



Why Colorful Plates?

Fruits and Vegetables: Bringing Lots of Benefits to the Table

Food for Thought

Studies show that eating at least two servings of fruit and at least three servings of vegetables every day is one of the healthiest things we can do.

Yet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that, on average, only 14% of adults in America are eating enough fruits and vegetables. The statistics are even worse for high school students – only 9.5% of American teens are getting the right amount of fruit and vegetable servings each day.¹

Why Are Fruits and Vegetables So Important?

1. Weight Control

Eating enough fruits and vegetables are one of the key ways to fight obesity, according to the CDC. That's because fruits and vegetables are high in nutrients and can be low in calories. Other ways to fight obesity include getting more physical activity, drinking less sugar-sweetened drinks, eating less high-calorie/low-nutrient foods and watching less TV.²

2. Chronic Diseases

Getting your full amount of daily fruits and vegetables can help you prevent certain chronic diseases. Eating fruits and vegetables can help:

- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce risk of heart disease and stroke
- Probably lower your risk for some cancers
- Lower your risk of eye problems
- Lower your risk of digestive problems
- Mellow your blood sugar to help keep your appetite in check⁵

Did you know?

Studies show that you get full from the *amount* of food you eat, not the *number* of calories you eat. In other words, if you ate half of a small blueberry muffin, you may not get as full as if you ate an entire bunch of grapes, even though both are about 200 calories. You can cut calories by eating less fatty foods and more fiber-rich foods, like fruits and vegetables.^{3,4}

Tips on the Web

For more information on how fruits and vegetables can help fight chronic diseases, visit the Harvard School of Public Health website at: www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource.

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2009 State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/downloads/StateIndicatorReport2009.pdf
2. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Leadership for Obesity Prevention and Control <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HaltingObesity/>
3. Centers for Disease Control Health Weight – it's not a diet, it's a lifestyle! http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/cutting_calories.html
4. Rolls BJ, et. Al. Am J Clin Nutr 2000;72:361-
5. Harvard Public School of Health, The Nutrition Source: Vegetables and Fruits, The Bottom Line <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits.index.html>

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