

FOCUS ON WHOLE FRUITS



Why Eat Fruit?

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Rate Your Fruit Use:

How many fruits do I include daily in my diet?

Four ways I prepare fruits are:

Six fruits I frequently use in my home are:

Mark the fruits that can be grown locally with a *

Fruit is nutritious, colorful and flavorful. Most fruits are naturally low in fat, sodium and calories. Fruit provides many essential nutrients that often are underconsumed, including vitamins C and A and folate, as well as potassium and dietary fiber. Eating more fiber-rich, low-calorie fresh fruit in place of higher-calorie foods can help decrease your overall calorie intake.

Nutrient-rich

Many fruits are good sources of vitamin C, which maintains the health of our skin, cartilage and blood vessels. Citrus fruits and strawberries are among the best sources of vitamin C.

Many dark gold or orange fruits are rich sources of beta-carotene. Our bodies use beta-carotene to make vitamin A to maintain the health of our skin and tissues. Cantaloupe, apricots, grapefruit, watermelon, peaches, plums and many other fruits are rich sources of beta-carotene.

Some fruits, including strawberries and oranges, are good sources of folate, which is important for red blood cell development. Consuming adequate folate/folic acid reduces the risk of neural tube defects, including spina bifida and anencephaly.

Women of child-bearing age should consume 400 micrograms of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods or supplements in addition to intake from foods. Some research suggests that folate also may play a role in decreasing the risk for heart disease, depression and dementia.

Diets rich in potassium can help maintain or reduce blood pressure. Bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches and apricots, cantaloupe and honey dew melon are rich sources of potassium.

Fiber-rich

Whole or cut-up fruits are sources of dietary fiber, but fruit juice provides little to no fiber. Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit for the benefits dietary fiber provides.

Eating enough fiber can help with weight management, and can help prevent chronic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes. Many fruits provide “soluble fiber” that can help reduce blood cholesterol levels and decrease the risk of heart disease when paired with an overall healthful diet. Fiber-rich foods help give you a feeling of fullness while providing fewer calories. Adequate fiber in your diet may reduce constipation and promote healthful gut bacteria.

Preparation Tips

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fruit.
- Rinse all fruits in clear, running water to remove dirt and surface microorganisms just before eating, cutting or cooking. Rinse fruit first even if you plan to peel it.
- Use a produce brush if needed.
- Do not use soap or detergent when cleaning produce.
- Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after rinsing to reduce the amount of bacteria that may be present.
- Cut away any bruised, damaged or soft spots before eating. Discard moldy fruit.

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