



Nutrition News

Feeding the world with knowledge



January 2017

How to Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

Common Ways to Add More Produce to Your Diet



This time of year most everyone is trying to eat healthier. Whether weight loss is your goal, you want to improve your health, or you simply want to drop the junk from your diet, more fruits and vegetables is likely high on your to-do list.

The idea of eating more fruits and vegetables may seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be hard. In a 2016 study published in the journal *Public Health Nutrition*, researchers from

the CDC explored how Americans who ate the recommended amount of produce incorporated fruits and vegetables into their diet. No photo-staging, filtering or editing here, just real information from real people eating real food.

Using dietary questionnaires from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), investigators estimated produce consumption among 17,571 people aged two years or older. Based on USDA recommendations*, 22% of adults and 53% of children met the daily recommendation for fruit, while just 17% of adults and 27% of children met the daily recommendation for vegetables.

So how were those people reaching those goals? They weren't doing anything special; they just ate more. They did things we all sometimes do: eat raw fruit as a snack, add vegetables to sandwiches, make salads and stir-frys and eat fruit with their breakfasts. They just did it every day.

Overall, this is pretty good news. You don't have to make major changes to your diet to get in enough fruits and vegetables; you just need to eat more of the produce and less of everything else. Small shifts, like adding more banana slices and less granola to your yogurt, swapping carrot sticks for chips with hummus, or using more spinach and mushrooms and less pasta with your dinner can make a big difference. More fruits and vegetables and less of everything else could mean reduced risk of illness and chronic disease, greater control of weight, and even increased mood. Happy New Year to that!

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Swap out the pasta and bring on the veggies with our [Kale & Zucchini Pesto Noodles!](#)

*USDA Recommended Daily Intakes for Fruits and Vegetables

Age and Sex Group	Fruits (cups)	Vegetables (cups)
Children 2-3 years	1	1
Children 4-8 years	1-1.5	1.5
Females 9-13 years	1.5	2
Females 14-18 years	1.5	2.5
Females 19-30 years	2	2.5
Females 31-50 years	1.5	2.5
Females over 50 years	1.5	2
Males 9-13 years	1.5	2.5
Males 14-50 years	2	3
Males over 50 years	2	2.5

Don't Talk and Shop

Multitasking While Grocery Shopping Can Hinder Healthy Decisions



We know not to text and drive. Then it was don't text and run. Now research finds multitasking on our cell phones could pose problems at the grocery store too.

In a 2016 study published in the *Journal of Retailing*, researchers set up grocery shopping scenarios to determine how multitasking while shopping affects purchasing decisions. First, 227 college students were told to shop for snacks that totaled 500 calories or less. Half the students listened to a voicemail while shopping, while the other half shopped distraction-free. In a second trial, 119 shoppers in Paris were asked to choose a low-calorie pasta sauce for a friend on a diet. Some shoppers listened to a recording while navigating the store, others did not.

Before shoppers hit the aisles, researchers also manipulated their mindsets through a reading exercise. Some participants were put into a "how-mindset," meaning they were focused on the process of how to do something, while others were put into a "why-mindset," which had them focused on the reason for doing something. Researchers note that people in why-mindsets have a tougher time making decisions because they analyze the pros and cons of every choice—not an easy task when talking on the phone.

Grocery purchases revealed those focused on how were able to multitask with no problem. On the contrary, those focused on why failed to buy healthier foods while distracted by their phones. The problem for us: Most people live in a why world, especially when trying to buy healthier foods.

Think about it: You're working your way through the store, faced with thousands of different food choices, trying to pick the foods that are the healthiest, freshest, best tasting, and most cost effective. Who can handle a cell phone conversation during that?

Don't make shopping harder than it has to be. Put the phone down, stick to your list, and you'll be out the door in no time stocking your fridge full of nutritious foods.

Need some inspiration? We'll make it easy. Pick up some apple cider, farro and a [DOLE® Chopped Pomegranate Salad Kit](#) and you've got our [Apple Cider Farro Chopped Salad](#) on the table.

Exercise to Beat Winter Blues

Jogging Linked with Favorable Mood Changes



It's that time of year again: The holidays are over, the temperatures are dropping and the days grow dark by 5 pm. What's the easiest way to look on the bright side? Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and add some exercise to your day, says a 2016 study published in the *Journal of Sport Behavior*.

Fifty-five college students at Bowling Green State University were asked to jog for 15 minutes at their preferred intensity. Right before and after exercising, participants answered questions about their moods and exercise habits. Among the whole group, just a short bout of exercise led to significant increases in vigor and decreases in depression, anger, tension and fatigue. Even students who said they didn't like to exercise saw favorable changes in mood—that's good news for most!

During the cold winter months it can be tough to exercise—a simple jog outside can't always happen in the ice and snow. Get creative to fit your activity in! Try downhill or cross-country skiing, snow shoeing or sledding—running up that hill can be a real workout. If you prefer to keep it indoors, group exercise classes are a way to keep it fun. If that's not an option, stay home and pop in a workout DVD or find videos online. If you keep your heart rate up you'll keep your mood up too!

BONUS: Hate to run? Try yoga! A study from Boston University found yogis had 14% higher levels of GABA, a neurotransmitter linked, at low levels, to depression and even epilepsy.

