Pack your meals with healthy produce using these 7 tips

Research links diets rich in fruits and vegetables with a lower risk for heart disease, but The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that most Americans eat less than half the amount of recommended vegetable servings. Meals packed with produce can help you lower the risk for heart disease, lose weight and add more fiber, nutrients and antioxidants in your diet. If you're finding it difficult to get your daily servings of vegetables, try these seven tips that make eating more vegetables easy.

Tip #1. Top Proteins with Sautéed Vegetables
Instead of topping cooked fish (or meat or poultry) with a sauce, use sautéed vegetables, such as peppers, onions and tomatoes. They’ll add plenty of flavor and nutrients—and at the same time, boost portion size without adding a lot of calories.

Tip #2. Replace Carbs with Vegetables
Lighten carbs with low-cal veggies. If you love cheesy mashed potatoes but not all the calories they deliver, replace some of the potatoes with vegetables, such as broccoli and you’ll get fewer calories and more disease-fighting antioxidants. (Another twist on this trick: replace some of your pasta with veggies.)

Tip #3. Use Lettuce Leaves as Bread
The next time you make a sandwich, consider lettuce leaves as a virtually calorie-free alternative to a bread slice or wrap. Just about any filling works beautifully. Try tuna or chicken salad, a stir-fry or even a burger.

The low-cal condiment is long on flavor and fiber—and it packs a whole vegetable serving into every 1/2 cup.

Tip #5. Add Spinach
Add spinach to soups, stews and casseroles. It pumps up the volume—so you feel like you’re getting more—for virtually no additional calories.

Tip #6. Dress Up Your Vegetables
Eating vegetables simply steamed—plain—gets old fast. Add just a little olive oil plus big, bold “no-calorie” flavoring (garlic, sherry vinegar), and you’ve got a delicious proof that low-cal eating doesn’t have to be boring. You can do it forever.

Tip #7. Try Edamame
Get edamame—green soybeans—into your diet. They have satisfying protein and fiber. Try adding them to salads, stir-fries or soups.

www.commonhealth.virginia.gov
http://www.eatingwell.com/article/15316/7-ways-to-eat-more-vegetables/

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