

City of Bloomington, Division of Public Health

New Year, New You tip #4: Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits for an easy way to lower your caloric intake and obtain MANY health benefits.

Most vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. None have cholesterol. That is why vegetables are such a boon to weight management. Just make sure not to regularly eat vegetables with sauces or seasonings that add fat, calories or cholesterol.

Also, fresh vegetables and fruits help to **reduce your risk for heart attack, stroke and certain cancers** when eaten as part of an overall healthy diet.

Extra tips for eating more fruits and vegetables

- Shop at the farmer's markets and involve children in making choices.
- Dip fruit into lowfat yogurt or peanut butter.
- Go easy on juice; whole fruit is a better choice.
- Dip raw vegetables in lowfat salad dressings.
- Add vegetables to soups, stews, casseroles and cooked pasta.
- Roast vegetables; use colorful combinations.



What Public Health does for you

Public Health works to assure everyone in our community has access to plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables because they are important to preventing chronic disease. **Heart disease, cancer and stroke are the three most common causes of death in Bloomington.**

- The Women, Infants and Children program provides nutrition counseling and food vouchers for healthy food including fruits and vegetables.
- Public Health Nurses work with families to promote optimal health and child development. They are a resource for food and other concerns.
- Our community partnership works to increase the availability of fruits and vegetables to all in our community, including from community gardens, at farmers markets and at the food shelf.

Health benefits of selected nutrients in vegetables and fruits

Dietary fiber

- Helps reduce blood cholesterol levels
- Important for proper bowel function
- Helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis
- Provides a feeling of fullness with fewer calories

For more information, contact: Bloomington Public Health Division | 1900 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431 | PH: 952-563-8900 V/TTY | *Office hours:* Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. *Interpreters and transportation information are available upon request.*

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Potassium

- May help to maintain healthy blood pressure.
- Sources include sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products, beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, spinach, lentils and kidney beans.

Vitamin A

- Keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.
- Sources include apricots, cantaloupe, carrots, collard greens, grapefruit, leaf lettuce, romaine lettuce, spinach, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and watermelon.

Vitamin C

- Helps heal cuts and wounds.
- Keeps teeth and gums healthy.
- Aids in iron absorption.
- Sources include bell pepper, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage (green), cantaloupe, cauliflower, collards, grapefruit, kiwi, lemon, lime, melon (honeydew), orange, pineapple, potato, raspberries, rutabagas, spinach, squash (summer), strawberries, sweet potato, tangerines, tomatoes and watermelon.

Folate (folic acid)

- Reduces the risk of a woman giving birth to a baby with neural tube defects, such as spina bifida, and may reduce risk of heart disease. **In addition to adequate food sources, women in child-bearing years should consume 400 mcg of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods or supplements.**
- Sources included asparagus, broccoli, chickpeas, collard greens, lentils, lima beans, pinto beans, spinach, split peas, strawberries, white beans, cauliflower, leaf lettuce and romaine lettuce.