

Is pre-cut produce as good for you as its whole counterpart? Maybe not. If you're worried about losing nutrients by buying fresh-cut produce, you may not be entirely off-base. Fruits and vegetables are very sensitive to light, heat, air, and time, and any of these factors can contribute to nutrient loss and the demise of antioxidants. If you want the freshest pre-cut produce, look for the "use by" date. But keep in mind these dates are geared more toward spoilage, probably not nutrient loss. To be safe, you can always cut and store your own produce at home. Slice fruits and veggies into larger pieces in order to expose less surface area to the process of oxygenation (that annoying thing that turns your apples brown and can destroy nutrients and precious antioxidants in your food). Store freshly cut fruits and veggies in airtight, opaque containers to avoid exposing them to air and light. And keep them as cold as possible in the fridge without actually freezing them. Gobble up fresh foods quickly; a fruit or vegetable's original nutrient, phytochemical and antioxidant content will last up to 5-7 days in the fridge. To be on the safe side, use cut produce within three days. Preparing your own pre-cut produce at home takes some initiative on your part, but if you want the best out of your foods, it's well worth it. (*LifeScript*)

DID YOU KNOW that not eating enough during the day in order to reduce calorie intake and lose weight can backfire in the evening hours when the comforts of home call? Do you raid the fridge in the middle of the night? It may not be your love of ice cream that's to blame. In fact, you're lucky if you last all the way until the evening before hunger strikes. Going hungry isn't the key to permanent weight loss, and you simply can't starve yourself skinny. When you go hungry, your body enters into starvation mode and conserves energy, which means you're not burning any extra calories. In fact, eating too few calories can reduce your daily energy output by 30%, which is easily 500 calories you're not burning off. Doesn't quite balance out, does it?

Instead of sabotaging your weight-loss efforts by skimping on breakfast and lunch, eat a hearty breakfast (oatmeal is always a winner) and a substantial lunch (turkey sandwich, veggie sticks, fruit and yogurt). When dinner time rolls around, break out the low-cal salad and fruit for dessert; then brush your teeth before you can change your mind about eating those leftover brownies. (*LifeScript*)

And remember you are what you eat!