

# Let's #VegTogether

## Veggie Health Tips



- Rates of heart disease, cancer and stroke are higher in Louisiana than in the United States as a whole.
- The leading causes of death in the U.S. are heart disease, stroke, and cancer—all diseases that eating more vegetables may prevent.
- More than four in five Americans do not eat enough vegetables, making veggies the most under-consumed of all recommended foods.
- Eating more vegetables can help lower blood pressure.
- Eating more vegetables may reduce the risk of some cancers, particularly colon cancer and breast cancer.
- Eating vegetables instead of high-calorie foods may help in avoiding weight gain and reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- Vegetables are important sources of many nutrients, including dietary fiber, potassium, folate, iron and other vitamins.
- Diets rich in dietary fiber from vegetables can reduce the risk of heart disease. Veggies high in fiber include: peas, brussels sprouts and parsnips.
- Eating more folate reduces a woman's risk of having a child with a brain or spinal cord defect. Veggies containing folate include: spinach, asparagus, turnip greens, cauliflower, beets and broccoli.
- Potassium helps maintain a healthy blood pressure. Veggies containing potassium include: dark leafy greens like spinach, avocados, squash and mushrooms.
- Iron is necessary to protect against anemia. Veggies containing iron include: dark leafy greens like spinach, peas, brussels sprouts, asparagus and mushrooms.

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Find more quick prep tips at [VegTogether.org](https://www.vegtogether.org).

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**But, wait! There's hope! It's in the veggie section. Here's what to know, and what to do:**

- Eat vegetables at least three times a day. The more, the better. (What other food can you say that about?)
- Mix it up. Get dark green veggies as well as red and orange ones. Legumes—like beans and peas—count toward our veggie tally, too. Each of these delivers different nutrients, so go for variety.

**And here's what we should eat less of. (Don't worry, it's a short list.)**

- Processed foods. That means food that comes in a box or a bag—most of it has too much sugar, salt and unhealthy fat, so it's best to steer clear.
  - Refined grains like white bread, crackers, snack cakes, corn and wheat tortillas, and white rice. Choose foods made with whole grains and brown rice instead.
- Meats, especially processed ones. They're often high in saturated fats, and red meat and processed meat (like deli meats, bacon and sausage) have been linked to colon cancer. Which is even less fun than a colonoscopy.

**Once we bring veggies home, the hard part is over. Here are some prep tips:**

- Keep it simple. Veggies taste great on their own (no, really!) so there's no need to smother them in sauces, cheese or dressings.
  - When cooking veggies, the best methods are steaming, boiling, roasting, microwaving or sautéing.
- Steer clear of deep frying or using too much oil, cheeses or heavy sauces

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