Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates, fiber and phytochemicals.

**Health benefits**

Naturally occurring in plant foods, phytochemicals are thought to protect us against heart disease and some types of cancer.

In addition to all of these health benefits, fruits and vegetables are low in fat, unless you add sauces, dressings, and other high-fat ingredients or use high-fat cooking methods such as frying. Because fruits and vegetables are low in fat and high in fiber, they help to satisfy you without many calories. So they are a smart addition to the diets of weight-conscious Americans.

**How much should you eat?**
MyPyramid recommends that adults eat 1½ to 2 cups of fruits and 2½ to 3 cups of vegetables every day. Try to eat at least one good source of vitamin C daily, such as oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, guava, papayas, peppers, broccoli, potatoes and collard greens.

Also, try to eat at least one good source of vitamin A daily. A form of vitamin A (carotenoids) is found in red, yellow, and orange fruits and vegetables and in many dark-green leafy vegetables.

Working fruits and vegetables into your diet

Most Americans do not eat even the minimum amount of fruits and vegetables suggested. Some tips for increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables include:

- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables (and their juices) as snacks.
- Add extra fruits and vegetables to tossed salads.
- Make dips with vegetables and fruits.
- Stuff an omelet with vegetables.
- Top your pizza with lots of fruits and vegetables.

Remember to eat a colorful diet that includes a variety of fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables every day for optimal nutrient intake.

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