



Most of us need to eat more produce

I think I eat a lot of produce, but my sister, a dietitian, says I should eat more. I usually have a piece of fruit as a mid-morning snack, and I always have a salad and a side dish of vegetables at dinner.

Well, I hate to enter into family disputes, but I think you should pay more attention to your sister the dietitian.

According to the MyPyramid food intake guidelines, the amount of produce you should eat each day depends on your age, sex, and activity level. The minimum recommendations for teens and adults are 1.5 cups of fruit and 2 cups of vegetables each day. But, if you're a moderately active male in your 30s, for example, you should be consuming 2 cups of fruit and 3.5 cups of vegetables a day. You can check the recommendations for you at <http://www.mypyramid.gov>; click on "Get a personalized plan."

In November 2000, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a plan for "Healthy People 2010," a framework for measuring the nation's health priorities. One of its goals is for 75 percent of Americans to consume at least two fruits per day and 50 percent of Americans to consume three vegetables per day by 2010. Unfortunately, we have a long way to go. A recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

shows that average intake is far below those goals, with only 33 percent of adults eating two fruits and 27 percent eating three vegetables a day. Just 14 percent of adults eat both two fruits and three vegetables a day.

Teenagers are faring even worse. Just 13 percent eat three vegetables a day, and only 9.5 percent eat both two fruits and three vegetables a day.

And here's something new to keep in mind: Eating fruit might be even better for you than we thought. A recent study in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* indicates that scientists have significantly underestimated the content of polyphenols in fruit. Polyphenols are plant-based substances that have wide-ranging effects on health. If the study is correct, eating more fruit could give you a bigger health boost than scientists ever realized.

You already have a good start on fruit and vegetable consumption, but to add more to your daily routine, try a half-cup of fruit at breakfast, and a small salad or some baby carrots, celery sticks, or green pepper at lunch or for an afternoon snack. Also, choose a vegetable-based main dish, such as eggplant parmesan or vegetable stir-fry, more often for any meal. And keep fruits and vegetables visible and in easy reach as a visual reminder to increase your intake.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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