

# When It Comes To Your Health - *More Matters*



With fruits and vegetables, more matters! **More Matters** is a national initiative to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables and to promote good health. For the month of September, try filling half your plate with fruits and vegetable at every meal and snack – see what a difference it makes in your health! Fruits and vegetables are full of vitamins and minerals that promote happy and healthy bodies.

## Go Local

September is also one of the most bountiful months for fresh produce. Many of your summer fruits and vegetables – peaches, summer squash, tomatoes, and zucchini – are still readily available, while the fall harvests are beginning to hit peak season as well. Be on the lookout for fresh pears, corn, pumpkins, apples, and mushrooms. The climate in this region also supports several crops year-round, including sweet potatoes, collard greens, peanuts, and fresh herbs. Check out your local farmer's market to see what else you can find!

## The Low-Down on Fruits & Veggies

Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat, sodium and calories and do not contain cholesterol. However, fruits and vegetables do contain the following.

- **FIBER** may help reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity, and Type II diabetes. Fiber is found in many fruits and vegetables, but is particularly concentrated in the skin.
- **FOLIC ACID** helps to form red blood cells, and is vital during pregnancy as it helps the fetus develop properly. Leafy greens, citrus fruits, and legumes contain folic acid.
- **POTASSIUM** helps to reduce high blood pressure, and reduces the risk of bone density loss and of developing kidney stones. Potassium is found in bananas, prunes and prune juice, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, carrots, potatoes, leafy greens, grapes, and orange juice.
- **VITAMIN A** helps support eye and vision health and a strong immune system. Sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, pumpkin, mangos, dried apricots, tomato juice, and summer squash are all good sources of Vitamin A.
- **VITAMIN C** assists in the growth and repair processes of body tissue, helps heal wounds, and keeps teeth and gums healthy. Vitamin C is found in citrus fruits, kiwi, pineapple, berries, melons, broccoli, peppers, leafy greens, potatoes, and tomatoes.



It's not just a balanced diet that is important – “more matters” also applies to exercise! Federal guidelines recommend getting a minimum of 150 minutes per week of moderate level aerobic exercise. That may seem like a daunting challenge, for some, but try these tips to get your body moving. You'll be surprised at how much you are capable of!

- *Start with brisk 10 minute bouts of exercise: walk the dog before work, or make time for a short walk during your lunch break.*
- *Park at the far end of the parking lot, or get off the bus one stop early on your way to work.*
- *Keep a gym bag in your car or at your office with a change of clothes and sneakers, so finding time to exercise is convenient.*
- *Play with your kids. Go ahead; join the pick-up soccer game at the park. Your children will be thrilled to see you participating, and they will help you work up a good sweat.*
- *Mix it up – routine can get boring. Try swimming, yoga, gardening, or playing a round of golf (carry your own clubs) for a change of pace to keep exercise from feeling like a chore.*

## Tips to incorporate fruits and vegetables into your daily routine

- ✓ Keep a bowl of fresh, whole fruit on the counter or in the refrigerator.
- ✓ Wash, cut and store fruits and vegetables, so when you are ready to eat, there is no prep work involved.
- ✓ Purchase fruits and vegetables when they are in season will provide you with the best flavor, and they will likely cost less.
- ✓ Stock up on frozen vegetables so they are easy to heat and add to a meal.
- ✓ Include a side salad with each dinner – it is an easy, healthy way to round out a meal.
- ✓ Be colorful! Consuming fruits and vegetables in an assortment of colors will

not only add variety to your plate, but will help ensure you are getting the various vitamins and minerals these foods contain

- ✓ Try something new. Many grocery stores have a section of “exotic” fruits and vegetables. Next time you are shopping, buy a starfruit, dragon fruit, a few plantains or some bok choy. This is a great way to involve your children, too!

Sources: ChooseMyPlate.gov, Cdc.gov, Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina Final Report

