

# Fruits and Veggies – More Matters

## Why Are Eating Fruits and Vegetables Important?

Since 1991, the National 5 A Day Program has been dedicated to promoting healthy eating through fruits and vegetables. More recent research shows 5 servings a day may not be enough. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans now recommend that Americans double the amount of fruits and vegetables they currently eat. Given the increase of chronic diseases among all age groups, eating a diet rich in a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables is more important than ever.

The Center for Disease Control and Produce for Better Health have responded by collaborating to launch a new campaign called “Fruits and Veggies – More Matters”. Their message is simple: Generous amounts of fruits and veggies in all forms – fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% juice are rich sources of vitamins, minerals, and other natural substances that can help protect against chronic diseases. Fruits and vegetables are high in:

Fiber – that has been shown to decrease the risk of coronary heart disease and some cancers.

Magnesium – that supports normal muscle and nerve functions, a steady heart rhythm, and a healthy immune system.

Potassium – that may help to maintain a healthy blood pressure.

Vitamin A – that keeps eyes and skin healthy and protects against infections.

Vitamin C – that helps heal cuts and wounds in addition to keeping gums and teeth healthy.

## Why is this an issue?

People who eat more fruits and vegetables as a part of a healthy diet are less likely to suffer from obesity, stroke, some types of cancer, type-2 diabetes and perhaps, high blood pressure and heart disease.

While knowledge about fruits and vegetables among consumers has increased over the last two decades, research has shown that consumption remains far below daily recommendations.

By investing in an effort to get Minnesotans to increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables we can:

1. Reduce the incidence or onset of a disease.
2. Reduce the number of years a disease needs to be clinically managed.
3. Reduce the costs associated with disease management and its related disabilities.

## Relevant statistics\*

- 81% of Minnesotans consume less than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- 33% have been told by a health professional that they have high cholesterol.
- 22% have been told by a health professional that they have high blood pressure.
- 26% have been told by a health professional that they have pre-diabetes.
- 1 in 4 are classified as obese based on Body Mass Index scores

\*2007 Behavioral Risk Factor surveillance system

For more information

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>



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