






10 Easy Ways to Get More Fruit and Veggies

Currently, American's fruit and vegetable consumption comprise **less than 4% of our standard American diet** (when discounting potatoes and French fries). The USDA (along with doctor's, nutritionists and other health providers) recommends that we eat more fruits and vegetables. Below, we've included a variety of strategies for getting more of nature's bounty into our bodies.

- **Embrace Frozen:** Not Disney but your freezer isle. Frozen fruits and veggies are an easy and economical way to make sure they are always around, in the exact quantity needed. Many kids love snacking on frozen fruit and/or veggies! Throw them in a stirfry, smoothie, hot cereal, pasta or soup. In many cases, frozen veggies can also have more nutritional value than their fresh counterparts that have been shipped long distances and sitting on supermarket shelves
- Keep **containers of cut up veggies** in the fridge. It is easy to reach for some carrots sticks, celery, broccoli, jicama (a delicious root), or cucumber if they are already cut and waiting for you. Bring a bag to snack on during the day, while watching T.V. or preparing dinner.
- **Roast them.** If you've never tasted roasted carrots and parsnips – be prepared to fall in love. In fact, roasting ANY vegetable (with a touch of sea salt and a drizzle of olive oil on a pan at 375 degrees for about 30 minutes) brings out the sugar of the vegetable. Although roasted veggies are a great fall and winter staple, no reason you can't enjoy spring and summer's bounty the same way.
- **Make your dessert fruit based:** Baked apple, poached pear, seared pineapple, stewed apricots, a bowl of blueberries, can be enhanced with a touch of honey, a drizzle of maple syrup or a sprinkling of brown sugar and cinnamon.
- **Eat soup.** Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall, you can find a soup that fits the season. Soups (hot and cold) are super easy, economical, versatile and make amazing leftovers. Stuff them full with as many vegetables and legumes (beans) as you can't go wrong.
- **Keep fruit on the counter.** Take a page from the restaurateur's playbook: An attractive bowl of fruit looks nice on the counter and makes you want to reach for more.
- **Have more fruit and veggies for breakfast:** A smoothie is an easy choice but also consider, adding applesauce to a whole grain pancake, tomatoes, asparagus and onions to scrambled eggs, avocado to your toast. If you can get 2 -3 servings of fruit or veggies in the morning, you are on the way to a nutritionally sound day.

-  If eating out, **ask for a side of vegetables** instead of the French fries, a side salad instead of toast. Most places will accommodate you.
-  Although high in sugar, a **snack of dried fruit** (try to find the unsulfured varieties) makes a great snack paired with roasted or raw nuts, helps keep you full and gives you a great boost of energy.
-  **Keep track of your fruit/veggie consumption.** We hold ourselves accountable to things we measure. Make a family chart and check off days members meet their daily requirements – 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 cups of vegetables (at a minimum) – keep our bodies functioning at optimal levels. Add another wrinkle and keep track of colors. Who can get to the end of the rainbow first: green, purple, red, white, brown, orange, yellow.