



# Extension FactSheet

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## Fruits and Vegetables Are a Convenience for Busy People!

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**W**ho 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 enough fruits and vegetables each day is important to help you maintain your health? The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggests consuming enough fruits and vegetables, while staying within your caloric needs. The guidelines also recommend choosing a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. The recommended daily amounts vary, depending on your age, sex, and physical activity level.

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 blood pressure, manage weight, and reduce risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer.

Here are some ways to help you and your family.

### Get Enough Fruits and Vegetables!

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 vegetables 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 Fruits and Vegetables

Drink fruit juice instead of soda or coffee in the car. Be careful—Remember one cup of 100% fruit juice can be considered a cup from the fruit group. Try to keep the amount of fruit juice you drink to less than half of your daily fruit intake. You can keep eight to twelve-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, and cherries.

### Shopping for Fruits and Vegetables

Take advantage of easy options such as precut, 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 Counts as a Cup of Fruit or Vegetables?

- 1 cup (8 ounces) of 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- 1 cup cooked or canned vegetables or fruit

- 2 cups raw leafy vegetables is equivalent to 1 cup of vegetables
- 1 cup dried beans or peas, cooked
- 1/2 cup dried fruit

Remember, the more fruits and vegetables, the better!

### References

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