Putting MyPlate on Your Table: Fruit

MyPlate, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guidance system, helps individuals use the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans to make smart choices from every food group. MyPlate includes an interactive, online guide that provides individuals with recommended food amounts to eat, based on gender, age and physical activity level. Personalized guides and other resources can be found at choosemyplate.gov.

This fact sheet provides an introduction to the fruit food group.

Why Fruit?

It is recommended that people of all ages fill half of their plate with fruits and vegetables at each meal. Eating fruit provides health benefits. People who eat more fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases including heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

The fiber contained in vegetables and fruits may reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

Fruits provide dietary fiber, vitamin C, potassium and folate (folic acid). They are naturally low in fat, sodium and calories. Fruits do not contain cholesterol.

Which Foods Are in the Fruit Group?

Foods in this group include any fruit or 100% fruit juice. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen or dried, and may be whole, cut-up or pureed.

How Much Is Needed From the Fruit Group?

This chart shows the USDA’s daily recommendation for fruit intake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>2–3 years old</th>
<th>1 cup</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4–8 years old</td>
<td>1 to 1½ cups</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>9–18 years old</th>
<th>1½ cups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>9–13 years old</td>
<td>1½ cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14–18 years old</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>19–30 years old</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31+ years old</td>
<td>1½ cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>19+ years old</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note these equivalents for 1 cup of fruit:

- 1 small apple (2.5 inches in diameter)
- 32 seedless grapes
- 1 large peach
- ½ cup dried fruit such as raisins, prunes or dried apricots
- 2 canned peach or pear halves
- 1 cup 100% fruit juice
- 8 large strawberries
- 1 wedge or 1 cup watermelon chunks
- 1 medium pear
- 1 large orange

Although 100% fruit juice can be part of a healthful diet, it lacks dietary fiber. When consumed in excess, it can add extra calories.

Select whole fruits that are fresh, canned, frozen or dried rather than juice. When choosing canned fruits, select fruits packed in 100% fruit juice to limit added sugars.
Tips for Getting Fruit on Your Table

• Enjoy a piece of fruit with your breakfast.
• Select local fruits when in season.
• Offer fruits as dessert.
• Enjoy a piece of fruit such as an apple, banana or orange as a snack.
• Try a smoothie made with fruit and low-fat milk or yogurt.
• Try 100% applesauce topped with raisins as a snack.

References
