

Your questions about fruit, answered

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Why does fruit count in recipes? Are there other times I need to count it? And how much is too much? Don't worry — we've got some answers for you.

Fresh fruit is definitely having its moment in the spotlight, ever since Weight Watchers awarded it all a **PointsPlus**[™] value of zero! But with great freedom comes great responsibility, and we know some of you are anxious that you get it "right." Here, we answer some of your common

questions:

When I add fruit to the recipes I create in the Recipe Builder, it counts *PointsPlus* values for it! I thought fruit was zero?

Just as we've always done with 0 **PointsPlus** value vegetables, 0 **PointsPlus** value fresh fruits contribute toward the total **PointsPlus** values of a recipe, whether it's a Weight Watchers recipe or one you build yourself in the Recipe Builder.

The technical explanation is that because recipes are calculated based on the total grams of fat, fiber, protein and carbs for all their ingredients. As one poster on the Message Boards, [DANI_THE_GECKO](#), sagely points out: "The recipe builder only knows that you input nutritional information. It does not know if it's fruit, green beans or heavy cream."

But why do we do it this way? There are a couple of very good reasons why we count fruits and veggies in our recipes:

- Our recipes often appear in articles and magazines nationally, so we need to provide the calories and nutrient content, as many recipes published elsewhere do.
- Once vegetables and fruit are elements in a prepared recipe, the experience of eating them changes. Few people overeat carrots — but they might overeat carrot cake.

If your "recipe" is truly just a few pieces of fruit, then you might want to record it in your Tracker as separate items or as a "meal" — the latter looks at each item separately and then adds up all the **PointsPlus** values. Because all the items have 0 **PointsPlus** values, the total will also be zero.

Are there situations when I need to count *PointsPlus* values for fruit?

No, not for fresh fruit. Yes, fruit does have calories, and it contains fiber and other nutrients. But we're assuming that you'll eat a certain amount of fresh and other unsweetened fruit (veggies, too) each day, and have taken that into account when giving you your daily **PointsPlus** Target.

All fruit is 0 **PointsPlus** values when it's fresh, unsweetened frozen, canned in its juice and drained, or with artificial sweeteners. What if you peel it? Yep — as long as it's unadorned, it's still zero. (Again, same for veggies.)

You do need to count **PointsPlus** values when there's added sugar, such as fruit in syrup or in juice, or when there's less water content, as with dried fruit.

I've heard that cooking fruit increases its sugar content. Is that true? Does cooked fruit really have a **PointsPlus value?**

No, the sugar content doesn't increase when fruit is cooked. However, during the cooking process, there is water loss, so you will have more fruit for a given volume. In other words, a half cup of cooked pears will contain more fruit than a half cup of raw pears.

How much 0 **PointsPlus values fruit is too much?**

We'll say it again: Yes, fruits and vegetables aren't magically calorie-free just by dint of us making most of them free of **PointsPlus** values. We took this step to encourage people to eat more fruits and vegetables; foods that are nutritious, satisfying and help to encourage you to make healthy, lasting choices that will lead to weight loss.

If you're concerned that you're eating "too much fruit," ask yourself if you're enjoying what you're eating, or if you're honestly stuffing yourself with bananas because they're "free." Or maybe you're blending pounds of berries and bananas with ice into big-gulp smoothies.

If you're using fruit and veggies as a way to stuff yourself in lieu of stuffing yourself with less healthy foods, then it's possible that you may be reaching the point of "too much." If you're eating more than you used to, but you're using them for healthy snacks, to bulk up your meals or as a tide-me-over when you're down to the last few **PointsPlus** values for the day or week, then you're probably OK.

The bottom line? Let your hunger, and your weight loss, be your guide.

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