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An Apple a Day? Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

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The phrase “An apple a day keeps the doctor away” was coined in 1913; about 150 years ago in Wales. The original aphorism was “Eat an apple on going to bed and you’ll keep the doctor from earning his bread” (MacGill, 2015). To test the reliability of these aphorisms, the University of Michigan, School of Nursing, developed a research study. The study measured the number of visits one had to the doctor’s office. The set baseline of “no more than one visit a year to the doctor” meant that the aphorisms were true, and not just a clever way to get people to eat more fruits (MacGill, 2015). The study, however, proved the saying false, but found some interesting facts that could help motivate people to eat more fruits and vegetables.

The Imperial College in London did a study showing that when you eat 800g, about 10 servings, of fruits and vegetables a day it has significant positive effects on your well-being (Wighton, 2017). Fruits and vegetables such as: “apples and pears as well as citrus fruits and vegetables such as lettuce, broccoli and cabbage are particularly effective in preventing strokes, heart disease, and early death” (Vonberg, 2017). Ten servings of fruits and vegetables a day has been proven to reduce: 24% of heart disease, 33% of stroke, 28% of cardiovascular disease, 13% of total cancers, and 31% of premature deaths (Wighton, 2017).

Only 27% of Americans consistently eat vegetables at least three to four times a day (*Increase fruits...*, 2016), and just 1 in 10 Americans eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day (Thompson, 2015). Lifestyle barriers can be

difficult for adults to include 10 servings of fruits and vegetables in their daily diets, when they have a job or kids or both. Listed below are a few simple ideas that can help you, and encourage others to increase fruit and vegetable intake each day.

- 1- Keep people involved. Whether it is your family, friends, or neighbors, when you include others in the planning, shopping, and the cooking process, they, and yourself, are much more likely to try new fruits and vegetables and taste new recipes (*Increase fruits...*, 2016).
- 2- Set a time aside. Plan a time each day between meals to have a snack or serving of fruits or vegetables.
- 3- Replace the less healthy food with the healthier fruit or vegetable. Slowly replace high sugar and processed foods with new recipes that include fruits and vegetables.
- 4- Try new things, discover what you like. Try a variety of new foods and new recipes to determine what fruits or vegetables you like, and can easily incorporate into your diet.
- 5- Replace sugary drinks or soda with 100% fruit juice.
- 6- Include additional fruits or vegetables in salads or omelets, and for toppings on pancakes, cereal, and waffles.
- 7- Have a fruit and vegetable smoothie for breakfast or as a healthy snack.
- 8- Place fresh fruits and vegetables in easily assessable areas to encourage family members to grab a quick, healthy snack.

Below are two quick and easy, tasty, adult and kid friendly recipes that include several fruits or vegetables.

Penne with Spring Vegetables

Takes 25 minutes Makes 4 Servings

- 1-pound fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into ½ inch pieces
- 1 (8 ounce) package sugar snap peas, trimmed
- 1 (8 ounce) package dry penne pasta
- 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add asparagus, and cook for 2 minutes. Add peas, and cook for 2 more minutes. Transfer to a large bowl; set aside. Add pasta to boiling water, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until al dente; drain.

2. Place pasta in the bowl with asparagus and peas. Toss with olive oil, Parmesan, salt and pepper. (J., 2006)

Fresh Fruit Pops

Takes an hour or more

Make as many as you want

- strawberries
- kiwi
- banana
- blueberries
- raspberries
- orange juice
- small plastic cups
- wooden sticks or skewers

1. Choose what fruit you want to put into your fruit pops. You can choose from the ones above or choose your own. Wash and cut the fruit into small pieces and place them into a plastic cup.

2. Pour enough orange juice to cover the fruit and place a wooden stick in the middle. With all the fruit the wooden stick should stand up.

3. Lastly place cups into the freezer and freeze. (American College of Pediatricians, 2014)

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