



Food Sources: Vitamin C

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is a water-soluble nutrient essential for protein metabolism, immune function, wound healing, gene expression, and collagen production. It also acts as a potent antioxidant and participates in numerous chemical reactions throughout the body.

Fruits and vegetables are the richest sources of vitamin C. Some fortified foods and supplements also provide vitamin C. Since it is sensitive to heat, consuming fruits and vegetables raw or lightly steamed is recommended. Vitamin C deficiency is rare when the diet includes a variety of fruits and vegetables, but smokers or those who eat very few fruits and vegetables may be at higher risk for insufficient intake.

The RDA for vitamin C is as follows:

- Females, 19+: 75 mg/day
 - Males, 19+: 90 mg/day
 - Pregnancy, 19+: 85 mg/day
 - Lactation, 19+: 120 mg/day
- *Smokers require an additional 35 mg/day compared to nonsmokers

Food, standard serving size
Average Vitamin C Content (mg)

- Red sweet pepper, ½ cup raw – 95 mg
- Strawberries, 1 cup – 85 mg
- Orange, 1 medium – 70 mg
- Kiwi, 1 medium – 65 mg
- Sweet green pepper, ½ cup raw – 60 mg
- Broccoli, ½ cup raw – 50 mg
- Brussels sprouts, ½ cup cooked – 45 mg
- Grapefruit, ½ medium raw – 44 mg

- Tomato juice, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup – 33 mg
- Cantaloupe, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup – 30 mg
- Cabbage, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked – 28 mg
- Cauliflower, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raw – 26 mg