

MyPyramid — Fruit Group

Karen Schledewitz, Extension Assistant
Linda Boeckner, Extension Nutrition Specialist

MyPyramid – the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guide system – is an interactive, online guide that provides individuals with recommended food amounts based on their sex, age and activity level. This personalized guide may be found at www.MyPyramid.gov. For healthful diets, stay within your calorie limit while getting needed nutrients from each of the basic food groups. Learn to balance food intake and physical activity to maintain a healthy weight.



This fact sheet provides a look at the **Fruits Group** from MyPyramid. Any fruit

or 100 percent fruit juice is part of this group. For a 2,000 calorie diet, MyPyramid recommends two cups of fruit daily. More or fewer cups may be eaten depending on individual calorie needs. Go to www.MyPyramid.gov to find how many calories and cups of fruit are right for you each day.

Fitting Fruit Into Your Daily Plan

Many Americans do not eat enough fruits, or enough variety of fruits. Orange or grapefruit juice, bananas, apples, and applesauce are the fruits most often eaten by Americans.

One key recommendation of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 is to *choose a variety of fruits and vegetables*. Eating a variety of fruits helps provide the full range of vitamins, fiber, minerals and phytochemicals needed to stay healthy. The list of fruits in the box will add variety and a full range of nutrients to an individual diet.

MyPyramid's fruit group includes all fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits and 100 percent fruit juices. 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 will also be about one cup.

Whole fresh fruits are easy snacks to carry 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. Fruits can be purchased as canned or frozen for convenience. Fruits packed or frozen in water or their own juice have less sugar and calories than those packed in heavy syrup.

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| Apples | Nectarines |
| Apricots | Oranges |
| Avocado | Papayas |
| Bananas | Peaches |
| Berries, all types | Pears |
| Cantaloupe | Pineapple |
| Cranberries | Plums |
| Grapefruit | Prunes |
| Grapes | Pomegranates |
| Honeydew melon | Raisins |
| Kiwi Fruit | Tangerines |
| Lemons | Watermelon |
| Limes | 100% Fruit juices of all kinds |
| Mangoes | |

Why Include Fruits?

Fruits are sources of many important nutrients including potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, folate and many phytochemicals. These nutrients play key roles in keeping you healthy and energetic. Some of the health benefits from eating a diet rich in fruits as part of an overall healthy diet include:

- Reducing risk of stroke and cardiovascular diseases
- Reducing risk of type 2 diabetes
- Reducing risk of some types of cancer
- Maintaining a healthy weight

Phytochemicals occur naturally in fruits, vegetables and whole grains and give these foods their color. There are about 3,000 different phytochemicals with identified health benefits. Each color in fruit provides unique health benefits, so the more reds, yellows, greens, oranges and blues on

your plate the better. For example, researchers study blue and purple fruits such as grapes and plums for their role in healthy aging, urinary tract health and protecting the body's memory function. Learning more about these benefits helps tell why eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables is so important to maintaining health.

How to include fruits

Here are some tips for including more fruit in the daily diet.

- Keep a bowl of whole fresh fruit on the table or counter.
- Eat pieces of fruit dipped into low-fat yogurt or pudding.

- Make fruit smoothies by blending fat-free or 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 acidic fruits like oranges, pineapple or lemon juice.
- Top breakfast cereal with fruit such as bananas, peaches or any type of berry.
- Use fruit for dessert.
- Pack fruits to snack on during road trips.

References

United States Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*. 6th edition, Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005.

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