

Healthy Living Newsletter

Tips to Eat More Fresh Fruits and Veggies

Fruits and vegetables are the core of a healthy diet. The recommended amount of fresh fruit for older adults is 1.5-2 cups and for vegetables is 2-3 cups. For uncooked veggies like leafy greens, the serving size is 2 cups. For cooked vegetables and greens, the serving size is 1 cup. Aim to get a variety of fruits and vegetables.

How do I eat more?

1. Add fruits and vegetables to foods you are already eating. Add fresh chopped vegetables to the top of your pizza, add more vegetables to pasta sauce, or add more greens and sliced veggies to soup and sandwiches. Add fruit to yogurt, oatmeal, or on salads.
2. Have a smoothie for breakfast or snack. You can easily add frozen spinach, kale, and frozen fruits. This is an easy way to start your day with vegetables and fruits filled with nutrition.
3. Eat in-season produce. This will make fresh produce more affordable while it's also fresh. In season Summer produce in Colorado includes bell peppers, summer squash, corn, green beans, cucumbers, berries, melon, peaches, and kiwi.
4. Prepare vegetables and fruit for easy snacking. After buying groceries, immediately wash and cut produce for easy snacking. This makes it more convenient and easier to snack with dips or sauce. For example, chopping bell peppers, cucumbers, broccoli, and celery ahead of time will make it more likely you'll consume them.



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ENJOY THIS ISSUE

Feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who may find it useful.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, IDEAS

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The 10-Minute Walk Streak Challenge

7 days. 10 minutes. Big sleep payoff.

Here's your mission: walk 10 minutes daily for one week.



The Daily 10-Minute Walk Habit

- 1) Ease In (1-2 minutes)
 - Stand tall and relaxed
 - Take 3 slow breaths
 - Start walking at a very easy pace
- 2) Comfortable Walk (8-10 minutes)
 - Walk at a pace where you can talk in full sentences
 - Outdoor daylight is helpful—but indoor walking absolutely counts
 - If you feel tired, slow down or shorten the time
- 3) Gentle Finish (2-3 minutes)
 - Slow your pace
 - Do 4 rounds of calm breathing
 - Inhale 4 seconds
 - Exhale 6 seconds
 - Optional: light calf or hamstring stretch

Coach reminder:

The first few minutes are just about getting moving. There's no rush.

Coach reminder:

Some days will feel better than others. All of them still count.



Always consult your physician before starting an exercise program.

Why Walking Helps Sleep

Regular movement earlier in the day helps your body understand when it's time to be awake and when it's time to rest. It also reduces stiffness and restlessness that can make it harder to get comfortable at night. The key is timing: try to finish your walk earlier in the day, or keep it very gentle if it happens later.

Want to start moving more but not sure where to begin?

Would you like these benefits for **FREE**?

1. Free exercise instruction
2. Free nutrition counseling from a Registered Dietitian
3. Free weekly motivational calls

Healthy Moves Exercise Program

In the comfort, privacy, and safety of your own home, this evidence-based exercise program is designed specifically for people 60 years or more, with one or more chronic health conditions.

Only available to clients living in: Denver, Arapahoe, Jefferson, Adams and Douglas counties.

Contact **Amanda Webb** for more information.

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You Snooze, You Win! zzz

Getting a good night's sleep plays an important role in energy, mood, memory, and overall health. Yet many common sleep myths can actually make rest harder to come by. Watching TV in bed, relying on alcohol to fall asleep, or trying to "catch up" on sleep by sleeping in on the weekends can disrupt your body's natural sleep rhythm. Caffeine (even earlier in the day), nicotine, and heavy or spicy meals close to bedtime may also interfere with falling asleep or staying asleep. Instead, sticking to a consistent sleep and wake schedule, keeping the bedroom cool, dark, and quiet, and getting daylight exposure in the morning can support better sleep at any age!

What you eat during the day can also affect how well you sleep at night. Certain foods contain nutrients that help regulate the sleep-wake cycle, including melatonin, tryptophan, magnesium, and omega-3 fatty acids. Fruits like cherries, bananas, and oranges; whole grains, beans, nuts, eggs, and poultry; leafy green vegetables; and fatty fish may all support healthier sleep patterns. Timing matters too! Lighter evening meals and avoiding reflux-triggering foods close to bedtime can help reduce nighttime discomfort and awakenings.

By pairing healthy sleep habits with nourishing food choices, you can create a routine that helps your body wind down naturally and rest more deeply. Small changes can add up to better sleep and better days ahead!



Congregate Corner

What's that smell?

Summer is around the corner, and that means food has the potential to spoil much faster. Eating spoiled foods can make us sick, so it's important to know when something has gone bad. If something smells, looks or feels off or unusual, it's best to throw it away.



Check us out!
Our dining site in Commerce City, Eagle Pointe, is now open on Mondays at 11:30am. Stop by and enjoy a free lunch, see you there!

Why do we do it?

The Congregate meal program is important to seniors who are experiencing hard times. According to America's Health Rankings, 7.7% of seniors experienced food insecurity in 2022. Each meal we serve tries to bridge that gap!



Scan this QR code with your smart phone to comment on the food you've been eating at our congregare sites.



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The Volunteers of America is a national, non-profit, faith-based human service organization. Since 1896 Volunteers of America Colorado Branch has been seeking to identify and serve the basic needs of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our community. Our administrative offices are located at 2660 Larimer Street, Denver CO, 80205. To speak to someone about our programs or volunteering opportunities you may email us at info@voacolorado.org or call 303-297-0408. To keep up with our news and activities, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and *Instagram*.

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SMOOTHIE RECIPES

Mango Smoothie Recipe

- 2 cups diced frozen mango, plus a few thawed cubes for garnish
- 1 small frozen banana
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk, or any milk, plus more as needed
- ½ cup whole milk Greek yogurt*
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- Fresh mint or basil leaves, optional, for garnish

Instructions

1. In a high-speed blender, place the mango, banana, almond milk, yogurt, and lime juice.
2. Blend until smooth, adding more almond milk as needed to blend. Pour into glasses, garnish with diced mango and fresh mint, if using, and serve.



Green Smoothie Recipe

- 1 cup frozen spinach or kale
- ½ frozen banana
- ½ tablespoon almond butter
- 1 to 2 cups peeled and frozen orange segments, or frozen pineapple or mango chunks
- ½ teaspoon chia seeds, optional
- 1 cup almond milk, plus more as needed to blend
- Handful of ice

Instructions

1. In a blender, place the spinach, banana, almond butter, 1 cup frozen fruit, and chia seeds, if using. Add the almond milk and blend until smooth, adding more almond milk as needed to blend. Add the ice and blend again.
2. Taste and add more frozen fruit if you'd like your smoothie to be sweeter. Blend until smooth, adding more almond milk as needed.

*try adding protein powder for added protein

Food Safety Tip

Refrigerate all leftovers within 2 hours to prevent bacterial growth.