

# From the Nutritionist

Andrea Hart, RDN, CDN



## Eat More Fruits and Veggies!

Spring is finally here, and that makes it a great time to focus on eating more fruits and vegetables. Spring produce is making its debut, and as the season continues and turns to summer, more and more fresh produce will be available.

Fruits and veggies are important sources of vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients that you won't find in a vitamin supplement. Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables has many benefits — for example, they are filling but low in calories, so they can help with weight regulation; they are high in fiber, which helps with digestion; and they can reduce the risk of many diseases, including heart disease, high blood pressure and some cancers. Adults need at least 2 cups of vegetables

and 1 ½ cups of fruit each day for good nutrition — people with higher calorie intakes need even more. Unfortunately the average American doesn't eat the recommended amounts of these important foods.

Here are some tips to help you eat more:

- Try something new — a new type of fruit or veggie that you haven't had before, or one prepared in a different way. You might be surprised and find new flavors you enjoy!
- Add veggies to omelets for a great boost of color and nutrients. Broccoli, spinach, tomatoes, peppers, and onions are popular omelet fillings.
- Instead of flavored oatmeal packets, sweeten plain oatmeal naturally with raisins, applesauce, or chopped fruit like apples, pears, or bananas.
- Top your pizza with peppers, onions, or broccoli instead of (or in addition to) meats.
- Vegetable soup can be a tasty way to get a dose of many different veggies.
- Increase your opportunities to eat fruits and veggies by choosing them for snacks.
- Add veggies to pasta dishes and casseroles for extra nutrition.
- Bananas and sliced apples make great additions to sandwiches made with peanut butter or chocolaty spreads like Nutella.
- Load up your sandwich, wrap or burger with veggies like tomatoes, onions, shredded carrots, spinach, and guacamole.
- Choose 100% fruit juice, but limit your intake — while half a cup a day can count toward your daily fruit intake, more than that adds extra sugar to your diet.
- Salad bars can be a great way to meet the recommendations for fruits and vegetables. Go for a variety of each, but limit high calorie toppings like croutons and salad dressing.
- Fresh fruits and veggies are great, but if they are not available, frozen and canned versions are also nutritious. Check the label to look for varieties that don't have added sugar or salt.
- Check out local farmer's markets and farm stands for great tasting, local produce. Or, plant a garden and grow your own!

*Andrea Hart, registered dietitian nutritionist and New York State-certified dietitian/nutritionist, is available for free, confidential, one-on-one counseling and as a speaker or facilitator for campus groups, panels or classes.*

*Contact Andrea: [andrea.hart@cortland.edu](mailto:andrea.hart@cortland.edu) or call 607-753-5773 with questions or to set up an appointment. Or stop by her office, first floor, Neubig Hall, across from the Neubig Dining cashier.*