

## 5 a DAY – ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH?

Most of us know that we should be eating 5 portions (or more) of fruit and vegetables every day. Most people also know ‘they are healthy’. But **WHY** are we encouraged to eat so many foods from this particular food group? All foods contain vitamins and minerals but the food group containing fruits and vegetables is especially rich in them and other substances which mean they are great for the following reasons:

	<b>Short term health benefits</b>	<b>Long term health benefits</b>
<b>Fibre</b> (benefits the digestive system and heart)	-Reduces constipation -Feel less ‘sluggish’ -Feel less ‘bloated’	Can reduce the risk of bowel disorders e.g. cancer Can protect against heart disease
<b>Vitamins and Minerals</b> (keep our immune systems in tip top order)	-Help us fight coughs and colds -Helps skin, eyes and hair in good condition (less spots!) -Feel less ‘sluggish’	Can protect against certain cancers, heart disease, bone health
<b>Filling and low in energy</b>	-Make up feel full and less hungry -Helps management our weight	Weight management, heart health, certain cancers

### Eat a Rainbow

By eating fruits and vegetables of different colours, you are very likely to achieve a good range of vitamins and minerals for maintaining health and wellbeing. Certain colours are especially rich in protective compounds and each fruit or veg varies in different vitamin and mineral contents (eating 5 of the same colour still only counts as one portion so try to mix it up).

**Red fruits and veggies contain ‘lycopene’ which may help protect against certain cancers**

Try: tomatoes (fresh or tinned); pink grapefruit; red peppers, watermelon

**Orange fruits and veggies are packed with ‘beta-carotene’, which the body converts to vitamin A for healthy skin**

Try: squash; sweet potatoes; carrots; mango; peaches; orange peppers; nectarines; apricots

**Yellow fruits and veggies contain ‘carotenoids’ – these protect our eyes**

Try: sweetcorn; yellow peppers; yellow courgettes

**Green fruits and veggies contain energy giving compounds and iron which can help prevent anaemia**

Try: broccoli; kale; spring greens; watercress; spinach; kiwi fruit; green grapes

**Purple fruits and veggies are a good source of 'anthocyanins' which are a great anti-ager!!!**

Try: aubergines; red cabbage; blueberries; red grapes, plums; blackcurrants

## **Rainbow Activity**

If you have a child that is reluctant to eat fruit and veggies, draw a blank rainbow and, every time your child eats a portion of fruit and/or veg, invite them to either draw the different colours of fruit or veg on the rainbow or use coloured stickers until their rainbow is complete. Incorporate into a reward chart with non-food related treats.

## **But 5 portions is so many – I can't manage that many portions a day**

**Examples of a portion? Depends on the age of your child/young person, it is a handful**

- 1 average size fruit, eg apple, banana, peach, orange etc
- 2 smaller fruits, eg satsumas, plums etc
- Handful of strawberries or cherry tomatoes
- 1 bowl of mixed salad
- 1 carrot
- 2 serving spoons of cooked veg, eg broccoli, cauli, frozen peas , runner beans etc
- ½ tin beans

Beans such as kidney beans, cannellini beans are a vegetarian source of protein (can be used as a meat replacer) but also count as 1 of your 5 a day.

**You can use FRESH, TINNED, FROZEN or DRIED – they all count!**

## Increasing your intake of fruit and veggies

Rather than adding up each individual fruit or veg, it's easier to just add it to every meal and snack

- Add fruit (fresh, frozen or dried) to your breakfast
- Slice/mash banana on your toast
- Have fresh or frozen fruit with your yoghurt
- Eat a piece of fruit or veg sticks as a snack (baby sweetcorn, peppers, carrots, cucumber, radishes)
- Chop up veg sticks or make a fruit salad and keep in the fridge for you to snack on when peckish
- Put salad on sandwiches, wraps, burgers, pittas or try lettuce wraps!
- Make a soup with loads of chunky veg
- Try houmous, guacamole and salsa
- Try veggie pates and burgers instead of meat ones
- Eat fruit based desserts, sweeten cakes with fruit instead of sugar
- Add carrots, swede, shredded cabbage, parsnips, butternut squash to your mashed potatoes – ½ and ½ (and for cottage pies)
- Use less meat and add veg and pulses to bolognaise sauces or cottage pies
- Try cooking veg in a different way, e.g. roasting, stir frying
- Try different salads, e.g. mixed bean salad, lentil salads, runner bean salad, sweetcorn salsa etc
- Add beans, lentils and chickpeas to rice

Plan your meals so you ensure you get a good variety of fruit and veg that you love. Recipes on:

[www.bbcgoodfood.com](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com)

[www.change4life.co.uk](http://www.change4life.co.uk)

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