

## Eating Healthier -- Part III

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### Fruits and Vegetables

The new recommendations for healthy diet in this country include four or five servings of fresh fruits and vegetables each day. A lot of your patients may only have one or two servings of fresh fruits or vegetables a week. I have found that suggesting the traditional four to five servings daily will totally overwhelm those patients on the standard American junk food diet. Instead, I ask them to consume one piece of fresh fruit five days a week, such as an apple or an orange, in place of their normal snacks of candy, chips, or pastries.

### One Bean, One Green, Three Colors

I urge my patients to try to eat a large salad every other day. You will find many patients consider a salad as iceberg lettuce with a cherry tomato, covered by a healthy (no pun intended) amount of thousand island or blue cheese dressing. Other patients call iceberg lettuce with processed cheese, ham, egg, and gobs of dressing, a chef salad. Neither of these count as salads. Many restaurants now have salad bars that are full of junk. Items that are called salad, such as carrot salad, egg salad, potato salad, macaroni salad, and coleslaw, when prepared at commercial establishments, are generally very high in fat. Instruct your patients to steer clear of these salad bar items. My rule of thumb for making a salad is one bean, one green, and three colors, topped with non-fat or low-fat dressing. This formula will usually result in a healthful salad. Finally, for those who state they are still hungry after eating a salad for a meal, I point out to them that they didn't eat enough salad. I give them an example of what a salad should be: start with a half head of red leaf lettuce or salad bowl lettuce, then grate a whole carrot and a whole large zucchini. To this I have them add a whole bell pepper, chopped, and a can of rinsed and drained beans. This mixture is topped with a low calorie or fat-free salad dressing. I guarantee that the majority of your patients who say salads don't fill them up will not be hungry after consuming a salad like this. Now that you have influenced your patients to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, below are some pointers on raw vegetable preparation.

### PREPARATION POINTERS

Eat Normally	Wash	Special Attention
Bananas	Cabbage -- #1	Spinach -- #4
Corn	Cucumbers -- #2	Apples -- #4
Melons	Eggplant	Broccoli -- #4
Grapefruit	Zucchini	Peaches -- #4

Oranges	Peppers	Carrots -- #4
Jicama	Tomatoes	Pears -- #4
	Cauliflower	
Footnotes	Cherries	
#1 = discard outer leaves	Grapes	
#2 = peel, if waxed	Celery	
#3 = cut out any buds	Green beans	
#4 = buy organically, if possible or thoroughly scrub (soak in bowl of water with liquid wash detergent for 3 minutes & rinse thoroughly)	Lettuce -- #1	
	Potatoes -- #3	
	Berries	
	Mushrooms	
	Sprouts	

In conclusion, start with small, easy goals (three salads a week). As your patients begin to improve their diet, look and feel better, they will be more receptive to continuing a change toward a healthier diet.

*Reference*

Nutrition Action Health Letter, April 1989.

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AUGUST 1992