

## Vegetables and Fruits



*First of all, a diet rich in vegetables and fruits can reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, lower blood pressure, and prevent some types of cancer. Eating non-starchy vegetables and fruits like green leafy vegetables, apples and pears (for example) may even promote weight loss. [1]*

### **TIPS TO EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES EACH DAY**

Keep fruit where you can see it! Place ready to eat washed whole fruits in a bowl to grab-and-go.

Choose something new on the produce aisle! Variety and color are the key to a healthy diet.

Skip the potatoes! Choose other vegetables that are packed with nutrients and more slowly digested carbohydrates.

Make it a meal! Try cooking new recipes that include more vegetables. Salads, soups and stir fries are a great idea.

### **Cardiovascular disease**

There is compelling evidence that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.

- A meta-analysis of cohort studies following 469,551 participants found that a higher intake of fruits and vegetables is associated with a reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease, with an average reduction in risk of 4% for each additional serving per day of fruit and vegetables. [2]
- The largest and longest study to date, completed as part of the Harvard-based Nurses' Health Study and Health Professionals Follow-up Study, included approximately 110,000 men and women whose health and dietary habits were followed for 14 years.
- The higher the average daily intake of fruits and vegetables, the lower the chances of developing cardiovascular disease. Compared with those in the lowest category of fruit and vegetable intake (less than 1.5 servings a day), those who averaged 8 or more servings a day were 30% less likely to have had a heart attack or stroke. [3]

### **Blood pressure**

- The [Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension \(DASH\) study](#)[6] examined the effect on blood pressure of a diet that was rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products and that restricted the amount of saturated and total fat. The researchers found that people with high blood pressure who followed this diet reduced their systolic blood pressure (the upper number of a blood pressure reading) by about 11 mm Hg and their diastolic blood pressure (the lower number) by almost 6 mm Hg—as much as medications can achieve.

Numerous early studies revealed what appeared to be a strong link between eating fruits and vegetables and [protection against cancer](#). Unlike case-control studies, [cohort studies](#), which follow large groups of initially healthy individuals for years, generally provide more reliable information than case-control studies because they don't rely on information from the past. And, in general, data from cohort studies have not consistently shown that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables prevents cancer.

- For example, over a 14-year period in the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study, men and women with the highest intake of fruits and vegetables (8+ servings a day) were just as likely to have developed cancer as those who ate the fewest daily servings (under 1.5). [3]
- A meta-analysis of cohort studies found that a higher fruit and vegetable intake did not decrease the risk of deaths from cancer. [2]

## References

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08/18/2023