



Mini Talk: 5 A Day, Fruits & Vegetables

The 5-a-day initiative encourages us to try to eat 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Eating a variety fruits and vegetables as part of a health-eating pattern may help protect us against many chronic diseases.

Five or more may sound like a lot, but one serving can be a medium piece of fruit, a few pieces of dried fruit, a half a cup chopped, cooked or raw vegetables or fruit, or a six ounce glass of citrus juice. (They can be fresh, frozen, canned or dried.) Try steaming, baking or microwaving vegetables instead of frying.

Activity: Healthy Nutrition

1. Show participants what a healthy 5-A-Day plate looks like. Ask participants what it looks like - a lot or not very much? Discuss problems people might have in eating 5 fruits and vegetables a day: cost, access to fresh produce, waste, difficulties cooking, etc. Have the group brainstorm possible solutions from their own experience.
2. Discuss ways to incorporate more fruits and vegetables everyday – on breakfast cereals or salads, for a snack, or a dessert.
3. Review the Week’s Tips and Tasks for healthy eating. Demonstrate how to keep track of the fruits and vegetables they eat.

Tips and Tasks

At least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables is the goal for a healthy diet.

Eating vegetables and fruit can help prevent strokes, heart disease, diabetes, and intestinal problems.

Try to add 1 more serving each day until the goal is reached.

What is a serving of fruit?

1 medium apple, banana, orange, pear
½ cup chopped, cooked, canned fruit
¾ cup (6 oz) 100% fruit juice
¼ cup dried fruit (raisins, prunes)

What is a serving of vegetables?

1-cup raw leafy vegetables
½ cup other cooked or raw vegetables
¾ cup (6 oz) vegetable juice

For more activities like this see “Steps to Healthy Aging” by the National Policy & Resource Center on Nutrition & Aging/Florida International University



Colorful fruits and vegetables promote health!

Vitamin A is found in orange and deep yellow fruits and vegetables – mangoes, cantaloupe and yams.

Vitamin C comes from a rainbow of colorful fruits and vegetables – citrus, strawberries, and green peppers.

Calcium, a mineral food that is needed for healthy bones and teeth, also regulates the heart and nervous system.

For adults, the daily calcium needs are 1200 mg or 3 or more servings of calcium rich foods, which include:

Yogurt (plain, nonfat or low fat)	1 cup = 435 mg
Sardines (canned, with bones)	4 ounces = 430 mg
Fortified orange juice	1 cup = 300 mg
Milk (whole, low/reduced, or fat-free)	1 cup = 300 mg
Swiss cheese	1 ounce = 270 mg
Collard greens (cooked)	½ cup = 180 mg

Fiber (such as whole grains) may help prevent colon cancer, keep cholesterol from being absorbed by the body and reduce the risk of heart disease. It can also increase the feeling of fullness so we don't eat more than we should. Adults need about 25 grams of fiber each day. If you are adding fiber to your diet, gradually increase your intake to avoid gastrointestinal discomfort.

Sensible **portion sizes** are an important key in reaching or maintaining a healthy weight. As we age, most of us need fewer calories than we did when we were younger. However, our nutritional requirements remain the same or increase with age. The Nutrition Facts panel on food labels contains information about serving size portions.

Serving Sizes

- Deck of playing cards = a 3 oz serving of meat, poultry, or fish.
- Baseball = 1 cup of milk, yogurt or chopped fresh greens.
- Small fist (or computer mouse) = ½ cup of cut fruit, vegetables or pasta.
- Tennis ball = about the size of a medium size piece of fruit.
- Golf ball = about 2 tablespoons of peanut butter.
- Your thumb = about 1 oz of cheese
- Your thumb tip = 1 teaspoon of margarine



Elements of Nutrition

DAILY NUTRITION CHECKLIST

Measure your progress toward a healthy diet by counting the number of fruits and vegetables you eat each day.

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