



**Eat Well, Live Well**

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# Step Right Up

## to Healthy Eating

### Colour your choices with Vegetables and Fruit

**Bright red and yellow peppers, juicy oranges, sweet pineapples, plump berries and grapes, crisp carrots, ripe tomatoes and luscious leafy greens – doesn't your mouth water just thinking about these delicious foods?**

**Vegetables and Fruit are 1 of 4 important food groups in *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.** Together with Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives, and Meat and Alternatives, they form a tried and true blueprint for healthy eating.

#### **Vegetables and Fruit taste awesome!**

Your taste buds will come alive when you savour the sweetness of snow peas, the crunch of cucumber and the kick of kiwi!

**Vegetables and Fruit help you stay healthy.** They are loaded with vitamins, fibre and antioxidants, all known to help fight disease and allow your body to perform at its best.

- With the exception of olives and avocados, Vegetables and Fruit are low in fat and calories. They make a great snack any time of the day.
- Broccoli, red peppers, tomatoes, strawberries, oranges, grapefruit and kiwi are best picks for Vitamin C, which is needed to prevent infections and heal cuts and bruises.



- Fruits, such as apples, strawberries and citrus fruits contain soluble fibre, which helps to reduce 'bad' cholesterol. Most fruits and vegetables, except for juices, also provide insoluble fibre, which helps to keep digestive systems healthy and regular. Eating the skins of vegetables and fruit is great for added fibre.
- Dark green leafy vegetables, asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, green peas, corn, oranges and orange juice, and canned pineapple juice are great sources of folate. This B vitamin is needed for healthy blood and known to protect against neural tube defects during pregnancy.
- Lower your risk for heart disease, stroke and certain types of cancer by choosing antioxidant rich vegetables and fruit. Examples include dark green, red and orange choices like red peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, spinach, kale, carrots, sweet potatoes, mangos and cantaloupe.



## Tips for choosing and enjoying Vegetables and Fruits

### Enjoy vegetables and fruit at each meal or snack to get the amount you need each day.

Canada's Food Guide recommends a certain number of Food Guide Servings each day from the Vegetables and Fruit group depending on your age and gender.

Age	# of Food Guide Servings of Vegetables and Fruit
Toddlers 2-3 years	4
Children 4-8 years	5
Youth 9-13 years	6
Teens (females) 14-18 years	7
Teens (males) 14-18 years	8
Adults (females) 19-50 years	7-8
Adults (males) 19-50 years	8-10
Adults (females) 51 years and older	7
Adults (males) 51 years and older	7

### Vegetables and Fruit are totally versatile!

Enjoy them fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Try them in soups, stir-fries, stews, casseroles or as a dessert.

### Have dark green and orange vegetables or fruit each day.

Having vegetables and fruit at every meal and snack helps you get the number of servings you need. One Food Guide Serving is equal to 1 medium piece of fresh fruit OR 125 mL (1/2 cup) of cut up fresh, frozen or canned fruit or vegetable OR 250 mL (1 cup) of green salad OR 125 mL (1/2 cup) of 100% fruit juice OR 60 mL (1/4 cup) dried fruit.

**Short on time?** Use pre-washed bagged salads or cut-up vegetables and fruit to save time.

Dietitians provide food and nutrition information you can trust. Find a dietitian in your area at [www.dietitians.ca/find](http://www.dietitians.ca/find) or call 1-888-901-7776.

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### Choose vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

You'll get more fibre and other important nutrients. When choosing juice, look for products that are 100% juice.

**In a hurry?** Grab the perfect fast food that doesn't need a container – bananas, apples, pears, oranges are all easy take along foods.

**Need a yummy breakfast?** Blend 1 cup (250 mL) yogurt with 1 medium banana, 1/2 cup (125 mL) orange juice and a few berries for a tasty shake.

**Hold the fat, sugar and salt.** Enjoy the true taste of vegetables and fruit. Enhance flavours with herbs and spices rather than salt. Avoid deep fried vegetables – have steamed or stir-fried vegetables instead. Choose unsweetened or fruit packed in juice.

**Be adventurous** – try one new fruit or vegetable every week – you'll be amazed at how good it all tastes. Visit markets with foods from different parts of the world. Experiment with Bok choy, gai lan, casava, okra, bitter melon, passion fruit, pomegranate, and star fruit.

**Lock in nutrients.** Steam or use just a small amount of cooking water to keep the most nutrients in your vegetables.

**Show children how and where veggies are grown** – try growing a few in your own back yard or take a road trip to a pick-your-own field or farmers market.

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