

## Add Color with Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are an important part of an overall healthy eating plan because they're typically high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber and low in calories and saturated fats. Most fruits and vegetables also have no or little sodium. Avocados are even a good source of healthy fats your body needs. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables may help you control your weight and blood pressure and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. They provide key nutrients many of us don't get enough of, such as calcium, fiber, iron, potassium and vitamins A and C. You can easily add color to every meal and snack. Try some of these practical tips that don't require a lot of changes to the way your family eats:

- Pack portable, easy-to-eat fruits and veggies in your work or school bag and avoid vending machine temptations.
- Add frozen peas or broccoli to rice when it's almost done cooking.
- Add extra veggies to soups and stews.
- Have a meatless meal once a week. Think vegetable lasagna, portabella mushroom "burgers" or grilled veggie kebabs.
- Fill out a sandwich with fruits and veggies. Try sliced or shredded vegetable like beets, carrots, celery, cucumbers, onions, peppers, radishes, tomatoes and zucchini and/or sliced fruits like apple, avocado and pear.
- Keep frozen and canned fruits and vegetables on hand for when you need to throw together a meal in a hurry. Compare food labels and choose items without too much sodium or added sugars.
- Work fruits and vegetables into your family's favorite dishes.
- Make adding fruits and veggies to meals a snap by cutting them up and keeping them in the fridge. They'll also be handy for snacking!
- When eating out, ask if you can substitute a fruit cup or side salad for fries and other less-healthy sides.
- Top yogurt, oatmeal and cereal with berries or sliced fruit.
- Make fruit popsicles. Freeze 100 percent juice or pureed fruit in an ice tray or popsicle mold.
- Add spinach, peppers or mushrooms into scrambled eggs and omelets.
- For snack time, keep fresh fruit and pre-chopped or no-chop veggies (such as baby carrots, cherry tomatoes and sugar snap peas) on hand, as well as single-serve containers of raisins or applesauce. Your

kids may grab them instead of less-healthy snacks if they're readily available.

- Enjoy fruit for dessert most days and limit traditional sugar-sweetened desserts to special occasions.
- Make it fun for kids to try new fruits and veggies. Let them pick out a new fruit or vegetable in the grocery store each week, and figure out together how to cook or prepare it. You might end up expanding your palate as well!
- Eat the rainbow: A fun and tasty way to make sure your family is eating a good variety of fruits and vegetables is to eat as many different colors as you can each day.
- Keep a bowl of whole fruit handy on the desk, table or countertop

### Picking a produce:

The good news is that all produce counts, which means canned, fresh and frozen varieties can help you reach your goal.

Here's how to pick the best produce of the bunch:

### Canned Fruits and Vegetables

- **WATCH FOR SODIUM:** Sodium is usually added to canned foods to preserve them. Look for low-sodium, reduced-sodium or no-salt-added labeled foods. Compare the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label and choose the product with the lowest amount. Drain and rinse canned veggies to reduce sodium even more.
- **WATCH FOR ADDED SUGAR:** Look for fruit that's canned in water, its own juice, or light syrup (drain and rinse).
- **DELICIOUS USES:**
  - Add drained cans of corn, tomatoes, and pinto beans or any other vegetable to low-sodium chicken broth for a superfast and filling vegetable soup.
  - Use a blender, food processor or a fork to smash drained and rinsed garbanzo beans, northern beans, or any beans into a bean dip for baby carrots; add a little lemon juice and garlic powder for some zip.
  - Serve canned fruit as a dessert topped with low-fat, no-sugar-added

yogurt; or top whole grain cereal with canned fruit.

### Frozen Fruits and Vegetables

- **WATCH FOR SODIUM:** Compare the sodium content on the Nutrition Fact's label and choose the product with the lowest amount. Sauces and seasonings can contain excess salt and add calories.
- **WATCH FOR ADDED SUGAR:** Choose 100% frozen fruits without added sugars.
- **DELICIOUS USES:**
  - When you boil pasta, throw in some frozen veggies at the end of the cooking time for added nutrients and variety.
  - Whip up a smoothie of frozen fruit, fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt.
  - Mix frozen berries into baked goods and oatmeal.

### Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Fresh fruits & vegetables are easy, portable choices. Whenever you leave the house, get into the habit of stashing a fresh snack in your purse or backpack; think: apple, orange, banana, grapes or baby carrots. These snacks will keep you energized and avoid less-healthy snacks at vending machines.

- **LOOK FOR SEASONAL CHOICES:** Your heart-healthy recipes will taste even better with produce that's in season.

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**For more information on diabetes, or to make an appointment, call your Weeks primary care provider at 603-788-5095.**

The Diabetes Support Group monthly newsletter is produced by Weeks Medical Center Registered Nurse and Diabetes Care and Education Specialist, Ashley Clauss. If you have any questions regarding the Diabetes Support Group, contact Ashley at 603-788-5659. We are always looking for new members!



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• DELICIOUS USES:

- Always top sandwiches with extra vegetables.
- Serve cut-up veggies with hummus or fat-free plain yogurt with fruit for a healthy snack.
- Serve a colorful fruit salad for dessert.
- Add pureed fruits and veggies to sauces, smoothies, soups and more for a boost of flavor and nutrients.

### Meeting Recap:

May was our second in person support group meeting since the start of covid! We were joined by Dr. Tara Soraghan, Podiatrist at Weeks Medical Center who did a wonderful presentation of the importance of taking care of our feet with diabetes.

### Next Meeting... Please Join Us

Our next meeting will be June 21st, PROMPTLY at 7pm, please arrive early as the doors will be locked and you will be unable to enter the building. Please use the Lancaster Patient Care Center Ground Floor Entrance.

We will be joined by Erin Campbell, RD, LD, Weeks Medical Center Dietician who will be doing a presentation on healthy eating. Reminder: Masks are required.

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### Fruit and Almond Smoothie

Start your morning off with this refreshing smoothie. Almond milk is lower in carbs than regular milk and is great for people with milk or lactose intolerance.



#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup frozen strawberries and peaches
- ½ cup Plain Nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth and thick.

#### NUTRITION FACTS

Servings Per Recipe: 2, Serving Size: 1 cup, Calories 100, Total Fat 2.5g, Satfat 0.5g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 110mg, Total Carbohydrated 15g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 5g.

[https://www.diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/fruit-and-almond-smoothie.html?home-category\\_id=28](https://www.diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/fruit-and-almond-smoothie.html?home-category_id=28)



**Weeks Medical Center**

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