

Fruits and Vegetables

Nutrients in Fruits & Vegetables

beta-carotene

Fruits and vegetables have beta-carotene, a chemical that converts to vitamin A in the body. Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps protect against infections. Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keep teeth and gums healthy.

folic acid and folate

Folic acid and folate that comes from it are important nutrients found in all green, leafy vegetables. They can prevent a serious birth defect called spina bifida. Women should make sure they eat enough vegetables to prevent this serious disease if they were to get pregnant.

potassium

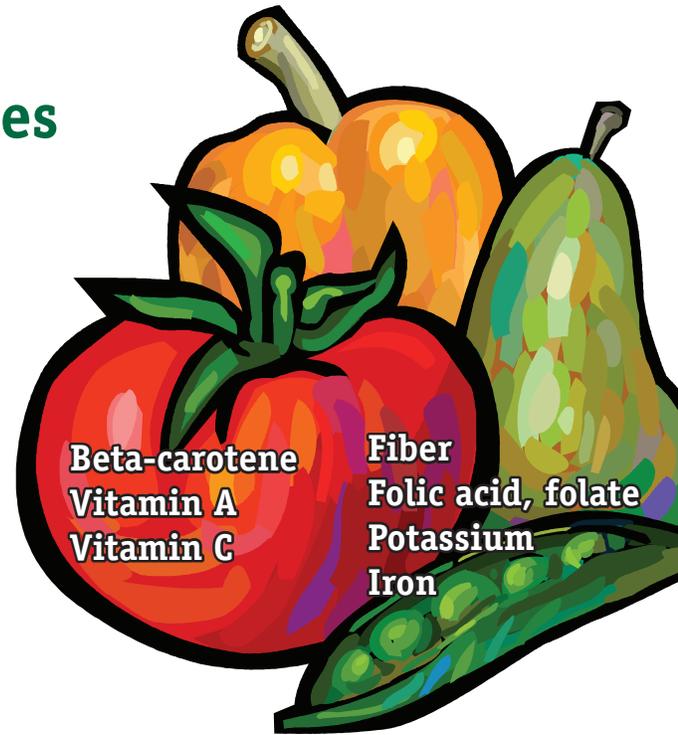
Fruits and vegetables also have a lot of minerals. An important mineral they provide is potassium. Diets rich in potassium can help maintain a healthy blood pressure. Fruits and vegetables also have beneficial phytochemicals that keep our blood vessels healthy.

iron

Although we think of meat and meat products as good sources of iron, several vegetables are good sources, too. They include pumpkin seeds, tofu, pistachios, blackstrap molasses, raisins, pinto beans, sweet potatoes, sunflower seeds, pumpkin, oatmeal, walnuts, spinach and tomato juice.

fiber

Something else that is provided by the plants in our diet is fiber. Diets rich in dietary fiber have been shown to have a number of beneficial effects, including decreased risk of coronary artery disease. Fiber helps prevent constipation by speeding elimination. Fiber and adequate water intake can help keep the intestinal track healthy by improving elimination. Fiber can also slow down the digestive process and helps release nutrients slower and longer in the intestinal track. This can help with weight control and blood sugar control.



Compared with people who consume a diet with only small amounts of fruits and vegetables, those who include more of the two are less likely to have a risk of chronic diseases, including stroke and perhaps other cardiovascular diseases and certain cancers.



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Heli Roy, PhD, LDN, RD	<p>Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, William B. Richardson, Chancellor Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, David Boethel, Vice Chancellor and Director Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Paul D. Coreil, Vice Chancellor and Director</p> <p>Pub. 3005 (20M) 11/07</p> <p>Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.</p> <p>This material was funded by USDA's Food Stamp program. The Food Stamp program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local Extension office or visit www.lsuagcenter.com</p>