

Go green—literally.

Ways to increase vegetable consumption

It can be difficult to get enough vegetables

if they are only eaten as a side dish at dinner. Thankfully, vegetables are versatile enough to add to every meal. Think of creative ways you can work them into all your favorite dishes.

- ▶ Add frozen spinach to scrambled eggs for a weekend breakfast.
- ▶ Give your sandwich a makeover. For a flavorful twist, try adding cucumber slices, roasted peppers, or mushrooms.
- ▶ Start your dinner meal with a green salad. While you're preparing the salad, cut up a few extra vegetables and pack them in a reusable container for your lunch the next day.
- ▶ Add cooked vegetables to pasta sauce.
- ▶ Serve chili, pasta, or rice in a broiled tomato, a steamed green pepper, or a half of a roasted acorn squash; these vegetables can become an edible "bowl."
- ▶ Add chopped kale or other hearty greens to any soup or stew.
- ▶ Put a vegetarian twist on traditional "meat" dishes; try black bean chili, vegetable stew, or lentil burgers.
- ▶ Try adding shredded carrots or zucchini to muffins and breads.



What is the buzz with going green?

There are now "green" cleaning supplies, "green" clothing lines, "green" buildings, and even "green" foods.

While there is no specific definition for **going green**, the term generally refers to practices that protect the environment by reducing waste, pollution, and the use of synthetic materials and harmful chemicals.



We know that our dietary choices can have a strong impact on our health, but they can also impact our environmental footprint.

By trying a few "green" eating suggestions, you and your family can eat well and work towards improving the environment.

Going green with nutrition



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Re-USE, Re-DUCE, Re-CYCLE

For starters, go green with lunch.

Pack a bag lunch. Research shows that meals prepared at home tend to be lower in fat, sugar, salt and calories. Cut down on waste by packing lunches in reusable containers.

If you make water your beverage of choice at lunch... Instead of buying a plastic water bottle in the cafeteria, use a reusable container and fill it from the water fountain or tap. This eliminates the need to purchase a beverage, which saves you money and helps keep bottles out of the trash. Every year, more than 30 billion plastic water bottles are thrown away in the U.S.

Buy foods in bulk and pack your own "snack packs." Commercial snack-size packages of cookies, dried fruit, and crackers cost more than home-bagged snacks and may be high in sodium or fat. Be creative and pack your own fruit, nut, and cereal mixes in reusable containers.



Back to Basics

Think whole foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, legumes, low-fat and fat-free milk, whole grains, eggs, lean meats, fish, and poultry.

Why buy whole foods? Whole foods are often eaten by themselves without added sugars, salt, or fat. When it comes to grains and fresh produce, whole foods usually contain more dietary fiber than processed food products. In addition to health benefits, there are also environmental benefits to food that require less processing. In general, the less processing that is required, the less energy is consumed for production and packaging.

Mix it Up

Did you know that not all foods are equal when it comes to their carbon footprint? For example, conventional meat and dairy production have high energy requirements and produce more green house gas emissions than plant-based foods. By varying your protein sources throughout the week, you can have a positive impact on the environment and your health.

Try using nuts or beans, such as kidney, pinto or garbanzo beans, to vary the protein in your diet. This will be good for the planet and will help reduce your intake of saturated fat and cholesterol as well.

Eat Local

It has been estimated that many food products in the United States travel an average of 1300 miles to get to the consumer. For fruits and vegetables, this means that they often have to be picked before peak ripeness which sacrifices both taste and nutrition.

However, not all climates are suitable for growing particular foods. Find out what is produced in your area, and take advantage of local options. Less energy is used for transport, and the foods will likely taste better as well.

- ▶ **Farmers' Markets:** One way to eat local is to find a Farmers' Market in your neighborhood. Fruits and vegetables are often picked the day they are brought to market. In addition to fresh produce, bread, cheese, and eggs are also found at many markets. Buying from local farmers supports businesses in your community and provides an opportunity to find out more about how your food was grown.
- ▶ **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA):** Another way to enjoy local produce is to join a CSA. Consumers purchase a "membership" to a local farm, and in return, they receive a box of seasonal produce each week throughout the farming season. For more information about some of the CSAs in your area, visit: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml>



Going green with physical activity

We all know it is important to be physically active for our own health, but it is important for the environment as well. By decreasing time in the car and walking or biking more, you not only burn calories but you can reduce pollution. **Think about ways you can go green with physical activity.**

- ▶ Can you walk to your friend's house?
- ▶ When you run errands, can you park in one spot and walk to the various stores instead of moving the car each time?
- ▶ If you have a meeting at a different office building, can you walk instead of drive?