

## Salad Extravaganza - Getting Your Recommended Daily Allowance Of Vegetables

If you have been paying attention to the news, you should already know about the recent changes made to American RDA's. (Recommended Daily Allowances)

These recommendations are a general guideline to aid in a healthy diet for the entire population. The most notable change is eating more fruits and vegetables, preferably in their whole form.

According to the new guidelines, Americans should eat at least 5 servings of fruits or vegetables, although 9 servings is even better. Five to Nine servings a day of fruits and veggies may sound hard to do, but there is a solution. This solution is called a salad. Salads can be and are very versatile and can be served as prelude to dinner, as a side dish or even as an entree. Salads aren't just lettuce anymore.

Here are some suggestions to add texture and flavor to your salads:

- \* Baby Spinach or other type of lettuce. This will instantly add some variation from the typical Iceberg lettuce salad. It also adds colors, as some lettuces are deep purple and rich green, they have different tastes and textures as well.
- \* Cherry Tomatoes. These bite size tomatoes are perfect for salads. There is no slicing and dicing required, just rinse off and toss on.
- \* Olives. Both black and green olives add tang to an ordinary salad. At about 10 calories each, they add flavor without a lot of guilt.
- \* Cucumbers. Sliced or diced, cucumbers are another great topping for salads. One half cup of cucumbers is only 8 calories, so feel free to load up!
- \* Bean Sprouts. These give a great chinese flair to a salad. Also very low in calories.
- \* Other fresh vegetables such as carrots, cucumbers, peas, beans, mushrooms and fresh peppers adds variety and taste to any salad. Top with all of your favorites.
- \* Nuts. Consider adding chopped walnuts, soy nuts, almonds or peanuts for a healthy crunch to your next salad. Nuts help to lower cholesterol and provide Omega-3 fatty acids that aid your circulatory system.
- \* Fruits. Add sliced apples, pineapple, mandarin oranges, strawberries, grapes, melon, or all of the above for a salad that is sweet to eat. If you can eat pineapple on a pizza, you can surely eat it atop a fresh salad. This is a refreshing twist on the "traditional" salad and enjoyable in the summer months. Top with a sweet salad dressing, for a perfect meld of fruit and vegetables.
- \* Seasonings. You can add flavor easily with fresh ground pepper, herbs, or any number of salt free seasonings. Some specialty type stores may offering salad seasoning blends that are worth trying.

Keep in mind that not all salad toppings are created equal. Topping your salads with some items can quickly make it not so healthy. You'll want to avoid deep fried chicken filets. Granted, it is chicken.. but it's cooked in a deep fryer. Instead choose a boneless, skinless breast version. This will reduce the overall number of calories you consume. Drowning your salad in creamy buttermilk based dressings will also add extra calories. If available, choose a wine and vinegar. Bacon Bits are another bad choice for topping your otherwise healthy salad. Bacon is very high in sodium and fat, and doesn't add any nutritional value, other than taste.

I hope these tips will help you eat your recommended daily allowance of fruits and vegetables.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

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