

Nutrivore90: Eat More Veggies

Why 5 Servings of Veggies a Day Is the Nutrivore Way

When it comes to improving your diet, eating more vegetables gives you the biggest return on investment of nearly anything you can do. The scientific case for veggies is overwhelming—vegetable intake is consistently linked to lower risk of nearly every chronic disease you can name, from heart disease and stroke to cancer, type 2 diabetes, autoimmune diseases, osteoporosis, cognitive decline, and even mood disorders like depression and anxiety.



In fact, eating plenty of vegetables every day is so powerful that researchers estimate that nearly 8 million premature deaths could be prevented globally each year if everyone ate enough of them. That's how foundational this habit is to your long-term health.

So, how many servings should we aim for? The preponderance of evidence suggests that 5 servings of vegetables per day is the most effective target for maximizing health benefits.

Let's acknowledge though that the science is mixed here, with some studies showing that the benefits of vegetable consumption begin to plateau around 3 servings, and others suggesting continued improvements with 6, 7, or even 8 servings. Overall, aiming for 5 servings per day is a research-supported sweet spot—offering the most consistent and meaningful reductions in chronic disease risk without being overwhelming or unrealistic.

That's why Nutrivore90 sets a goal of 5 servings of vegetables per day: it's the sweet spot for health benefits, it's backed by decades of research, and it's totally achievable with a little practice.


Every little bit counts. **In fact, going from eating no vegetables to a single serving per day delivers a similar amount of health benefit as going from one serving per day to five—yes, eating five servings of veggies per day is about twice as good for you as eating one.** This is particularly great news if you currently don't eat vegetables because any effort you put in to upping your veggie intake will return dividends in terms of your health. **And if 3 servings per day feels like a more achievable goal for you right now, start there!** There's no need to be perfect—just keep building up and celebrating your wins along the way.

And don't worry: one serving isn't a huge amount. For most veggies, one serving is:

- ✨ 1 cup for raw vegetables (about the size of your fist)
- ✨ 2 cups for raw leafy greens (like spinach, kale, or arugula)
- ✨ ½ cup for cooked vegetables (since most shrink as they cook)
- ✨ ¼ cup for avocados and olives

You don't need to weigh or measure your food—eyeballing is more than good enough. One cup is about the same volume as your fist. And because five daily servings falls within the range where the benefits of veggies plateau, eating a little bit more or a little bit less than that goal won't make a big difference to your health or your ability to hit the daily values of the nutrients vegetables have—so you don't need to overthink veggie servings!

The important thing is to aim high and start where you are. Whether you're already close or just getting started, five servings a day is a powerful habit that supports every system in your body. And with Nutrivore90, you're learning how to make that habit feel automatic. That's what makes it sustainable. **Let's eat more veggies—and feel the difference!**

 **Tip:** *If you're looking for a handy-dandy tool for tracking your servings of vegetables, you'll be excited to know that the **Nutrivore Weekly Serving Matrix includes checkboxes for total vegetables**, as well as **cruciferous veggies, root veggies, leafy veggies, mushrooms and alliums** as particularly valuable options!*

Vegetables

5 Vegetable Servings Per Day

SERVING SIZE



The 4 fingers of 2 closed fists is approximately 2 Cups






4 fingers of a fist



The 4 fingers of a closed fist is approximately 1 Cup

2 CUPS LEAFY VEGGIES (measured raw)

1 CUP MOST VEGGIES (measured raw)

 Leafy Vegetables	 Cruciferous Vegetables	 Alliums	 Mushrooms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> amaranth greens arugula beet greens chard collard greens cress dandelion endive kale lettuce microgreens mustard greens purslane radicchio sorrel spinach sprouts watercress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arugula bok choy broccoli Brussels sprouts cabbage cauliflower Chinese broccoli collard greens daikon horseradish kale kohlrabi mustard greens radish rutabaga turnip wasabi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> chives elephant garlic garlic leek onion scallion spring onion shallot ramp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> boletus button mushroom chanterelle cremini maitake morel oyster mushroom portobello shiitake white mushroom wood ear mushroom
 Root Vegetables			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> acorn squash arrowroot bamboo shoots beet root butternut squash carrot cassava (aka tapioca, yuca) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> celeriac daikon delicata squash ginger Hubbard squash Jerusalem artichoke jicama kabocha squash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lotus root parsnip potato pumpkin radish rutabaga spaghetti squash sweet potato 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> taro tiger nut turnip water chestnut yam

* These foods do double duty - they count as both vegetable and starchy food servings

SERVING SIZE

4 fingers
of a fist



The 4 fingers
of a closed fist
is approximately
1 Cup










1 CUP MOST VEGGIES
(measured raw)

Vegetables (continued...)

