



Nutrition News

Feeding the world with knowledge

National Fresh
Fruit & Vegetables
Month



June 2016

Get Up and Grow!™ Together

Family Meals at Home Have Benefits



Last year, we challenged North Americans to “Get Up and Grow” and eat more fruit and vegetables to promote health and happiness. In 2016 we’re taking it one step further and encouraging everyone to “Get Up and Grow! Together” —because isn’t everything more fun with family and friends?

According to the 2015 State of the Plate by Produce for Better Health Foundation, the average American eats fresh fruit just 150 times and vegetables 183 times over the course of an entire year. That’s not even every other day! For kids under ten, fruit is on the menu just 111 times a year, and vegetables a mere 75 times.

No one has more control of what goes on your plate than you—the easiest way to eat more fruits and vegetables is to get in the kitchen and make your own meals! Cooking at home can have tremendous benefits to health. Harvard research finds people who eat 11 to 14 homemade lunches or dinners a week have a 13% lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared to people who ate less than six homemade meals a week. Eating at home can save you from weight gain too. A study from Tufts found the average restaurant meal packed over 1,200 calories—almost a day’s worth of calories for some!

It’s not just the food on your plate that matters—an even greater benefit comes from eating together. We’ve previously discussed the health advantages of family meals, such as lower BMI and lower risk of depression. Eating a family meal at the table, without phones or TV, can inspire meaningful conversations, impart valuable life lessons and positively impact all aspects of health.

Get Up and Grow! Together is all about healthy living as a group, because making (and keeping up with) major lifestyle changes becomes easier when you have support from others. Add more fruits and vegetables to your day by trying out our newest recipes—packed with produce and meant to be enjoyed with family and friends. For

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Featured Recipe



- **Spicy Caramelized Cauliflower & Broccoli**

a flavorful side dish everyone will love, try our [Spicy Caramelized Cauliflower & Broccoli](#), the perfect accompaniment to grilled salmon or chicken.

Breathe Deeper with Produce

Fiber-Rich Diet May Improve Lung Health



We already know dietary fiber can aid in weight management, support intestinal health, defend against harmful bacteria, and help keep you regular. New research published in *Annals of the American Thoracic Society* finds fiber may keep you breathing easier too.

Using data from NHANES, a national survey on health, researchers looked at the dietary habits of 1,921 adults ages 40 to 79 years and analyzed their lung function through spirometry, which measures how quickly full lungs can be emptied and the total volume of air expired. Participants were classified as having normal, restricted or obstructed airflow.

About 68% of people who ate more than 17.5 grams of fiber per day had normal lung function, compared to just 50% for those who ate less than 10.5 grams of fiber day. About 30% of the low-fiber group had airflow restriction, while the same was true for just 15% of the high-fiber group. People who ate the most fiber had larger lung capacities and could exhale more air in one second, according to tests. Fiber-packed fruits, vegetables and legumes seemed to have the greatest effect on lung health.

Researchers can't say for sure why dietary fiber is good for the lungs, but it could be due to fiber's anti-inflammatory role in the body or improvements in gut microbiota thanks to fiber. Though researchers did account for other beneficial nutrients and dietary risks linked with lung function in their analysis, there's also still a chance that fiber intake could simply be an indicator of an overall healthier diet, making this an association, not cause and effect. Either way, a healthy diet is a win for your lungs and this study is a good reminder of why it's important to eat the whole fruit or vegetable, not just the individual nutrients in supplement form.

Add more fiber-rich fruits and vegetables to your day by whipping up our [Refresh](#) smoothie, made with celery, pineapple, banana and apple. Also try berries, pears, baked potatoes with skin, and artichokes, which are particularly high in dietary fiber.

BONUS: Healthy eating yields healthy lungs. A 2015 study found people who ate the healthiest diet had 33% lower risk of COPD diagnosis compared with those who ate the least healthy diet. Healthy diets contained plenty of fruit, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes.

Health Kick for Men

Playing Soccer May Lower BMI



Lace up your cleats and take it to the field! A study out of the University of Copenhagen finds soccer may be more than just a game when it comes to better health.

Researchers divided 26 older men (average age 68 years) into three groups: One group played soccer for an hour one or two times per week, another group lifted weights, and the third was a control group and did not exercise. After 52 weeks, the group that played soccer saw a small drop in BMI, while the weight-lifting group saw no change and the control group actually gained weight.

Researchers noted benefits on the cellular level too. The soccer group saw a 59% increase in the expression of SOD-2, a gene that helps fight oxidative stress and inflammation, and a 30% increase in GLUT-4, a transporter that takes sugar out of the blood and into cells for energy (a good effect for diabetes prevention).

The benefits of soccer don't stop there. Previous studies by the same group of researchers demonstrated that four months of twice-weekly one-hour training sessions improved maximum oxygen uptake by 15% and muscle function by 30%. Soccer training also showed promise as a guard against osteoporosis, increasing seniors' retention of minerals (calcium, iron, phosphorus, zinc, etc.) in their bones.

You don't need to play like David Beckham to add some soccer to your fitness routine. Round up some friends, find a field, and let the game begin! If you're more serious about the sport, find a local league through a health club or community center.

Cruciferous Vegetables Crush Diabetes

Sinigrin Compound Prevents AGE Formation



According to the CDC, over 9% of Americans have diabetes and more than one out of three adults has pre-diabetes, putting these folks at severe risk for health complications. As we discussed last December, high blood sugar associated with diabetes can result in the formation of AGEs (advanced glycation end products), harmful compounds that are linked to kidney disease, nerve disorders, cataracts and Alzheimer's disease. New research from India finds cruciferous vegetables may play a defending role in preventing these compounds from forming.

