

Smart Food Choices: Flavorful Fruits

Fact Sheet 1052



Cooperative Extension

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Flavorful Fruits

Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed. The amount of fruit you need to eat depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity.

Nutritional Benefits

- Most fruits are low in fat, sodium, and calories. None have cholesterol.
- Fruits are good sources of potassium, dietary fiber, and vitamin C. High in potassium are: bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches and apricots, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, and orange juice.
- Provides fiber for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis.
- Provides a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. Whole or cut-up fruits are sources of dietary fiber; fruit juices contain little or no fiber.
- Provides Vitamin C for growth and repair of all body tissues and helps heal cuts and wounds, along with keeping teeth and gums healthy.
- Provides folate (folic acid) to form red blood cells. Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant and those in the first trimester of pregnancy should consume adequate folate.

Health Benefits of Fruits

- Reduce risk for stroke, Type 2 diabetes, and perhaps other cardiovascular diseases.
- Protect against certain cancers, such as mouth, stomach, and colon-rectum cancer.
- Reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and may help to decrease bone loss.

Daily Recommendations

| | | |
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| Children | 2-3 years old 4-8 years old | 1 cup 1 to 1 ½ cups |
| Girls | 9-13 years old 14-18 years old | 1 ½ cups 1 ½ cups |
| Boys | 9-13 years old 14-18 years old | 1 ½ cups 2 cups |
| Women | 19-30 years old 31-50 years old 51+ years old | 2 cups 1 ½ cups 1 ½ cups |
| Men | 19-30 years old 31-50 years old 51+ years old | 2 cups 2 cups 2 cups |

These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

In general, 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or 1/2 cup of dried fruit can be considered as 1 cup from the fruit group. The following specific amounts count as 1 cup of fruit (in some cases equivalents for 1/2 cup are also shown) towards your daily recommended intake:

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| Apple | ½ large (3.25" diameter) 1 small (2.5" diameter) 1 cup of sliced or chopped, raw or cooked |
| Applesauce | 1 cup |
| Banana | 1 cup sliced 1 large (8" to 9" long) |
| Cantaloupe | 1 cup diced or melon balls |
| Grapes | 1 cup whole or cut up 32 seedless grapes |
| Grapefruit | 1 medium (4" diameter) 1 cup sections |

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chart continued...

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| Mixed fruit (fruit cocktail) | 1 cup diced or sliced, raw or canned, drained |
| Orange | 1 large (3-1/6" diameter) 1 cup sections |
| Orange, mandarin | 1 cup canned, drained |
| Peach | 1 large (2 3/4" diameter) 1 cup sliced or diced, raw, cooked, or canned, drained 2 halves, canned |
| Pear | 1 medium pear (2.5 per lb.) 1 cup sliced or diced, raw, cooked, or canned, drained |
| Plum | 1 cup sliced, raw or cooked 3 medium or 2 large plums |
| Strawberries | about 8 large berries 1 cup whole, halved, or sliced, fresh or frozen |
| Watermelon | 1 small wedge (1" thick) |
| Dried fruits (raisins, prunes, apricots, etc.) | 1/2 cup dried fruit is equivalent to 1 cup fruit |
| 100% fruit juice (orange, apple, etc.) | 1 cup |

Keep Fruits Safe

- Wash hands OFTEN with hot soapy water for 20 seconds before, during, and after preparation.
- Wash fruit with cool tap water before cutting, eating raw, or cooking.
- Rub fruit briskly with your hands and a clean produce brush to remove dirt and surface residues. Dry after washing. Do not use soap or detergents to clean vegetables.
- Keep fruit separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood while shopping, preparing, or storing.

Lunchbox Ideas with Fruit

Unless your family's lunch will be kept in a refrigerator at school or at work, make sure you have a cool pack in the lunchbox to keep foods fresh. Proteins, dressings, and dairy, especially, must be kept cold to keep them from spoiling.

Proteins: Use a variety of lean meats, such as sliced turkey with cranberry sauce or chicken breast. Other good sources of protein are peanut butter (good with banana), low-fat cheese, hummus, or hard-boiled eggs.

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Dressings: Try mustard, light mayonnaise, or low-fat salad dressing as a spread. If your family likes butter, try tub margarine. Salsa also makes a great dressing. Try mango peach salsa for a change.

Fruit: Use any fresh fruit in season, applesauce, fruit cocktail cups (packed in fruit juice, not sugar syrup), or 100% fruit juice boxes. Keep lunch interesting by choosing different fruits on occasion--for example, star fruit, kiwi, or papaya.

Vegetables: Use all the colors! Pack an assortment of carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes, green and red peppers strips, celery with peanut butter, or broccoli or cauliflower florets with light dressing. You can mix up a medley of cooked vegetables and stuff them in pocket bread. If you add lettuce to a sandwich, remember to dry it well after washing it or you'll have a soggy sandwich.

Dairy products: Jazz up low-fat yogurt with fresh fruit or low-fat granola.

Grains: Use whole-wheat bread for sandwiches. If your family is tired of sandwich bread, try whole-wheat pocket or pita bread, tortilla wraps, rice cakes, or grain salads, such as couscous, and add apple, citrus, or mango.

Snack Ideas: Fresh fruit or dried fruit; whole-wheat pretzels, crackers or rice cakes; low-fat yogurt with fresh fruit; cottage cheese with applesauce; apple slices with almond butter; trail mix or granola; peanut butter and banana slices; pineapple or mango smoothies.

Beverages: Water or seltzer water; low-fat (1% or skim) milk for children over age two; whole or 2% milk for children under two; or offer them limited amounts of 100 % fruit juice. (Eating fruit rather than drinking more than 8 oz of juice per day is recommended for older children, adolescents, and adults to limit sugar and calories.)

References

Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition
www.cfsan.fda.gov

MyPyramid
www.mypyramid.gov

Rutgers Cooperative Extension
www.njaes.rutgers.edu/extension