



Fruits and Vegetables

The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! message was developed by the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) at Children's Memorial Hospital. The message is focused on 5 healthy lifestyle behaviors to help children and their families be more healthy.

5-4-3-2-1 Go! promotes:

- *5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day*
- *4 servings of water a day*
- *3 servings of low-fat dairy a day*
- *2 hours or less of screen time (TV, video games) a day*
- *1 hour or more of physical activity a day*

This message was developed with the 3-5 year old child in mind, but is a healthy message for the entire family.

5 Servings of Fruits and Vegetables a Day

Benefits:

- Fruits and vegetables provide many vitamins and minerals to support your immune system so you are less likely to get sick
- Fruits and vegetables also provide a lot of fiber that helps with constipation/regularity and helps to prevent colon cancer
- Increased servings of fruits and vegetables also help people to lose weight because they tend to replace less healthy foods
- The nutrients in fruits and vegetables help prevent many serious diseases. These nutrients help to reduce the risk of:
 - heart disease,
 - high blood pressure,
 - type II diabetes,
 - and cancers, including lung, breast, colon, and stomach cancers.

What is a serving?

- 1 cup of raw salad greens
- ½ cup cooked/chopped fruits or vegetables – ex: canned peaches/pears, green beans, peas
- ½ cup cooked beans or peas
- ¼ cup (1 oz) dried fruit – ex: 1 small box of raisins
- 6 oz of 100% fruit juice – **Note that for juice, a serving is not a full 8 oz. cup. It is only ¾ of a cup, or 6 oz**



Is juice as good as whole fruit?

No.

-Whole fruit is better than fruit juice: whole fruit provides more fiber, while juice has more calories but is less filling

-Whole (including chopped or cooked) fruits and vegetables retain the fiber that is removed when it is juiced. Think of the skin of an apple or the pulp of an orange, these are removed in the juicing process, so we do not get their fiber benefit

-Juice tends to provide more calories per serving than whole fruit, but is not as filling.

--Therefore, when drinking juice it is easy to take in more calories than needed to maintain a healthy weight.

Example :

- 1 6 oz glass of Orange Juice has **91 calories** and only **0.6 grams of fiber**
- 1 medium-small orange (1 serving) has only **45 calories**, and contains **2.3 grams of fiber**

-If you do serve juice, **have only one 6 ounce glass a day, and make sure it is 100% juice.**

-Other “juice” products contain only 15% or less juice. When there is so little juice it doesn’t count towards the 5 servings a day

Which fruits and vegetables should I eat?

Different fruits and vegetables have different nutrients.

For example:

- oranges have a lot of vitamin C and a good amount of potassium
- bananas have a lot of potassium
- Carrots have a lot of vitamin A and a good amount of potassium
- spinach is a good source of iron.

In general, **darker** colored fruits and veggies tend to have more nutrients.

- EXAMPLE: Spinach greens have more nutrients than iceberg lettuce.

The important thing is to get a **variety** of different fruits and vegetables each day

What’s Best? Canned? Frozen? Fresh?

ALL are useful in getting 5 servings a day!

- Choose products without added sauces
- Canned fruit – packed in juice, not syrup
- Look for low-sodium canned vegetables
- Eat a variety of each!



Plan Ahead! When grocery shopping, plan ahead for the week.

Choose seasonal produce:

- Seasonal produce is ripe and ready to eat
- It has more nutrients and flavor
- It is less expensive

Used frozen, canned or dried

- Packed in natural juice
- Without added sauces

Be Prepared.

Caring for your family and working is very time-consuming and you may be tempted to leave out vegetables when you are short on time. Just remember these tips for a quick and easy way to add more vegetables and fruit to your meals:

- Eat fruit whole, like apples, peaches, berries, or banana or slice up veggies as a quick as a snack or a side dish.
- You can fruit and veggies in low-fat yogurt, mustard, etc.
- Sliced apples, carrot sticks, celery sticks, sliced bell pepper, and sliced tomatoes all make a side addition to a meal
- After grocery shopping, clean and cut fruit and veggies and package in a baggie for a quick snack
- Take some help from the supermarket salad bars for pre-cut and washed produce
- Purchase single service size fruit cups for a snack on the run

Space your fruits and vegetables throughout the day.

By adding one or two produce items at each meal and snack, you can make your way to 5 servings a day! Here are some examples:

Breakfast

- 6 oz glass of 100% juice
- 1 small banana

Lunch

- Side salad (1 cup)

Snack

- 1 small apple

Dinner

- Side of cooked broccoli (1/2 cup)



How to help your child reach 5 servings a day

- **Keep** fruits and vegetables at home
- Encourage child to **pick out** their favorite produce at the store
- Allow kids to **help** with preparation
- **Be a good role model** by eating fruits and vegetables too!
- **AVOID food as a reward** for good behavior or as a way to urge your child to eat:
 - Doing this puts a higher value on the dessert
 - Many children will learn to like a food if exposed to it often enough
 - It may take 20 times, but just offering a little piece and not pressuring the child to eat can help even the pickiest eater try new foods

Tips to add vegetables to your family's meal - Be a Sneaky Cook

- Add vegetables cut into small pieces to ground meat; onions and mushrooms work well.
- Add vegetables as toppings to meat dishes, such as tomato sauce or sautéed peppers or mushrooms.
- Make fajitas with both meat and sautéed vegetables

Take-Home Fruit and Vegetable Points

- Source of vitamins, minerals, fiber
 - Focus on variety
- Plan ahead and be prepared
 - Keep produce available for meals and snacks
- Aim for one or two servings of produce with each meal

Adapted from the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) at Children's Memorial Hospital, 5-4-3-2-1 Go!:
<http://www.clocc.net/partners/54321GO/5%20Servings%20a%20day%20Script.pdf>

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