

Fitting In More Fruits & Veggies

Try these 20 quick and simple tips to increase your intake of tasty and nutritious fruits and vegetables.

1. Many vegetables taste great with a dip or dressing. Try a low-fat salad dressing with raw broccoli, red and green peppers, celery sticks or cauliflower.

2. Add color to salads by adding baby carrots, shredded red cabbage, or spinach leaves. Include in-season vegetables for variety through the year.

3. Include beans or peas in flavorful mixed dishes, such as chili or minestrone soup.

4. Keep a bowl of cut-up vegetables in a see through container in the refrigerator. Carrot and celery sticks are traditional, but consider red or green pepper strips, broccoli florets, or cucumber slices.

5. Plan some meals around a vegetable main dish, such as a vegetable stir-fry or soup. Then add other foods to complement it.

6. Include a green salad with your dinner every night.

7. Shred carrots or zucchini into meatloaf, casseroles, quick breads and muffins.

8. Include chopped vegetables in pasta sauce or lasagna.

9. Order a veggie pizza with toppings like mushrooms, green peppers and onions and ask for extra veggies.

10. Use pureed, cooked vegetables such as potatoes to thicken stews, soups and gravies. These add flavor, nutrients and texture.

11. Grill vegetable kabobs as part of a barbecue meal. Try tomatoes, mushrooms, green peppers and onions.

12. Keep a bowl of whole fruit on the table, counter, or in the refrigerator.

13. Refrigerate cut-up fruit to store for later.

14. Buy fruits that are dried, frozen and canned (in water or 100% juice) as well as fresh, so that you always have a supply on hand.

15. Consider convenience when shopping. Try pre-cut packages of fruit (such as melon or pineapple chunks) for a healthy snack in seconds. Choose packaged fruits that do not have added sugars.

16. At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas or peaches; add blueberries to pancakes; drink 100% orange or grapefruit juice. Or, mix fresh fruit with plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt.

17. At lunch, pack a tangerine, banana, or grapes to eat, or choose fruits from a salad bar. Individual containers of fruits like peaches or applesauce are easy and convenient.

18. Try meat dishes that incorporate fruit, such as chicken with apricots or mangoes.

19. Add fruit like pineapple or peaches to kabobs as part of a barbecue meal.

20. For dessert, have baked apples, pears, or a fruit salad.