

[IMAGE]

Get Your 5 a Day the Easy Way

By Editorial Staff

Are you getting at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day? If you're not, you're not alone. Many Americans fail to meet the recommended dietary requirements when it comes to fruit and veggie intake, and the result, according to an ever-growing body of research, is an increased risk of poor health over time. That's because not only are fruits and vegetables low in fat and calories (a great substitute for the increasingly prevalent high-fat, high-calorie processed foods our society eats), but also because they're absolutely jam-packed with micronutrients shown to help prevent disease. So, if you're ready to get your five (or more) a day, but don't know how to do it, here are three easy ways to ensure you get the fruit and veggies your body needs:

1. *Super salad:* The beauty of a salad is that you can load up on veggies, but it's not the entirety of your meal. You can also pick your favorite veggies – a few or a bunch – rather than worrying about forcing down the dreaded peas or stomach-turning broccoli (insert your least favorite veggies into the sentence). Another benefit: many salad recipes include fruit, nuts, etc. (try the spinach / cranberry / walnut / Gorgonzola cheese combo), which not only adds to the deliciousness of the creation (and hides some of the taste of potentially not-so-favorite veggies), but also ensures balanced intake of other health-promoting foods.
2. *Blender magic:* Don't like the taste of vegetables, and don't like eating fruit all day? Then why not start your morning with a hearty blend of both, mixed with a few ingredients you do like? Blend spinach, cucumber and celery with apples and carrots and you're well on your way to meeting your daily requirement in a single glass. (Keep in mind that depending on the type of juicer, you may not be getting the fiber present in the fruits / vegetables, so you'll need to ensure adequate daily intake through other sources.) Or make a smoothie with a few fruits, nonfat yogurt and some wheat germ for a balanced, fruit-laden meal.
3. *Taste test:* If you just don't like the taste of most vegetables, no matter how hard you try or how much you understand their role in good health, don't fret. The solution is to find meal combinations that let you get your daily requirement without tasting it. For example, if you like chicken and rice, dice (or food process) some broccoli, carrots and peppers, then add them to the mix. Chances are you won't even taste the vegetables, particularly if you've added seasoning to the chicken/rice combo. Experiment with different

combinations and get your veggies without suffering!

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