

Blending Fruits and Vegetables

The American Cancer Society recommends eating a minimum of 2½ cups of fruits and vegetables each day. More than 2½ cups is recommended to maintain optimal health and weight.

Fruits and Vegetables	
Recommended Daily Servings	One Serving is Equal To
Women: 5 to 8 Men: 7 to 11	1 medium piece of fruit (such as an apple, orange, pear or banana)
	1 cup raw fruits and vegetables
	½ cup cooked fruits and vegetables

Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are rich sources of nutrients essential for health and life. They contain:

- **Vitamins and minerals:** Vitamin C, calcium and iron are the nutrients that most people are familiar with. These nutrients are essential to our body. Illnesses can happen if the body does not have enough vitamins and minerals.
- **Phytochemicals:** Phytonutrients are found only in plant foods. These powerful compounds have many disease-fighting properties including working as antioxidants, strengthening the immune system and fighting viruses. The best way to get a variety of these health-supporting nutrients is to eat all colors of fruits and vegetables.
- **Fiber:** Fruits and vegetables contain several types of fiber that have different functions. Fiber sweeps away impurities from the intestinal tract and promotes regular bowel movements. Fiber slows the digestion and absorption of glucose, which helps manage blood sugar levels. Other types of fiber provide food for the good bacteria living in the intestinal tract and protect the lining of the intestines.

If you have a normal appetite and food tolerance, it is best to include whole vegetables and fruits with every meal. You can eat them raw or cooked (such as steamed or roasted). Add chopped vegetable to recipes. Many people find it helpful to drink some of their fruits and vegetables to ensure that they take in the higher number of recommended servings. Blending is recommended instead of juicing, as juicing removes all the fiber. **One 8-ounce smoothie equals 2 servings of vegetables and/or fruits.**

How to Blend Fruits and Vegetables

A standard kitchen blender easily blends most fresh and frozen fruits, leafy green vegetables and soft vegetables such as cucumbers and zucchini. A high-powered blender is needed to blend hard vegetables like carrots, beets and celery. There is no limit to the combination of fruits and vegetables that can be blended together. With experience, you will find the combinations you most enjoy. See a few sample recipes on page 2.

Basic Green Smoothie

- 2 cups liquid (your choice of water, juice, nectar, yogurt, green tea or any milk)
- 4 cups fruit, fresh or frozen
- 2 to 4 cups fresh, raw greens (such as spinach, kale, Swiss chard, collard greens, beet greens)

Optional: Add ice if using only fresh fruits and vegetables. Add ½ banana or oatmeal to thicken. For a small blender, consider ¼ of the recipe (½ cup liquid, 1 cup fruit, 1 cup raw greens).

Hearty Green Smoothie

- 1½ cups milk of choice or yogurt
- 1 banana, peeled
- 2 cups raw baby spinach
- ½ cup blueberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 cup frozen unsweetened peach slices

Rainbow Vegetable Smoothie

- 1 cup water
- 1 cucumber, coarsely chopped
- ½ lemon, peeled and deseeded
- 1 apple, quartered and cored
- 4 carrots, quartered
- 1-inch piece fresh ginger root
- 2 cups fresh kale, stems removed
- 2 cups ice

Blending Instructions (for all recipes): Wash raw fruits and vegetables well. Place all ingredients in a blender in the order listed. Secure the lid. Blend ingredients according to the blender instructions for 30 seconds or until the desired consistency is reached. Store leftovers in a clean glass or plastic container in the refrigerator. Drink within 48 hours to ensure freshness.

Consider these optional ingredients for variety:

- **Fiber:** seeds, prunes, psyllium husk, oats, nuts, bran cereal
- **Sweetener:** dates, agave nectar, honey, stevia
- **Flavor:** fresh ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla, cocoa powder, cardamom, mint, basil, turmeric

Tips for Eating Problems

Side effects of cancer and cancer treatment often cause poor appetite and nausea. If you can tolerate liquid foods better than solid foods, try to drink smoothies in place of a solid meal. When drinking smoothies as a meal replacement, be sure to include ingredients containing protein and fat for balanced nutrition. If you are losing weight, add extra protein and fat to your smoothies to help prevent muscle loss and fatigue. See below for suggestions.

- **Protein ingredients:** protein powder, plain yogurt, kefir, cow's milk, milk alternatives, nuts, nut butters, tofu, seeds (ex. chia, ground flax, hemp), wheat germ
- **Fat ingredients:** avocado, coconut milk, nuts, nut butters, seeds, plant oil (such as coconut, flaxseed, olive), MCT oil (fat supplement), whole-milk yogurt, half and half, shredded unsweetened coconut

If you have questions about your nutrition needs, ask your care provider to schedule an appointment for you with the dietitian.