



FACTSHEET

THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE BIBLE!

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Easy question: How many servings of fruits and vegetables should we aim to eat a day?

Five is the magic number and it's also the minimum number we should be aiming for. This number came out of the US and is based on partnership formed in the 1990's between the National Cancer Institute and a Health Foundation. Recent research suggests that we should be eating 5 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit a day to optimise our health - so the new rule is '5 + 2' servings a day!

A serving size is approximately 80g or the size of a medium apple. A portion

should fit into the palm of your hand (note that for children the portion size is scaled down so it fits into the size of their palm).

Your daily 7 needs to come from different vegetables and fruits. Eating 7 apples for example would still only count as 1 serving. Fruit juice only counts as 1 serving however many glasses you have.

Note that fruit juice, even a freshly squeezed juice is not considered to be healthy in large quantities. It is naturally high in sugar and can 'spike' blood sugar levels when drunk on its own. It's also worth remembering that many of the nutrients in fruits



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and vegetables are found just under the skin of the fruit and in the pulp. By drinking the juice you miss out on some of these precious vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

To optimise your nutritional intake we suggest:

- Eat the whole fruit or vegetable, not just the juice
- Aiming for a variety of rainbow colours during the day
- Include a green leafy vegetable as one of your 5 daily vegetable servings. These vegetables contain folic acid which helps to protect your cellular DNA (needed for healthy genes).

Phytochemicals

Fruits and vegetables are also rich sources of phytochemicals. These

are chemicals/substances made by plants which are associated with health benefits.

You may have heard of the following **lycopene** (found in tomatoes) which research indicates may help to reduce the risk of prostate cancer.

There are also **carotenoids**, the orange, red and yellow pigments found in certain plants which are linked to cancer prevention and improved eye health.

The cruciferous (**cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower**) vegetables contain phytochemicals called sulforaphane and indole 3-carbinol which help the body to **detoxify** carcinogens (substances which can cause cancer). There's lots of new really exciting research on these humble vegetables.

Antioxidants

Fruits and vegetables are also rich sources of antioxidants. Antioxidants are substances which help to protect the body's cells from damage and therefore reduce the risk of diseases like cardiovascular disease, dementia and cancer. Many of the vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals in plants act as antioxidants, such as Vitamins A and C, selenium and polyphenols.

Dark green leafy vegetables and red fruits contain some of the highest amounts of antioxidants.

A high fruity and veggie daily menu!

- **Breakfast:** Greek yoghurt with berries and flaked almonds (1 fruit serving)
- **Lunch:** Large mixed salad with grilled salmon (3 veg servings)
- **Snack:** 1 apple and a handful of walnuts (1 fruit serving)
- **Supper:** Bean curry (made with courgettes, peppers and tomatoes), brown rice, grilled spinach and cucumber raita (4-5 veg servings).