

Healthy Lifestyles

Duke Children's Primary Care

5-3-2-1-Almost None Eat FIVE fruits and veggies a day!

WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES?

A growing body of research shows that fruits and vegetables are essential to our health. They contain vitamins, minerals and fiber. They are amazing! They prevent stroke, heart disease, certain types of cancer, and digestive problems! If there were a medicine that did all that, you'd take it, wouldn't you?

If that's not enough to convince you, try this: eating fruits and vegetables can fill you up, leaving less room for junk food calories. This helps many people lose weight.

Even with all these benefits, most people don't get enough fruits and vegetables in their diet. One study showed that the average middle-schooler eats on average less than 1 fruit or vegetable a day!



Why? Many people say they don't like the taste. Some don't know how to prepare them. Others feel they are too expensive. Some people don't have access to fresh fruits or veggies. Ask your dietician about these issues if they apply to you. There is almost always a good solution.

HOW MANY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES DO I NEED EVERY DAY?

The answer depends on how old you are, and how active you are. In general:

A 5 year old boy	1.5 cups of fruit	1.5 cups of veggies
A 10 year old girl	1.5 cups of fruit	2.5 cups of veggies
A 15 year old boy	2 cups of fruit	3.5 cups of veggies
An adult	2 cups of fruit	4 cups of veggies

WHAT'S IN A FRUIT OR VEGGIE?

FIBER

Fiber lowers your risk of heart and blood vessel disease, and treats digestive problems Navy, pinto, black, kidney, lima, white and soybeans.
Lentils, black eyed peas, chick peas and artichokes

FOLATE

Folate prevents cancer, and reduces the risk of having a child with a brain or spinal cord defect Black eyed peas, cooked spinach, northern beans, asparagus

POTASSIUM

Lowers blood pressure Tomatoes, sweet potatoes, cooked greens, lima beans, carrots, prunes

VITAMIN A

Healthy skin and eyes, boosts immunity Sweet potatoes, spinach, pumpkin, carrots, turnip greens, mustard greens, kale, winter squash, cantaloupe, red peppers, collard greens

VITAMIN C

Helps heal cuts and wounds, also keeps teeth and gums healthy Red and green peppers, kiwi, strawberries, sweet potatoes, kale, cantaloupe, broccoli, pineapple, oranges, mango, cauliflower, tomato, Brussels sprouts

WHAT ABOUT GETTING MY FRUITS AND VEGGIES FROM JUICE OR FRUIT PACKED IN SYRUP OR VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS?

Juice contains a lot of sugar. One cup a day is enough for anyone, no matter what the age. In fact, we do not need fruit or vegetable juice at all to be healthy.

Fresh fruits and veggies can be expensive. Frozen or canned is a very healthful alternative, and does not take away from the nutritional value of the food. Fruit packed in juice or better yet, water, is much lower in sugar than the fruit packed in syrup.

Vitamins and nutrients should come from food first. You can take a multivitamin to get some of these nutrients, but you will miss out on many natural substances that only come from the food.

TRY A NEW VEGGIE TODAY!!!