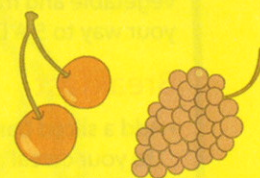




Fruity Facts!



WHY EAT MORE FRUIT?

Plant foods like fruits, vegetables, wholegrains, and pulses such as beans, are a vital component of a healthy balanced diet. Fruit is quick and easy to prepare, it can be cheap and is readily available for any meal or snack, making it nature's own 'fast food'.

Fruit contains a wide range of vitamins, minerals, fibre and other phytochemicals that help to keep the body healthy and protect cells from damage that can lead to cancer.

Research shows that vegetables and fruits help to reduce our risk of a range of cancers. There is also good evidence that they help to lower the risk of heart disease, protect against stroke and high blood pressure and even help to manage diabetes.

We should all be aiming for at least 5 A DAY. On average children currently eat only three portions of vegetables and fruits a day, and adults only eat around four portions a day (Department of Health), so on **Fruity Friday**, let's all aim to have our '5 A DAY'.

WHAT EXACTLY IS FRUIT?

Fruit is the fleshy and often sweet part of a flowering plant or tree that contains its seeds. Fruit can be eaten in a variety of different ways: raw, cooked, blended, puréed, juiced and dried.

There are many different types to try:

Stone fruits – such as peach, plum, apricot and cherry

Soft fruits – such as berries like raspberry, blueberry, blackberry, strawberry and currants like redcurrant and blackcurrant

Citrus fruits – such as orange, lemon, lime and grapefruit

Vine fruits – such as melon, grape and kiwi fruit

Fleshy fruits – such as apple, pear and banana

Exotic fruits – such as mango, papaya, lychee, mangosteen, passion fruit and pomegranate

WHAT COUNTS AS A PORTION?

One portion is 80g, which is roughly equivalent to:

- 1 slice of large fruit like melon or pineapple
- 1 whole medium fruit like an apple or banana
- 2 whole small fruits like plums or kiwi fruits
- 1-2 handfuls of smaller fruits like grapes or berries
- 1 heaped tablespoon of small dried fruit such as sultanas or raisins
- 2-3 medium-sized dried fruits such as apricots
- 1 glass (150ml) of pure fruit juice (juice only counts as one portion per day no matter how much you drink)
- 3 heaped tablespoons of cooked vegetables such as carrots, peas and sweetcorn
- 3-4 heaped tablespoons of beans and pulses (these only count as one portion per day)
- 1 cereal bowl of mixed salad

These portion sizes are for adults. Children's portion sizes may be smaller. An easy way to remember portion sizes is to think of it as a handful – this works for both adults and children!

FOLLOW THE RAINBOW RULE

We all have our favourites! But to see the most health benefits it's important to eat a variety of different types and colours of fruits (and vegetables) each day.

Here are some ideas:

GREEN – apple, grape, kiwi fruit, pear, honeydew melon

RED – raspberry, rhubarb, strawberry, cherry

ORANGE – mango, orange, papaya, peach, nectarine, cantaloupe melon

YELLOW – lemon, grapefruit, pineapple

WHITE – banana, lychee, dragon fruit

PURPLE – blackberry, blackcurrant, plum

Many of the bright rainbow colours we see in fruit come from phytochemicals. By choosing a variety of different coloured foods, not only will our meals and snacks look more appetising but they will also provide us with the best possible mix of health-enhancing nutrients. Which colour will you choose?

EASY WAYS TO '5 A DAY'

Try one of our simple suggestions to boost your vegetable and fruit intake and make sure you're well on your way to 5 A DAY!

Breakfast

- Add a sliced banana, handful of berries or dried fruit to your cereal
- Make a fruit smoothie using unsweetened, low-fat yoghurt and fresh fruit

Healthy snacks

- A handful of grapes or cherry tomatoes
- 2 satsumas or plums
- An apple or pear
- Celery or carrot sticks with reduced fat houmous or salsa

Lunchtime

- Add lettuce, cucumber and sliced tomatoes to your sandwich
- Include a side salad with your jacket potato
- Have a vegetable soup
- Add chopped peppers, tomatoes or sweetcorn to pasta and rice salads

Main meal

- Include at least 2 portions of vegetables with main meals
- Add extra vegetables to curries, casseroles, pasta and rice dishes, and pizzas
- Base your meals around plant foods instead of meat. A good rule of thumb is to fill two thirds (or more) of your plate with wholegrains, beans, vegetables and fruits, and one third (or less) with animal foods

Desserts

- Make a fruit salad with different coloured fruits like plums, kiwi fruit and melon
- Make a fruit crumble and serve with low-fat yoghurt or low-fat fromage frais
- Use different coloured chopped fruits to make fruit kebabs
- Make a delicious Summer Glory (see the recipe to the right)

TOP FRUIT TIPS

Fruit can be an inexpensive and delicious way to incorporate more plant foods into your diet. There are simple ways to make sure it is always available at home without going to waste.

-  Fresh, frozen, dried and tinned vegetables and fruits all count towards your 5 A DAY.
-  Always keep tinned varieties in your cupboard. Healthier choices are in natural juice or water with no added sugar or salt. Just add low-fat fromage frais or natural yoghurt for a delicious breakfast or dessert.
-  Buying berries and other small fruits frozen can be very cost-effective; you will get more for your money and they won't go off before you've had a chance to eat them. Sprinkle a handful onto your morning porridge – the heat will defrost them in no time.
-  If you have fruit that is unlikely to be eaten before it goes off, liquidise and freeze it as ice cubes. That way it is available any time – defrost and mix with low-fat natural yoghurt!
-  Instead of throwing away fruit that has gone past its best, use it to make a simple fruit compote. In a pan, warm up some apple juice and add your fruit. Simmer gently until the fruit is soft. Serve with porridge, low-fat yoghurt or a home-made granola topping.

SUMMER GLORY

(serves 2, 330 kcals, 5g fat, 0.5g salt per serving)

A simple and delicious dessert that counts towards one of your 5 A DAY.

Ingredients

- 200-250g/8-10oz mixed summer fruits, like redcurrants, blackcurrants, raspberries or cherries (fresh, frozen or tinned)
- 50g/2oz caster sugar
- 250g natural bio yogurt
- White bread, thinly sliced and crusts removed



Method

- 1) Choose one or two berries for decorating each serving and place the rest of the fruit in a bowl. Cleanly remove any stems and check over the fruit, cutting out any damaged parts if necessary.
- 2) Add half the sugar and toss the fruit in this and set aside for 1 hour for the juice to be released from the fruit (this will happen more quickly with frozen or tinned fruit).
- 3) Blend the rest of the sugar into the yoghurt mixture.
- 4) Chop the bread into 1cm squares.
- 5) In tall sided glasses or glass bowls, spoon some of the fruit mixture, then a little of the yoghurt mixture, then a layer of bread squares. Repeat, ending with a layer of yoghurt mixture.
- 6) Cover and place in the fridge to chill – ideally overnight to allow the bread to absorb the fruit juices.
- 7) Decorate with remaining berries before serving.

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