

F NEW-LIFESTYLES STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOUSM FRUIT FACTS

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Why should fruits be a key part of everyone's daily diet?

Providing the variety we crave, fruits keep meals interesting. Some fruits burst with flavor in our mouths, add zip to otherwise bland recipes, and tempt with a diversity of textures.

Naturally sweet, fruits make a perfect afternoon treat or after-dinner dessert.

Besides coloring our markets and our meals with a variety of tastes, textures and shapes, fruits provide essential vitamins and minerals, dietary fiber, water and other substances that are important for good health. They are good sources of vitamin A, vitamin C, folate and potassium. Eating the recommended 5 servings a day may reduce the risk of cancer and protect from other chronic diseases like heart disease and stroke. Additionally, most fruits are naturally low in fat and calories and none has cholesterol. They look good, taste good, and are good for you.

1. Are avocados bad for you?

Many people steer away from avocados after learning that avocados are high in fat. Avocados are loaded with nutrients such as

dietary fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin C, vitamin E, potassium, magnesium and folate.

They're also cholesterol and sodium free. Avocados contain 60% more potassium per ounce than bananas. This fruit is an excellent source of monounsaturated fat. So, go ahead and make that homemade guacamole!

2. Is a tomato a fruit or a vegetable?

Often thought of and used as a vegetable, botanically-speaking, tomatoes are actually a fruit. This is because by definition a fruit is the edible part of the plant that contains the seeds. A vegetable, on the other hand, is the edible stems, leaves, and roots of the plant. No matter what you call it – fruit or vegetable, it's still delicious when grown in the backyard and eaten out of the garden!

3. If it is recommended that I eat 3 to 4 servings of fruit daily, how big is one serving?

One serving size of fruit is defined as:

- 3/4 cup (6 oz.) 100 percent juice
- One medium fruit (e.g., apple, orange, banana, pear)
- 1/2 cup cut-up fruit
- 1/4 cup dried fruit
- 12 fresh cherries
- 3/4 cup blueberries
- 1/2 large grapefruit
- 1 cup of raspberries
- 17 small grapes



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Here are some tips for picking and preparing the freshest fruits.

Apple

One of everyone's favorite fruits, apples have secured their place in American cuisine and culture. Consuming about 120 apples apiece each year, Americans clearly follow the old adage that "an apple a day keeps the doctor away." There are 2500 known apple varieties grown in the U.S. with flavors ranging from sweet and juicy to tart and crisp and with names like Golden & Red Delicious, Gala, Fuji, McIntosh, Jonathan and Granny Smith to name a few varieties.

Choose firm apples that are free of soft spots. Keep apples in a plastic bag in the refrigerator after purchasing to prevent further ripening for up to six weeks. Wash apples with soap and rinse with water before eating. After they are cut, apples will quickly turn brown from the effects of oxidation. To prevent browning, sprinkle apple slices with a solution of one part citrus juice to three parts water.

Watermelon

A member of the squash and cucumber family, watermelon is surprisingly a vegetable even though we enjoy it as a "fruit." Watermelon consists of 92% water and 8% sugar which makes it such a refreshing summer treat! Choose a firm, symmetrical watermelon free of soft spots, cracks and bruises. Ripe watermelon will have a healthy sheen, a dull rind, dried stem, and a buttery yellow underside where it touched the ground. It should smell like melon. Ripe watermelon should feel heavy for its size and have a hollow sound if you thump it. Avoid immature white or very pale green colored watermelon.



Ever come upon a fruit or vegetable in the grocery store that you've never seen before? Satisfy your natural curiosity and ask someone working in the produce department what the fruit or vegetable is and how to prepare it. Another good way to safely branch out and try something new is to ask another store patron how they plan to cook that strange vegetable or fruit they just selected. You just might discover a new family favorite!

Strawberries

There's nothing like the taste of plump, fresh strawberries bursting with flavor in your mouth. From the moment you pick one up, the smell overwhelms your nose with sweetness. It's best to choose strawberries that are plump, firm and well-colored. Strawberries are at their best when their season starts in early April.

Always refrigerate strawberries if you are not eating them the same day you buy them. Do not remove the caps or wash the berries until you are ready to use them. When caps are removed before use, the berries lose some of their moisture. Washing early tends to bruise them and the berries lose their freshness.

Cantaloupe

Also known as muskmelon, cantaloupes are considered "in-season" from May to September. When selecting a cantaloupe, choose one with a yellowish rind and a pleasant aroma. The stem area should be clean as this indicates that the fruit was ripe when picked. If the cantaloupe is extra-juicy, you will hear the seeds rattle inside when you shake it.

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NEW-LIFESTYLES STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOUSM VEGGIE FACTS

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Research continues to support the undeniable health benefits of a diet rich in vegetables. Considered to be some of the world's healthiest diets, Japanese and Mediterranean diets regularly incorporate many nutrient-rich vegetables into their traditional everyday recipes. Raw, cooked, pureed, steamed, poached and roasted, vegetables comprise a color palette Monet would envy.

