



June 2015

"EAT YOUR VEGGIES."

Your mom, your spouse, your kids, your doctor, they all say it—and it's time to start listening. Why? Because it's a fact: People who live in regions where vegetable consumption is greatest live the longest.

Eating more vegetables is probably the most effective dietary change you can make to fight chronic disease like cardiovascular disease, diabetes and even some cancers. Vegetables are rich sources of nutrients that are typically under-consumed in the U.S., such as magnesium, potassium, dietary fiber and vitamins A, C, and K.

Vegetables are essential in a sound weight-loss program too. They contain little or no fat. They're very low in calories, yet their high fiber content provides a sense of fullness. Research at Tufts University suggests that the greater the variety of vegetables in your daily diet, the fewer calories you're likely to consume—and the less you'll weigh.

HOW MANY SERVINGS OF VEGETABLES DO AMERICANS EAT

EACH DAY? In the most recent survey, the U.S. diet included 4.4 daily servings, up from 3.8 in 1991. It sounds close to "five a day," the minimum for health, but that figure is misleading. A quarter of U.S. daily vegetable consumption comes from French fries and potato chips—more fat (and sodium) than vegetable.

THE WORLD'S HEALTHIEST DIETS DON'T SKIMP ON VEGETABLES

DASH Diet

The DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) continues to be considered the healthiest diet by U.S. News and World Report. Originally developed to help control high blood pressure, this eating plan has been shown to be effective for weight loss, supporting heart health and helping to prevent and control diabetes. Veggies are a key ingredient in the DASH diet. They're rich in nutrients such as potassium, magnesium and fiber, and naturally low in calories, fat and sodium.

Mediterranean Diet

The traditional eating style of the people of Greece, Italy and Spain emphasizes seasonality and local produce. Fish, poultry and red wine are consumed in moderation. Meat, sugar and salt don't have the stranglehold on the diet the way they do in the U.S. today.

Asian Diet

While there isn't really one traditional Asian diet, Asian countries have lower rates of obesity, heart disease and diabetes compared to Western countries. After rice and noodles, vegetables and legumes are the dominant food groups. Fish and shellfish are optional daily choices, while eggs and poultry are generally eaten weekly. Red meat is consumed only rarely.

QUICK TAKES



STAYING HEALTHY — WITH VEGETABLES

Whether you're 25 or 65, the health-protective habits you start now will pay off as you age. Some of the many benefits include:

- A healthy diet paired with an active lifestyle can keep your blood pressure, cholesterol and weight at healthy levels.
- A healthy diet can help prevent heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.
- Eating plenty of leafy vegetables and beans helps keep your blood sugar in the healthy range. Blood sugar control can reduce the risks of eye, nerve and kidney complications of diabetes.
- Maintaining a healthy weight will help you maintain healthy joints.
- A diet rich in yellow plant pigments may help protect your vision from macular degeneration.

VEGETABLES ON THE GRILL

Grilling season is in full swing all across the country. When most of us think of grilling, our minds run through a list of meats. Steaks, burgers, hot dogs, brats, pork chops, chicken, maybe a turkey breast or two. If we think of vegetables at all, it's the coleslaw or potato salad to go alongside the grilled meat.

This summer is the time to change your grilling style. Take a minute to explore some of these delicious ways to cook vegetables (and a fruit or two) on the grill.

PEPPER AND ONION KEBABS: Cut 1 red bell pepper, 1 green bell pepper, 1 orange or yellow bell pepper and 2 Anaheim peppers into quarters. Scrape away any seeds or membranes. Slightly thaw 1 cup frozen pearl onions. Thread peppers and onions onto wooden skewers. Brush kebabs with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Sprinkle with salt, black pepper and Aleppo pepper flakes. Grill until peppers are soft and begin to char, 4 or 5 minutes per side.

SMOKY-SWEET SWEET POTATOES: Peel and thickly slice 2 or 3 fat sweet potatoes. Toss slices with apple juice, a splash of maple syrup, a generous grinding of black pepper and a tablespoon of olive oil. Wrap up in a double layer of foil and grill for about 20 minutes, turning the package a couple of times.

GRILLED BRUSSELS SPROUTS: Precook 1 pound trimmed Brussels sprouts in a microwave-safe bowl in the microwave for 3 minutes. Remove from the microwave and add 1 tablespoon olive oil, 2-3 cloves chopped garlic, 1 teaspoon smoked paprika, a generous grinding of black pepper and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice. Toss to mix. Thread sprouts onto wooden skewers. Grill for 5 minutes, turn and grill another minute or two.

PESTO-TOPPED SQUASH: Cut summer squash or zucchini diagonally into slices about 3/8 inch (1 cm) thick. Brush both sides with olive oil. Grill on one side until browned, about 2 or 3 minutes. Turn over, lightly brush grilled sides with store-bought pesto and grill another minute or two.

GRILLED CELERY (REALLY!): Toss large celery ribs in your favorite low-fat Italian salad dressing, set aside to marinate for a few minutes. Start grilling the celery over medium-high heat. After 2 or 3 minutes, slide to a cooler part of the grill to finish cooking. When perfectly done, celery will be tender, yet slightly crisp. Serve with just about anything.

SPICY PINEAPPLE: Lay thick slices of fresh pineapple on a hot grill and brush them with your favorite lower-sodium barbeque sauce. Cook for a minute or two. Serve with grilled chicken or fish.

GREEN GODDESS DRESSING MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP, FOR EIGHT 2-TABLESPOON SERVINGS

Summertime is salad season. One of the best ways to pump up your veggie intake is to always include a salad of mixed greens with your supper. Make a double batch of this classic dressing to have on hand for tonight's meal and the next couple of nights.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup fat-free buttermilk
- 1/4 cup chopped chives or scallion greens
- 1/4 cup roughly chopped parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon or 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- Several fresh mint leaves
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 anchovy filets
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

Puree the first nine ingredients in a food processor. Taste and add salt and pepper as needed. Transfer to a jar and store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.



NUTRITIONAL INFO PER 2-TABLESPOON SERVING

- 85 Calories
- 7 grams Fat
- 1 gram Saturated fat
- 1 gram Protein
- 5 grams Carbohydrate
- 0 gram Dietary fiber
- 120 mg Sodium