

May 2022
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Food & Fitness

Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables

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Adding extra fruits and vegetables to our diet is extremely beneficial for our health. This is because fruits and vegetables help with specific functions within our body in order to keep us alive and healthy.



Fruits and vegetables help in a vast majority of ways—improves immune system, helps bones and muscles get stronger, keeps us hydrated, high in fiber, and they are packed with lots of essential vitamins and minerals. But how exactly do fruits and vegetables help our bodies?

Fruits are packed full of antioxidants, which remove free radicals from the body which can run rampant and damage cells. If these free radicals build up, they can cause us to become seriously ill. This is why having fruits in our diet can help improve our immune system! Eating fruits also helps lower our risk of several diseases—diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and even some cancers.

Fruits also help to keep us hydrated because of how juicy they are. Eating fruits with a super high water content can help you reach your daily requirement, especially if you are not a fan of plain water.

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Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables

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Fruits and vegetables are also packed full of fiber, which is essential for healthy bowel movements. It helps keep you “regular,” which can prevent constipation, hemorrhoids, or even diverticulosis/diverticulitis. Fiber also helps you to feel full for longer periods of time.

Most importantly, fruits and vegetables have many vitamins and minerals that help our bodies to stay healthy and keep going. Some of these nutrients help our skin to stay protected from cuts, bruises, or the sun. Orange fruits and vegetables also help to keep our eyes sharp.

Adding a wide variety of fruits and vegetables to our diet allows for our bodies to get all of the essential vitamins and minerals that it needs so be sure to eat the rainbow! But how many fruits and vegetables do we need to eat? If we look at our plate as a whole, at least half of our plate needs to be fruits and vegetables.

If we look at ways to add more vegetables to our diet, there are a number of ways to achieve this goal. We can layer lettuce, tomatoes, onions, or other vegetables on sandwiches, burgers, or wraps. If we look at pastas and vegetable soups, we can add tomato sauce and extra vegetables here. Stir-fries or casseroles can be made with a wide variety of vegetables.

Fruits and vegetables can even be mixed together to make our favorite desserts. Let’s look at our recipe for the month, which adds in apples, strawberries, and rhubarb.



What Is In Season?

May Seasonal Fruits:

- ♥ Apples
- ♥ Apricots
- ♥ Blackberries
- ♥ Blueberries
- ♥ Cantaloupe
- ♥ Cherries
- ♥ Grapefruit
- ♥ Lemon
- ♥ Lime
- ♥ Mango
- ♥ Oranges
- ♥ Nectarines
- ♥ Peaches
- ♥ Plums
- ♥ Raspberries
- ♥ Strawberries



May Seasonal Vegetables:

- ♥ Artichokes
- ♥ Avocado
- ♥ Asparagus
- ♥ Beets
- ♥ Bell peppers
- ♥ Broccoli
- ♥ Cabbage
- ♥ Carrots
- ♥ Cauliflower
- ♥ Celery
- ♥ Cucumber
- ♥ Onions
- ♥ Peas

Vegetable—Rhubarb

Rhubarb is a vegetable, but it is often used in the kitchen like a fruit. Raw rhubarb is quite sour, like a lemon. It is also very similar in texture to celery.

Rhubarb grows in groups and produces a reddish stalk with green leaves on top. The stalk is the only edible portion of the plant because the leaves contain a high amount of oxalic acid. If consumed in large amounts, oxalic acid can cause kidney stones.

Rhubarb was originally grown and found in Asian countries, mainly China, where they used it for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. It is now grown commercially in the Pacific Northwest, California, and Michigan. Rhubarb can easily be grown in gardens locally, especially if it has plenty of space and is left alone. Its growing season is usually from April to July. Rhubarb can also be grown in hot-houses and is grown entirely in the dark which leads to yellow leaves and brilliantly red stalks. This causes it to be more tender and sweeter than outdoor rhubarb.

As for knowing when to pick rhubarb—the redder the stalk, the sweeter the flavor. Rhubarb can act as a great substitute for cranberries and are a good match with sweeter fruits like strawberries.



Nutrition Facts	
Portion Size	1 stalk
Amount Per Portion	11
Calories	
% Daily Value *	
Total Fat 0.1g	0 %
Sodium 2mg	0 %
Total Carbohydrate 2.3g	1 %
Dietary Fiber 0.9g	3 %
Sugar 0.6g	
Protein 0.5g	1 %
Vitamin D 0mcg	0 %
Calcium 44mg	3 %
Iron 0.1mg	1 %
Potassium 147mg	3 %

Fruit—Apples



Apples were first brought to North America by European colonists and have been around for thousands of years. Apple trees originated in Central Asia but are now grown worldwide. The apple trees that are most commonly grown locally in West Virginia are Fuji, Braeburn, and Granny Smith.

