



Fuel with Fruits & Vegetables: Activities and Tips

1. Swap a caffeinated beverage with a noncaffeinated beverage.

Caffeine can provide an initial boost of energy, but overconsumption can lead to some negative side effects like anxiety, insomnia, headaches, and more. Try some noncaffeinated beverages, especially at least 8 hours before bed:

- Water
- Juice
- Soda water
- Fruit smoothie
- Caffeine-free tea
- And more!

Unsure of the caffeine content in your beverage? Check it out here: [Caffeine content for coffee, tea, soda and more - Mayo Clinic](#)

2. Prioritize eating 3 meals a day

Eating three meals a day provides our brain and body with the fuel it needs to carry out our daily activities to their best of our ability. If you find yourself missing a meal when you're on the go, make sure to keep some extra food or snacks on hand for when you're feeling hungry. Ideally, meals should be well-balanced and cover all food groups.

Questions? Or, looking for specific tips and tricks to incorporate nutritious eating into your lifestyle? Set up a free appointment with our dietician: [Nutrition | Student Wellness - The University of Iowa \(uiowa.edu\)](#)

3. Enjoy a food you like without guilt

Eating intuitively seeks to encourage others to listen to their body's signals for hunger and satiety, meaning you also get to eat what you like so that you can enjoy your food. It takes a way a traditional dieting approach and helps you stop seeing food as good or bad. Instead, you eat what your body thinks is good for you without guilt. Enjoy your food!

Interested in improving your relationship with food, movement and your body? Check out our website to schedule an individual consultation or attend a workshop! [Intuitive Eating | Student Wellness - The University of Iowa \(uiowa.edu\)](#)

4. Try a new fruit or vegetable or prepare one in a new way.

Variety makes our food more interesting and provides a wider range of nutrients. Different colors provide different nutrients, so try something new. Or prep a fruit or veggie in a new way and find a different way to enjoy those nutrients!

Find some new ideas at your local grocery store or the Farmers Market (video on Farmers' Markets: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=S7ZaVZpFSMM&t>). Think you've tried all the fruits and veggies out there? Look here for some new ones: <https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/fruit-and-veggie-color-list/>

Here's some ideas for new ways to try your fruits or vegetables:

- add grapes or chopped apples to chicken or tuna salad
 - grate vegetables like carrots, squash, zucchini and sweet potatoes into things like hamburger patties, meatballs or meatloaf, pasta sauce, pancakes or muffins – even the pickiest eater may eat them this way!
 - add a variety of chopped veggies (raw or cooked) or fruit to tacos, sandwiches, wraps or pitas – greens, tomatoes, carrots, peppers, cucumbers, apples, mango, pineapple, raisins or raisins
 - oven roast a sheet pan of fresh or frozen vegetables – eat them warm or cold or add to other dishes such as a salad, in a tortilla, on a sandwich, tossed with pasta, added to rice
 - bake chicken or pork chops with apple wedges, figs, dates, dried apricots or prunes
 - top a sweet potato with salsa or chopped dried fruit
 - add slices of pineapple or apple on a pizza
- See the recipe section for more ideas! Or **attend our Cooking Workshop on Tuesday, September 28 at 7:00 pm at CRWC, Meeting Rm 1A&B** – sample something new there!

5. Eat at least 3 different colors of vegetables and fruits on 1 day

Different colors provide different nutrients – mix up the colors you eat for a variety of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Antioxidants are important for building your immune system, improving recovery from workouts and supporting brain function - including mental health. Here's some ideas to add color:

- Buy a variety of colors of vegetables and fruits when shopping
- Eat a different one at each meal
- Chop up a variety of vegetables and/or fruits as a salad
- Add fruit or vegetables to other dishes such as dried fruit to oatmeal, tomato slices and greens in a sandwich, mixed peppers in pasta
- Make a smoothie with 2 or more fruits or vegetables
- Stir some cooked mixed veggies into your rice

See tips above or the **recipe section (link)** for more ideas!

More info: <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/food-nutrition/what-color-is-your-food>



6. Eat only the fruits and vegetables you truly love!

Eating should be enjoyable, as well as to meet our needs for fuel and nutrients! Take a day and focus on eating only your favorite fruits and vegetables. Mindfully notice what you like about them such as the sweetness or savoriness, temperature or texture, smoothness or crispiness, or how they make your body feel by providing fullness and some fluid.

If you don't truly love them, we hope some of the tips above can help you find more ways to enjoy fruits and vegetables. Keep working on finding ones you like and focus on appreciating all the good things they do for your body such as providing energy, fiber, volume for fullness, nutrients for metabolism and boosting your immune system!

Tips for fitting in fruit & vegetables

- Start your day with fruit or vegetables, to fit in more! Add fruit to your cereal, oatmeal, waffles or pancakes at breakfast. Add veggies to eggs or have a smoothie.

- Keep fruits and vegetables in sight - if you see them, you will eat them! Grapes, oranges, bananas, and apples make a colorful bowl arrangement on the table. Or put a bowl of washed fruit in the center of the refrigerator, so it's easy to grab (and enjoy cold).
- Save money on fruit by purchasing those in season. Find what's in season: <https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/whats-in-season-2/> or <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/seasonal-produce-guide>
- Freeze your produce! Frozen fruit makes a tasty cold treat and it is also a good way to preserve fruit that is starting to get overripe or is about to go bad. Frozen fruit can be used in smoothies or partially thawed and stirred into yogurt or oatmeal. Fresh spinach and kale can be frozen to use in smoothies, soups, stews or casseroles.
- Pureed fruit can substitute for half of more of the oil in baked goods. Try applesauce, mashed banana or mango, pumpkin or other soft or cooked fruit.
- Throw vegetables (fresh or frozen) into soup – add to canned soup or use prepared broth to make your own soup. Time saver: cook extra veggies at other meals to add to soup later in the week!
- Stir fry a mixture of veggies for a colorful, tasty side dish; for more color and flavor variety, add pineapple or mandarin orange slices. Time saver – use a frozen vegetable mix or packages of pre-cut vegetables from the produce aisle.
- Add frozen veggies to any pasta or noodle dish – throw them in to cook with the pasta or noodles during the last few minutes. Reduces cooking time and clean up!

More tips

<https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate>

<https://fruitsandveggies.org/>

<https://www.fruitsinfo.com/>

<https://www.nutrition-and-you.com/vegetable-nutrition.html>

<https://www.nutrition-and-you.com/fruit-nutrition.html>

Food safety tips (for fruits and veg): <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/communication/steps-healthy-fruits-veggies.htm>

Please know eating more fruits and vegetables isn't going to resolve mental health problems like anxiety, depression or disordered eating, or decrease the impact of external factors such as trauma or systemic oppression. If you are struggling with these challenges the University of Iowa has professional resources to support you. Start here to find resources:

<https://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu/>

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