

## Fruit and Vegetable Tips

Below are 27 tips for increasing the intake of fruits and vegetables. These ideas may also help you think of other creative ways to include fruits and vegetables in your menus.

- **Substitute vegetables for some or all of the meat in lasagna.** Consider spinach, shredded carrots, zucchini, mushroom and tomatoes, or a "Mexican Lasagna" with refried beans, cheese, chilies and salsa.
- **Add vegetable to pasta sauce.** Sauté chopped carrot and celery along with mushrooms, onions and crushed tomatoes.
- **Serve stir-fried vegetables with or without meat.** Use a bottled stir fry sauce or one you make yourself with soy sauce, wine or chicken broth. Season with ginger and garlic and thicken with cornstarch.
- **Turn baked potatoes into a main dish** by topping with melted cheese, and a generous serving of steamed fresh broccoli and carrots, or a mixture of cooked or ground turkey breast with black beans, corn and salsa.
- **Fill heated tortillas with vegetarian refried beans or black beans.** Top with salsa and serve with plain yogurt, lettuce and tomatoes.
- **For a vegetarian pizza,** add a combination of oven roasted eggplant, squash, slices of tomato, sweet peppers, spinach, or artichokes over a Boboli crust and top with cheese.
- **Fill an omelet with onions, zucchini and tomatoes,** or scramble eggs with mushrooms, tomatoes and peppers. Top with salsa.
- **Cook a big pot of soup or stew with seasonal vegetables.** Adding dried or canned beans can stretch your food dollar.
- **Grill vegetables on the barbecue.** Marinate your favorite vegetables with bottled or homemade vinaigrette. Parboil more dense vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, artichokes and sweet potatoes.
- **Add vegetables to sandwiches.** Try slices of cucumber, pepper strips, sprouts, grated carrots, zucchini, fresh spinach leaves or well-drained coleslaw.

- **Make a bean dip** from nonfat, canned refried beans, packaged taco seasoning to taste, bottled taco sauce and nonfat yogurt. Serve warm or cold with baked tortilla chips, sweet pepper strips or other fresh vegetables.
- **Cut cauliflower, broccoli and other favorites into snack size pieces**, splash with vinegar and herbs and keep handy in the fridge. Serve raw veggies with a favorite lowfat dressing.
- **Serve a fresh green salad daily.** Add familiar veggies such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, kidney beans or garbanzo beans; experiment with the more exotic vegetables as well.
- **Add fruit to your chicken or tuna salad.** Try chopped apple with tuna salad, and grapes, oranges or pineapple with turkey or chicken salad. Serve the salad in a tomato or bell pepper shell.
- **Purée cooked apple or pear as a sauce** for chicken or turkey, or add chopped dried apricot or fresh peaches to baked or grilled chicken.
- **Serve a cold salad plate** of lowfat cottage cheese surrounded with sliced fresh fruits.
- **Top pancakes with slices of fresh berries**, peaches or banana just before flipping or top whole grain waffles with fresh fruit compote and yogurt instead of syrup.
- **Mix unsweetened applesauce or fresh chopped apple into cooked cereal**, or top hot or dry cereals with dried fruit, chopped apple, berries or bananas.
- **Add fruits and vegetables to your favorite muffin, bread or cookie mix** -- about a half to one cup of fruit or vegetables for every two cups of dry ingredients. Try cooked or canned pumpkin, shredded zucchini or carrots, or chopped apples, berries, cranberries, raisins or apricots.
- **Serve a cereal sundae** by layering low sugar cereal with diced fresh fruit, almonds and lowfat yogurt.
- **Freeze grapes, bananas, berries and peaches.** Chop the fruit and spread the pieces out on a baking sheet so they will freeze individually, then transfer fruit into bags to store in the freezer.
- **Make a fruit shake** using fresh or frozen fruit, lowfat plain yogurt and a small amount of fresh juice or 1% milk.

- **Serve fruit kabobs** with apples, oranges, banana, grapes and strawberries.
- **Offer banana boats** made with a banana sliced lengthwise and spread with peanut butter, and put back together again like a sandwich.
- **Make orange and peanut butter "snack-wiches"**. Spread peanut butter on a graham cracker then top with a fresh orange "wheel" slice.
- **Serve vanilla yogurt over a baked apple or fresh fruit salad**, or lemon yogurt over mixed berries.
- **Snack on dried fruits** like apples, apricots, figs, dates or prunes. For a heartier snack, add them to lowfat granola.