Fruits, Vegetables and ALS

Antioxidants, Carotenes and Produce Linked to Higher Function in ALS Patients



Remember the Ice Bucket Challenge that swept the nation in the summer of 2014? It got a lot of people talking about ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig's disease). We won't try to bring back that icy trend in mid-January (brr!) but we do want to bring back the important topic of fighting this rare disease.

ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) is a disease that kills nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord, causing loss of muscle control, paralysis and eventually respiratory failure. The disease affects more than 20,000 people in the United States with 15 new cases diagnosed every day. Though life expectancy after diagnosis is just about two to five years, researchers are hard at work to find a treatment. A promising study published in *JAMA Neurology* finds fruits and vegetables may play a role.

Researchers asked 302 ALS patients questions about what foods they typically ate and determined what nutrients

were in those foods. They also ran tests to estimate patients' degree of functional impairment. The more antioxidants a patient ate, the better the patient's function. Foods found to be especially beneficial were fruits and vegetables high in carotenoids (like carrots and spinach), foods high in fiber (like whole grains) and oils high in omega-3 fatty acids (like olive oil). On the flip side, deli meats and milk seemed to negatively affect function, likely because higher fat content can promote oxidative stress.

This is just one great example of why eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables is so important. A healthy diet doesn't just mean a healthy weight, but a healthy body too! We're still years of research away from finding a real cure for ALS, but eating plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains is an easy and risk-free way that patients may be able to improve their quality of life.

Awesome Avocados

Substituting Avocados for Other Fats May Improve Heart Health



The avocado has come a long way from just game day guacamole (though there's nothing wrong with that!). From avocado roses and toasts to pestos and puddings, avocados have found their place in entrées, desserts and snacks. Though higher in calories than most fruits (a serving, which is 30 grams or one-fifth of an avocado, comes in at 50 calories) most of those calories come from monounsaturated fats, the "good" fat that's linked to heart health. A 2016 study published in the *Journal of Clinical Lipidology* adds to the evidence.

Researchers compiled results of ten unique studies that looked at how substituting avocados in place of unhealthy fats affected participants' health. Overall, swapping in avocados led to drops in total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol and triglycerides—all factors that can lower risk of heart disease and other chronic conditions. In fact, these changes were comparable to the effects of some medications (though we don't advise changing your regimen without consulting your physician).

True, the people in these studies were eating a lot of avocados—anywhere from half an avocado to one and a half avocados every day—but they weren't just eating more avocado. They were swapping out unhealthy fats and using avocado as a replacement. Try these simple swaps to potentially reap the benefits:

- Use avocado on sandwiches and in tuna salad in place of mayonnaise.
- Mix avocado into salads instead of creamy dressings.
- Spread avocado on whole wheat bagels in place of cream cheese.
- Incorporate avocado into baked goods instead of using butter.
- Add avocado to smoothies instead of using milk.

Avocado-based guacamole is sure to have a spot on your football party spread but there are plenty of ways to add avocado to your football-themed feast. [Spicy Sweet Potato and Banana Chili in Tortilla Bowls](#) topped with diced avocado is perfect for the occasion.

BONUS: Here are some other tasty ideas for [Nutritious Game Day Eats!](#)

Facebook for Longer Life?

How Using Facebook May Help Lower Mortality Risk



You may have seen the headlines: Using Facebook can help you live longer. But don't stop reading there. The study, published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, finds it's not just signing up for Facebook that matters but rather how you're using it.

Working directly with Facebook, researchers from UC San Diego and Yale analyzed public health records and Facebook use data for more than 12 million people in California. Yes, they found the risk of dying in a given year is about 12% less for Facebook users than non-users, but that could have been due to several unrelated factors such as education or income.

What they really found was how you used Facebook mattered most. People who accepted the most friend requests were 34% less likely to die compared with those who accepted the least friendships. Posting photos was important too: Those who posted the most photos saw a 30% drop in risk of death compared to the average.

These results point to two interesting things. First, longevity is linked to the willingness of others to seek out connection and friendship, not just your own. (Translation: People have to want to be your friend!) Second, if posting photos of you and your friends is linked to longer lifespan, it may be *offline* social activity that is the real key to longevity rather than Facebook itself.

Friendship and social support have long been linked to health, well-being and longevity, and this study finds Facebook may be a tool to strengthen meaningful real-life relationships rather than virtually replace them. We're all for using Facebook (we're on it too!) but be sure to make time to connect with your friends in real life. For an extra health boost, try meeting up for a game of soccer, round up the crew for a hike, or gather some friends and try a new recipe like our [Banana Nut Mash](#). Snap some photos, share them on Facebook and you might just add a few years to your life.

BONUS: Think this is interesting? Share it on Facebook! Research shows posting articles on social media may help you better connect with and absorb the information you read.

FEATURED RECIPE

Kale & Zucchini Pesto Noodles

Ingredients:

- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 bag (5 oz.) DOLE® Organic Kale Salad Mix
- 3 zucchini, spiralized
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup pesto sauce
- ¼ cup shaved Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

- HEAT** oil in a large skillet and place over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook for 1 to 2 minutes.
- ADD** zucchini noodles and kale mix to skillet. Gently toss and cook until greens are wilted, about 2-3 minutes.
- STIR** in pesto sauce and lightly toss until the zucchini noodles are evenly coated. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Top with Parmesan cheese.



Makes: 4 Servings

Total Time: 15 minutes

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