

Stroke Prevention: 10 Ways to Eat More Fruits & Veggies

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A diet rich in fresh produce can help with stroke prevention

“Eat your fruits and veggies.” We’ve all heard it before, and probably not just once. While some of us may or may not have listened, knowing how fresh produce helps prevent stroke can motivate us to actually make the effort. Here’s an eye opener: [Studies show](#) that eating more fruits and vegetables can reduce your risk of stroke and heart attack by 30%! That’s a big deal, which is why we made this list of 10 tips on how to easily incorporate more of what matters into your day.

1. Keep Fruit Where You Can See It

Have you ever heard the saying, “Out of sight, out of mind?” Well, it’s true! Especially when it comes to remembering our fruits and veggies, which can be instrumental in controlling cholesterol and our risk of stroke. So make it easy on yourself and keep a bowl

of apples, bananas, and oranges in a big, decorative bowl on your kitchen counter. That way when you see it, you'll want to grab it.

2. Eat the Rainbow

An easy rule of thumb is that the more color your food has, the more nutrients it has. These nutrients take the form of precious vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that help protect our cardiovascular health and reduce our risk of stroke. For example, sweet potatoes are much more nutrient dense than regular potatoes and Swiss chard has more nutrients than iceberg lettuce. Eating more color means you're packing more nutrients into your day and getting more bang for your buck!

3. Swap the Potatoes

The excuse that potatoes are a vegetable won't work anymore. According to the [Healthy Eating Pyramid](#) by the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, potatoes are no longer counted as a vegetable since they're mostly starch and should be consumed sparingly. Remember, we want our food to be colorful and nutrient-rich to help prevent stroke, so limit the mono-colored starches and ante up the bright veggies! An easy swap is to skip the fries and replace them with something more nutrient dense yet still crunchy, like these [kale chips](#).

4. Shop the Perimeter of the Store

You are what you eat, and you want to be as fresh as possible. Fresh produce can be found along the perimeter of the store, and that's where you should aim to buy the bulk of your groceries. These fresh foods are much higher in nutrients and antioxidants than the boxed foods you'll find on the inner shelves. In fact, these processed foods are loaded with preservatives and other junk that you want to keep out of your body as much as possible.

5. Go on a Full Stomach

When you shop at the grocery store on an empty stomach, you end up buying the entire store, right? We sure know what that feels like! But what's worse is that we end up buying unhealthy, processed, high-calorie foods because our body is in 'starvation mode' and wants to get calories (*any* kind of calories, even the bad stuff) fast. By taking your grocery trips after you've eaten, you will be in your right frame of mind and perfectly capable of making smart choices.

6. Have a Weekend Prep Party!

Make it easy on yourself and prep your fruits and veggies on the weekend, that way you're more likely to add them to your diet throughout the week. Try grating some carrots, beets, and zucchini for an easy salad topping, or cut up some pineapple and cantaloupe to last throughout the week.

7. Freeze Your Grapes and Make Sure They're RED

Have you ever tried frozen grapes? They're a healthy and wholesome snack, especially if they're red. Red grapes are high in the antioxidant resveratrol which has powerful neuro-protective properties and can help reduce the brain damage caused by ischemic stroke. So not only will you be protecting your brain, but you'll also be fitting a tasty serving of fruit into your day.

8. Eat Your Food Your Way

The healthier your diet becomes, the less you'll find yourself eating out – and that's great! You'll be saving money and getting rid of the excessive amount of fats and salts that restaurants often cook with. A low-sodium diet is linked to better cardiovascular health and reduced risk of stroke, so do it your way and cook at home often.

9. Add Something Green to Your Smoothie

Smoothies are a great way to get more fruit into your diet, and they're also an opportunity to squeeze some leafy greens in too! According to the United States Department of Agriculture Research Service, [leafy greens](#) contain a significant amount of the B vitamin folate, which helps protect heart health. Try adding 1-2 cups of spinach to your fruit smoothie like in this [recipe that we love!](#) Once you develop a palette for it, try working up to kale, one of the most nutrient-dense leafy greens out there.

10. Make It a Meal

Make vegetables the main ingredient and you'll hit your daily dose in no time. Start off with something sneaky like swapping pasta with [zucchini noodles](#). Then move on to something more adventurous, like [this rainbow salad](#) that's sure to amp up your nutrient intake.

Alright, that's enough to digest for now. Soon these ten tricks will help transform your diet into a nutrient-laden regimen that will help with stroke prevention. Plus, you'll feel amazing.