



## The Importance of Fruits and Vegetables

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Many studies have highlighted the connection between eating fruits and vegetables and good health, especially a decreased risk of a wide range of serious diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer and strokes. Under-consumption of fruits and vegetables is also linked to an increased risk of obesity, both in adults and children.

What makes fruits and vegetables so important to good health?

Fresh fruits and vegetables are high in fiber and low in calories. They are also some of nature's best sources of antioxidants and other phytonutrients: substances that work synergistically to benefit human health in ways that science is just beginning to understand.

### The Healthy People 2010 program falls short of modest goals

Proper nutrition is central to good health and maintaining proper weight. A 2010 United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC) survey shows that over the past ten years American eating habits have actually gotten worse.

The last large scale CDC survey of eating habits of American adults prior to 2010 was in 2000. Alarmed by the very low level of fruit and vegetable consumption that the study quantified, the United States government launched Healthy People 2010 -- a set of food-based health objectives for the nation to achieve over the first decade of the new millennium.

The goals of Healthy People 2010 were not particularly ambitious. The initiative aimed to get 75% of Americans to eat at least two servings of fruit daily, and 50% to eat at least three servings of vegetables.



Even though the government made efforts over the past decade to encourage people to eat better, the new CDC report is a record of failure to achieve even modest improvement. Quite the opposite: it found no statistically relevant change in vegetable consumption by Americans over the past ten years, and actually recorded a small decrease in fruit consumption!

And the CDC report isn't the only recent study to quantify the disturbing lack of fresh fruits and vegetables in Americans' diets.

A 2007 study by researchers from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and the Welch Center for Prevention, Epidemiology and Clinical Research showed that 72% of Americans did not meet even the minimal Healthy People 2010 guideline of two daily servings of fruit and 68% did not meet the minimal guideline of three servings of vegetables.

Combined, the statistics paint an even grimmer picture: fewer than 11% of Americans studied by Johns Hopkins and Welch meet Healthy People 2010 goal of five cumulative fruit and vegetable servings per day.

## New CDC Report: Americans aren't eating enough fruits and vegetables

It has been widely known for decades that most Americans don't eat anywhere near the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommended 7 to 13 daily servings of fruits and vegetables.

The new 2010 CDC report reveals that the situation remains bad -- and is apparently getting worse.

This new study records that more than two-thirds of adults eat fruit fewer than two times a day, and almost three-quarters eat vegetables fewer than three times daily.



American children are at least as much at risk as their parents. Another CDC report issued last year found that less than 10% of American high school students eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day!

The alarm isn't just at the CDC. A 2009 Ohio State study that quantified similar shortfalls in fruit and vegetable consumption among American children concluded, "...there is a common need among American children and adolescents for nutritional interventions designed to increase daily fruit and vegetable consumption."

Could the numbers be even worse than reported?

Clearly, people in the United States are not consuming enough fruits and vegetables. But are they actually eating even as much as these studies sadly indicate?

According to the USDA, while dietary guidelines recommend eating 7 to 13 servings of fruits and vegetables per day, Americans report consuming only 4.4 servings.

But remember: that's how much respondents report eating. Research has consistently found that Americans typically overestimate the amount of fruits and vegetables they eat, and underestimate the amount of fat and sweets.

Also remember that people include less healthy vegetable choices, such as (often delicious!) salted greasy French fries in these figures.

## How a lack of consumption of fruits and vegetables is contributing to American Obesity

It has been widely reported that citizens of the United States are now the fattest in the world.

The CDC has ranked obesity and its consequences as the number one health risk facing Americans. Childhood obesity -- once a fairly rare condition -- now affects a very large percentage of our children, and the percentage has risen steadily as the consumption of fresh



fruits and vegetables has declined.

The consequences of obesity are currently estimated to result in 400,000 deaths a year in the United States.

Part of the linkage between declining consumption of fruits and vegetables and obesity is quite straightforward: To an alarming degree Americans have replaced high fiber / low calorie fresh fruits and vegetables with high calorie / low fiber processed foods.

The second part of the linkage is only now beginning to be revealed by science: fresh fruits and vegetables contain important nutrients -- such as the antioxidants and phytonutrients mentioned previously -- that processed foods do not. Many researchers believe that these nutrients are essential for regulating body weight and contribute significantly to overall health in other ways.

Do not be misled by the nutritional "spec" on the wrapper or box of processed foods: while somewhat useful in comparing certain basic common characteristics of foods (protein; fat; carbohydrate, salt and calories per "serving" being the most obvious examples) these government mandated labels in no way quantify the entire range of nutrients present -- or not present -- in processed foods.

## How NLP can help you eat healthy food -- and love it!

Eating choices reflect patterns of thought, and can be changed by changing your mind!

When people refer to "Comfort Food" they are almost universally referring to high fat / high calorie foods such as pizzas and cheeseburgers.

While there is nothing at all wrong with enjoying a delicious deep-dish pizza or a large burger smothered in cheese, our bodies are not designed to live on those foods alone.



NLP enables mental changes that make the health benefits of fruits and vegetables a positive force in our clients' lives, and that positive force makes increased consumption of these healthy and nutritious foods as natural as breathing.

Consider how NLP can help you change your mind about fruits and vegetables, eat healthier and lose weight!

A final small note: we are not vegetarians. We love our pepperoni pizza and blue cheese cheeseburgers. But with that being said, if you want to learn more about just how delicious vegetarian cuisine can be, we highly recommend: [chefchloe.com](http://chefchloe.com)

Comfort food? Check out her Mexicali Sliders with Cajun Yam Fries ("Perfectly spiced black beans with slow cooked caramelized onion, topped with tangy spicy mango sauce and chunky guacamole"). And that's just the burger! The yam fries are a whole other vegetable taste treat...

Really yummy -- and inspiring!

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