account age, gender and physical activity. If you are very active, you will need to eat even more fruits and vegetables!

Consuming more fruits and vegetables can help improve your health. It is important to eat fruits and vegetables because they contain fiber (help promote healthy bowel function), phytochemicals (help strengthen the body's immune system), vitamins and minerals (help protect from heart disease, stroke, some types of cancer). Fruits and veggies are rich in different nutrients so you need to eat from the entire color spectrum (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, white).

Why Eat More?—Top Ten Countdown

10. Color and texture. Fruits and veggies add color and texture and appeal to your plate.
9. Convenience. Nutritious in any form—fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100% juice, so they are ready to eat when you are!
8. Fiber. Fruits and veggies provide fiber that helps fill you up and keeps your digestive system happy.
7. Low in calories. Fruits and veggies are naturally low in calories.
6. May reduce risk of disease. Eating plenty of fruits and veggies may reduce the risk of many diseases including heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers.
5. Vitamins and minerals. Fruits and veggies are rich in vitamins and minerals that help you feel healthy and energized.
4. Variety. Fruits and veggies are available in an almost infinite variety...there's always something new to try!
3. Quick, natural snack. Fruits and veggies are nature's treat and easy to grab for a snack.
2. Fun to eat! Some crunch, some squirt, some you peel...some you don't, and some grow right in your own backyard!
1. They taste great!



This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call toll-free 1-866-762-2237 or visit www.dcf.state.fl.us/ess. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

All Forms Matter

When it comes to good nutrition, all forms of fruits and vegetables matter whether fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100% juice. With over 200 choices and a variety of convenient packaging, fruits and vegetables are easy to store and easy to serve—something to please everyone!

- Most frozen and canned foods are processed within hours of harvest, so their flavor and nutritional value are preserved.
- Studies show that recipes prepared with canned foods had similar nutritional values to those prepared with fresh or frozen ingredients.
- Canned foods are "cooked" prior to packaging, so they are ready to eat or add to a recipe.
- Frozen foods also require little preparation since washing and slicing, for instance, is already done.

Grow a Family Garden!

Gardening can be family fun—a time to be active, relax and spend time together. It also teaches that plants also need food and water to grow and stay healthy. Caring for plants develops responsibility, builds self-esteem and kids are usually excited about tasting the new foods they have grown!

You Will Need:

1. Garden plot/containers: If you have space, a plot two-foot square is big enough, but children will need more help preparing the soil. In the city or an apartment, containers will work just fine (empty milk cartons, bleach jugs, cans, etc.)
2. Child-size tools: Watering can, small shovel, old spoon/fork, small rake, digging stick, hoe, spade, hose, sticks for labeling plants.
3. Seeds or young plants (seedlings)
4. Water: From hose or watering can.
5. Soil: (for container gardens)
6. Fertilizer: Compost, manure, chemical types

Easy Plants for Kids to Grow:

In a plot or container (* these grow easily in a container):

Beets,* carrots,* cherry tomatoes,* collard greens,* cucumbers,* green beans,* herbs,* lettuce,* okra, onions,* peppers,* spinach, tomatoes, zucchini

In small pots in a windowsill: herbs, seeds to replant as young plants in the garden

National Survey Shows America's TOP TEN...

Fruits	#	Vegetables
Bananas	1.	Potatoes
Apples	2.	Head Lettuce
Watermelon	3.	Tomatoes
Oranges	4.	Onions
Cantaloupe	5.	Carrots
Grapes	6.	Celery
Grapefruit	7.	Sweet Corn
Strawberries	8.	Broccoli
Peaches	9.	Green Cabbage
Pears	10.	Cucumber

Simple Recipe Ideas

Fruits

Fresh fruits are great to eat (one kind or a colorful variety mixed together). You can also cut them into pieces and add low-fat vanilla yogurt or non-dairy whipped topping. Another option is to add more crunch by adding low-fat granola.

Try a refreshing fruit smoothie with fresh bananas, fresh/frozen strawberries, low-fat yogurt, orange juice and crushed ice in a blender.

Vegetables

Coat sliced eggplant, squash, zucchini, and/or green bell peppers with olive oil and 1 teaspoon salt-free herb blend. Roast on the grill or in the oven at 425 degrees F. for 30-40 minutes.

Instead of French fries, make oven-baked sweet potato slices. Wash, peel and slice. Coat lightly with olive oil and sprinkle with ground cinnamon. Bake at 425 degrees F. for 30-40 minutes.

Some of the information in this newsletter was adapted from the Web site below and USDA *Nibbles for Health* #33 - Nutrition Newsletter for Parents of Young Children

For more information on selection/storage/cooking tips and recipes, visit the Fruits and Veggies—More Matters Web site at <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>

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