


# Nutrition fact sheet



**M**any Americans already know the health benefits of eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day, but only 20 to 30 percent are actually doing it. One of the roadblocks is finding enough healthy fruit and vegetable choices while at work or when eating out. The focus of this year's 5 A Day Campaign is "Fruits and Vegetables, by Popular Demand."

The National Cancer Institute is encouraging Americans to speak up for healthy food choices and recommends easy strategies for making changes happen.

## Speak Up for 5 A Day!

Research shows that diets containing at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day may help prevent 35 percent or more of all causes of cancer. In fact, eating more fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of obesity, heart disease, and hypertension, as well. Eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day is one of the most important things you can do for good health.

Of course, setting a goal and reaching it can be two different things. Many people find it especially challenging when they don't prepare meals at home. And let's face it, the busier our schedules, the more difficult it is to plan meals, grocery shop, and cook at home. But there are things you can do to make eating more fruits and vegetables easier, even as days get more hectic.

### *5 A Day—ask for it*

The good news is that everyone has the power to ask for more healthy food options, at work or when eating out.

### *At work*

Many Americans spend more time at work than at home. Sometimes all three meals—and some snacks—are all eaten while at work. Often cafeterias, vending machines, and

quick service restaurants don't provide enough healthy—and appetizing—fruit and vegetable choices. This presents a challenge in reaching the 5 A Day goal. But, you can ask for healthy food choices to be offered. Once they are added—buy them to show there is a demand for healthy foods.

### *Tips:*

- Mobilize the employee wellness committee, human resources department, or cafeteria manager to hold a "5 A Day Challenge" contest. Encourage everyone to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day for at least a week. Those who reach the goal become eligible for a prize at the end of the promotion.
- Ask your office to extend the reach of worksite activities by making fruit and vegetable tips sheets and recipes available to all employees.
- Create a colorful fruit or vegetable dish for an office potluck lunch or party.
- Celebrate the 5 A Day promotion by placing a fruit basket in the coffee room or employee lounge area.
- Ask the cafeteria manager to add more variety in fruit and vegetable side dishes and toppings for sandwiches.



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## Information

The American Dietetic  
Association/National Center  
for Nutrition & Dietetics  
(NCND)

For food and nutrition  
information and a referral  
to a registered dietitian in  
your area, call the Consumer  
Nutrition Hot Line:

**800/366-1655**

Visit ADA on the  
World Wide Web:

**www.eatright.org**

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■ Express your concern about limited fruit/vegetable options in vending machines. Ask co-workers to do the same. The more people who make the request, the more likely it will happen.

### *At restaurants*

Whether running out for a quick lunch or having dinner at a favorite restaurant, it's important for you and your family to work toward the 5 A Day goal. If entrée selections don't include your preferred vegetable side dish, speak out for a healthy substitute. Most restaurants will be pleased to accommodate you. According to a recent restaurant survey, more customers requested "customized" or "personalized" dishes last year than ever before. And, if your request has been heard before, it may turn into a permanent menu item.

Here are tips on how to advocate for more fruits and vegetables in restaurants:

- Ask for fruit and vegetable substitutes—just because it's not on the menu doesn't mean it's not in the kitchen.
- Make a point of telling the wait staff, chef, or manager that you appreciate their efforts when they accommodate your needs.
- Ask the manager to allow customers to choose alternative side dishes to

chips and fries, such as fruit salad or lightly marinated cold vegetables.

■ Encourage friends to patronize restaurants willing to go out of their way to serve more fruits and vegetables.

Eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day is one of the most important things you can do for good health. Don't let circumstances get in the way of reaching your goal—speak out for healthier choices and make yours a 5 A Day lifestyle.



### *Where to find out more about fruits and vegetables:*

Look for fruit and vegetable fact sheets, taste tests, poster, and recipes in your local grocery. Check out <http://www.5aday.gov> for more tips on how to ask for fruits and vegetables, great new recipes and other tools to help you achieve the 5 A Day goal. Or call 800/4-CANCER for more information about diet and cancer prevention.