

The Wellness News

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All About Spring Vegetables!

Growing up, you may remember your parents bribing, and yes, even forcing you to eat your vegetables. At the time, you may not have understood why it was so important to load up on your veggies, but you should thank your parents now, because they were definitely on to something. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), low fruit and vegetable consumption is directly responsible for 1.7 million deaths (2.8%) worldwide annually. Check out some of the many important reasons to include plenty of vegetables into your diet:

Benefits of Vegetables:

- They contain fiber, which improves digestion, helps to balance blood sugar, keeps you feeling fuller longer, and may contribute to healthy cholesterol levels.
- Vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals, including folate, potassium, Vitamin A and Vitamin C.
- Antioxidants! These free radical fighting components are abundant in vegetables, rearing their cancer fighting heads and contributing to healing collagen, a substance that keeps you looking younger longer.

Get a Spring Mix of Vegetables!

Spring is finally here and a great time to increase your vegetable intake. Many vegetables don't produce in the winter, but come alive in the spring. Here are a few delicious spring favorites that you can enjoy:

- Artichokes
- Asparagus
- Lettuce
- Beets
- Peas
- Carrots
- Avocados
- Radishes

Check out this website for more information on the many health benefits of eating a diet high in produce:

http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/benefits/nutrient_guide.html

1-800-343-3822 ♦ www.alliancewp.com

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Helpful vegetable tips:

- **Focus on the beginning of the day.** Many people are good about eating their vegetables at dinner. But what about the other meals? Start your day off right by eating some eggs scrambled with spinach or having an omelet packed with asparagus, avocado and tomato.
- **Make salads exciting.** Load up on your fruits and vegetables by having a fresh and healthy salad for your meal.
- **Snack right.** Prepare veggies for snacks at work and munch on them between meals. Vegetables like celery and carrot sticks, radishes, and bell peppers are easy to eat without making a mess. Try dipping them in hummus for a protein-packed snack.
- **Experiment with new produce.** Ask your local grocer or farmer what is in season and try a new vegetable each week. Better yet, sign up for a vegetable delivery box, such as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), which will encourage you to be more adventurous with your veggies.

A word about picky eaters:

Parents often struggle with getting their children to eat more vegetables. Instead of trying to hide vegetables in your children's food, expose them to veggies instead. Kids often need to be exposed to new foods 10-12 times before they actually try it, so don't give up! Research finds that kids will model what their parent's eat, so make sure you practice what you preach. Set a good example by filling your plate with half vegetables and let your kids see you eating and enjoying them.

You are what you eat:

Incorporating healthier foods into your diet can be a big change, but working towards a more nutrient dense diet is always worth the effort. Start slowly by setting a goal to add an extra vegetable each day, make sure you have plenty of veggies stocked at home and work, and ask your family for lots of support.

The WHO states that the cost of meeting the dietary recommendation for fruit and vegetable intake can be as little as \$1 per day. To save money, buy fresh fruits and vegetables that are seasonal and local, purchase frozen for those not in your area, use produce that goes bad quickly first, and chop and freeze the vegetables you know won't get eaten for future soups and smoothies.

It is famously said that "you are what you eat" and according to Nobel Prize winning writer, William Faulkner, "only vegetables are happy." So, eat your vegetables and be happy.



Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-888-343-3822

Sources: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/childrens-health/HQ01107>

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