

WEEK

Stop the Clock with Fruits & Vegetables



It's week three and you should be used to lots of water and whole grains every day. But it's not over yet! Now you need to add more fruits and vegetables to your diet.

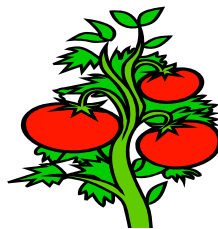
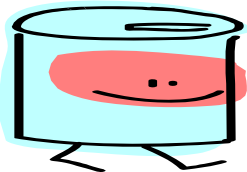
Some foods do a lot more than give you energy – they actually help you stay young. Fruits and vegetables are long-life foods packed with nutrients to help slow down the aging process and prevent disease

Vitamins and minerals are essential to healthy aging, and foods in this group are loaded with both. They are also low in fat, cholesterol-free, and filling!

The USDA found that most people don't eat enough fruits and vegetables to benefit. That's too bad because these delicious, easy to find plant foods are a big piece of the long-life plan.

Research shows just by eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, you could drop your blood pressure and lower your risk for heart disease and cancer.

Getting more home-grown nutrition from these foods is a delicious way to live to 100, and it's unbelievably easy. During week 3 you will begin to build in a total of 6 servings of fruit and vegetables a day.



Fresh, Canned or Frozen

Food gurus often turn noses up at frozen or canned fruits or vegetables. The Motto: "Fresh is Best".

Fresh, however, is a relative term. Most produce has a short shelf life. After three days in the fridge or on the pantry "fresh" foods lose their nutrients.

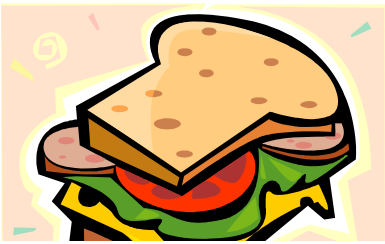
Truth is, canned and frozen vegetables generally have the same nutritional value as the fresh relatives. If manufacturers can or flash freeze produce off the vine, you lock in the nutrients.

The biggest drawback to processed foods is the added sodium and sugar. Check the nutrition facts label and find foods without these "extras".

Experts recommend you buy enough fresh food to last about three days. Then switch to canned or frozen until you are able to buy fresh again.

One fruit or vegetable serving means:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup berries
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried fruit
- 1 cup raw leafy veggie
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raw or cooked vegetable



Serve up six fruits and vegetables a day

Grow gradually. Add an extra serving at each meal during the week until you reach a total of six a day.

Get Creative. Slice up strawberries, peaches, or bananas on hot or cold cereal (grains) or stir them into plain low-fat yoghurt.

Can the meat. Leave meat out of one meal at least twice a week and add more vegetables instead.

Mix and mingle. Toss extra fruits and vegetables into salads, soups, or casseroles.

Make fancy sandwiches. Don't settle for plain meat and bread – add lettuce, tomato, cucumbers, sliced carrots, and green or red pepper.

Dig it as dessert. Try fruit as a sweet end to your meals instead of high-calorie, high fat desserts.

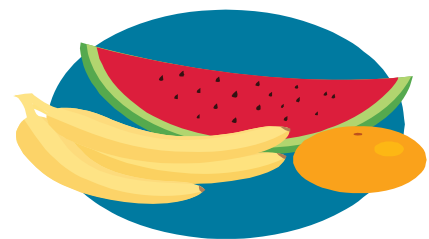
Nibble all day. Keep a bag of dried fruits or fresh sliced vegetables on hand for snacking throughout the day.

Antioxidants: The key to healthy aging

When you cut open an apple, oxygen in the air reacts with it, creating unstable compounds called free radicals. These compounds damage the apple and turn it brown.

The same happens in your body. You breathe oxygen. Your body processes it, creating free radicals at the same time. These radicals travel through your body looking for electrons they can steal from healthy cells in order to become stable. When they succeed, they leave the cell irreversibly damaged. This is called oxidation.

You don't necessarily see the damage as you do with the apple and it happens at a much slower pace, but the harm free radicals cause increases over time. Researchers have linked the free radical damage to over 200 diseases including cataracts, diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers





Antioxidants are a family of nutrients that can put the breaks on free radicals. This special group includes vitamins A, C, and E. The minerals selenium, copper, zinc, and manganese, and some nutrients called phytochemicals also act as antioxidants.

These fight oxidation by combining with free radicals to keep them stable – and harmless. But just think how much oxidation is probably going through your body every minute. In addition, cigarette smoke, pollution, radiation, stress, excessive sun exposure, and other factors can increase your level of free radicals..

