



Heart-Healthy Tips: Summer Fruits and Veggies

When you think of the next cookout that you are attending, you probably imagine plates of juicy hamburgers and hot dogs, bags of chips, potato salad mixed with plenty of mayonnaise, and all the fixin's for s'mores – not a fresh fruit or veggie in sight. However, the summer provides an abundance of delicious, colorful squash, melons, and berries.

Compared to people who eat only small amounts of fruits and vegetables, those who eat more generous amounts - as part of a healthy diet - are likely to have a reduced risk of chronic diseases. These diseases include stroke, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, and perhaps heart disease and high blood pressure.

Use these tips to make sure you are getting plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables:

- As part of a nutritious, seasonal dinner, cut up and grill fresh peppers, sweet onions, zucchini, yellow squash, eggplant, and more.
- For dessert, try a fresh fruit salad of melon, strawberries, grapes, blueberries, cherries, and other fruits.
- Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories, so substituting them for high-calorie foods can be a calorie-reducing strategy. For example, eat strawberries with a little bit of sugar or artificial sweetener on them when you have a craving for sweets.
- In-season vegetables include green beans, tomatoes, radishes, zucchini, peppers, corn, cucumbers, spinach, sweet potatoes, onions, potatoes, eggplant, garlic, okra, squash, black-eyed peas, lettuce, and rhubarb.
- In-season fruits include blueberries, strawberries, cherries, melons, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, pineapples, red grapes, raspberries, Valencia oranges, apples, watermelon, papaya, kiwi, mango, and figs.
- For suggestions on ways to prepare many vegetables and fruits, visit FruitsandVeggiesMatter.gov.

Sources: Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention