Vegetable Quiche

By: By Rosalind Elemy, MA, RD and Barbra Sassower, MPH, RD, CDE

The recommended intake of fruits and vegetables is at least five and up to 11 servings per day depending on individual caloric needs. Sound like a lot? The recommendation may sound overwhelming; however, a portion size for fruits and vegetables is one half cup, so eight servings of fruits and vegetables equal approximately four cups per day.

Fruitful Benefits

Scientific evidence shows that diets high in fruit and vegetables can help control cholesterol levels and high blood pressure and may provide protection against some forms of cancer. In addition, the fiber in fruits and vegetables may prevent some intestinal disorders.

Adding fruits and vegetables and limiting dietary fat can also help promote weight loss. A recent study of individuals who consumed a diet high in fruits and vegetables and limited fat intake resulted in one-third more weight loss compared to individuals who only reduced fat intake alone. Eating fruits and vegetables helps increase the feeling of fullness, thanks to the fiber.

A Rainbow of Selections

When selecting fruits and vegetables, choose deeply colored fruits and vegetables for the extra nutrients they provide.

Nutrients in red vegetables and fruits may help with memory function and urinary tract health. Include red apples, beets, red grapefruit, red bell peppers, red potatoes, strawberries, tomatoes and watermelon to the shopping list.

Antioxidant and anti-aging benefits can be found in blue and purple fruits and vegetables. Look for blueberries, grapes, eggplant, plums and purple cabbage.

Yellow and orange fruits and vegetables provide antioxidants like vitamin C and carotenoids (yellow, red and orange pigments that are converted into vitamin A in the liver). Add apricots, butternut squash, carrots, nectarines, pineapples and yellow peppers to the grocery cart.
"Adding fruits and vegetables and limiting dietary fat can also help promote weight loss."

Green fruits and vegetables are packed with lutein and indoles, nutrients that promote vision health and bone strength. Pick up some asparagus, broccoli, brussels sprouts, green apples, honeydew melons, kale, kiwifruit and spinach.

BREAKFAST

- Add bell peppers, spinach and tomatoes to an omelet.
- Sprinkle fresh, dried, or frozen fruit on cereal.
- Whip up a low fat smoothie made with fresh or frozen fruit.

LUNCH

- Include tomatoes, carrots, radishes, squash, broccoli, celery and spinach in salads.
- Add extra lettuce, tomato, shredded red cabbage, carrots, avocado or sprouts in sandwiches or pita pockets.
- Enjoy a bowl of vegetable soup.

DINNER

- Substitute yams for white potatoes, rice or pasta.
- Use stir-fry vegetables; the short cooking time helps retain the nutritional value of the vegetables.
- Blend pureed cauliflower and low-fat milk to create a healthier Alfredo sauce for pasta.
- Add grated zucchini and carrots to classic dishes like meat loaf or spaghetti.
- Use grilled eggplant and zucchini for a flavorful vegetable lasagna.
- Top homemade pizzas with plenty of colorful vegetables.
- Eat fresh fruit for dessert.

SNACKS

- Keep a supply of vegetables handy, including baby carrots, celery sticks, broccoli, cherry tomatoes and cauliflower.
- Fresh or dried fruit and unsweetened juices are great snacks.

Healthy Living is a publication of Eisenhower Medical Center · © Copyright 2014 All Rights Reserved · www.emc.org