

## **\*Choosing a Rainbow of Produce for Good Health**

In the food world, fruits and vegetables have it all - a huge range of flavors, a wide variety of textures, a rainbow of colors and a list of health benefits that's hard to beat. It's nearly impossible to overstate the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables. Name a health problem in the U.S. and produce has probably been shown to help in its prevention and/or treatment. The incredible array of phytonutrients in plant foods has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, macular (eye) degeneration, prostate problems, osteoporosis and many types of cancer.

Unfortunately, we are not taking full advantage of these health benefits. Studies by the Produce for Better Health Foundation show that Americans are eating only about 3½ servings of produce per day - far short of the recommended minimum of five servings per day. For kids only 33 percent are eating the minimum two daily servings of fruit and only 29 percent are eating the minimum three daily servings of vegetables. Even worse, half the vegetables eaten by kids are white potatoes and a quarter is fried potatoes (fries).

The best way to get the power of produce is to enjoy as many different kinds and colors of fruits and vegetables as possible. Fortunately, all types of produce provide great taste - and promote good health. Fresh, frozen, canned and dried - they all count.

It's important to remember that five is a healthy start, but 5 to 9 servings may be needed to get the full power of produce. The good news is that a serving is smaller than most people think. One serving can be a medium piece of fruit; ½ cup of cooked, canned or cut-up vegetables or fruit; 1 cup of chopped lettuce and other raw leafy vegetables; ¾ cup of 100-percent fruit or vegetable juice; ½ cup of cooked dried beans and peas; or ¼ cup dried fruit.

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## **A High Five**

In selecting your daily intake of fruits and vegetables, the National Cancer Institute recommends choosing:

- At least one serving of a vitamin A-rich fruit or vegetable a day.
- At least one serving of a vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable a day.
- At least one serving of a high-fiber fruit or vegetables a day.

**Several servings of cruciferous vegetables a week. Studies suggest that these vegetables may offer additional protection against certain cancers, although further research is needed.**

## **High in Vitamin A\***

apricots  
cantaloupe  
carrots  
kale, collards  
leaf lettuce  
mango  
mustard greens  
pumpkin  
romaine lettuce  
spinach  
sweet potato  
winter squash (acorn, Hubbard)

## **High in Vitamin C\***

apricots  
broccoli  
Brussels sprouts  
cabbage  
cantaloupe  
cauliflower  
chili peppers

## **High in Vitamin C\***

orange juice  
pineapple  
plum  
potato with skin  
spinach  
strawberries  
bell peppers  
tangerine  
tomatoes  
watermelon

## **High in Fiber or Good Source of**

### **Fiber\***

apple  
banana  
blackberries  
blueberries  
Brussels sprouts  
carrots  
cherries  
cooked beans and peas (kidney, navy, lima, and pinto beans, lentils, black-eyed peas)  
dates  
figs  
grapefruit  
kiwi fruit  
orange  
pear  
prunes  
raspberries  
spinach

## What's a Serving Size?

Here's what the National Cancer Institute recommends as a serving of fruit and vegetables:

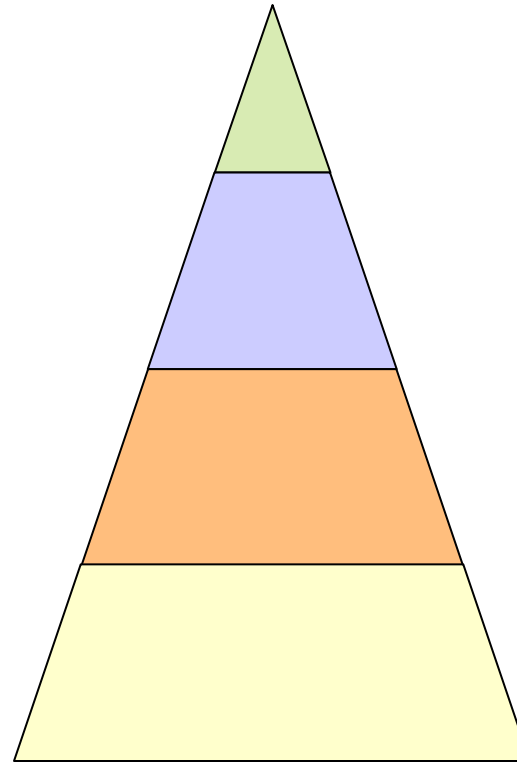
- 1 medium fruit or 1/2 cup of small or cut-up fruit
- 3/4 cup (180 milliliters) of 100 percent juice
- 1/4 cup dried fruit
- 1/2 cup raw non-leafy or cooked vegetables
- 1 cup raw leafy vegetables (such as lettuce)
- 1/2 cup cooked beans or peas (such as

### \*Barriers To Accessing Nutritional Food

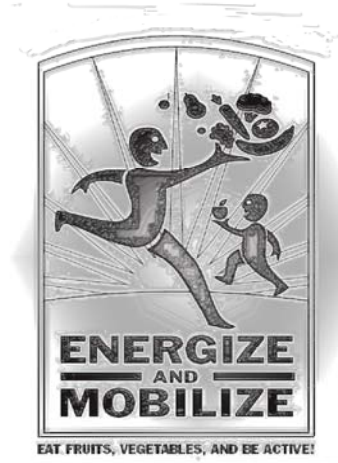
- Over 65% of survey respondents ate two servings or less of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Only 6% reported eating the USDA recommended amount of five servings of fruits and vegetables a day
- Over 70% of survey respondents reported that they regularly ate chips, ramen noodles and soda.
- 30% of survey respondents said they were limited to eating what is available in free food lines
- Other Barriers Cited By Respondents:
  1. Discrimination
  2. Lack of refrigeration
  3. Lack of storage space
  4. Lack of kitchens in living units
  5. No access to supermarkets
  6. Neighborhood food outlets that close early

\*From Taken for Granted: Ignoring Downtown Food Insecurity

## \*USDA FOOD PYRAMID\*



*Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Stamp Program. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious food for a better diet. **To find out more, visit a local County DPSS office (nearest at 4<sup>th</sup> and Alameda).***



## Benefits of Eating Five Servings of Fruits and Vegetables A Day

**Los Angeles  
Community Action Network**

**Taken for Granted: Ignoring  
Downtown Food Insecurity  
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