The 10 foods with the most antioxidants are:

Prunes
Raspberries
Blueberries
Strawberries
Blackberries
Brussels Sprouts
Spinach
Raisins
Plums
Kale



It's difficult for your natural store of antioxidants to keep up. But you can help! Research proves you can raise the levels of antioxidants in your body by eating more fruits and vegetables.

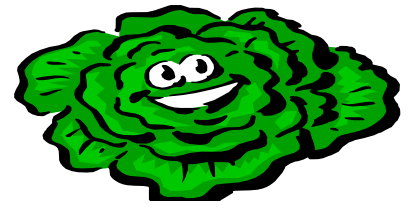
Phytochemicals fight poor health

Plants contain natural chemicals – called phytochemicals or phytonutrients – that protect them from disease, drought, too much sun, and even bugs. These built in defenders help people too.

When you eat colorful plant foods, you wind up eating the hundreds of phytonutrients inside them, as well. Many of these nutrients seem to boost your immune system and guard against diseases. Some act as antioxidants too. Two in particular are becoming famous for their disease – fighting power.



- **Beta Carotene** is just one of the over 600 dyes found in plants. It's easy to spot a food rich in this nutrient – look for bright orange, red or green fruits or vegetables. As an antioxidant, beta carotene helps prevent heart disease, cancer, memory loss and rheumatoid arthritis. Carrots are loaded with beta carotene as well as other orange vegetables like sweet potatoes, and fruits like mangoes, cantaloupe, and apricots. If you prefer greens, pick dark and leafy like spinach and collard greens.
- **Lycopene**, which gives fruits their red hue, could also give you a long lease on life. Research shows it may protect against prostate, stomach, and esophageal cancer. In addition it helps preserve eyesight. Watermelon, papaya, pink grapefruit, tomato products or red fruits are full of lycopene. Yes, even Ketchup is an excellent source of lycopene!



Arm for battle with vitamin A

Also referred to as Retinol, this antioxidant vitamin's job is to keep your cornea healthy, guarding your eyesight, particularly night vision. It also protects your skin, lungs, and bladder from infections and boosts your immune system so you're better able to fight illnesses.

Women over 50 need about 700 micrograms of A each day, and men of the same age about 900 mcg. a day. Only animal foods such as milk, liver and eggs provide whole vitamin A, however, snacking like a rabbit is another way to get more vitamin A. This is because your body turns some phytochemicals like beta carotene into this vitamin. Look for beta carotene in the bright orange and dark green vegetables and fruits discussed earlier.

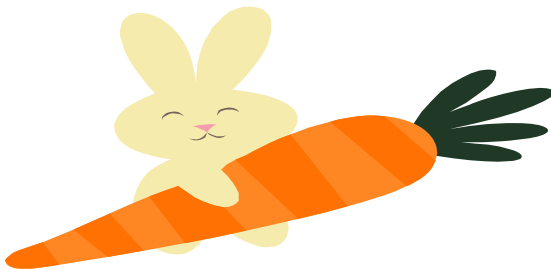
Color your world healthy with C

In the fight for good health, vitamin C may be your best weapon. If you didn't get enough you wouldn't be able to exercise and you would probably be sick all the time. Vitamin C is a building block of collagen, the tissue that holds your bones, muscles and joints together, and it's well known for strengthening the immune system to help fight colds and heal wounds. It is also a powerful antioxidant, too, so when eating C-rich foods you are fending off free radicals. Citrus fruits like oranges and grapefruit are full of C, but colorful fruits like strawberries, kiwis, tomatoes, and cantaloupe aren't far behind. Even vegetables, from broccoli, peppers and potatoes to leafy greens like

romaine lettuce and cabbage, carry loads of C.

A woman over 50 needs about 75 milligrams a day. Men of the same age need 90 mg. a day.

In other words, six servings/day of fruits and vegetables should dish out a delicious dose of C every day.



Make the most of fruits and vegetables

Go for color – dark green, bright yellow, orange, or red are best bets for vitamins A, C, folate, fiber, and certain phytochemicals.

Eat a variety. Different fruits and vegetables contain different nutrients, and you need them all to fortify your body.

Cook vegetables lightly to preserve phytochemicals inside them.

Try to eat fruits or vegetables whole or sliced instead of always drinking them as juices. Liquids often lack the fiber in the original food.

Don't let mouth or tooth problems stand in the way of good health. Grate, chop, or puree crunchy vegetables if you have difficulty chewing them.



Stay with us for week 4 – “Stay Stronger with Dairy”