

National Nutrition Month® 2011



This year's theme, "Eat Right with Color," emphasizes the importance of eating a variety of foods for optimal health. Color is a way to assure variety, which is the best way to get essential nutrients (vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, & phytochemicals) necessary for health, well-being, and disease prevention.

While we may all be aware that a healthy, balanced diet includes eating a variety of foods from each food group every day, the majority of older adults fall short of the recommended daily intake.



People who include adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of certain health problems, such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure) and obesity.

Dietary Recommendations for Older Adults:

- Fruit: 1 ½ cups
- Vegetables: 2 ½ cups
- Grains: 6 ounces (at least 3 ounces from whole grains)
- Dairy: 3 cups
- Meat & Beans: 5 ounces

*For more information visit the USDA website at <http://www.mypyramid.gov/index.html>

Ideas to Help Add Color and Nutrition to Your Plate

- **Get creative with your salads**

Adding different fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans, and/or leafy greens to a salad is a fast and easy way to pack a lot of nutrients into a meal or side dish.



- **If you're unable to use fresh fruits or vegetables try frozen or canned**

Canned or frozen vegetables are a great way to help you consume adequate fruits and vegetables. To avoid high sodium (salt), aim for less than 20% sodium per serving. Frozen vegetables don't have salt added and you can thaw out and use only the amount you need at a time.

- **Eat fruit as dessert**

While desserts such as cakes and pies are wonderful to enjoy on occasion, they typically are high in fat and calories and offer very little, to no nutrition. Next time you reach for something sweet at the end of a meal (or in the middle of the day) make it a piece of fruit or fruit salad.

- **Top your cold or hot cereal with fruit and nuts**

Using dried or fresh fruit such as bananas, raisins, strawberries, and/or blueberries is a delicious way to add variety to your morning meal. Sprinkle a handful of your favorite nuts (preferably unsalted) to add some protein and healthy fats, as well as a crunchy texture.

- **Add vegetables to casseroles, stews, soups, sandwiches, and pasta dishes**

This may be the easiest way to add variety to your diet. You can modify meals you already enjoy by adding vegetables. Turn your next beef lasagna into a beef and vegetable lasagna by adding spinach, broccoli, and peppers. Enjoy your next turkey sandwich with spinach, cucumbers, tomatoes, and shredded carrots.

