

Nutrition

fact sheet



No doubt you're familiar with the "5 A Day" logo featured in the produce section of your supermarket. The logo now has a new look, encouraging Americans to eat not just 5, but 5 to 9 daily servings of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy, active lifestyle.

Eat 5 to 9 A Day for Better Health

The "5 to 9" recommendation comes from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and reflects a growing body of research about the important role fruits and vegetables play in health promotion and disease prevention. Depending on your calorie needs, the Guidelines advise eating 5 to 9 servings daily by choosing 2 to 4 servings of fruit and 3 to 5 servings of vegetables.

What is a serving?

A serving is smaller than most people think. For example, a large salad is often 2-4 servings, and a standard 12-oz carton of 100% orange juice is 2 servings. With such small serving sizes, it's easy to reach the 5-9 a day recommendation by eating 2-3 servings at a time.

Fruits and Vegetables Connected to Health

Fruits and vegetables deliver vitamins, minerals, and fiber your body needs to stay healthy. They're also packed with hundreds of disease-fighting phytochemicals — natural substances that work as a team and

may protect good health. Only fruits and vegetables, not pills or supplements, can provide all of these nutrients together.

A growing body of research offers even more good reasons to eat your fruits and vegetables:

- **Lower your risk of certain cancers:** People whose diets are rich in fruits and vegetables (5 or more servings a day) may have a lower risk of developing certain types of cancers.
- **Lower your risk of heart disease:** Some studies indicate that people who eat 9 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, as part of a heart-healthy diet low in saturated fat and

Many of us should eat more than 5 servings every day!

	Vegetables	Fruits	Total
Children aged 2 to 6, some women, and some older adults	3	2	5
Children over age 6, teenage girls, active women, and most men	4	3	7
Teenage boys, and active men	5	4	9

Source: United States Department of Agriculture/Department of Health and Human Services, *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000*

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cholesterol, are less likely to develop some types of heart disease than people who eat only 2 to 3 servings a day.

■ **Lower your risk of stroke:** A recent study found that eating 10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, as part of a healthy diet, was associated with a significantly lower risk of stroke. People who ate at least 3 servings of fruits and vegetables per day had lower rates of stroke than people who ate little or no fruits and vegetables. Stroke rates declined even further with each additional serving of fruits and vegetables.

■ **Reduce high blood pressure:** According to the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) study, when people with high blood pressure ate 8 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day and lowfat dairy products, as part of a healthy diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol, they lowered their blood pressure within a month.

■ **Help you manage your weight:** When combined with a healthy, active lifestyle, eating fruits and vegetables can help you manage your weight. Most fruits and vegetables are low in calories and fat, and many contain lots of water and fiber to help you feel full. Eating larger portions of fruits and vegetables at meals, and fewer high calorie foods, can reduce calorie

intake while still satisfying your appetite. For the best calorie control, fruits and vegetables should be eaten raw, steamed, or boiled, and without any added sauces, butters or oils.

Eat for Color

The National Cancer Institute recommends eating a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Try fruits and vegetables from each of these color groups regularly:

Green — Leafy greens, lettuce, green pepper, broccoli, green beans, peas, green cabbage, green apples, green grapes, honeydew, kiwifruit

Orange/yellow — Carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut and winter squash, cantaloupe, oranges, lemons, nectarines, peaches, mangoes, papayas

Red — Tomatoes, spaghetti sauce, tomato juice, red peppers, red onions, kidney beans, red lentils, apples, pink grapefruit, red grapes, strawberries, cherries, watermelon, raspberries, cranberries

Blue/purple — Eggplant, purple grapes, plums, raisins, blueberries, blackberries, purple figs, dried plums, black currants

White — Cauliflower, mushrooms, onions, garlic, parsnips, shallots, turnips, ginger, jicama, bananas, pears

Center meals around fruits and vegetables

To help reach your goal of 5 to 9 daily servings, make fruits and vegetables the focus of each meal. Create your

A serving is:

- ½ cup of most fruits or vegetables
- ½ cup of cooked beans such as black, kidney, pinto, or garbanzo
- 1 cup of lettuce or leafy green such as romaine, spinach, or arugula
- 1 medium-size piece of fruit
- ¼ cup dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, or prunes
- A 6-oz can of tomato juice or any other 100% fruit or vegetable juice

plate around vegetables—like broccoli and cauliflower—instead of including them only as a side. Think about a variety of fruits and vegetables as the main dish, with meat and starches as accompaniments. Eating fruits or vegetables as part of most meals makes it easy to eat 5 to 9 servings a day.

Easy ways to enjoy fruits and vegetables

Start your day with a serving of fruit like a banana, a large handful of berries, or a small fresh fruit smoothie. Snack on fruits throughout the day, like plums, pears, or melons. Eat a big salad at lunch—try a bed of baby spinach with carrots, peppers, and broccoli. Try raw vegetables with lowfat dip. Enjoy your favorite beans and peas as a side dish or on a salad. Add fresh or frozen vegetables to your favorite pasta sauce or main dish. Try fruit, like berries or a mango for dessert. Remember, dips or dressings and food preparation such as frying or breading adds additional calories.

Information

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For food and nutrition information or for a referral to a dietetics professional in your area call:

800/366-1655

or visit:

www.eatright.org



American Dietetic Association
"Your link to nutrition and health"SM
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995



www.5aday.gov

