

Fruits and Vegetables

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Eat a Variety of Colors

The average person might not care to know the details regarding which nutrients they're getting when they eat fruits and vegetables, but eating a variety of different colors on a daily basis can help ensure that you're eating healthier.

Having a variety of colors on our plates not only makes for an attractive meal, but it also provides for a broader range of nutrients. An added benefit is that kids are often drawn to the colors and may be more willing to try new, healthy foods.

Fruits and vegetables contain natural antioxidants that help to keep our bodies working at their best. Nutrients like calcium, fiber, folate, iron, potassium, sodium, and vitamin A & C are found within the color spectrum of fruits and vegetables.



In addition, fruits and vegetables are low in calories and come in various shapes, sizes, and textures...all of which can contribute to making dining fun as well as healthy.

Take advantage of the natural beauty and variety found in fruits and vegetables to help your family try new foods.

Remember to buy fruits and vegetables that are in season—they will be cheaper and fresher.

For more information on fruits and vegetables, contact your local Better Living for Texans Office. We'd love to hear from you!

Source:
www.fruitsandvegiesmorematters.org.

What's in Season This Month: Pineapple

Pineapples are good sources of fiber and potassium and provide some Vitamin C. When choosing pineapples, some people judge them by snapping a finger against the side of the

fruit. A good, ripe fruit should have a dull, solid sound. Immaturity and poor quality are indicated by a hollow thud. Ripe pineapples should be fragrant, have fresh-looking leaves, and feel

heavy and plump. Pineapples may be stored for no more than 4-6 weeks

Source: *UC at Berkeley, The Wellness Encyclopedia of Food and Nutrition by Sheldon Margen, M.D.*

"Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle" with Informed Food Choices

An eating pattern that meets people's nutrient needs within calorie limits is vital to maintaining good health and quality of life. That's why the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is encouraging everyone to "Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle" with informed food choices during National Nutrition Month® 2015 .

"A healthy lifestyle is about so much more than just choosing to eat more fruits and vegetables. While that is important, it's also essential to make informed food choices based on your individual health and nutrient needs," says registered dietitian nutritionist and Academy Spokesperson Marjorie Nolan Cohn. Knowing which nutrients your body needs, the foods that contain them, and how much fits into your healthy eating plan are all part of making smart choices. Each March, the Academy encourages Americans to return to the basics of healthy eating through National Nutrition Month®. This year's theme encourages consumers to adopt a healthy lifestyle that is focused on consuming fewer calories, making informed food choices and getting daily exercise in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of chronic disease and promote overall health. Learn your needs

Age, gender, body type, family history, existing health conditions and daily routines all play a factor in determining which foods we should eat more of and which we should avoid when trying to optimize our health.

"A consultation with a registered dietitian nutritionist is the best tool for learning what your body needs to achieve peak health and prevent disease," Cohn says. "An RDN will review your health history, and then work with your preferences and routine to put together a comprehensive and achievable lifestyle-based eating plan."

Find Your Foods

Understanding what is in food is essential to making informed food choices while building an eating plan that meets your tastes.

"This may sound simple, but knowing which foods contain the nutrients you need is the next step in biting into a healthy lifestyle," Cohn says. "For instance, most people know that oranges are a good source of vitamin C, but so are tomatoes and potatoes. Dairy foods like milk are a good source of calcium, but so is broccoli. Fruits and vegetables provide fiber, but so do whole grains and beans. A registered dietitian nutritionist can guide your food choices while keeping your tastes and preferences in mind."

Know the facts:

When food selections go beyond whole foods and into packaged foods, understanding what fits and what doesn't may not be as clear.

"Front-of-package nutrition claims, ingredient lists and Nutrition Facts Panels can make any food choice dizzying, but with a few tips from an RDN, that task will be less daunting," Cohn says. "The higher an ingredient is on the list, the more of that ingredient is included compared to the others. This is a good way to determine if a particular food product is made with whole grains or has a lot of added sugar," Cohn says. "Often when an ingredient like salt or fat is reduced, more of another ingredient is added to help keep taste consistent," Cohn says. "So, no matter what the claim is on the front of the package, it's important to always read the Nutrition Facts Panel to determine how many calories and how much fat, sugar and salt are in the package." Making the right food and nutrition choices is a necessary part of biting into a healthy lifestyle.

Mexican Black Bean Salad

Mix up a Mexican meatless meal by tossing canned (drained and rinsed) black beans with fresh corn, a tomato, bell pepper and red onion. Add avocado, jicama or diced mango for more adventurous eaters. Toss with lime juice and olive oil, and serve over crunchy romaine lettuce with whole –grain tortilla chips.

Matthies-Bennett 4-H Scholarship Auction

We will be accepting auction items April 8 & 9 from 8am - 5pm and April 10 from 8am - 12noon (closed each day 12-1 for lunch).

Auction will be April 11 beginning at 9:30am

Pecos County Coliseum - US Hwy 285 (across from the golf course)
Fort Stockton, TX

For more information, contact the Extension Office at 336-2541

Proceeds benefit the Youth of Pecos County 4-H Clubs

Monthly Recipe: Mixed Fruit Salad

Makes: 6 servings

Total Cost: \$3.24

Serving Cost: \$0.54

Ingredients:

- 1 can mandarin oranges, drained
- 1 can fruit cocktail, drained
- 1 can pineapple chunks, drained
- 2 apples (chopped)
- 1 banana (sliced)

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Cover and chill until ready to serve.
3. Refrigerate leftovers.



For more information on SNAP-Ed, contact your local county Extension office. Better Living for Texans is located in over 200 counties across the state.

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