

**Fresh, Frozen or Canned
Fruits and Vegetables:
All Can Be Healthy Choices!**



Have you eaten a variety of fruits and vegetables today? The [American Heart Association recommends](#) a healthy dietary pattern that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, legumes, fish, skinless poultry, nuts, and fat-free/low-fat dairy products, and limits sodium, saturated fat, red meat and added sugars. The good news is that all produce counts, which means canned, fresh and frozen varieties can help you reach your goal.

Here's how to pick the best produce of the bunch:

Canned Fruits & Vegetables

Canned fruits and veggies are convenient to have in your pantry for times you can't get to the store; they can even be kept at work (with a can opener) for an afternoon snack. Since they don't expire quickly, you won't waste money when buying canned veggies – which sometimes happens with fresh produce that goes bad.

- **Watch for sodium:** Sodium is usually added to canned foods to preserve them. Look for low-sodium, reduced-sodium or no-salt-added labeled foods. Compare the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label and choose the product with the lowest amount. Drain and rinse canned veggies to reduce sodium even more.
- **Watch for added sugar:** Look for fruit that's canned in water, its own juice, or light syrup (drain and rinse).
- **Delicious uses:**
 - Add drained cans of corn, tomatoes and pinto beans or any other vegetable to low-sodium chicken broth for a super-fast and filling vegetable soup.
 - Use a blender, food processor or a fork to smash drained and rinsed garbanzo beans, northern beans, or any beans into a bean dip for baby carrots; add a little lemon juice and garlic powder for some zip.
 - Serve canned fruit as a dessert topped with low-fat, no sugar-added yogurt; or top whole grain cereal with canned fruit.

Frozen Fruits & Vegetables

These are picked at the peak of ripeness and then flash frozen to preserve optimal nutrition. They last for several months in the freezer and can be a very economical choice.

- **Watch for Sodium:** Compare the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label and choose the product with the lowest amount. Sauces and seasonings can contain excess salt and add calories.
- **Watch for added sugar:** Choose 100% frozen fruits without added sugars.
- **Delicious uses:**
 - When you boil pasta, throw in some frozen veggies at the end of the cooking time for added nutrients and variety.
 - Whip up a smoothie of frozen fruit, nonfat or low-fat milk and yogurt.
 - Mix frozen berries into baked goods and oatmeal.

Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

Fresh fruits & vegetables are easy, portable choices. Whenever you leave the house, get into the habit of stashing a fresh snack in your purse or backpack; think: apple, orange, banana, grapes or baby carrots. These snacks will keep you energized and avoid less-healthy snacks at vending machines.

- **Look for Seasonal Choices:** Your heart-healthy recipes will taste even better with produce that's in season. Check out our [Seasons of Produce infographic](#).
- **Delicious uses:**
 - Always top sandwiches with extra vegetables.
 - Serve cut-up veggies with hummus or a "light" dip for a healthy snack.
 - Serve a colorful fruit salad for dessert.
 - Add pureed fruits and veggies to sauces, smoothies, soups and more for a boost of flavor and nutrients.

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