



May is here—hurrah! I think we all are excited for some good weather and outdoor time after the winter we just survived! Gardening season is upon us! And with that comes wonderful fresh fruits and vegetables into our farmers markets and grocery stores! The produce looks and tastes so much better this time of the year so eat up and enjoy! How many fruits and vegetables do you need? See if you can hit the recommended intake levels. For most of us this is between 1 ½ and 2 ½ cups of fruit daily and 2 to 4 cups of vegetables. (For your individual amount see [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)) And the more variety the better! Look for the deep dark colors as they likely offer the most health benefits. Fruits and vegetables are low in calories, high in fiber and offer naturally occurring phytochemicals that fight aging and disease. I often say they are like “preventative medicine” but much tastier!! Those who eat the recommended amounts or more as part of a healthy diet are likely to have reduced risk of chronic diseases including stroke, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer and perhaps heart disease and high blood pressure. But how much is a cup? Examples of 1 cup of fruit would be a large orange, a small apple, 32 grapes or 8 large strawberries. Examples of 1 cup of vegetables would be 1 large ear of corn, 12 baby carrots, or a salad with 1 cup of lettuce and ½ cup of other vegetables. (See other portions at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov))

Some of you may be interested in what are the healthiest fruits and vegetables. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSP!) scored fruits by adding up its percent of the Daily Value (DV) for 6 nutrients plus considered carotenoid content. Based on these scores, the top fruits are guava (picture at top of page), watermelon, pink or red grapefruit, kiwi, papaya, cantaloupe, dried apricots, orange and strawberries.

For vegetables they considered 6 nutrients, carotenoids and fiber. The tops scoring vegetables were Swiss chard (picture at top of page), kale, spinach, collard greens, Brussels sprouts, canned pumpkin, broccoli, sweet potato (with skin), red pepper and carrots.

If you are interested in how other fruits and vegetables scored, send me an e-mail and I'll do my best to let you know!

Since fruits and vegetables are so important to our health, how can we eat more?

1. Start early in the day! Add them to your breakfast. Add fruit to your cereal or yogurt or veggies in with your eggs or omelet.
2. Bring them to work! Pack some in your lunch—or purchase the nice selection ISU Dining offers.
3. Eat them for snacks—pack some with your lunch and have them available for AM or PM snacks.
4. Consider dried or canned fruit that you can leave at the work place. There is now quite a variety beyond raisins-apricots, mango, dried berries.
5. Did you know salsa counts as a veggie?? Beyond chips, it's a nice condiment to serve with grilled meats and fish.
6. Add veggies to your sandwich (like Subway), to your pizza and to salads.
7. Keep frozen and canned veggies on hand for when fresh is too expensive or you don't have fresh on hand.
8. Put fruits and veggies in a basket on your counter or table and in the front of your refrigerator (out of sight is out of mind!)
9. Get fruits and veggies at the salad bar when you eat out or in the grocery store for take home.
10. Stretch yourself to try some new ones and expand your horizons!

Also check out <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/> (this replaces the 5 a day campaign)  
<http://www.recipezaar.com/siteneews/post.php?pid=917>

For additional ideas, see the attachments above. This is one fairly easy way that you can greatly improve your nutrition!!



May 5 is **Cinco de Mayo**, a holiday that commemorates an initial victory of Mexican force over French forces in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. In the US and other locations around the world it is a celebration of Mexican heritage and pride. If you enjoy Mexican food, it's a wonderful way to celebrate this holiday. Mexican food can be fat-laden, topped with tons of melted cheese and served with refried beans. What can be done to make it more healthful? Start the day with a breakfast burrito in a WW tortilla with eggs, added veggies and cilantro, low fat cheddar cheese, and salsa. Once you have eaten homemade salsa it is touch to go back to the bottled variety. It is super easy to make!

- 1 - 28 oz can Hunts Diced Tomatoes, drain reserving juice (in the summer substitute garden fresh ripe tomatoes!)
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- salt to taste (you may need any with canned tomatoes)
- 1 Jalapeno Pepper, Seeded and deveined
- 1/4 Cup Cilantro, stems removed and chopped
- 1/4 medium sweet onion

Chop all ingredients in a food processor to your desired consistency, adding reserved tomato juice as necessary.

For other Mexican dishes, consider adding these healthful ingredients: avocado, brown rice, canned black beans (drained and rinsed), fresh peppers, onions and tomatoes, romaine lettuce or fresh spinach, low fat sour cream or plain yogurt, WW or corn tortillas, lean meat, fish, or shrimp. Prepare dishes with healthy fats such as olive oil or canola oil. Who knew Mexican fare could be so colorful, so delicious and so healthy?

Need some recipe ideas??

<http://newsletters.eatingwell.com/members/ViewMailing.aspx?MailingID=114331>

<http://www.cookinglight.com/cooking/cs/worldcuisine/package/0,14343,633037,00.html>

Ole'!! Enjoy your weekend! Be active and be healthy!

Sally

Sally Barclay, MS RD LD  
Nutrition Clinic for Employee Wellness  
Iowa State University  
36 MacKay Hall  
Ames, IA 50011  
(515) 294-9625  
barclay@iastate.edu