

12 Weeks to Weight Loss Success This Week's Tip:



Fruits & Vegetables are your Friends



You've heard it before but it's such an important issue that it deserves to be repeated – getting enough fruits & vegetables into your diet is so important for your health and will absolutely help you to reach your weight loss goals!

They contain a variety of nutrients, including vitamins, minerals & antioxidants. Eating the recommended amount of fruits & vegetables each day can reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Vegetables are rich in vitamin A & C, folate, fiber & potassium. Folate helps the body form red blood cells and is especially important for women of child-bearing age to prevent neural-tube defects in babies. Vitamin A keeps your skin and eyes healthy and protect against infections. Fruit is naturally low in fat, sodium and calories and rich in potassium, fiber, vitamin C & folate. Fiber in fruit helps to protect against heart disease & lower cholesterol. Vitamin C helps with wound healing and keeps gums & teeth healthy.

Most produce is low in calories compared to other foods, so filling up on these foods can aid in weight loss & weight management. It is recommended that adults take in between 5-10 servings of fruits & vegetables every day. Generally, one serving is equal to one small piece of fruit or 1/2-1 cup, depending on the item. Seems like a lot? Here are some tips for getting those 5-10 servings into your diet every day!



- Preparation is key! When you get home from the grocery store, take the time to wash and prepare all your fresh produce. Keeping these items prepared and ready to use in your fridge will make it so much easier to use them in meals and for snacks.
- Fresh is best! For convenience, frozen makes a great second choice, especially for out of season items. Your last choice should be canned as they contain preservatives. When choosing canned fruit, look for those packed in water or juice, not syrup.
- Include them in every meal – don't let one meal go by without including a piece of fruit or a serving (or two) of vegetables. This way you can knock out a minimum of three servings without much effort.
- Dealing with picky eaters? Hide your veggies! Puree them into tomato sauce, chop or shred finely and add them to salads, soups or pasta. Serving mashed potatoes? It's easy to mash in steamed cauliflower with your potatoes without anyone being the wiser!
- Consider juicing – while eating vegetables & fruit whole is the best choice, juicing can help you to squeeze in (no pun intended) those extra servings to get you past the minimum. A good juicer is an investment into your health – a good entry level model will run you between \$200-300. Remember that the best juices for health are those containing lots of green, leafy vegetables – fruit should be used to add flavour/sweetness and not the sole ingredient in your juice.
- If you are the type who has never met a vegetable that you've liked, perhaps you've been eating them the wrong way or at the wrong time of year! Eating seasonally ensures you are getting them at their peak flavour and quality. No one likes mushy, overcooked veggies – try them steamed with garlic & ginger for a game-changing experience!

Source: www.fitnessmagazine.com, www.prevention.com, www.livestrong.com