Apple trees are typically grown in orchards commercially, but can easily thrive by themselves in a personal garden if they are planted on top of a hill with

plenty of sun. Apple trees typically need at least six hours of sun each day. These trees can grow anywhere from four feet to thirty feet tall depending on their variety. Apple trees do require cross-pollination, so another tree must be in bloom at the same time of the year in order for the apple tree to grow and produce fruit. Other fruit trees that bloom at the same time as the apple trees are a great option and provide an even larger variety of fruit.

Apples tend to ripen from the outside of the tree to the center, and from the top of the tree to the bottom. So the amount of sun that the fruit receives determines how fast they will become ripe for picking. The apple should easily detach from the tree with a gentle pull when fully ripe. It is best to wait for all of the green to fade from the skin before harvesting.

Nutrition Facts

Portion Size	1 medium-sized apple
Amount Per Portion	
Calories	104
	% Daily Value *
Total Fat 0.3g	0 %
Sodium 2mg	0 %
Total	10 %
Dietary Fiber 4.8g	17 %
Sugar 21g	
Protein 0.5g	1 %
Vitamin D 0mcg	0 %
Calcium 12mg	1 %
Iron 0.2mg	1 %
Potassium 214mg	5 %

Fruit—Strawberries



Strawberries are widely grown and collectively appreciated for their aroma, bright red color, juicy texture, and sweetness. They are very versatile in the cooking world and can be made into jam, juice, pies, ice cream, milkshakes, and even chocolates.

The strawberry was first bred in France and is now grown commercially in California and Florida. Strawberries are grown on more than 60,000 acres in the United States today. Strawberry plants produce “runners,” which extend out several inches from the main plant, take root in the soil, and produce new plants called “daughter plants.” Strawberries will typically begin to flower in late May and will fruit heavily from mid-June to mid-July.

It is suggested to pick only fully red (ripe) berries and to harvest every three days. You should cut by the stem, but do not pull the berry or you could damage the plant. You can store unwashed berries in the refrigerator for three to five days.

Nutrition Facts	
Portion Size	1 cup
Amount Per Portion	46
Calories	
% Daily Value *	
Total Fat 0.4g	1 %
Sodium 1.4mg	0 %
Total	4 %
Dietary Fiber 2.9g	10 %
Sugar 7g	
Protein 1g	2 %
Vitamin D 0mcg	0 %
Calcium 23mg	2 %
Iron 0.6mg	3 %
Potassium 220mg	5 %

Recipe—Rhubarb, Apple, and Strawberry Crumble

Ingredients

- ♥ 1 bunch rhubarb
- ♥ 1 Tbsp sugar
- ♥ 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- ♥ 2 cups apples slices
- ♥ 1 cup sliced strawberries
- ♥ 1/2 cup rolled oats
- ♥ 1/2 cup plain flour
- ♥ 1/4 cup brown sugar
- ♥ 2 Tbsp butter

