

Vegetables and whole fruit

These are important for vitamins, minerals, fibre and phytonutrients (which help protect against disease).

It is better to eat whole fruits, rather than drink fruit juice. When you eat a whole fruit, you get the beneficial fibre that is naturally present in the fruit. This can help you feel full and supports healthy digestion. Whole fruit has less natural sugar than fruit juice, which can be better for overall health.

When enjoying fruits, it is important to consider portion sizes, especially with sweeter and larger fruits like grapes, bananas, pineapple, and mango.

If you have tinned fruit, try to choose those in natural juice rather than syrup and drain the juices away.

For dried fruit, be mindful of the portion size. A portion would be equal to one piece of fruit, for example, 1-2 dried apricot, dates or figs, or 8-10 sultanas, cranberries, or sour cherries.

Try to make small steps towards more vegetables and whole fruit. For example:



Improving the nutritional quality of a ready meal



Adding frozen peas to a ready meal can make your meal healthier. This simple addition of peas can increase the fibre, protein, and phytonutrient content of your meal, which is good for your body.

Making your own tomato sauce



Make your own tomato sauce to act as a base for meals, as a good alternative to ultra processed versions. Lightly fry chopped red onions with seed oil or olive oil, until softened (5-10 minutes). Add chopped garlic and fry for another minute. Then add a tin of chopped tomatoes and one tablespoon of tomato puree. Season with dried mixed herbs or fresh basil.

What about potatoes?

Potatoes are classed as a starchy food. They offer some nutrition like fibre and nutrients, but they are often eaten in processed forms (e.g. peeled, mashed and fried). If you enjoy potatoes, try to eat them with their skins on and try different types too, for example, new potatoes and sweet or purple varieties.



Tips for moving towards more vegetables and whole fruit

Use tinned, frozen or fresh, whichever is more available. Tinned tomatoes make a great homemade sauce for meals.



Try roasting broccoli and cauliflower with plenty of seed oil or olive oil, some black pepper, garam masala and/or cinnamon.



Try a roasted vegetable tray bake with plenty of oil and herbs for flavour. If you prefer sweeter vegetables try adding carrots, butternut squash, red onion, beetroot, parsnips and red peppers.



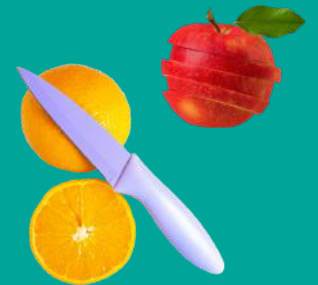
Courgette, broccoli, peas, carrot and peppers go well in curries and can help bulk out the dish and make it more filling.



Peppers, courgettes, mushrooms and aubergine can be added to skewers and roasted or barbecued with seed oil or olive oil and garlic. Whole sweet corns can also be barbecued.



Add chopped whole fruit to bean and grain salads, for example, orange or apple. Add the zest of orange for more flavour.

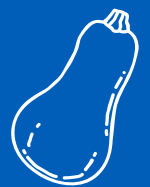


Add chopped whole fruit to natural or Greek yoghurt, as an alternative to artificially flavoured yoghurt.



Did you know?

The skins of vegetables and fruit contain important fibre and nutrients. Save time and reduce waste by keeping the skins on. The skins of pumpkin and squash are edible and taste great when roasted.



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