



Nutrition Tips: fruits and vegetables in Your Daily Diet



The importance of fruits and vegetables (F&V) in the diet!

The results of many clinical studies and long-term observational studies show that the nutritional importance of fruits and vegetables is much greater than previously thought. Therefore, in global dietary recommendations, fruits and vegetables are considered the basis of a healthy diet.

We should remember that an improper diet, poor in fruits and vegetables, is a major risk factor for the development of diet-related diseases, which are the

main causes of mortality in the EU.

F&V as a part of everyday diet can prevent many severe non-infectious diseases, including among others: high blood pressure, coronary disease and stroke, cancer, type II diabetes and obesity. Moreover, consuming various F&V ensures the proper intake of most micronutrients, dietary fiber, antioxidants and many other nutritionally important substances. Including F&V into your daily diet is one of the most effective ways to support overall health and well-being.



Fruit and vegetable consumption

The World Health Organization (WHO) claims that fruit and vegetable intake should be at least 400 grams/day/person. It is suggested that this should be 3 to 5 portions of vegetables and no more than 2 to 3 portions of fruit per day, assuming that one portion is 80 g of product.

At the same time, it is noted that the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed should depend on the age, gender and physical activity of the consumer. More physically active people should consume more fruit and vegetables, in accordance with their energy requirements. Children should consume approximately the same amount of vegetables as fruit (1:1 ratio), and as they mature, this proportion should shift towards increased vegetable consumption. However, at an advanced age, it is beneficial to increase fruit consumption again.

F&V are available in a wealth of colours and flavours, not only they can influence positively on your health but also makes your dish more colourful and appealing.

Each colour of fruit and vegetable represents different types of nutrients, antioxidants and phytonutrients. Try to eat F&V from different colour groups every day.

- Red ones: tomatoes, red bell pepper, strawberries, cherries are rich in antioxidants like lycopene and anthocyanins.
- Orange/Yellow ones: carrots, sweet potatoes, mango, citrus fruits have a lot of beta-carotene and vitamin C.
- Green ones: broccoli, spinach, kale, peas, avocado have high amount of vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- Blue/Purple ones: eggplant, blueberries, blackberries, beet roots, purple cabbage are packed with flavonoids and anthocyanins.
- White/Brown: mushrooms, onions, garlic, cauliflower are a good source of allicin, antioxidants and fibre.



Here are some nutritional tips to increase your consumption of F&V:

- Eat fruits and vegetables as often as possible, preferably every day.
- Add fruit and/or vegetables to every meal – which can be in the form of a vegetable paste or just a leaf of kale or lettuce into your sandwich or topping with a slice of tomato.
- Reach for seasonal fruits and vegetables – they contain higher levels of nutritionally important substances when in season and at the correct stage of ripeness.

- Fruits instead of sweets – make fruits and vegetables as a snack on-the-go.
- Use a convenient form, e.g. small portions of vegetables that are easy to take out (e.g. cherry tomatoes), ready-to-eat vegetable sticks (carrots, cucumbers, peppers).
- Use frozen or canned options when fresh are not available
- If you don't have access to fresh fruits and veggies you can buy dried fruits in the form of raisins, fruit bars and fruit or vegetable chips.
- Plan your meals – it helps to control what you eat.
- Veggie based soups and F&V smoothies can be an easy way to pack a lot of fruits and/or vegetables into one meal.
- And last but not least: do not allow yourself to be hungry and don't go shopping when you are hungry because you are more prone to buy/eat junk food than nutritious products.

To sum up: the more variety you have, the better! Fruits and vegetables are packed with essential substances, like vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, incorporating which into your daily diet can improve digestion, boost immunity, support health and overall well-being. There are only advantages from consuming them every day!

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