

5 A DAY Factsheet

What does 5 A DAY mean?

The World Health Organization and the Department of Health recommend that you should aim to eat at least five portions of a wide variety of fruit and vegetables a day. Evidence shows there are significant health benefits to getting at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. That's 5 portions of fruit and veg in total, not 5 portions of each.

Eating a variety of different fruits and vegetables is important to make sure you get a range of vitamins, minerals and nutrients.

Why are fruit and vegetables important in the diet?

- Fruit and vegetables are a good source of essential vitamins and minerals such as folate, vitamin C and potassium
- They also contain fibre which is important for healthy digestion. Fibre helps to prevent constipation and other digestion issues.
- Fruits and vegetables can also help to reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer.
- Fruit and vegetables are generally lower in calories so are also key in helping us to maintain a healthy weight.

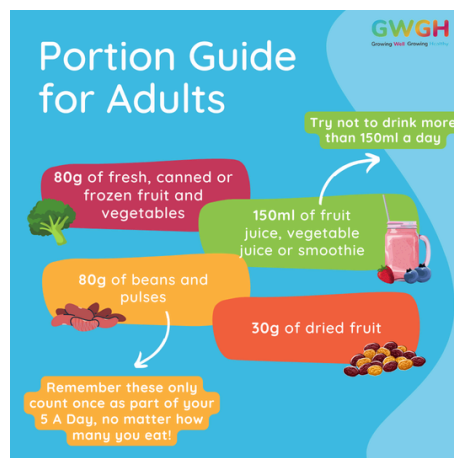
What is a portion of fruit or vegetables?

Children

- Children should also eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day.
- The amount of food a child needs varies with age, body size and levels of physical activity.
- As a rough guide, 1 portion is the amount they can fit in the palm of their hand.

Adults

- An adult portion of fresh, frozen or tinned fruit or vegetables is 80g.
- For dried fruit, a portion is 30g.
- For beans and pulses, a portion is 80g - these only count once as part of your 5 A Day
- 150ml of unsweetened 100% fruit juice, vegetable juice or smoothie – this can only count once towards your 5 a day so try to limit juices to 150ml per day.



Note: Potatoes don't count towards your 5 A Day because they are a starchy food. Foods like potatoes, yams, cassava and plantain are eaten just like rice, pasta or bread as the carbohydrate part of a meal. They're still important in balanced diet as they give you fibre and nutrients, but they don't count as one of your 5 A Day. Sweet potatoes, parsnips, swedes and turnips however do count.

Top tips for increasing fruit and vegetable intake:

- Try adding spinach into foods such as pasta sauce or curry as it boosts the nutritional value without really changing the flavour or texture. If you really want to disguise the texture, finally chop the spinach before adding.
- Set yourself a family challenge to try a new fruit or vegetable each week. You take it turns to pick what new fruit or vegetable the family is going to try.
- Mash a banana into porridge for sweetness instead of adding sugar.
- Finely dice or grate vegetables such as carrots, onions and celery and add them in to dishes such as chili, bolognaise and tomato pasta sauce.
- Boil vegetables such as parsnips alongside potatoes and mash together for vegetable boosted mash.
- It can take 10-20 times to accept new flavours and textures so try fruits and vegetables again even if you think you don't like them.
- Prepare carrot or cucumber sticks and keep them in the fridge for quick and easy snacks.
- Try to add a portion of salad to your sandwiches and wraps.
- Try out a taste test at home with the family! It can be fun to try new flavours and textures that you've never tried before!
- Get your child involved in preparing and cooking foods! They are more likely to try things that they've helped to prepare.



TRY THIS: EAT A RAINBOW

Eating fruits and vegetables of different colours, you are more likely to achieve a good variety of vitamins and minerals in the diet. It is important to consume different vitamins and minerals as they all have different functions in the diet. For example, orange fruits and vegetables contain carotenoids for healthy skin, eyes and to boost immunity. Green fruits and vegetables are rich in antioxidants to help keep our bodies healthy.

Challenge yourself or your family to consume a fruit or vegetables from each of the colour of the rainbow over the next week!