The 2016 study, published in the *International Journal of Biological Macromolecules*, showed that sinigrin, a glucosinolate compound in cruciferous vegetables like Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage and kale, was able to prevent the chemical reactions that form AGEs. Lab work indicated that sinigrin trapped certain compounds that are crucial components of AGEs and chaperoned them away before any harm was done.

Cruciferous vegetables make a healthy addition to any diet, and research shows you actually have to eat the food, not

a supplement, to reap the benefits. If you can't get over the bitter taste (the strong taste and smell come from the very compounds that make these vegetables so healthy!) try roasting cruciferous vegetables with a drizzle of olive oil, which brings out a slightly sweet flavor. Add a squeeze of lemon juice or some grated Parmesan cheese and these veggies will please even the pickiest of palates. Our [Hail Caesar!](#) salad is a twist on the classic, made with roasted cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts.

BONUS: British researchers found that sulforaphane—an indirect antioxidant in broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables—can help protect the body's circulatory system from oxidative stress, which is particularly beneficial for those with diabetes.

Fresh Fruit for Your Heart

Eating Fresh Fruit May Improve Heart Health



Brightly colored, naturally sweet, and pleasantly crisp—what's not to love about fresh fruit? Add more fresh fruit to your day and your heart may tick a little longer too, says a 2016 study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

Chinese researchers looked at the diets of nearly half a million adults and monitored their health for about ten years. Daily fresh fruit-eaters had lower blood pressures, lower blood sugar levels and overall healthier hearts. Compared with those who never ate fruit, people who ate fresh fruit every day were 40% less likely to die from heart disease, 34% less likely to have suffered a major coronary event, and about 30% less likely to have had a stroke. Data suggests that 16% of deaths from cardiovascular disease may be attributed to low fruit consumption.

Adding more fresh fruit to your diet is easy! Here are ten delicious ways to naturally sweeten your day:

1. Blend fresh fruit into smoothies. Bananas and pineapple bring tropical flavor. Try the [Tropi-Kale Paradise Smoothie](#).
2. Fold berries into whole wheat muffins, quick bread or coffee cake mix.
3. Substitute fresh grapes for jelly in a peanut butter sandwich.
4. Try grilling fruit like pineapple and peaches. Our [Grilled Tropical Split](#) is a delicious dessert.
5. Mix blueberries into quinoa, barley or other grain salads.
6. Stir ripe banana into oatmeal as a natural sweetener—it adds creamy texture too.
7. Add pineapple to chicken and vegetable stir-fry.
8. Make a mango salsa to enjoy over grilled fish.
9. Enjoy banana “ice cream” for dessert. [Pumpkin Spice Frozen Swirl](#) is tasty any time of year.
10. Eat fresh fruit as a snack—apples, grapes, berries and bananas are convenient on-the-go.

For a delicious and fruit-filled breakfast, try our [Cocoa Acai Bowl](#) made with bananas and topped with fresh strawberries.

Chill Out to Slim Down

Chronic Stress Can Inhibit Weight Loss



Summer is here—time to kick back and relax! If you're looking for a reason to spend a little extra time lounging in the hammock or out by the pool, we have good news: A study published in *BBA Molecular and Cell Biology of Lipids* finds stress relief may be good for your waistline.

Researchers from the University of Florida looked at how chronic stress effects production of betatrophin, a protein that inhibits an enzyme that breaks down fat. Lab work showed that when cells are stressed out, expression of betatrophin dramatically increases—as much as 12.5 fold in this study. Essentially, the cells responded to stress by producing a substance that causes the body to retain fat.

All this could mean that when you're chronically stressed, it's very easy to pack on the pounds.

Back when food was scarce and resources low, this was pretty strategic programming for our bodies; it's the equivalent of stock-piling food in your home when a big storm threatens your town. But in modern society, where chronic stress is more likely due to work or money than scarcity of calories, this logical fail-safe becomes a threat to health.

Understanding that the body may be hard-wired to hold on to fat during stress, it's even more important to reach for nutritious foods when the pressure is on. Better yet, incorporate stress-reducing activities into your regular routine: yoga, meditation, reading, walking through nature, playing with your dog, sipping a cup of tea, or whatever else works for you. Take a deep breath, smile, and start planning your summer vacation!

BONUS: Round up some friends and take a walk! A study from England found group nature walks were significantly associated with lower depression and perceived stress, and more positive mental well-being.

FEATURED RECIPE

Spicy Caramelized Cauliflower & Broccoli

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cups DOLE® Cauliflower, cut into 1-inch florets
- 3 cups DOLE Broccoli, cut into 1-inch florets
- ½ DOLE Yellow Onion, peeled and finely minced
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon smoked sweet paprika
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 4 tablespoons water
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste



Makes: 4 Servings

Prep Time: 45 minutes

Directions:

1. Heat olive oil in large nonstick pan over medium heat.
2. Add cauliflower and spread in single layer. Cook without stirring until the undersides are lightly browned, 7 to 8 minutes.
3. Flip each floret and continue cooking, undisturbed, until evenly browned, 7 to 8 minutes.
4. Add broccoli, onion, red pepper, paprika, honey, water, lemon zest, lemon juice, and pepper. Cook an additional 6 to 10 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Transfer to serving dish.

EDITORIAL TEAM

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