

Get More Fruit and Veg into your Meals

Incorporating more vegetables and fruit into each meal is a great way to improve you and your family's health. With less than 10% of Queensland adults consuming the recommended 5 serves of vegetables each day, it was an obvious choice to make "Get More Fruit and Veg" the Country Kitchen's first key message!

Incorporating more fruit and vegetables into our diets increases our intake of important nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients, which aid in the prevention of chronic diseases. While dietary supplements may seem like the easy choice to get these essential vitamins and minerals, evidence does not show the same preventative benefits from supplements as we get from food. This is because our body better digests nutrients when they come directly from food, as well as that the essential nutrients in fruit and vegetables are accompanied by non-essential nutrients such as carotenoids, antioxidants and flavonoids not found in supplements.

Supplements are often expensive and can have negative health effects if taken in excess or for long periods of time. Most people can get all the vitamins and minerals required to meet the recommended dietary intakes through the consumption of a varied and healthy diet, as recommended by the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Focus on reaching the recommended five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit each day. There is no substitution for the benefits that fruits and vegetables provide and we recommend choosing food first over supplements whenever possible. Strategies that can help increase fruit and vegetable intake include:



- Adding colourful vegetables and/or fruit into each meal.
- Keeping frozen vegetables on hand so you can easily add to meals when you don't have fresh produce available.
- Substituting added sugar in recipes with high fibre fruits or sweet vegetables such as carrots, pumpkin or sweet potato.
- Incorporating one to two vegetarian meals per week.
- Aiming to have half of your plate filled with veg at lunch and dinner.