

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption: Minding the Gap

Research has long recognized that diets high in fruits and vegetables contribute to health in an important way, and the risk for many diseases and chronic illnesses decreases as fruit and vegetable intake increases. Diets that emphasize plant foods are protective against cardiovascular disease, stroke, certain cancers, type 2 diabetes and hypertension. Research has shown that diets low in plant foods are linked to greater levels of inflammation and increased risk for chronic diseases.

While nutrition and health experts agree that eating plenty of plant foods is a key factor in maintaining good health and staving off disease, most people are still not consuming enough, which is why increasing fruit and vegetable consumption has been a long-standing priority among health professionals. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a minimum of 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 cups of vegetables daily, but the average American only consumes 1.1 cups of fruit and 1.6 cups of vegetables per day.

