

HEALTH News

Getting 5 fruits and veggies isn't too hard

TALK TO THE MIRROR



FLORINE MARK

You've heard it time and time again. Munch on fruits and vegetables. Be sure to get five a day. We know it's important, but with our busy schedules, how can you find time to eat all those serving of fruits and vegetables and even harder is getting our families to follow along.

Health experts agree that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, at least five a day, is essential for good health. Fruits and vegetables are low in fat, high in fiber and a great source of certain nutrients like Vitamins A and C. Because of these nutrients, eating fruits and vegetables may help lower your risk of cancer and heart disease. Plus, they're a great way to fill up without adding calories.

Eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day may be simpler than you think. Here are some quick and easy ways to get your five-a-day.

Breakfast: Make a fruit shake in a blender, combine fruit (e.g. banana, orange, strawberries) with skim milk or yogurt. Add ice and process until smooth. Or, add raisins or a banana to hot or cold cereal.

Lunch: Brown bag carrot sticks or pepper strips — cut up veggies the night before. Or, eat a piece of fruit, like an apple, pear or plum for dessert.

Dinner: Add broccoli to pasta or zucchini and mushrooms to pasta sauce. Have a tossed salad — buy it prepackaged and save on prep time.

You can also garnish fish or poultry dishes with fruit — add sliced kiwi, mango, strawberries or a bunch of grapes — or vegetables for a tasty alternative.

Snack: Top frozen yogurt with unsweetened fruit cocktail or mandarin orange sections.

Munch on raisins or mixed dried fruit.

Fruits and vegetables are important foods for people of all ages. But getting kids to eat them can be a real challenge. Here are some ideas:

Dunk and Dip: Let children dunk vegetables in a dip of their choice. Whether it's ranch salad dressing, yogurt, barbecue sauce or ketchup, it may be all that's needed to help the vegetables go down.

Think Bite-Size: Offer bite-size pieces for easy eating, like baby carrots or carrot coins, cherry tomatoes, pineapple tidbits or melon balls.

Think Color: Liven up fruit with plenty of color. Mix red and green seedless grapes, golden and dark raisins, honeydew and cantaloupe chunks, blueberries and strawberries.

Make Faces: Hold your children's interest by helping them create faces or scenes with pieces of fruits or vegetables. For instance, in a bowl of hot cereal, use raisins to make eyes and a nose and an apple slice to form a mouth. On a mound of mashed potatoes, plant broccoli like little trees.

Make Names: In our house we always referred to broccoli as trees and cauliflower as clouds. My children couldn't wait to eat the clouds floating over the trees.

Ask for Assistance: Children who help with preparation may be more inclined to eat the finished product. Have them pick the peas from their pods or choose what's to go into a salad.

Plant a Garden: Children love to eat fruits and vegetables if they have watched them grow. Give each child a small plot of land and let the farming begin.

Set a Good Example: Eat your fruits and vegetables with them.

I love hearing from you! Please submit any questions, inspirational stories or suggestions for upcoming articles to "Talk to the Mirror," Weight Watchers, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48334-2974 or fax: (810) 553-7106.

BY BARE PERT TEMPLETON

SPECIAL WRITER

Summer sports enthusiasts eager to enjoy outdoor fun without incurring painful injuries need only heed a handful of safety tips to stay out of the E.R.

Putting on proper equipment and knowing the rules of the game are the simple steps recommended by Dr. Mark P. Konich M.D., who is an orthopedic and reconstructive hand surgeon on staff at William Beaumont Hospital in Troy.

"In the spring people will go out and start in-line skating, biking or playing softball without using the proper safety equipment," Konich said. "Then they fracture their wrist or jam their fingers, often so badly that they need surgery."

A native of Detroit, Konich attended Wayne State University and the University of Michigan Medical School. Following his residency at Henry Ford Hospital he completed a clinical fellowship in hand surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School in Boston. Konich spent six years on staff at Henry Ford Hospital where his patient roster included many professional athletes on the Detroit Red Wings, Lions, Tigers and Rockers teams.

He said those players were more apt to incur injuries related to the repetitive use of a compressed ligament or limb that already had tendon damages. But, casual athletes make up the bulk of Konich's work at Henry Ford and when he moved to a position at Beaumont last fall he continued to help out the non-professional sports enthusiasts.

An appointment with Konich doesn't automatically send the injured party to the operating room. As a surgeon he also has patients come in for evaluations and provides the delicate work needed to put casts and splints on the injured.

The sports related injuries most often encountered by Konich in his practice today are ligament, tendon and joint dislocations to hands, fingers and



STAFF PHOTO BY COLLEEN ROGERS

Play safe: Prevention is the best cure for sports injuries, says Beaumont hand surgeon Dr. Mark Konich. He sees most injuries from rollerblading.

wrists. He said casual athletes are more likely to need treatment following one single traumatic episode on the field.

"In certain sports, like right now with in-line skating, it's very common to have people getting out there without proper equipment," Konich said. "The hands are what go out when you fall and usually with skating, they are on a concrete surface that's not very forgiving. I see lots of fractures of the wrist and broken fingers."

In fact, in-line skating is the recreational sport that causes the most hand and wrist injuries for patients visiting Konich office these days. He constantly reminds people that there are simple measures to safety in skating. The short list includes wearing wrist guards, elbow pads and knee pads.

"It's human nature and common to have people say the equipment doesn't look cool and is a hassle," Konich said.

"Wrist guards are inexpensive, easy to use and easy to put on."

Another tip offered by the doctor is that skaters put the equipment on before starting out, and remove their skates before taking off their pads. "I've had patients in my office who broke their wrist while standing around after skating," Konich said. "They took their wrist guards off before their skates, fell and injured themselves."

Softball is another spring sport that can produce lots of hand and wrist injuries for athletes. He said it is possible to prevent finger fractures from improper catching and fielding and wrist fractures from sliding into bases, if players simply learn proper playing techniques.

"Most of it is common sense and learning the proper way to do the sport," he added.

An unsuspecting outdoor activity that can also bring about strains and nerve problems in the hands is biking.

Konich suggests wearing biking gloves to help cushion the nerve area — especially for those who are biking long distances.

"If you are fond of biking marathons, or frequently ride for long periods of time, you may even want to invest in special handlebars that allow you to rest your entire forearm. This decreases the pressure on the wrist," Konich said.

When cooler temperatures calm down the outdoor athletes activity Konich continues to encounter patients with sports related injuries. Winter activities like indoor soccer and downhill skiing also produce lots of fractures. Konich's advice remains the same regardless of the season.

"With preventive measures, you can decrease the incidence of injury and lessen the severity," Konich said. "It's a lot less painful and expensive than having to go through surgery and rehabilitation."

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Michigan Department of Community Health

STATE FARM UPDATE:

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