



50 Ways to Eat Your Vegetables

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009 states that only 27.4% of adults consume at least 3 servings of vegetables per day *and* only 14% of adults consume at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Five servings of vegetables *and* fruits per day are considered the minimum recommended intake by many health organizations and professionals. Enter your age, gender and activity level into CDC's Fruit & Vegetable Calculator to determine your optimal intake (<http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/howmany.html>).

The Basics

Organic or conventional? Eating conventionally-grown vegetables is far better than not eating vegetables at all as the health benefits outweigh the risk of pesticide exposure. If you are interested in minimizing your exposure, use the Environmental Working Group Shopper's Guide to Pesticide in Produce to guide your choices.

Dirty Dozen (most contaminated) Buy organic to decrease exposure	Clean Fifteen (least contaminated)
Celery	Asparagus
Cherry tomato	Avocado
Cucumber	Cabbage
Hot peppers	Sweet corn
Potatoes	Eggplant
Spinach	Mushroom
Sweet bell peppers	Onion
Kale/collard greens	Frozen sweet peas
Summer squash	Sweet potatoes

Fresh, frozen, canned or dried/dehydrated? Fresh seasonal sources which are grown locally and eaten soon after they are harvested will generally provide the most nutrient density. Frozen options are also good as they are often frozen shortly after harvesting. Choose frozen varieties without any sauces. Canned vegetables have been heat treated decreasing nutrients that are heat sensitive and are often preserved in a salty solution increasing their sodium content. Rinse canned vegetables before consuming. Dried/dehydrated vegetables are often expensive and more calorie dense.

Raw or cooked? Cooking vegetables can decrease heat sensitive nutrients but it can also liberate other nutrients such as lycopene in tomatoes when combined with olive oil. Some people experience raw vegetables to be more gas forming. In general, eat a variety of raw and cooked sources but try to avoid overcooking. Steam, grill, roast or gently pan sear your vegetables in small amounts of healthy fat. Avoid deep-frying or tempura prepared vegetables.

Juice or whole? The benefit of whole vegetables is that they contain fiber, whereas, the benefit of juicing whole vegetables is that it contains extreme nutrient density that allows one to consume more nutrients than they might otherwise eat. Juicing can be a great option for nutrient density, detoxification plans or to help as a meal replacement for weight loss. Consider doing both for their special benefits.

Use the following chart for inspiration and ideas on making vegetables pleasing to your palette to help you reach your optimal intake for promoting health and preventing disease.

50 Ways to Eat Your Vegetables...				
Sauté with stock	Add to a quesadilla	Add chopped broccoli to stuffing	Add to cooked grains	Serve raw with hummus
Make smooth tomato sauce by blending canned or fresh tomatoes, olive oil, parmesan, basil & garlic with hand immersion blender or food processor	Skewer 1-1 ½ inch size vegetable pieces & grill; partially cook longer cooking vegetables before grilling	Combine chopped tomatoes, diced cucumbers, peppers, cilantro, lime juice & boiled shrimp for Mexican shrimp cocktail	Get creative with salsa by adding other fruits, veggies & seasonings	Change the salad greens for variety
Slice/chop, put on baking sheet & roast for 20 minutes at 400 degrees	Shred carrot, onion & broccoli & add to cream cheese	Skewer vegetables, present as a bouquet, serve with dipping sauces	Add fresh or frozen vegetables to canned or homemade soup	Change the texture of salad ingredients (i.e. shredded)
Make veggie hash by shredding veggies, tossing with olive oil & herbs, bake at 375 degrees for 20-25 minutes	Add cole-slaw or broccoli-slaw to salad or toss with dressing for quick salad	Puree steamed cauliflower with stock or milk & herbs for mashed cauliflower or creamed cauliflower soup	Add chopped veggies to lasagna or baked pasta dishes	Sauté with garlic, herbs & seasonings
Shred vegetables, remove liquid, add bread crumbs & egg to make grilled patties	Use plain yogurt as base for crudité; add dollop of mustard, pesto or salsa for flavor	Add cauliflower pieces to macaroni & cheese	Create varied pestos by using different herbs or greens instead of basil	Add sprouts to cold wraps
Bake sweet potatoes & add to tomato sauce or meatloaf	Use hand-immersion blender, blend baked sweet potato with stock & spices for pureed soup	Make veggie pizzas with sauce, chopped veggies & pitas, English muffins or tortillas	Store salad fixings in appetizer tray to make for quick salad assembly	Add grilled veggies to warm wraps
Slice sweet or white potatoes, place on sprayed baking sheet, sprinkle with herbs & bake at 375 degrees for 20-30 minutes	Add chopped vegetables to chicken or tuna salad	Use eggplant, cut lengthwise instead of noodles for lasagna	Puree cooked beets, broccoli, carrots cauliflower, red bell pepper, spinach or summer squash & add to other recipes	Make a veggie burrito with beans
Sautee mushrooms as topping for grilled chicken, rice or baked potato	Slice cucumbers lengthwise & add to sandwich	Shred sweet or white potatoes, toss with olive oil & spices, cook in skillet for hash browns	Add to casseroles	Add spinach to scrambled eggs or omelets
Keep cut raw veggies on hand	Use pesto or salsa as a sandwich condiment	Add leftover veggies to quiche	Stir-fry	Use lettuce leaves as a wrap
Store clean & dry salad greens in salad spinner in fridge	Add to juice extractor with fruit	Top grilled polenta with sautéed veggies	Keep frozen vegetables on hand for quick addition to meal	Serve with cheese fondue