

KEYS TO BETTER HEALTH™

Fruits and Veggies 101

Does the thought of eating fruits and vegetables bring to mind stern lectures from your childhood years? If so, it's likely you haven't yet experienced the wonderful range of flavors, textures, and color they bring to your daily plate. Beyond the obvious benefit of being a lower calorie addition to snacks and meals, fruits and vegetables provide necessary vitamins, minerals, and fiber that help support overall health.



Fresh, Frozen, Canned or Dried— Do All Forms Count?

While fresh fruits and vegetables are the most hyped for being “the healthiest” choice, the truth is—all forms count and contribute to a healthy diet. Don't let perception stop you from enjoying the convenience, cost-savings, and nutrition of fruits and vegetables in all of their available forms.

Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables have the benefit of being processed immediately after harvest. This quick processing can result in equal or even greater amounts of nutrients being available than in a fresh counterpart¹. To avoid some of the added ingredients attributed to canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, such as salt and sugar, opt for plain varieties.

Similarly, dried fruit is a delicious way to boost the overall nutrient density of your diet (especially with potassium and fiber)². Through the drying process, the naturally occurring sugars become more concentrated—along with the nutrients and calories—as the moisture is removed, so keep portion size in mind.

Preparation, Preparation, Preparation

Get the most of out of your fruits and vegetables with smart preparation techniques. Give your fruits and veggies the same attention you give to your main entrée through seasonings and different preparation methods and you'll be taking seconds in no time.

1. **Roasting:** This cooking method caramelizes the naturally occurring sugars in both fruits and vegetables bringing out a deeper, sweeter flavor. Ideal for almost all varieties of fruits and vegetables.
2. **Grilling:** This cooking method adds a smoky flavor and brings out the natural sweetness of fruits and vegetables. Ideal for almost all varieties of fruits and vegetables.
3. **Seasonings:** Whether it's a savory seasoning blend for vegetables made with garlic or cumin or sweeter spices for fruit (such as cinnamon) take time to add a little flair to your dish to highlight and enhance their natural flavors.

Don't forget the most important preparation technique of all—always wash your fresh fruits and vegetables before enjoying.

Keys to Better Health™ offers a nutrition shelf-edge labeling program, which makes it easy for you to quickly identify healthy choices regardless of what diet you follow. When you're in our store, be on the lookout for our nutrition tags

Resources:

4. About The Buzz: Frozen And Canned Fruits And Vegetables VS Fresh. Fruits and Veggies More Matters website. <http://www.fruitsandveggies-morematters.org/frozen-and-canned-fruits-and-vegetables-vs-fresh>. Accessed June 15, 2016.
5. About The Buzz: Fresh Fruit Is Much Healthier Than Dried Fruit? Fruits and Veggies More Matters website. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/fresh-fruit-is-much-healthier-than-dried-fruit>. Accessed June 15, 2016.



Disclaimer: This information is intended for educational purposes only and does not replace advice from your doctor or health care provider. For individual recommendations, please consult with a doctor or registered dietitian.