5 Vegetable Servings Per Day

 Nightshades	 Other Vegetables	 Umbellifers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ashwagandha ● Bell peppers (aka sweet peppers) ● Eggplant ● Goji berries (aka wolfberries) ● Hot peppers (such as chili peppers, jalapeños, habaneros, chili-based spices, red pepper, and cayenne pepper) ● Potatoes (but not sweet potatoes) ● Tamarillos ● Tomatillos ● Tomatoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avocados ● Alfalfa sprouts ● Artichoke ● Asparagus ● Capers ● Cucumber ● Edible flowers ● Green beans ● Heart of palm ● Okra ● Olives ● Peas ● Rhubarb (only the stems are edible) ● Summer squash, all varieties ● Squash blossoms ● Zucchini 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carrot ● Celeriac ● Celery ● Chervil ● Coriander/cilantro ● Dill ● Fennel ● Parsley ● Parsnip

Helpful Veggie Tips

<p> Start with the Veggies You Like</p>	<p> Incorporate Veggies into Every Meal</p>	<p> Start with Small Portions</p>
<p>Make adding more veggies as painless as possible. Start with whatever is the simplest meal and your favorite veggie.</p>	<p>Try adding vegetables to meals beyond lunch and dinner. Include spinach or bell peppers in your scrambled eggs, add shredded carrots to oatmeal, or toss leafy greens into smoothies.</p>	<p>If you're not used to eating many vegetables, start with small servings and gradually increase them over time. Adding a small salad or side of roasted veggies to meals is a good way to build the habit.</p>
<p> Add Vegetables to Favorite Dishes</p>	<p> Roast or Air-fry for Maximum Flavor</p>	<p> Plan and Prep for Easy Access</p>
<p>Add extra vegetables to dishes you already enjoy. Try mixing spinach, mushrooms, or onions into pasta sauces, lasagna, casseroles, or even pizza. Bulk up soups and stews with zucchini, carrots, or bell peppers.</p>	<p>If you're not a fan of raw vegetables, roasting or air-frying can completely transform their taste and texture. Caramelizing brings out natural sweetness, making them more enjoyable to eat.</p>	<p>Chop vegetables and fruit in advance and store them in the fridge for easy access throughout the week. Having them ready to go makes it easy to add them to meals without extra effort. This is also great for kids or when you're in a hurry.</p>
<p> Blend or Juice for A Nutrient Boost</p>	<p> Snack on Fruits & Veggies</p>	<p> Make Soups and Stews Veggie-packed</p>
<p>Smoothies and fresh juices are a great way to pack in extra fruits and vegetables. Add leafy greens, cucumbers, or avocado to a smoothie for a delicious, nutrient-dense drink.</p>	<p>Swap processed snacks for whole foods like sliced cucumbers with hummus, apple slices with nut butter, or a handful of cherry tomatoes. Having these options readily available makes healthy snacking easy.</p>	<p>Boost the nutrition of soups and stews by loading them with vegetables. Add leafy greens, root veggies, mushrooms or tomatoes to enhance flavor, texture and nutrition.</p>

Budget Tips for Eating More Vegetables

Eating more veggies doesn't have to mean spending more money. In fact, with a few simple strategies, you can **boost your vegetable intake and stick to your grocery budget**. Here are some tips to make veggies more affordable and accessible:

Skip Organic

Conventionally grown vegetables are just as nutritious as organic—sometimes even more so—and are perfectly safe and health-promoting. **When it comes to getting more veggies on your plate, quantity is what matters, not the farming method.** Numerous studies have shown that the nutritional differences between organic and conventional produce are negligible. And studies comparing the health effects of organic foods diets to conventional, and which have properly accounted for the types of food being eaten, show no benefit of organic foods—you get the same health benefit of eating broccoli whether it's organic or conventional. **For more details see Chapter 10 in *Nutrivore* by Dr. Sarah Ballantyne.**

Buy Frozen or Canned

Frozen and canned vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh—sometimes even more so, **since they're harvested at peak ripeness.** And, frozen and canned vegetables are health-promoting options—you don't need to worry about BPA, PFAS or microplastics. Keep staples like spinach, broccoli, carrots, peas, or green beans in your freezer or pantry to toss into meals anytime. Look for low-sodium canned options and steam-in-bag frozen veggies for quick prep. **For more details see Chapter 10 in *Nutrivore* by Dr. Sarah Ballantyne.**

Shop What's in Season

Seasonal vegetables are often cheaper, tastier, and more nutritious. Learn what's in season in your area and build your meals around those ingredients. **Bonus: Seasonal produce tends to rotate naturally through the veggie color families!**



Buy in Bulk

Buying larger quantities of staple veggies like carrots, onions, cabbage, or potatoes can help stretch your dollar. Just make sure to store them properly (cool, dry, and dark for most root veggies!) and use them across multiple meals.



Use Every Part

Don't toss those broccoli stems or beet greens! **Many veggie parts we consider scraps are totally edible and nutrient-rich.** Sauté stems with garlic and olive oil or add chopped greens to soups, stews, or egg dishes. Save peels and ends to make veggie broth!



Plan for Leftovers

When roasting vegetables, **double the batch and use leftovers** in wraps, bowls, or breakfast scrambles the next day. Stretching one prep session across several meals helps save time and money.



Prioritize High-Value Veggies

Not all vegetables have the same nutrient density per dollar. **Some of the best bang-for-your-buck options include:**

- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Spinach (especially frozen)
- Potatoes
- Brussels sprouts
- Kale
- Cauliflower
- Broccoli (especially frozen)

These are not only affordable but versatile and nutrient-packed—a great foundation for your 5-a-day habit.

Eating more veggies doesn't have to be expensive—it just takes a little strategy. With these tips in your back pocket, you can nourish your body and your budget at the same time! Every veggie counts—no matter how it's grown, stored, or served.