

Fruits, Vegetables and Your Health: A Real Look at 9 A Day

Mom was right about fruits and vegetables

Your mother used to pile your dinner plate high with greens and tell you to "eat all your vegetables so you will grow up big and strong." Well, she was more right than you know.



Did you know that eating fruits and vegetables can lower your chances for diseases — like many kinds of cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease? And the simple fact is that most of us don't eat enough fruits and vegetables for good health.

Black men are at high risk for diet-related diseases

Unfortunately, black men are more likely to get heart disease, high blood pressure and many types of cancer than other men. So, we need to pay as much attention to what we put in our bodies as the stuff we keep out, just as we pay attention to the kind of fuel we put into our cars.

It's easier than you think

The National Cancer Institute tells us men should be eating 9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day as part of a healthy, active lifestyle. That may sound like a lot. But it's a lot less than you might think.

A serving fits in the palm of your hand

A serving is 1/2 cup cooked beans, a medium-size piece of fruit like an apple or plum, or a tiny 1/4 cup of raisins. So it's not a whole a lot of food. It's easy to eat 2 or 3 servings with every meal.

- Find a way to eat 9 A Day that is right for you. Enjoy the taste of crispy, juicy fruits or hearty vegetables you like.
- Eat at least two helpings of vegetables with every meal.
- Eat delicious fruit for a snack.
- Snack on raw vegetables with low-fat dip.
- Eat more salads with meals or as entrees.

Learn more about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables at www.9aday.cancer.gov.

It's not too late

I have cut down on salt and greasy foods and I eat more fruits and vegetables. Being more active has helped me lose weight and lower my blood pressure —and I feel great.

It's not too late to start listening to your mother. As the saying goes, if father knows best... mama knows better.



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