

Get Fit for Life

The Official Newsletter
of the Atlantic County
Division of Public Health
Get Fit for Life Challenge

Week Four

All About Vegetables

Fruits and Vegetables for Big Health Benefits

Most experts suggest we increase the amount of vegetables and fruits we eat each day. They make this recommendation because vegetables and fruits are excellent food choices that are:

- low in fat
- good sources of fiber
- rich in many of the vitamins and minerals we need for good health
- good sources of other compounds that may reduce the risks of some types of cancer

Translating this recommendation into breakfast, lunch and dinner means having five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

What is a Serving?

It can be difficult to determine how much food equals one serving. Keep these handy guidelines in mind when planning your meals.

One Serving of Vegetables = 1 cup raw leafy greens
½ cup other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw; ¾ cup 100% juice

One Serving of Fruit = 1 medium piece of fruit;
½ cup chopped, cooked, or canned fruit; ¾ cup 100% juice

Getting the Most out of Vegetables

When vegetables are boiled in water, some of the nutrients are lost. Here are some simple ways to maximize the nutritional value of your vegetables.



- **Serve Vegetables Raw** Try a platter of cut-up raw vegetables or a tossed salad with a low-fat dip, such as plain low-fat yogurt mixed with curry powder or dill with dinner. Take along some snow peas, cherry tomatoes, or cut-up zucchini to snack on at work or on the road.
- **Serve Vegetables Microwaved or Steamed** Nutrients aren't lost as readily when vegetables are microwaved or steamed. Turn your saucepan into a steamer by inserting an inexpensive metal rack. Steam briefly so vegetables stay crunchy.
- **Serve Vegetables Stir-Fried** Vegetables will keep most of their nutrients if they are chopped into bite-size pieces and immediately stir-fried in a non-stick skillet with only a small amount of oil.
- **Save the Skin** You'll get more fiber from vegetables (and fruits) if you can eat the skin. ♦

Information courtesy of the Texas Department of Health



Atlantic County Division of Public Health: Working for Healthy People and Healthy Communities
Atlantic County Executive, Dennis Levinson Board of Chosen Freeholders, James Curcio, Chairman

Brave Beginnings to Get You Exercising

Getting Started

Don't try to make up for the last five days of inactivity during your first day of exercise! Begin slowly, gradually increase the time you exercise. Allow your body to adjust to the new active you! Remember to get your doctor's OK before you begin, especially if you're over 35.

Exercise Regularly

A warm-up will help prevent muscle soreness and injury. It will also prepare your body's most important muscle, the heart, for exercise. Although a minimum of 30 minutes of continuous movement is recommended for cardiovascular improvement, beginners may not be able to exercise that long. Your cool-down should gradually slow down your exercise pace, allowing your heart rate to return to normal. Your cool-down should also include some stretching to promote flexibility.

Be Careful

Injuries are avoidable! The majority of fitness injuries are caused by overuse and abuse. Remember, pain is not the name of the game.

Look for Results

Benefits of regular exercise can include: improved physical condition and physical appearance, lower risk for high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, weight loss (when combined with wise eating habits) and a more positive mental outlook.

Action Steps

Consider the following questions to jump-start your fitness program and increase your level of physical activity. Write down your answers and talk them over with a team member.

1. What activities do you enjoy?

2. What new fitness activities have you always wanted to try? A new sport? A new hobby? Are you willing to give this activity a try?

3. What time of day have you been exercising? Is this the best time for you? How can you arrange your schedule to accommodate your new fitness goals?

