What is Vitamin C?

Vitamin C is an antioxidant and an essential vitamin. Antioxidants help maintain a healthy immune system and protect the body from cell damage caused by second-hand smoke, air pollution, UV rays from the sun, etc. Because our bodies cannot make vitamin C, we need to get it from the foods we eat.

Vitamin C may reduce the risk of some cancers. Vitamin C is also important for wound healing and healthy bones, teeth, and skin. Vitamin C can increase the absorption of iron and folate.

Sources of Vitamin C

Most fruits and vegetables contain at least some vitamin C. The following foods are good sources of vitamin C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruits</th>
<th>Vegetables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berries</td>
<td>Bell pepper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cantaloupe</td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>Brussels sprouts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guava</td>
<td>Cabbage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiwifruit</td>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lemon / lime</td>
<td>Chili peppers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mango</td>
<td>Green peas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nectarine</td>
<td>Kale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Potato</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papaya</td>
<td>Spinach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tangerine</td>
<td>Tomato</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sweet potato</td>
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</table>

Raw fruits and vegetables are higher in vitamin C because cooking destroys vitamin C. Steaming or microwaving foods may lessen cooking losses.

Choose local fruits and vegetables. They are higher in vitamin C because they are not exposed to excessive sunlight when shipped to the store.

Tips for Eating More Vitamin C

- Add slices strawberries or kiwi to your oatmeal or cold cereal
- Make a fresh homemade salsa
- Take a small mandarin or tangerine to work and eat it as a snack between meals.
- Season food with citrus instead of salt, this adds flavor and lowers sodium intake.
- Add herbs such as garlic and watercress to your food, for flavor and vitamin C.
- Use kale or spinach leaves instead of lettuce when making a salad.
- Add chopped kale to soups.
- Make a fruit smoothie using any of the high vitamin C fruits listed in the table. For an extra boost of vitamin C, add kale or spinach to the smoothie!
Spinach Salad

8 ounces fresh spinach, torn into bite size pieces
¼ cup feta or goat cheese, crumbled
¼ small red onion, thinly sliced
¼ cup dried cranberries
2 Tbsp sliced almonds, toasted (optional)

Dressing:
½ cup bottled balsamic vinaigrette dressing
2 Tbsp orange juice
1 tsp orange zest

1. Place spinach in serving bowl. Add onion and half of cheese; toss to combine.
2. Combine salad dressing ingredients in a small mixing bowl. Pour over salad and toss to coat. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Top with cranberries and almonds. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Facts:
Number of servings: 4
Calories: 110, Total fat 3 g, Total carbohydrate 18 g, Protein 4 g, Sodium 249 mg


Vitamin C Boost Smoothie

1 cup strawberries, halved
1 orange, peeled and quartered (can substitute with mandarins)
½ cup mango
1 banana, peeled
6-8 ice cubes, crushed

1. Blend all ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth. Pour into cups and enjoy.

Nutrition Facts:
Serving size: 1 cup Number of servings: 2
Calories: 139, Total fat 0g, Total carbohydrate 34g, Protein 2g, Sodium 3mg, Sugar 23g

Source: Original Recipe

Mango Salsa

1 mango, peeled, seeded, & chopped
1 green onion, chopped
2 Tbsp lime juice
¼ cup chopped red bell pepper
2 Tbsp cilantro, chopped
1 Tbsp lemon juice

1. In a medium bowl, mix mango, red bell pepper, green onion, cilantro, lime juice, and lemon juice. Cover and allow to sit at least 30 minutes before serving.

Nutrition Facts:
Serving size: 2 tbsp Number of servings: 8
Calories 45, Total fat 0g, Total carbohydrate 11g, Protein 1g, Sodium 2mg, Sugar 9g


For more information: