



Why is obesity on the rise?

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), only one in 10 Americans eats enough fruits and vegetables as recommended by federal dietary guidelines.

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, an ongoing CDC-sponsored survey, has been compiling data on the healthy and unhealthy actions that average Americans take. The findings point to the fact that fruit and vegetable consumption has been consistently low over time.

Researchers have found that only 13 percent of U.S. residents consume the recommended one and a half to two cups of fruit daily. As far as vegetables are concerned, the numbers are even worse. Less than 9 percent of Americans eat the recommended amount of two to three cups of vegetables daily. Ranked by state, California had the highest consumption of vegetables at a paltry 13 percent, while Tennessee and Mississippi ranked among the lowest with 6.2 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively.

Joy Dubost, a registered dietitian in Washington, D.C., called the findings disappointing. "Part of the problem might be that people find it daunting to eat the daily recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. Dietitians and health experts need to do a better job of showing people how they can spread their intake across a full day of eating."

"We are seeing now what is going to happen if this trend continues. Obesity is on the rise. The rates of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease are on the rise," says Jordana Turkel, a registered dietitian at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

IMPORTANCE OF EATING COLORFUL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Eating a good amount of colorful fruits and vegetables is important because they help lower a person's risk of chronic illnesses, such as obesity, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. For example, fruits and vegetables are generally low in fat, which helps control cholesterol. They also contain a lot of fiber, which helps control spikes in blood sugar by slowing the digestive process.

Turkel explains that “people who want to boost their vegetable intake can make a salad part of their daily diet, even if it is served as a side dish at lunch or dinner. Fruit and vegetable smoothies are another option,” but she cautions against using too much fruit and to include the skin.

Latetia Moore, an epidemiologist and study author add, “It’s not that hard to eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. If you eat at least a banana and half an apple, you’re done for the day with fruit. For vegetables, if you have a side salad with lunch and a couple of vegetables with dinner, you’re done for the day.”



Fiber and natural carbohydrates are found in fruits and vegetables and are important—fiber keeps the bowels healthy and helps to lower cholesterol.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

To maintain good health and to help decrease your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes or becoming overweight, make up your mind to eat more fruits and vegetables and then just do it!



- Even if you don’t cook, there are time-saving options available, including bagged salads, precooked vegetables and steam-in-the-bag frozen veggies.
- Avoid fast-food restaurants. Make it a point to have fruit on hand to snack on.
- Change your mindset: fresh fruits and vegetables are actually much less expensive than most meats, seafood, cheeses and even some breads. Make sure vegetables take up the most space on your plate.
- Develop a new eating habit: one that incorporates either some fruit or vegetables at every meal.
- Incorporate IMMUNE+++ and DIGESTIVE+++ into your daily regimen. IMMUNE+++ will help fortify your body against illness, while DIGESTIVE+++ will support the absorption of nutrients, so you get the most out of what you eat.
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