

## Eating Vegetables the Healthy "Weigh"

Are you one of the millions of Americans suffering from a serious vegetable deficit? Everyone knows that veggies are healthy, but do you know how good for you they really are? Here are six good reasons to follow your mom's advice and eat your vegetables!

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### 1. Eat VEGGIES to maintain a healthy weight

As a group, vegetables are **low in calories** and **virtually fat-free**. (Avocados, technically a fruit, are the only real exception.) Increasing your vegetable intake is the easy, tasty way to cut back on calories, maximize nutrients and protect your health - all at the same time.

### 2. Eat VEGGIES to protect your heart

Vegetables are packed with the nutrients that can reduce your risk of heart disease - like **folic acid** (spinach, asparagus, and Romaine lettuce), **antioxidants** (tomatoes, sweet potatoes and peppers) and **fiber** (corn, peas and legumes - dried beans and peas).

### 3. Eat VEGGIES to fight cancer

High vegetable intakes have been shown to reduce the risk of almost all types of cancer. Two potent cancer fighters are **cruciferous vegetables** (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts) and those high in **lycopene** (tomatoes, red peppers and red fruits).

### 4. Eat VEGGIES to preserve your vision

Vegetables do more than help you see in the dark. High intakes of produce rich in **lutein** and **zeaxanthin** (dark green vegetables like broccoli, spinach, kale and collard greens) help prevent macular degeneration, the most common cause of blindness in older people.

### 5. Eat VEGGIES to save your skin.

**Vitamin C** (found in tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, broccoli and cabbage) has long been known as a super nutrient for maintaining collagen and connective tissue under the skin. Some preliminary studies also suggest that vegetable lovers may be less prone to wrinkles.

### 6. Eat VEGGIES to build strong bones

It takes a whole cast of nutrients to build strong bones - and vegetables are great sources of several essential ones. Bone up with **vitamin K** (spinach and broccoli), **potassium** (potatoes and mushrooms) and **magnesium** (spinach, limas, and black-eyed peas).



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