



# Eat fruit, veggies for health, not weight

**I was hoping that eating more fruits and vegetables this summer would help me lose a few pounds, but so far, no luck. Am I missing something?**

A lot of people think that eating more healthfully will automatically help them slim down. And no wonder: Most weight-loss plans emphasize the importance of incorporating more fruit and vegetables into the diet.

That's advice worth following for most Americans. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults in the U.S. consume fruit only 1.1 times per day on average, and vegetables only 1.6 times per day. At the same time, U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend adults eat 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit daily, along with 2 to 3 cups of vegetables. Boosting fruit and vegetable consumption is a good idea for just about everyone.

But for most people, unfortunately, that's not the only change in diet required for weight loss.

A meta-analysis published recently in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition examined the effect of fruit and vegetable consumption on weight. Researchers reviewed seven studies conducted between 1998 and 2013 involving more than 1,200 people. All of the studies were randomized and lasted for at least eight weeks, and all focused on fruit and vegetable intake and weight loss or gain.

The authors found that, across the board, increased fruit and vegetable consumption had no effect on weight loss in those studies.

From one perspective, it might sound like there's no reason to focus on fruits and vegetables if you want to lose weight. But as the authors noted, in these studies, eating more produce didn't cause weight gain, either. And there are plenty of reasons to eat more fruits and vegetables.

According to the CDC:

- A healthful diet rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.
- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals that contribute to good health.
- Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and can help you feel full without resorting to less-healthy choices.

The CDC offers links to additional resources to help you get the fruits and vegetables you need each day on its "Nutrition for Everyone" website. Included is a link with ideas on how to incorporate more produce in your weight-loss effort. For more information, see [cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables](http://cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables).

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1043, or [filipic.3@osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@osu.edu).*



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July 3, 2014

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**Editor:**

This column was reviewed by Irene Hatsu, food security specialist for Ohio State University Extension, the outreach arm of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

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