



Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Smart Tips to Build a Healthy Salad

Pack more nutrition into your day with a colorful, nutrient-dense salad. Keep basic ingredients on hand at home for a quick addition to any meal. Encourage kids to eat more vegetables by setting out ingredients to make their own salad creations.

Whether you're at home or find yourself at a salad bar while dining out, mix and match ingredients to explore new combinations. Assemble your salad by selecting one or more ingredient from the groups listed below. The number of items chosen and the amounts may vary, depending on whether the salad is eaten as the main dish or a side dish to go with a meal.

Consider flavor, texture and color. Add a small amount of salad dressing and enjoy!

Step One: Build Your Base

Select one or more of these leafy green vegetables as the base of your salad.

Arugula	Kale	Raddichio
Boston bibb lettuce	Iceberg lettuce	Red leaf lettuce
Escarole	Mixed greens	Romaine
Green leaf lettuce	Napa Cabbage	Spinach



Step Two: Boost the Nutrients with Extra Vegetables and Fruits

Adding extra vegetables to a salad helps add to the texture and flavor, as well as boost the nutrients. Be creative by chopping, dicing, shredding, or slicing a variety of different colored veggies, such as:

Artichoke hearts	Beets	Bell pepper	Bok choy
Broccoli	Cauliflower	Carrot	Celery
Corn	Cucumber	Mushrooms	Onion
Radishes	Red Cabbage	Snap or snow peas	Tomatoes
Water chestnuts	Zucchini		

Fruits may also work well in salads and add a little sweetness to the combination. Examples include:

Apple	Fresh Berries	Dried cherries	Grapes
Mandarin Oranges	Melon	Pear	Raisins

Step Three: Consider Adding Protein to Make it a Main Dish

Adding some type of protein food to your salad can make it a hearty main course.

Cooked Meat, Poultry and Seafood:

Beef, Boiled egg, Chicken, Ham,
Salmon, Shrimp, Tuna, Turkey

Vegetarian options include:

Black beans, Chickpeas, Edamame,
Kidney beans, Navy beans, Tofu

**Nuts and seeds can also be sources of protein for vegetarians.*

Step Four: Dress Your Salad

Dress your salad with a small amount of dressing.

For options lower in saturated fat, consider oil and vinegar or yogurt-based dressings instead of traditional creamy options. Salsa can also be a fun way to top a salad.

Garnish with a snip of fresh herbs, if desired.

Combination Ideas

- Romaine, grape tomatoes, cucumber, carrots, avocado and shrimp
- Mixed greens, chicken strips, melon, walnuts and feta cheese
- Spinach, red onion, mandarin oranges and sliced almonds
- Shredded Napa cabbage, water chestnuts, carrots, cashews and wheat berries

Sprinkle on Extras (Optional)

These tasty toppings carry a larger amount of calories in a small portion size. Use them sparingly to top off a salad.

You can also get creative by adding cooked grains to your salad. These foods can help balance out your meal. Plus, they add additional flavors and texture to your salad.

Grains

Bulgur, Farro, Quinoa, Wheat berries

Nuts and Seeds*

Almonds, Cashews, Peanuts, Pecans,
Pistachios, Pumpkin seeds, Sunflower seeds, Walnuts

Cheese

Blue, Cheddar, Feta, Mozzarella, Parmesan

Other

Avocado, Bacon bits, Croutons, Olives,
Tortilla strips

For a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist and for additional food and nutrition information, visit www.eatright.org



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

This tip sheet is provided by:

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