

[IMAGE]

Veggie Prep: Do It Right (Your Body Will Thank You)

By Editorial Staff

We all know vegetables are great sources of vitamins, minerals and other health-promoting compounds – but how do we ensure all that goodness gets into our bodies in a usable form? The way we prepare our veggies can make a big difference. Here are some tips for how to preserve all that original nutritional value when preparing your veggies for the dinner table:

1. Raw Isn't All It's Cracked Up to Be: Most people think eating vegetables in their raw, unaltered form provides the most nutrition, but that isn't the case, according to research. In fact, the heating process softens the outer layers of many veggies, making it easier for your body to access / absorb the valuable nutrients inside. What's more, in some cases, cooking actually increases levels of nutrients available for absorption.

2. Whole vs. Cut Makes a Difference: Research suggests eating veggies whole preserves their nutritional content compared to cutting them up. As soon as vegetables are cut / chopped / etc., their nutritional value begins to degrade. Many people cut or chop veggies (and fruit) beforehand or to provide quick access from the fridge, unaware of the damage being done.

3. Heat Your Veggies Right: If you're not eating them raw, and you can't always eat them whole, what's the best way to cook your veggies and access all those great vitamins, minerals, etc.? Steaming beats boiling, according to research, and sautéing beats frying. In a pinch, microwaving (either with or without water) also works because of the short prep time.

You know vegetables are an important part of a well-rounded diet, so include them in your meal plans as often as possible. To learn more about proper veggie prep, [click here](#) to read a great article from CNN.com that provides the aforementioned and other tips.

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