Fruits and Vegetables Are a Convenience for Busy People!

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Who has time to think about what they are eating? Everyone, according to the National Cancer Institute, especially with the variety of convenient fruit and vegetable choices on the market today.

As more families feel increased time pressures from jobs, family and other commitments, a healthful diet is easy to overlook. In our hurried days, we don’t always make the best food choices. However, it is possible to meet the demands of our busy lives and still make healthful food choices.

Did you know that eating enough fruits and vegetables each day is important to help you maintain your health? Dietary Guidelines for Americans, along with MyPlate, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guidance system, recommends that people of all ages fill half of their plate with fruits and vegetables at each meal.

Along with tasting great, fruits and vegetables are low in calories and fat, and high in vitamins, minerals and fiber. Eating lots of fruits and vegetables as part of a low-fat, high-fiber diet might help reduce blood pressure, manage weight and reduce risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.

Getting Enough Fruits and Vegetables

Have fruits and veggies on hand! It’s hard to choose grapes over cookies for a snack if they aren’t around. Studies show that households that have fruits and vegetables available for meals and snacks will eat more of them! Put a few extra fruits and vegetables into your shopping cart this week.

Commuting With Fruits and Vegetables

Eat a piece of fruit, or drink fruit juice instead of soda or coffee in the car. One cup of 100% fruit juice can be considered a cup from the fruit group. Limit the amount of fruit juice you drink to less than half of your daily fruit intake. You can keep 8- to 12-ounce cans or bottles in your refrigerator, chilled and ready to go! Bring fruits and vegetables that are in a single-serve cup or baggie, or bring ones that are able to be eaten by hand. Try these convenience foods: apricots, grapes, apples, nectarines, bananas, orange segments, broccoli, pears, carrots, edamame, plums, celery stalks, strawberries and cherries.

Shopping for Fruits and Vegetables

Take advantage of easy options such as pre-cut, cleaned and packaged fresh fruit and vegetables. Frozen, diced or canned fruits and vegetables are also easy to use.

Buy low-fat yogurt, fruit juice and fresh, canned or frozen fruit to blend a quick smoothie in the morning. Drink the smoothie at home, or pour it into an insulated cup to keep it cold and transportable.

Buy pre-cut vegetables for brown bag lunches, and try dipping them in low-fat salad dressing.

Buy frozen bags of berries, peaches or melon balls, and use them as needed.
What Counts as a Cup of Fruit or Vegetables?

- 1 cup (8 ounces) of 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- 1 cup cooked or canned vegetables or fruit
- 2 cups raw, leafy vegetables is equivalent to 1 cup of vegetables
- 1 cup dried beans or peas, cooked
- ½ cup dried fruit such as raisins, prunes or dried apricots
- 1 medium pear
- 8 large strawberries
- 1 large orange
- 32 seedless grapes
- 6 baby carrots
- 1 small, raw whole tomato
- 1 small pepper

Remember, the more fruits and vegetables, the better!

References