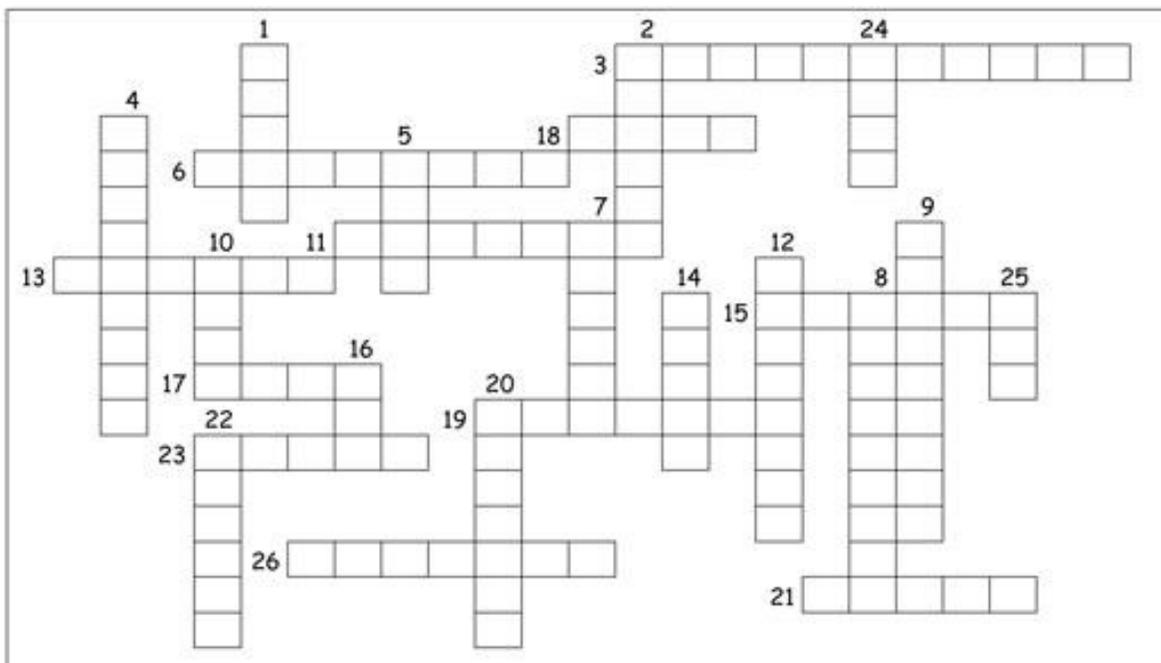
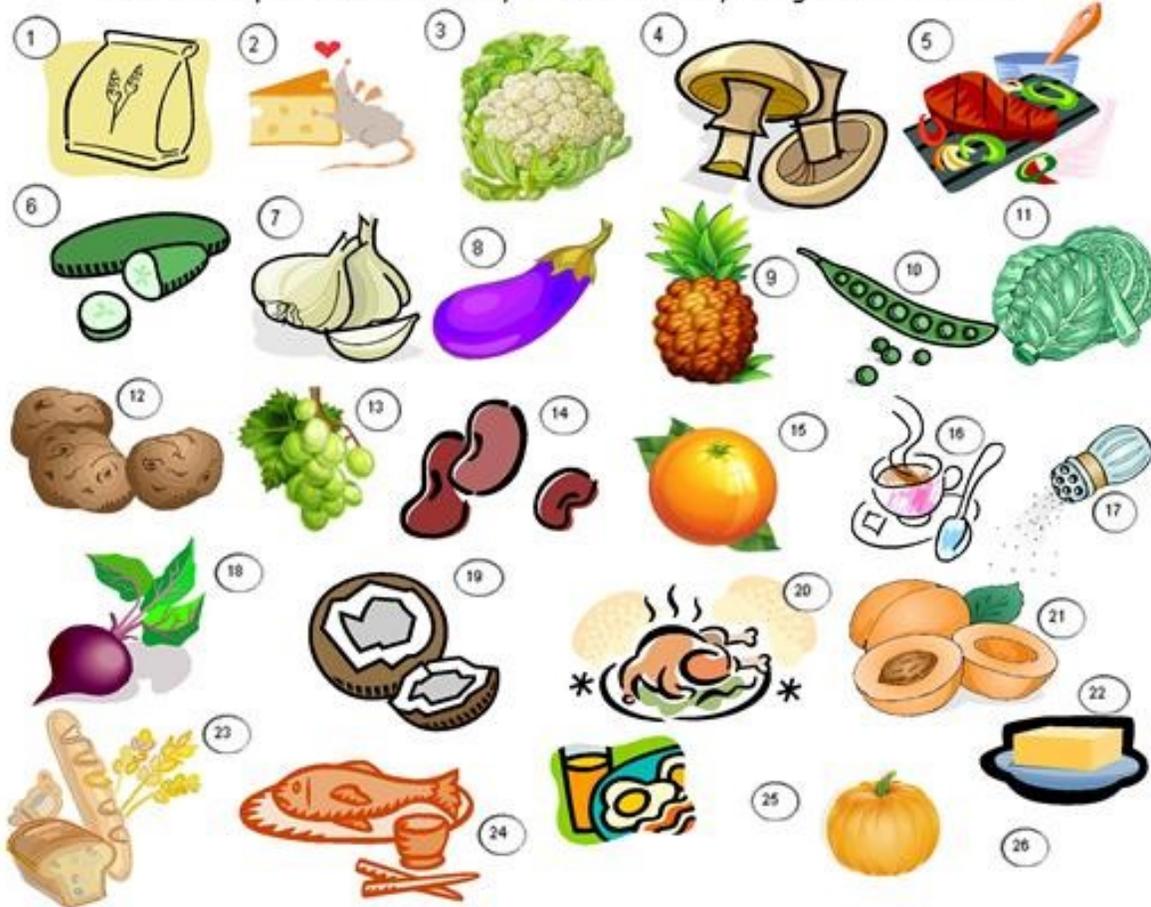


Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a baking dish. Cut rhubarb into 1/2 inch pieces. Wash. Place into a shallow, microwave-safe dish. Add sugar and cinnamon. Toss. Cook on HIGH power for 3 minutes or until tender. Spoon into dish.
2. Gently stir apples and strawberries into rhubarb.
3. Place oats, flour, sugar, and butter into a bowl. Mix until combined. Sprinkle over fruit.
4. Place crumble onto a baking tray. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until topping is golden brown.

