

GETTING YOUR 5 A DAY



WHAT IS '5 A DAY' ALL ABOUT?



In 1994, the Department of Health started the '5 A Day' campaign to encourage people to eat a combination of at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day. This came about after scientific research proved that eating fruit and vegetables reduced the risk of certain cancers (especially bowel), stroke, heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

WHY ARE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SO IMPORTANT?

Fruit and vegetables are an essential element of a balanced diet and can help us maintain a healthy weight. They provide us with a variety of vitamins and minerals, and all have different benefits. Try to vary the fruit and vegetables you eat as much as possible; spinach is a great source of iron, bananas give us lots of potassium and citrus fruits like oranges, lemons and limes are packed with vitamin C.

WHAT COUNTS AS ONE OF MY 5 A DAY?

One medium-sized piece of fruit or vegetable, or a portion of 80g, counts as one of your 5 a day (check out the examples below). An exception to this rule is the potato: even though it is one of the most loved vegetables in the country, it is mostly made of starchy carbohydrates and doesn't have as many nutrients as other fruit and vegetables. Because of that, it doesn't count towards your 5 a day.

Because fruit and vegetables lose nutrients when they are cooked, the general rule is that eating them raw is the best way to get your nutrients. But cooked vegetables are still very good for you. And because frozen produce is picked at its best then frozen straight away, it has many more nutrients than you might think. Tinned and dried fruit and vegetables also count towards your 5 a day, but they lose many of their nutrients along the way so you need to eat more of them to get the same amount of nutrients as you would if they were raw.



Fresh fruit

2 kiwi fruit or satsumas, 1 medium banana, orange, apple or pear, a handful of berries or grapes, or a wedge of melon or pineapple (80g or more).

Fresh vegetables

Half a pepper, half a large courgette, two florets of broccoli, three heaped tablespoons of carrots, four heaped tablespoons of fresh or frozen peas, or a bowl of lettuce.

Other

Foods in this category are not fresh fruits or vegetables but they do count towards your 5 a day. You can only count one of your 5 as an 'other' food type – the rest should be fresh. They include things like 1 medium glass of 100% unsweetened fruit juice, 1 heaped tablespoon of raisins, or 3 heaped tablespoons of tinned or even baked beans.

HOW CAN I GET MORE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES INTO MY DIET?

Here are a few simple ideas to get you started:

Breakfast

Try grating an apple into your muesli, chopping a banana over your cereal or making a fresh fruit smoothie.

Lunch & dinner

Put a beautiful big bowl of salad on the table as a side dish, add a big handful of beans, pulses or lentils to a stew or soup, or make your own home-made chips using gorgeous root veg like squash and sweet potato.

Snacks

Munch on an apple or pear, eat a small handful of dried fruit, or cut a carrot, cucumber, pepper or celery stick into batons then eat those with houmous or any other tasty dip.

For loads of extra information and tips to help you get your 5 a day, check out:

www.nhs.uk/livewell/5aday/Pages/5ADAYhome.aspx