

## What is the best way to get the most nutrition from vegetables and fruit?



Full of nutrients, crunch, and great taste, vegetables and fruit add tremendous variety and pleasure to any meal or snack.

By following [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#) you will ensure that you get a variety of vegetables and fruit daily in the recommended number of servings for your age and gender.

One food guide serving is:

- 1 whole medium fruit
- ½ cup (125mL) vegetables or fruit
- 1 cup (250mL) salad greens or leafy vegetables
- ½ cup (125mL) 100% juice
- ¼ cup (60mL) dried fruit

A healthy, balanced diet rich in vegetables and fruit can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and some types of cancer, and also provides a solid foundation for long-term weight control. This food group is a good source of carbohydrates, vitamins A and C, potassium, magnesium, folate, and fibre. To get the most from your fruits and vegetables:

- Eat at least one dark green vegetable (such as broccoli, green peas or beans, spinach, or romaine lettuce) and one orange vegetable (such as carrots, sweet potato or squash) each day.
- Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat.
- Choose vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

### Are frozen, canned and dried vegetables and fruit as healthy as fresh ones?

Although nothing beats the taste of fresh fruits and vegetables in season, frozen, canned or dry products that contain little or no added sugar, fat or salt can be healthy and sometimes more affordable alternatives. They are often harvested and packed at the height of the season when nutrients are at their peak, so they provide us with nutritious options all year round.

### How do I prepare vegetables and fruit?

Always wash fresh vegetables and fruit thoroughly under running water to remove dirt, bacteria, and any pesticide residues. Organic produce must still be washed thoroughly as well. Remove the outer leaves of leafy vegetables and scrub root vegetables like carrots and potatoes to remove all dirt, especially if you will be eating the skins. To keep vegetables and fruit fresh, store them unwashed and clean them just before use.

Avoid over-cooking vegetables, as this depletes them of nutrients and robs them of taste. Healthy cooking techniques include steaming, stir-frying, par-boiling or microwaving until tender-crisp.

Trusted advice from dietitians. [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

## Some Quick Tips to Increase Your Fruit and Veggie Intake

- Add a side-serving of vegetables and fruit to all meals and snacks
- Make a fruit burrito by rolling cut-up fruit in a soft whole grain tortilla shell
- Add fresh berries to your morning whole grain cereal or yogurt
- Top a sliced banana with a little peanut butter and a drizzle of maple syrup
- Substitute a lettuce wrap for a tortilla shell
- Enjoy frozen grapes or berries for a refreshing hot-weather snack
- Add sliced tomato, avocado, onion, cucumbers or zucchini to your sandwich.
- Use your imagination when you're making a salad! Try adding sliced pears, apples, or kiwi to your usual salad greens.