

Vegetable and Fruit Exchanges from a "Mediterranean Diet"

Patient compliance with "eating more fruits vegetables" is poor. One possible reason is the lack of good instructional material on how to eat more, which to eat, and what kind of balance to achieve. In a clinical trial in Michigan, the accompanying instructions for fruit and vegetable exchanges were given to subjects by mail with a phone follow-up by a dietitian, who personalized the counseling and recommendations. By the end of six months, the group receiving the instruction were self selecting a diet that had increased from 4.0 servings a day to 8.4.

Dark green vegetables	1 serving or more per day	Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, chard, dark green lettuce, greens, grape leaves, kale, nori (seaweed), *peas, spinach, watercress, zucchini (with skin)
Allium vegetables	Use liberally once or more/day	Garlic, green onion, leeks, onions, scallions, shallots
Green herbs	1 Tbsp or more per day	Basil, bay leaves, chervil, chives, cilantro, dill weed, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, peppermint, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme
Red vegetables	1 serving or more/day	*Catsup (2 Tbsp), salsa (1/4 c), *spaghetti sauce (1/4 c), tomatoes, tomato juice (1/2 c), tomato paste (2 Tbsp), tomato sauce (1/4 c), **tomato soup (1 c), vegetable juice
Yellow/orange vegetables	1 serving or more/day	Baby carrots (4), peppers (red, orange, yellow), carrots (1 med), carrot juice (1/4 c), *pumpkin, tangerines (2), *winter squash, *plantain, canned vegetable soup (1 c), vegetable juice
Other vegetables	1 serving or more/day	Artichoke, asparagus, baby corn, bamboo shoots, bean sprouts, beets, bok choy, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, *corn, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, green peppers, kohlrabi, mushrooms, okra, *parsnip, pea pods, **potatoes, radish, rhubarb, rutabaga, sauerkraut, sugar snaps, *taro root, turnips, water chestnuts
Vitamin C fruits	1 serving or more/day	Cantaloupe, grapefruit, guava, kiwi fruit, lemon, orange, mango, papaya, strawberries, tangerine (2)
Other fruits	1 serving or more/day	Apple, apple sauce, apricot (4), banana, berries, cherries (12), dates (3), figs (2), grapes (15-20), 100% fruit juice, melon, nectarine, pineapple, plums (2-3), prunes (3), *raisins, peach, pear, starfruit, any other

Figure 1.

A brief version of the Modified Mediterranean Exchange List that was provided to intervention group participants. In addition to the categories shown, participants were asked to consume two to three exchanges of low-fat dairy foods, 5 to 6 oz of lean or very lean meat or other protein, and 6 to 11 carbohydrate exchanges each day, with amounts adjusted to maintain baseline energy and fat intakes. Unless otherwise indicated, one serving of fruits and vegetables was defined as 1 cup raw, 2 cups loose leafy greens, 1/2 cup cooked, 1/4 cup dried, 1 medium vegetable or fruit, or 1/2 cup juice (count up to two servings/day for juice, the rest of the goal was to be met from whole foods). Starred foods were to be counted as both 1 fruit/vegetables exchange and 1/2 (*) or 1 (**) carbohydrate exchange. ^aMUFA=monounsaturated fatty acid. ^bPUFA=polyunsaturated fatty acid.