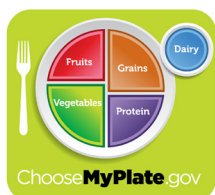


## MyPlate: Fruit Group

Donnia Behrends, Extension Educator  
Jamie Goffena, Extension Educator



MyPlate, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guide system, helps individuals use the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans to make smart choices from every food group. The MyPlate message about fruit is, “*Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.*” MyPlate includes an interactive, online guide that provides individuals with recommended food amounts to eat, based on gender, age, and physical activity level. Personalized guides can be found at [www.Choosemyplate.gov](http://www.Choosemyplate.gov) under the “SuperTracker and Other Tools” tab.

This publication describes ways to incorporate fruits into the diet, and their health benefits.

Consuming fruits may help prevent many common health ailments such as colds and flu. Fruits are rich sources of a variety of vitamins and minerals, fiber, phytochemicals, and antioxidants, which help to keep you healthy and energetic.

### Why Eat Fruit?

Only one-third of Americans eat fruit two or more times a day. As well as not eating enough fruit, many Americans do not eat enough variety of fruit. Orange or grapefruit juice, bananas, apples, and applesauce are the fruits most often eaten by Americans. Eating a variety of fruits means eating a variety of essential vitamins and minerals needed to keep your body healthy. Fruits are low-fat sources of many important nutrients including potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, vitamin A, folate, and many phytochemicals that help specific body functions. Health benefits from eating a diet rich in fruits include:



- reduced risk of stroke and cardiovascular diseases

- reduced markers of inflammation and oxidative stress in adults
- reduced risk of type 2 diabetes
- protection from certain types of cancer
- maintaining a healthy weight

### Recommendations for the Fruit Group

With MyPlate, the **Fruit Group** includes all fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or juiced fruit. One cup of fruit or 100 percent fruit juice, or one-half cup of dried fruit can be considered as one cup from this group. Generally, medium- to large-size fruits also will be about one cup. For a healthy eating pattern, while staying within an individual’s calorie needs, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends increasing fruit intake, eating the recommended amounts of fruits and choosing a variety of fruits, and choosing whole or cut-up fruits more often than juice. Since most Americans eat only 42 percent of the recommended amounts of fruit, most people need to increase fruit intake to two cups each day. However, the exact amount of food from the fruit group that you need to eat depends on your gender, age, and how physically active you are. From [www.Choosemyplate.gov](http://www.Choosemyplate.gov) find the daily calories and cups of fruit that are recommended for you. See *Table 1* for general guidelines.

**Table I. How much fruit is needed daily?**

<i>Daily recommendation*</i>		
<b>Children</b>	2-3 years old	1 cup
	4-8 years old	1 to 1½ cups
<b>Girls</b>	9-13 years old	1½ cups
	14-18 years old	1½ cups
<b>Boys</b>	9-13 years old	1½ cups
	14-18 years old	2 cups
<b>Women</b>	19-30 years old	2 cups
	31-50 years old	1½ cups
	51+ years old	1½ cups
<b>Men</b>	19-30 years old	2 cups
	31-50 years old	2 cups
	51+ years old	2 cups

\*These amounts are appropriate for individuals getting 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.

### Color Your Plate with Fruit

Phytochemicals are substances found in plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. About 3,000 different phytochemicals are identified with health benefits. Phytochemicals often are found in the plant pigment. Since



each color in fruit provides a unique health benefit, the more variety of color on your plate, the better. See *Table II* for specific benefits of fruit colors and phytochemicals.

### Eat Fruit Affordably

- Purchase fruit in quantities that can be eaten within a reasonable amount of time. Fruit purchased during harvest season will be more affordable. Select fresh fruit without obvious bruises (natural imperfections are OK) and allow fruit to ripen at room temperature in a bowl or brown paper bag.
- Refrigerate ripe or cut fruit. Canned or frozen fruit may be purchased for later in the week. Fruit canned in fruit juice provides more nutrients with fewer calories than those canned in syrup.
- Rinse (don't soak) all fruits just prior to eating or preparing. This will prevent spoilage during storage, as water encourages rapid mold growth.
- Whole fresh fruits are easy snacks to carry with you and are higher in fiber than fruit juices. Dried fruits are easy to pack in lunches and are convenient during long trips.
- Mixtures of fruit make good salads and desserts to serve with meals. Since fruit naturally includes sugar, it is a "sweet deal" for a healthy diet!

**Table II. Health Benefits of Fruit Colors**

<i>Color</i>	<i>Phytochemicals</i>	<i>Health Benefit</i>	<i>Fruits</i>
<b>Blue/Purple</b>	<b>Anthocyanins Phenolics</b>	<b>Healthy aging Better memory function Protects against heart disease Lowers risk of some cancers</b>	<b>Blackberries, blueberries, plums, elderberries, Concord grapes</b>
<b>Red</b>	<b>Lycopene Anthocyanins</b>	<b>Healthy aging Protects against heart disease Lowers risk of some cancers Urinary tract health</b>	<b>Raspberries, apples, cranberries, cherries, strawberries, guava, pomegranates, tomatoes, pink grapefruit, papaya, watermelon, red grapes</b>
<b>Orange/Yellow</b>	<b>Vitamin C Beta-carotene Bioflavonoids</b>	<b>Healthy eyes Protects against heart disease Lowers risk of some cancers</b>	<b>Apricots, cantaloupe, mangoes, oranges, peaches, nectarines, tangerines, pineapple, lemon, pears</b>
<b>Green</b>	<b>Indoles Lutein Quercetin</b>	<b>Protects eyesight Lowers risk of some cancers Promotes healing of stomach ulcers</b>	<b>Green apples, green pears, kiwi, avocados, green grapes, honeydew melon, limes</b>
<b>White/Brown</b>	<b>Allicin</b>	<b>Maintain healthy cholesterol levels Protects against heart disease Lowers risk of some cancers</b>	<b>Bananas, coconut, dates, white nectarines, white peaches, figs</b>

## Tips to Eat More Fruit

- Keep a bowl of whole fresh fruit on the table or counter.
- Start a meal with a piece of fruit.
- Snack on pieces of fruit dipped in low-fat yogurt or pudding.
- Make a fruit smoothie by blending low-fat milk or yogurt with fresh or frozen fruit such as bananas, peaches, strawberries, or other berries.
- Make a fresh fruit salad by mixing apples, bananas, strawberries, grapes, or pears with an acidic fruit like pineapple or lemon juice. The acid keeps fruit from turning brown.
- Top cereal and pancakes with fruit rather than sugar or syrup.
- Eat fruit rather than highly refined, sugary desserts and pair fruit with flavorful cheese.
- Pack fruits for snacking during road trips.
- For a refreshing summer treat, freeze grapes or sliced fruits flat on a cookie sheet. Transfer to an air-tight storage container once they are frozen.
- Add chopped or pureed fruits in your favorite bread, muffin, or cookie mix before baking.
- Include fruit chunks in a tossed salad, or a chicken or turkey salad sandwich.
- Puree fruit to make a spread for toast.
- Buy a new fruit each month for the family to try.

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