

10 tips

MyPyramid

Nutrition Education Series

focus on fruits

10 tips to help you eat more fruits



Eating fruit provides health benefits. People who eat more fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Fruits provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body, such as potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folate (folic acid). Most fruits are naturally low in fat, sodium, and calories. None have cholesterol. Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as a part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.

- 1 keep visible reminders**
Keep a bowl of whole fruit on the table, counter, or in the refrigerator.



- 2 think about taste**
Buy fresh fruits in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor. Add fruits for a sweet effect in a recipe.

- 3 think about variety**
Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or juice) as well as fresh, so that you always have a supply on hand.



- 4 don't forget the fiber**
Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit rather than juice, for the benefits that dietary fiber provides.



- 5 be a good role model**
Set a good example for children by eating fruit every day with meals or as snacks.

- 6 try fruit at breakfast**
At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas, peaches, or strawberries; add blueberries to pancakes; drink 100% orange or grapefruit juice. Or, try a fruit mixed with low-fat or fat-free yogurt.



- 7 try fruit at lunch**
At lunch, pack a tangerine, banana, or grapes to eat, or choose fruits from a salad bar. Individual containers of fruits like peaches or applesauce are easy and convenient.

- 8 try fruit at dinner, too**
At dinner, add crushed pineapple to coleslaw, or include mandarin oranges or grapes in a tossed salad.

- 9 snack on fruits**
Dried fruits make great snacks. They are easy to carry and store well.



- 10 keep fruits safe**
Wash fruits before preparing or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub fruits briskly with your hands to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry after washing.



From artichoke hearts to zucchini, there are more than 1,500 food items packaged in cans. Along with traditional canned favorites such as tomatoes and peaches, there are many new and exciting specialty foods that provide endless possibilities for canned creations.



Canned Food is Good for Your Health

- Almost all canned vegetables and canned fruits are fat-free.
- Based on epidemiological studies, canned carrots, as part of a healthy diet, have a potential of reducing the risk of cancer.
- Canned tomatoes and tomato sauces are among the best sources of lycopene. Lycopene, found in tomatoes and other red-pigmented fruits and vegetables, may help prevent certain cancers, especially prostate cancer. The heat from the canning process allows lycopene in tomatoes to be better absorbed in the body.
- Canned food only needs to be warmed through before serving because it has already been cooked in the can. This means that it loses remarkably little of its nutritional value.
- Many canned food products are available in low-salt and no-salt alternatives.
- Carotenes are antioxidants that provide protection for the body's cells. Canned apricots, carrots, peaches, pumpkin, spinach and sweet potatoes are all high in carotenes.
- Canned beans of all types (black beans, red beans, butter beans, garbanzo beans, etc.) are often fat-free. They're high in fiber and rich in protein and they may be used right from the can to add flavor, color and texture to a variety of meatless meals ranging from salads to casseroles. Keep in mind, the darker the bean, the more antioxidants it contains.
- Blueberries are a powerhouse of flavonoids, a category of antioxidant! Canned blueberries deliver plenty of flavonoids at levels comparable to, and in some cases higher than, other forms.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that canned food is packed full of nutrition? In most instances, canned food is comparable to its fresh and frozen counterparts. Plus, it's available year-round so it can easily be added to favorite recipes for a convenient meal solution.

- Prepared foods, such as soups and stews, are canned as soon as they are prepared to ensure the ultimate in freshness. More than 50 varieties of soups, stews and chili are available in cans, making meal preparation easy!
- Once the cans are sealed and heat processed, the food maintains its high eating quality for more than two years and is safe to eat as long as the container is not bulging or leaking.
- Most canned fruits and veggies contain no preservatives. They're picked and packed at the peak of ripeness, cooked quickly at high temperatures and sterilized in steel cans to keep nutrients in and impurities out.
- Most canneries are located just a few miles from the field, ensuring that canned food is packed at the peak of freshness.

What about Vitamins, Minerals and Protein?

- 📖 Canned pumpkin is an excellent source of beta carotene, which forms Vitamin A, an essential nutrient that promotes healthy vision and helps protect against infections. While ½ cup boiled, mashed fresh pumpkin contains 26% Daily Value (DV) for Vitamin A; the same amount of canned pumpkin has 540% DV.
- 📖 Canning is one of the safest ways to preserve foods. Shelf life of canned food is at least two years and the vitamin and nutrient levels in canned food remain stable during the shelf life.
- 📖 Canned poultry and fish, both protein-rich foods, are comparable to their fresh-cooked counterparts in nutritional value because protein is not affected by heat treatment. In fact, the canning process is actually responsible for higher calcium levels in canned fish than in freshly cooked.
- 📖 Canned spinach contains the same amount of Vitamin A as fresh or frozen.
- 📖 Many canned fruits and vegetables are high in Vitamin A. Canned products have comparable levels of Vitamin A to their fresh or frozen counterparts.
- 📖 Canned beans pack a powerful punch; they are a very good source of protein, fiber, iron, thiamin and folate.
- 📖 Most Vitamin C is retained after being canned and remains stable during the two-year shelf life of the product. Canned asparagus, grapefruits and pineapple are significant sources of Vitamin C.