Besides adding color to our plates, vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, dietary fiber, water and other substances that are important for good health. Along with fruits, vegetables are also good sources of vitamin A, vitamin C, folate and potassium. Eating the recommended 5 to 9 servings a day may reduce the risk of cancer and protect from other chronic diseases like heart disease and stroke. Naturally low in fat and calories and cholesterol-free, there's no over-indulging when it comes to vegetables. So, fill up your plate with a variety of good vegetables!

1. Lately, I've been hearing about the health benefits of "superfoods." Could you tell me more about them?

The so-named "superfoods" are a list of 14 foods composed by

Steven Pratt, MD who found these nutrient-rich foods commonly reoccurring in the world's healthier diets. Each of the "superfoods" has been praised for its nutritional value and resulting health benefits. Of the 14 listed "superfoods," eight are fruits and vegetables: beans, blueberries, broccoli, oranges, pumpkin, soy, spinach and tomatoes.

2. What is the safe, recommended way to wash fresh produce?

Wash fruits and vegetables under running water in a clean sink. Do not use soap, bleach or other chemical detergents to wash fruits and vegetables as they can be poisonous! If fruits and vegetables are firm, scrub them with a clean vegetable/fruit brush. For soft vegetables and fruit like tomatoes, rub gently with your hands under running water to remove dirt. Remove outer leaves of leafy vegetables like cabbage, lettuce and brussels sprouts before washing.

Produce washes currently marketed are expensive and not recommended for effective washing of fruits and vegetables.

3. What are phytochemicals?

Phytochemicals are nonnutritive plant chemicals that contain protective, disease-preventing compounds. More than 900 different phytochemicals have been identified



as components of food, and many more phytochemicals continue to be discovered today. It is estimated that there may be more than 100 different phytochemicals in just one serving of vegetables.

By regularly eating vegetables and fruit from each color group (orange/yellow, red, green, white and blue/purple) you will benefit from all of the phytochemicals' health-promoting properties.

4. If it is recommended that I eat 5 to 9 servings of fruit and vegetables daily, how big is one serving of vegetables?

One serving size of vegetables is defined as:

3/4 cup (6 oz.) 100 percent vegetable juice

1/2 cup raw or cooked vegetables

1 cup raw, leafy vegetables

1/2 cup cooked or canned peas or beans

Here are some tips for picking and preparing the freshest vegetables:

Bell peppers

Fresh bell peppers come in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes, but when selecting them, they all follow the same guidelines. Red bell peppers are just mature green bell peppers. Their skin should be firm without any wrinkles, and the stem should be fresh and green. They should feel heavy for their size. Avoid peppers with sunken areas, slashes or black spots.

To prepare, wash and remove the stem and seeds, which are indigestible. Enjoy their raw crispness in a colorful salad or roast them to bring out their sweetness Mediterranean-style.

Corn

Choose corn with tight green husks. Check each ear of corn by pulling the husk open to make sure the kernels are plump and arranged in tight rows. The kernels should be smaller at the tip of each ear – if they are as big at the tip as they are at the base, the corn has been over matured and may be tough.

Refrigerate corn to prevent the ears from becoming less sweet, as heat converts corn's sugar content into starch.

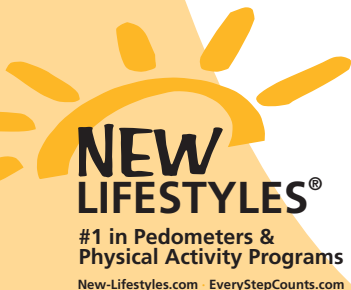
Artichokes

Closest relative to the thistle, artichokes are actually a flower bud. Choose an artichoke that is compact with tight leaves and feels heavy for its size. The stem width should be in proportion to the overall size of the artichoke. When you squeeze a fresh artichoke, the leaves will make a squeaky noise. Wash artichokes under cold running water. Pull off the lower petals and cut the stems to one inch or less. Cut the top quarter of each artichoke and snip off the sharp tips with kitchen shears.

Cook the artichokes soon after you cut them or they will turn brown. A lemon-water bath will help to keep their green color. Usually boiled or steamed, artichokes can be eaten whole or added to other dishes.

To eat an artichoke, pull off the leaves one-by-one and eat the fleshy ends attached to the plant by scraping them against your bottom teeth. As you get to the interior of the artichoke, the leaves will become smaller, lighter in color and bitter. Discard the bitter leaves and scrape off the fuzzy tuft covering the heart of the artichoke. Considered by most people to be the best part of the artichoke, the heart can be broken apart and eaten. Dip the leaves in the traditional melted butter or try a lighter lemon vinaigrette.

Are you wondering what the other 6 "superfoods" are? They are oats, tea (black or green), turkey, walnuts, wild salmon and yogurt.



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