

VARY YOUR VEG



BNF
Healthy Eating Week

The Challenge

Have a variety of vegetables this week.

Why are vegetables important?

Vegetables provide a range of different vitamins and minerals needed for health. They also provide fibre, which is important for the digestive system and can help reduce the risk of developing heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer in adulthood.

What counts?

There are some examples of 5 A DAY portions below but we don't have to limit our portion sizes of vegetables and having smaller amounts of lots of different kinds (e.g. in a soup or stew) is great too! Remember that fresh, frozen, canned, dried and juiced types all count.

5 A DAY portions

- Three heaped tablespoons of cooked vegetables like broccoli, peas, cabbage or carrots.
- A dessert bowl of salad.
- Three heaped tablespoons of beans, chickpeas or lentils can count as one of your 5 A DAY (but only once each day).

How can we include vegetables in our diet?

- Add extra vegetables to dishes, such as spaghetti bolognese, curry or cottage pie. Vegetables can be a great way to add bulk to meals and increase the amount of fibre they contain.

- Just like fruit, vegetables make a great snack. Try carrot, pepper or celery sticks.
- Vegetable juice or smoothies (up to a maximum of 150ml a day) can be served as a drink alongside meals.

5 A DAY vegetables

We should include a wide variety of different coloured vegetables in our diet as different coloured vegetables provide different amounts and types of vitamins and minerals.

Adding extra vegetables doesn't have to be too expensive or time consuming. Try frozen vegetables, which are usually already chopped, for a quick addition to meals. Peas are a favourite, but broad beans, green beans, spinach, edamame beans or mixed vegetables are good options. Canned vegetables also count – canned tomatoes are great as a base for sauces or curries, and canned sweetcorn, chickpeas or kidney beans can be added to stews, soups or salads. Look out for lower cost vegetables at supermarkets or local markets or go for ready prepared vegetables to save time.

It's easy to get stuck in the habit of eating the same vegetables, but this challenge is all about eating a wider variety. Data suggests that around 50% of vegetable intake comes from just four kinds (fresh and canned tomatoes, carrots, onions and peas). Eating a wider variety of vegetables can provide a wider range of nutrients, as well as the opportunity to try new food and recipes.

#readyveggiego

Fruit and Vegetables

We should be trying to eat at least **5 portions** of a variety of fruits and vegetables every day.

- ❖ Fruit and vegetables should make up just over a third of what we eat each day.
- ❖ They can provide fibre, and lots of essential vitamins and minerals.
- ❖ Eating lots of them may help you maintain a healthy weight – they are naturally low in calories and fat!
- ❖ Try and choose lots of different coloured fruits and veg – different kinds contain different combinations of important nutrients our bodies need to stay healthy.

What counts?	Example portion size
Fresh fruit and vegetables	80g
Frozen fruit and vegetables	80g
Canned fruit and vegetables	80g
Dried fruit	30g
100% unsweetened fruit and veg juice	150ml
Smoothies	150ml

Note: *Dried fruit can stick to teeth which may lead to tooth decay, so it's best to keep dried fruit to mealtimes and not between meals.*

TOP TIP

Try a new fruit or vegetable each week to increase variety.

Why not pick **seasonal** fruits and vegetables which are often cheaper and taste the best.



Why eat these foods?

Different fruit and vegetables contain:

- ✓ **Vitamin C** - important for maintaining healthy body tissues.
- ✓ **Vitamin A** - important for maintenance of normal vision, skin and the immune system.
- ✓ **Folate** - important for normal and healthy blood formation.
- ✓ **Fibre** - helps to maintain a healthy gut.
- ✓ **Potassium** - helps to maintain a healthy blood pressure and is also important for the normal functioning of the nervous system.



TOP TIP

If you don't like chopped vegetables, try grating carrots or courgettes into your food to add flavour and texture or make a tomato sauce with added vegetables and blend.

Remember

Unsweetened 100% fruit or veg juice and smoothies, will only count as a maximum of **1 of your 5 A DAY**, no matter how much you have!

Menu ideas to increase fruit and veg intake:

Breakfast ideas

Add a chopped **banana** and **strawberries** to your morning wholegrain cereal or porridge.

Enjoy a 150ml glass of unsweetened 100% **fruit juice** alongside your breakfast.



Lunch ideas

Sandwiches – add some **cucumber**, **lettuce** and **tomato**

Soup – add extra **seasonal veg** and blend into your soup

Baked potato – with your filling, why not have a **side salad**

Dinner ideas

You could try adding **peas**, **carrots** or **spring onions** through your mashed potatoes;

or, sprinkle some extra veg onto your pizza like **sweetcorn**, **pineapple**, **pepper** and/or **mushrooms!**





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My 5 A DAY chart

	1 portion	2 portions	3 portions	4 portions	5 portions	Daily Total	I tried something new (tick)
Monday							<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday							<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday							<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday							<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday							<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday							<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday							<input type="checkbox"/>



















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For more information on the sources used in this text, please contact postbox@nutrition.org.uk

Remember:

- 1 portion of fruit or vegetables = **80g**
- 1 portion of pulses (beans, peas or lentils) = **80g** (will only count as 1 of your 5 A DAY)
- 1 portion of dried fruit = **30g** (keep to mealtimes, and not as a between-meal snack)
- 1 portion of fruit juice or smoothie = **150ml** (will only count as 1 of your 5 A DAY)

What does one of my 5 A DAY look like? *(Some examples)*

 1 medium apple	 7 strawberries	 1 dessert bowl of salad	 3 tablespoons of sweetcorn
 1/2 of a grapefruit	 2 broccoli spears	 3 tablespoons of carrots	 1 medium orange
 1 medium banana	 4 heaped tablespoons of cooked spinach	 3 heaped tablespoons of baked beans*	 1 heaped tablespoon of dried fruit
 1/2 an avocado	 2 kiwi fruit	 2 satsumas	 7 cherry tomatoes

* Choose low salt and sugar versions.

Think variety:

To get the most out of your 5 A DAY, try and choose a variety of different types and colours of fruits and vegetables throughout the day.

