

Adding Up Vegetables

Nutrition messages have come and gone over the decades based on the latest research findings, but in spite of changing research and individual differences, one nutrition message has survived the test of time:

Eat 8 – 10 servings of brightly colored, low carb vegetables daily!

So how do you eat 8-10 servings of vegetables in 1 day?

Well, the first thing to keep in mind is what a serving actually is:

**One serving is equal to ½ cup cooked or raw low carb, chopped vegetables
OR 1 cup of raw, leafy vegetables.**

For a visual reference, a baseball or rounded fist is about the size of 1 cup.

How to Make it Happen

1. Pre-Prep on Sundays

- ◇ Over the weekend, buy the vegetables you'll need for the following week.
- ◇ If purchasing frozen vegetables, be sure to choose ones without added sugars, salt, sauces or seasonings.
- ◇ If purchasing canned vegetables, be sure to choose ones without added sugars or salt.
- ◇ Once home from the store, wash and chop fresh vegetables on Sunday afternoon and store in airtight containers or bags.
- ◇ Use the more perishable vegetables first, saving the hardier or frozen varieties for later in the week.



2. Invest in a Good Knife and/or Chopping Gadgets

- ◇ The best investment you'll ever make is in a set of good quality, sharp knives. A dull knife will make your work twice as hard and it will take twice as long!
- ◇ You can also consider purchasing a couple chopping tools to make the dreaded task of prepping produce fun and easy and get your kids involved. Put on some good music and ask your family to join in on the fun. You'll knock it out quickly while enjoying quality time with your family.
- ◇ Gadgets such as a mini chopper, mandoline, spiralizer or food processor can all come in handy.

3. Make a “Stir Fry To-Go Kit”

- ◇ By Thursday, your Sunday pre-prep ingredients may be running low (or out!). Consider stopping by the salad bar at your work cafeteria or local supermarket and stuff a few take out containers with chopped broccoli, onions, carrots, peppers and mushrooms.
- ◇ Once home, toss veggies in a skillet with extra virgin olive oil, add chicken or shrimp and pre-cooked quinoa or wild rice and you'll have dinner in 15 minutes.

4. Consider Batch Cooking

- ◇ Batch cooking is cooking large servings of food that can be used for meals throughout the week.
- ◇ Roast several large pans of various vegetables to use for lunch or dinners or in salads throughout the week.
- ◇ You can also batch cook meats, beans, soup and sauces, and starches to make meal prep quicker.

5. Fill HALF Your Plate with Vegetables

- ◇ When planning your meals, aim to fill ½ your plate with non-starchy vegetables.
- ◇ Non-starchy vegetables include: asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, greens (spinach, kale, lettuces, collards, arugula), carrots, green beans, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, etc.
- ◇ Add vegetables to favorite dishes like pizza, omelets, soups, casseroles, smoothies and sandwiches (i.e. grate carrot and zucchini into spaghetti sauce or toss fresh baby spinach in smoothies).

6. Re-create Your Plate in Restaurants

- ◇ When eating out, split an entrée with someone at the table or choose a healthy appetizer-sized protein (i.e. grilled shrimp) and add 2 side vegetables or 1 side vegetable and a salad (and 1 healthy starch like wild rice or a sweet potato, if desired).
- ◇ Most entrees aren't served this way, but restaurants are very accommodating and can easily make your goal of filling half your plate with veggies happen with just a few substitutions.

What Does 8-10 Servings of Vegetables Look Like?

Breakfast:

Egg Muffins or Veggie Omelete
with ½ to 1 cup Vegetables

(1-2 servings)



Lunch:

Bunless Burger with Roasted Red Pepper,
Lettuce, Tomato and Grilled Asparagus

(3 servings)



Dinner:

Baked Chicken or Fish with New Potatoes,
1 cup Green Beans and 1 cup Roasted Zucchini and Squash

(1-2 servings)

