



# Mix Up Your Veggies!

## Why Is It Important To Eat Vegetables?

Eating vegetables provides health benefits—people who eat more vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some diseases. Vegetables provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body.

### Health Benefits

- Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits as part of a healthy diet may reduce risk of heart disease, including heart attack and stroke, and certain types of cancers.
- Diets rich in foods containing fiber, such as vegetables and fruits, may reduce the risk of heart disease, overweight, and type 2 diabetes.
- Eating vegetables and other foods rich in potassium may lower blood pressure, and may also reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and help to decrease bone loss.
- Vegetables are naturally lower in calories and are useful in lowering calorie intake as part of a healthy diet.

### Nutrients

- Vegetables are important sources of many nutrients, including potassium, folic acid, vitamin A, vitamin C and dietary fiber.
- Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Vegetable sources of potassium include sweet potatoes, white beans, tomatoes, soy beans, lima beans and spinach.
- Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections. Vegetables high in vitamin A include sweet potatoes, carrots and dark leafy greens.
- Vitamin C helps the body heal wounds better and keeps teeth and gums healthy, and also aids in the body's absorption of iron. Vegetables high in vitamin C include bell peppers, broccoli and dark leafy greens.
- Calcium is necessary for the growth and maintenance of strong teeth and bones, nerve signaling, muscle contraction, and secretion of certain hormones and enzymes. Vegetables high in calcium include collard greens, kale and turnip greens.
- Dietary fiber from vegetables helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease. Fiber-containing foods help you feel full faster without eating as many calories, and is important to proper bowel function.