

Ask the Expert:

What is Food Fortification?

Written by Adina Miller, Purdue University Dietetics & Nutrition, Fitness, and Health '24

Our bodies need certain vitamins and minerals to function. Unfortunately, the amount of certain nutrients in some of the most commonly eaten foods may still not be enough to meet nutrient needs. In the past, this has caused public health problems, because people were not getting enough of certain vitamins and minerals to stay healthy. Since certain vitamins and minerals are not present in large enough amounts in foods that many people typically eat, the practice of fortification started. Fortification means adding vitamins and minerals to common food and beverage products to improve their nutritional quality. The main purpose of fortification is to lessen the chance for vitamin and mineral shortfalls in the population. Shortfalls occur when a person does not get the amount of vitamins and minerals that are needed to stay healthy over the long-term. Read on to learn about which foods and beverages are fortified with which vitamins and minerals:



- Milk is fortified with vitamin D. Almost all Americans do not get enough vitamin D, so drinking milk is a good step to take to help prevent vitamin D deficiency.

- Several fruit juices like orange juice are fortified with calcium. Calcium is a mineral that many Americans also don't get enough of. It is important for bone health in adults and bone growth in children and teens.

- Iodine is a key part of overall everyday health in its role as a regulator in metabolism or the body's daily energy use. Iodine can be found in iodized salt. However, most Americans consume too much salt, so try to limit adding salt. If you do use salt in cooking or on the table, though, make sure it is iodized.



- Many breakfast cereals are fortified with key vitamins and minerals, for example vitamin A and iron. Vitamin A helps with eye sight and iron helps with growth and giving your body energy.

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Food Safety: Lessening Food Waste

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Americans throw away billions of pounds of food each year. Reducing the amount of food waste can start with good habits in your kitchen. Here are some tips on how to get started:



- **Plan meals with foods that you already have in your kitchen.**
 - Take note of what foods you have in your fridge, freezer, and pantry before you head to the grocery store for more.
- **Try to use up all your food in leftovers.**
 - Some examples of meals that are great with leftovers are: soups, salads, sandwiches, and pasta dishes.
- **Use foods before they expire.**
 - Keep track of when foods in your kitchen will expire and try to eat them before their expiration date.
- **Practice food safety when storing food.**
 - Put perishable foods in the fridge instead of letting them sit out on the counter.
- **Be aware of portion sizes, so you buy the correct amount of food.**
 - Avoid buying more food than you or your family can eat before the food spoils.

Source: https://www.eatright.org/-/media/files/campaigns/eatright/nm-2023/english/tip-sheets-english/nm_2023_eating-right-and-reduce-food-waste.pdf

Summer Squash, Italian Style

Directions

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil on medium high in a large frying pan.
2. Put squash and any other in season vegetables in the pan, add water and season with salt, pepper, and basil.
3. Cook for 5 minutes on medium heat. Squash should be tender crisp.
4. Sprinkle with cheese and drizzle with another tablespoon of oil. Put under a preheated broiler and broil until the cheese melts.

Ingredients (4 servings)

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil*
- 1 summer squash (medium, thinly sliced)
- 1 tablespoon water
- salt and pepper (optional, to taste)
- 1 tablespoon sweet basil, fresh or dried
- 6 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, Romano cheese, or shredded cheese*



Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 98
 Protein: 3g
 Carbs: 2g
 Fat: 9g

***foods included in the TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)**

Sources: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/summer-squash-italian-style>

Eating Right:

Incorporating Fruits and Vegetables into Meals, Snacks, and More

Written by Adina Miller, Purdue University Dietetics & Nutrition, Fitness, and Health '24

Fruits and vegetables are important because they are packed with nutrients that are healthy for our bodies. Keeping fresh fruits and vegetables to include in meals can sometimes be challenging, because they may spoil more quickly compared to other foods. However, fruits and vegetables can be bought in canned, frozen, juice, or dried form, which last longer than fresh produce. These forms of fruits and vegetables may be easier to keep and add to snacks and meals.

How much fruit should I eat each day?

MyPlate, the advice in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, describes daily fruit needs based on age and gender, but a general rule of thumb is for adults to aim for 2 cups of fruit per day. Check out this link for more information on daily fruit needs <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/fruits>

How many vegetables do I need each day?

In general, it is recommended that adults aim for 3 cups of vegetables per day. Check out MyPlate for more specific recommendations. <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/vegetables>

How can I add more fruit to my diet?

Fruits can be great additions to meals. For example, you could add some berries to your morning cereal, yogurt, or oatmeal. They can also be nice snacks on their own or as a side of a meal. You could add an orange or a banana on the side to a sandwich, salad, or soup. Mixing fruits like grapes, melons, and pineapple together to make a fruit salad can also be a fun way to make fruit a side to a meal. Making smoothies with frozen or canned fruits is another great way to incorporate fruits. Fruits can also be paired with foods. For example, apples and peanut butter, yogurt and peaches, or applesauce with cinnamon.

How can I add more vegetables to my diet?

Dark-green vegetables, such as broccoli, kale, mixed greens, and romaine can be added as sides to meals. For examples, they can be added to meals in the forms of a side salad or cooked vegetables. Red and orange vegetables, such as carrots, bell peppers, sweet potato, and tomatoes can be added into meals together or separately as a stir fry or baked in the oven. Starchy vegetables such as green peas and corn pair nicely with soups or as sides to a meal. Vegetables can also be eaten fresh and dipped into hummus or other sauce or dips as a snack.



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This newsletter is edited by Adina Miller and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

In The News: March was the 50th National Nutrition Month!

Written by Adina Miller, Purdue University Dietetics & Nutrition, Fitness, and Health '24

Every March, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has a new topic for National Nutrition Month. This year, the topic was "Fuel for the Future". The main idea behind this topic was that no matter your age or lifestyle, making healthy food and drink choices will be beneficial for your energy now and in the future. The good outcomes of eating well can add up over time. Here are a few main points of fueling for the future:

- Eating in an environmentally friendly way
- Getting nutrition advice from a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)
- Eating a variety of different foods from the food groups
- Cooking tasty food at home
- Eating healthfully on a budget by planning

See the link for more information:

https://www.eatright.org/-/media/files/campaigns/eatright/nnm-2023/english/tip-sheets-english/nnm_2023_fuel-for-the-future-tip-sheet_english.pdf

