



April 12, 2005 Vegetables and fruit are disease fighting powerhouses

NEWMARKET - April is Cancer Awareness Month and what better time to start thinking about making changes to your life to reduce your risk of cancer. York Region Public Health Nutritionists say that the one thing that people can do that will have a great impact on their risk for cancer, is to eat at least five servings of vegetables and fruit per day.

A large scale study found that unhealthy eating, being overweight and physical inactivity may be responsible for 30% of cancers in the developed world. Furthermore, it was found that a diet rich in vegetables and fruit can reduce the risk of colorectal, lung and a number of other cancers.

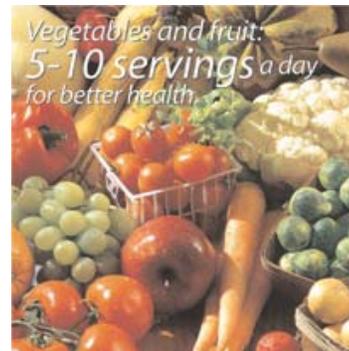
To some people, the thought of eating at least five servings of vegetables and fruit per day seems overwhelming. "Only 36% of York Region adults eat vegetables and fruit five to 10 times per day" says Susan Finkelstein, Public Health Nutritionist at York Region Health Services. "The potential of vegetables and fruit to prevent cancer is so promising that we must make eating them a priority."

To ensure you are meeting your quota of vegetables and fruit for the day, always have a supply of produce at home. It doesn't matter if you choose fresh, frozen or canned. They all have the same nutrition and health benefits. If you are pressed for time, you can purchase pre-chopped and/or frozen vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and lettuce.

An easy way to help you get your servings of vegetables without much effort is to fill your sandwiches with a good helping of vegetables such as leafy lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, alfalfa sprouts and cucumbers. When dining out, ask for a side salad or steamed vegetables with your entrée. 100% fruit juices or vegetable juices are also great options to help you meet your minimum of five a day.

Although *all* vegetables and fruit have protective substances such as vitamins, minerals, and fibre, research has shown that there are some "nutritional stars" when it comes to cancer prevention:

- ***Cruciferous vegetables***  
These include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, collards, rutabaga and turnips. Studies have found that these vegetables contain potent anti-cancer compounds called indoles and isothiocyanates.
- ***Dark green, orange and red vegetables and fruit***  
Generally speaking, vegetables and fruit that are dark green, bright orange or red contain the highest amounts of beneficial, disease-fighting compounds. Some examples include asparagus, kiwi, spinach, kale, carrots, mango, papaya, raspberries, red cabbage, red peppers and watermelon.
- ***Tomato and tomato products***



*Reduce your risk for cancer, heart disease and stroke by packing your diet with the goodness of vegetables and fruit. It's easier than you think!*  
**Take action to improve your health from the inside out**

Health Connection 1.800.361.5653

Tomato and tomato products contain a powerful anti-oxidant called lycopene. More and more studies are showing a link between high intakes of tomato and tomato products and lower risk of cancer, in particular prostate cancer.

The research is strong and consistent. For better health, eat at least five servings of vegetables and fruit per day.

For accurate, reliable and current nutrition information, speak to a Registered Dietitian at York Region Health Services *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653 or visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca).

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**Attachment: Printable flyer, "Vegetables and fruit: 5-10 servings a day for better health"**