

## News Release

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### Focus on fruits and veggies

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Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables can help you feel better today and stay healthy for tomorrow. A healthy diet with lots of different fruits and vegetables can help reduce your risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and certain cancers. Fruits and vegetables also contribute phytochemicals and antioxidants, which help slow the degeneration of cells as we age.

No one fruit or vegetable is responsible for reducing your risk of chronic diseases, so it's important to mix up your choices as you eat fruits and vegetables each day.

There is no good substitute for a balanced diet with a variety of fruits and vegetables. Americans are advised to eat more dark green and orange veggies, beans and peas. The Produce for Better Health Foundation estimates that we eat about 20 different fruits and vegetables a week. Challenge yourself to try a new one each week and encourage kids by setting an example.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that less than one of four Wisconsin residents meets a minimum recommendation of five or more servings of fruits and vegetables on a daily basis.

UW-Extension offers these suggestions:

- Add fruit to cereal, muffins, pancakes, waffles, salads or coleslaw
- Add vegetables to your eggs
- Pack fruit and cut up vegetables to snack on
- Eat raw vegetables with your sandwich instead of chips or fries
- Have fruit for dessert, such as baked apples or fruit kabobs
- For a snack, try apples with peanut butter or add berries to frozen yogurt
- Keep washed, cut up vegetables in the refrigerator and a bowl of washed fruit on the table
- Add shredded carrots or zucchini to ground meat entrées, such as meatloaf
- Order a veggie pizza or make a vegetable stir-fry
- Whip up a smoothie with fresh or frozen fruit, ice and low-fat yogurt

Whether you buy fresh fruits and vegetables in stores or farmer's markets, wash them in cold, drinkable water to remove any bacteria, dirt or pesticide residue. If you raise surplus produce or want to preserve what you buy, UW-Extension has current information on canning and freezing fruits and vegetables. For more information, contact me at 683-4168 or visit these web sites: <http://www.mypyramid.gov> and <http://www.healthierus.gov/nutrition.html>.

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