

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES: WEEK 21

Get more veggies

Whether you like them or not, it can be a challenge to eat the recommended amount of vegetables each day. Adding vegetables to meals and snacks that don't typically include them can make the challenge easier.

Eating vegetables provides essential vitamins and minerals, helps fight off diseases, and benefits every cell in your body.

With a little creativity you can easily add vegetables to any meal. They can be the star of the show, play a supporting role as a side dish, or go undercover in a casserole, soup or some other dish. Vegetables work well in many popular meals (such as sandwiches, hamburgers, meatloaf, casseroles and soups), or you could try them in a new recipe.

How to add more veggies

Include veggies such as sliced tomatoes, cucumbers and spinach in cold meat **sandwiches**.

Grate veggies like carrots, zucchini and beets and mix them into the ground meat for more nutritious **meatballs** or **meatloaf**. When you're choosing veggies to include in any dish, think about the flavor. Carrots, for example, are sweet, so they may add sweetness.

Fresh, frozen or canned

As mentioned in Week 11, fresh vegetables are always a great option but you might not be able to keep them on hand at all times. Canned and frozen varieties can be stored longer than fresh vegetables, which makes them good choices for last-minute meals. The differences in texture between fresh, canned and frozen versions of the same vegetable may make one work better in some dishes than in others. Crunchy fresh carrots, for example, are great for stand-alone snacks, while softer canned carrots may be easier to puree than fresh or frozen carrots.



Buying bulk packages of frozen veggies can be a great cost-cutting move, but don't feel like you have to use the entire bag at once. Just be sure to reseal the package properly to prevent freezer burn, which decreases the product quality.

One of the healthiest choices you can make is choosing to experiment. If you're willing to continually try new vegetables and new ways to prepare them, you're sure to find some that work for you and your family. So keep trying new ways to add, prepare and cook your veggies!



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Add fresh and frozen veggies to **casseroles**, **stir-fry**, **pasta**, and **rice dishes** without too much work. Frozen mixed veggies are already cut into uniform pieces, saving you time.

Experiment with homemade and store-bought **soups** by adding more or different veggies to them. Try using fresh, frozen or canned varieties.

Prepare and cook

You can prepare and cook vegetables in many different ways, such as sautéing, baking and breading. Any vegetable's flavor and texture could change depending on how you prepare and cook it.

Did you know?

You can add leafy greens like spinach and kale to homemade smoothies. They'll change the color of the drink, but if you use the right amount they won't change its taste (much).

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