

Food can be the best medicine

Instead of going to the drugstore, here's how to stay healthy with smart food choices

Are you searching for a magic pill to cure your ills? Well, look no further than the produce section at the grocery store or your local farmers' market!

You might be surprised to find out that one of the best ways you can stay healthy and fight illness is by eating the right types of food. And, you can save money and have a tasty meal.

Raid nature's medicine cabinet

Here's an easy way to start: Eat more fruits and vegetables. People who include more fruits and veggies in their diet are likely to have a lower risk of certain chronic diseases.¹

By having more...	Such as...	You can...
Omega-3s	Flaxseed, salmon and walnuts	
Vitamin C	Oranges and berries (blueberries, acai berry and strawberry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be protected against certain types of cancer¹ • Lower your risk of heart attack and stroke
Iron	Lean red meat, spinach, kidney beans, lentils and peas ²	
Fiber ¹	Beans and peas ³ Vegetables and fruit (whole or cut-up fruit is better than juice) Nuts, berries and brown rice ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut the risk of heart disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes • Reduce blood cholesterol levels
Potassium ¹	Bananas, prunes, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, orange juice, sweet potatoes, white beans, tomato products, beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, spinach, lentils and kidney beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower your blood pressure • Reduce the risk of kidney stones • Decrease bone loss
Folic acid (folate) ⁴	Dark green, leafy vegetables, spinach, asparagus, Brussels sprouts and black-eyed peas ⁵ Fruits, such as oranges, grapefruit and bananas ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your body make red blood cells • Lower the risk of birth defects in the brain, spine or spinal cord, tube defects, spina bifida and anencephaly (Women who may become pregnant should eat foods high in folic acid, and may need to take a supplement.)

Tips on eating more fruit and vegetables^{7,8}

- Keep a bowl of fruit on your table, kitchen counter or fridge.
- Use pureed, cooked vegetables such as potatoes to thicken stews and soups.
- Juice your vegetables as a fun and tasty way to add them to your diet.
- Cut-up fruit is an excellent snack. Try apples, pineapples or melon.
- Get vegetables that are easy to prepare. Buy bagged salad or a veggie tray that's already prepared for snacking.
- Order a veggie pizza and get toppings like green peppers, onions and mushrooms.

1 United States Department of Agriculture. *ChooseMyPlate.gov, Why is it Important to Eat Fruit?* (accessed August 2013): choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/fruits-why.html.
2 United States Department of Agriculture. *ChooseMyPlate.gov, Tips for Vegetarians* (accessed August 2013): choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/tips-for-vegetarian.html.
3 United States Department of Agriculture. *ChooseMyPlate.gov, Beans and Peas Are Unique Foods* (accessed August 2013): choosemyplate.gov/printpages/MyPlateFoodGroups/Vegetables/food-groups.vegetables-beans-peas.pdf.
4 WebMD. *Top 10 Sources of Fiber* (October 2006): webmd.com/diet/features/top-10-sources-of-fiber.
5 National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements. *Dietary Supplement Fact Sheet: Folate* (December 2012): ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Folate-QuickFacts/.
6 LiveStrong. *Fruits and Vegetables Containing Folic Acid* (October 2010): livestrong.com/article/268031-fruits-and-vegetables-containing-folic-acid/.
7 United States Department of Agriculture. *ChooseMyPlate.gov, Tips to Help you Eat Fruits* (accessed August 2013): choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/fruits-tips.html.
8 United States Department of Agriculture. *ChooseMyPlate.gov, Tips to Help you Eat Vegetables* (accessed August 2013): choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables-tips.html.