Brain Exercise

Look at the pictures and identify the food items by filling in the crossword





May 2022

March Observances

- Asian Pacific Heritage Month
- Foster Care Month
- Lupus Awareness Month
- National Barbeque Month
- National Photograph Month
- Older Americans Month
- Nurses' Week—week one
- Wildflower Week—week two
- National Police Week—week three
- Emergency Medical Services Week—week four

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 May Day	2 Brothers and Sisters Day	3 National Teacher's Day	4 Star Wars Day	5 Cinco de Mayo	6 Space Day	7 Kentucky Derby Day
8 Mother's Day	9 Lost Sock Memorial Day	10 Clean Up Your Room Day	11 Twilight Zone Day	12 International Nurses Day	13 Friday the 13th	14 National Windmill Day
15 Police Officer's Memorial Day	16 Love a Tree Day	17 Pack Rat Day	18 International Museum Day	19 Boy's Club Day	20 Pick Strawberries Day	21 Armed Forces Day
22 National Maritime Day	23 Lucky Penny Day	24 International Tiara Day	25 Tap Dance Day	26 Sally Ride Day	27 Sun Screen Day	28 International Jazz Day
29 Water A Flower Day	30 Memorial Day	31 Save Your Hearing Day				

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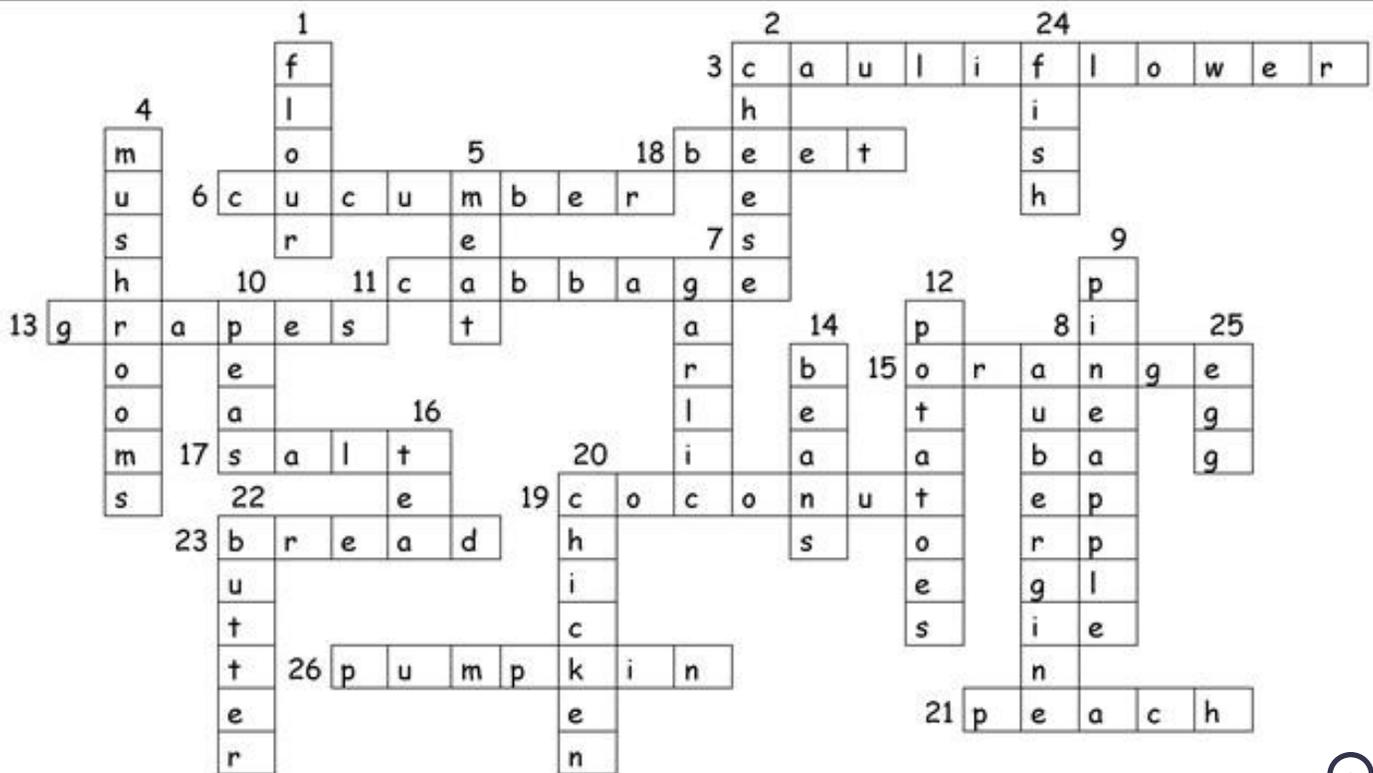
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Brain Exercise Answers



Happy Mother's Day!

This newsletter was created by partnering with Marshall University's Dietetics Internship Program and overseen by Kathrine J. Clark, MS, RD, LD, Nutrition Consultant to the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services.