

# Smart Choices

## Nutrition News

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### Inside the Pyramid—Fruits

People who eat more fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Fruits provide nutrients that are important for health and maintenance of your body. Here is a sample of the health benefits of eating plenty of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy lifestyle:

- ◆ May reduce risk for stroke and coronary heart disease.
- ◆ May reduce risk for type 2 diabetes.
- ◆ May protect against certain cancers.

MyPyramid from USDA recommends that adults eat about 2 cups of fruit per day (based on a 2,000 calorie diet). The amount that each person needs varies depending upon age, sex and level of physical activity. Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to get a personalized eating plan for you.

Most fruits are naturally low in fat, sodium and calories. Did you know that no fruits contain cholesterol??? They are also important sources of many nutrients such as potassium, fiber, vi-

tamin C and folate (folic acid). Diets high in potassium may help maintain healthy blood pressure. Dietary fiber from fruits may help reduce blood cholesterol levels, may lower risk of heart disease and reduce constipation. Fiber containing



foods such as fruits help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. That is good news for those who are trying to maintain or lose weight. Vitamins found in fruits play many roles in keeping our bodies healthy and maintained. Vitamin C is important for growth and repair of body tissues and helps heal cuts. Folate (folic acid) helps the body form red blood cells and reduces the risk of certain birth defects such as spina bifida. Have you had your fruit today?

#### What Counts as a Cup?

- ◆ 1 cup of fruit
- ◆ 1 cup of 100% fruit juice
- ◆ 1/2 cup of dried fruit
- ◆ 1 small apple
- ◆ 1 large banana
- ◆ 32 seedless grapes
- ◆ 1 medium grapefruit
- ◆ 1 large orange
- ◆ 1 large peach
- ◆ 1 medium pear
- ◆ 3 medium plums
- ◆ 8 large strawberries



#### In this Issue:

- Inside the Pyramid—Fruits
- Tips to Help You Eat Fruits
- Apple Salad
- Ways to Enjoy Fruits
- What's the Purpose of Food Stamps?

## Tips to Help You Eat Fruits . . .

- \* Keep a bowl of whole fruit on the table, counter or in the refrigerator.
- \* Refrigerate cut-up fruit to store for later.
- \* Buy fresh fruits in season when they may be less expensive.
- \* Buy fruits that are dried, frozen and canned (in water or juice) as well as fresh so that you always have a supply on hand.
- \* Try fruit for a healthy snack in seconds.
- \* Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit rather than juice in order to get the dietary fiber.
- \* When choosing canned fruits, select those canned in 100% fruit juice or water rather than syrup.
- \* Vary your fruit choices to get the most nutrients.



## Apple Salad

- 2 cups diced apples
- 1 cup diced celery
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup nuts
- 2 tablespoons salad dressing or mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon orange juice



Mix orange juice with salad dressing or mayonnaise. Toss apples, celery, raisins and nuts with the dressing mixture.

Serving Size: 1/2 cup  
Yield: 8 servings

Nutrition Facts: 110 calories; 6 g fat; .5 saturated fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 45 mg sodium; 15 g carbohydrate; 2 g dietary fiber; 11 g sugars; 2 g protein



## Ways to Enjoy Fruits:

- ⇒ Top cereal with bananas or peaches.
- ⇒ Add blueberries to pancakes.
- ⇒ Drink 100% fruit juice.
- ⇒ Try a fruit mixed with low-fat or fat-free yogurt.
- ⇒ For lunch on the go, grab individual containers of fruit like applesauce or peaches.
- ⇒ Add mandarin oranges to a tossed salad.
- ⇒ For dessert, have baked apples, pears or a fruit salad.
- ⇒ Enjoy cut-up or dried fruit as a snack.
- ⇒ Peanut butter spread on apple slices makes a fun healthy snack.
- ⇒ Make a fruit smoothie by blending fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt with fresh or frozen fruit.



## What's the Purpose of Food Stamps?

The Food Stamp Program isn't about welfare. Its goal is helping people with limited incomes improve their nutrition for better health and disease prevention. The program is available to all eligible persons.

Food stamp coupons have been replaced by an electronic card that looks and works just like a typical debit or credit card used by any grocery shopper. No one but you and the grocery check-out clerk will know you are using Food Stamps. This program can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact 1-888-LAHELPU or visit [www.dss.state.la.us](http://www.dss.state.la.us).



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References: [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) and SNAP-Ed Connection