



Families ... generations of strength

Family Life Month Packet 1998
Family & Consumer Sciences
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Are You Too Busy To Eat Healthy? Fruits & Vegetables Are a Convenience for Busy People!

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Who has time to think about what they're eating? Everyone — according to the National Cancer Institute, especially with the variety of convenient fruit and vegetable choices on the market today.

As more families feel increased time constraints from jobs, family, and other commitments, a healthful diet is easy to overlook. In our hurried days, we don't always make the best food choices. However, it is possible to meet the demands of our busy lives and still make healthful food choices.

Did you know that eating five fruits and vegetables a day is important to help you maintain your health? Along with tasting great, fruits and vegetables are low in calories and fat and high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Eating lots of fruits and vegetables as part of a low-fat, high-fiber diet may help reduce cancer risk. A recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) survey shows the average adult ate about 4.4 servings of fruits and vegetables a day in 1994 — up from an average of 3.9 daily servings from 1989–1991.

Here are some ways to help you and your family.

Get Your 5 A Day!

Have fruits and veggies on hand! It's hard to choose grapes over cookies for a snack if they aren't around. Studies show that households that have fruits and veg-

etables available for meals and snacks will eat more of them! Put a few extra fruits and vegetables into your shopping cart this week.

Commuting with 5 A Day

Drink fruit juice instead of soda or coffee in the car. You can keep 8- to 12-ounce cans or bottles in your refrigerator, chilled and ready to go! Or you can buy them at gas stations and fast food chains. Bring with you fruits and vegetables that are in the can or can be eaten by hand. Try these convenience foods — apricots, grapes, apples, nectarines, bananas, orange segments, broccoli, pears, carrots, plums, celery stalks, strawberries, cherries.

Shopping for 5 A Day

Take advantage of easy options such as pre-cut, cleaned, and packaged fresh fruit and vegetables. Frozen, diced, or canned fruits and vegetables are also easy to use

✓ Buy low-fat yogurt, fruit juice, and fresh, canned, or frozen fruit to blend a quick smoothie in the morning. Drink it at home — or pour it into an insulated cup to keep it cold and take it with you.

✓ Buy pre-cut vegetables (packaged or from the salad bar) for brown bag lunches and try dipping in low-fat salad dressing.

✓ Buy frozen bags of berries, peaches, or melon balls and use as needed.

What Is a Serving?

A serving is smaller than many people think. One serving is:

- 3/4 cup (6 oz.) of 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- 1/2 cup cooked or canned vegetables or fruit
- 1 cup raw leafy vegetables
- 1/2 cup dried beans or peas
- 1/4 cup dried fruit

Remember, five is the minimum — the more the better!

References

Fast & Easy Fruits & Vegetables for Busy People, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service and National Institutes of Health (1992).

Take the 5 A Day Challenge — It's Easy — Even for People on the Go, National Cancer Institute, 1997.