

# Nutrition in Minnesota

## Why nutrition is an issue:

Eating a balanced diet is one of the most important ways of improving overall health. Different nutrients have different roles so it is important to eat a wide range of food rich in fruits and vegetables. Poor eating habits that result in too many calories and not enough nutrients increases risk for chronic disease and disability. Over the past two decades, changes in dietary habits coupled with sedentary lifestyles have led to increases in nutrition-related chronic diseases in the U.S. Food consumption records show an increase in overall calorie intake. More importantly those calories include excessive intakes of animal products, fat, and refined sugars which increase risk for chronic diseases. While chronic diseases tend to express themselves in adulthood, public health surveillance systems indicate a growing number of children with clinical signs of adult chronic diseases.

## Fruit and vegetable consumption:

Eating generous amounts of fruits and vegetables in all forms – fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% juice provide a rich source of vitamins, minerals, and other natural substances that can help protect against chronic diseases. For example:

- *Fiber* has been shown to decrease the risk of coronary heart disease and some cancers
- *Magnesium* supports normal muscle and nerve functions, a steady heart rhythm, and a healthy immune system
- *Potassium* may help to maintain a healthy blood pressure
- *Vitamin A* keeps eyes and skin healthy and protects against infections
- *Vitamin C* helps heal cuts and wounds in addition to keeping gums and teeth healthy

## Nutrition and chronic diseases:

People who eat more fruits and vegetables as a part of a healthy diet are less likely to suffer from a chronic diseases and conditions including:

- Overweight and obesity
- Some cancers
- Type-2 diabetes
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Dental disease
- Osteoporosis

Changes in nutritional intake can help reduce the burden of chronic disease:

- *Obesity* - consuming more fiber, more fruits/veggies, and less refined sugar can help protect against obesity
- *Diabetes* – reducing obesity (specifically abdominal fat) will protect against diabetes
- *Stroke* – protective nutrition related lifestyle changes include lowering sodium and fat intake, while increasing fruits and vegetables, fiber and calcium
- *Heart Disease* – preventing diabetes and obesity reduces heart disease
- *Cancer* – anti-oxidants found in fruits and vegetable may protect against some forms of cancer
- *Dental Disease* – research shows dental disease and tooth loss is more common among those with diabetes
- *Osteoporosis* – optimal bone health in later life depends on dietary habits prior to the cessation of bone growth in early adulthood



Chronic Disease Risk Reduction Unit  
85 East 7<sup>th</sup> Place, Suite 220  
P.O. Box 64882  
Saint Paul, MN 55164-0882  
(651) 201-5400  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

# Nutrition in Minnesota – page 2

## Nutrition statistics:

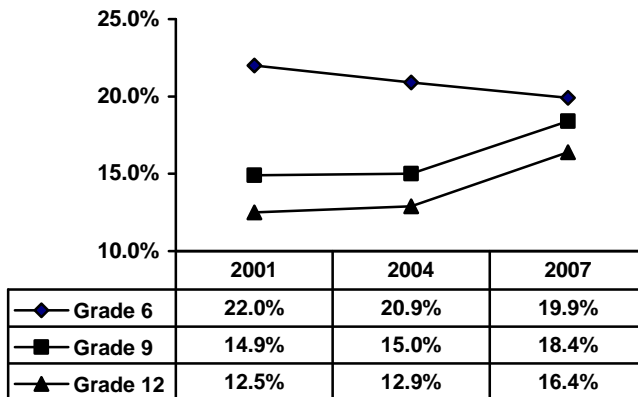
### National:

- In 2005, 76.2% of U.S. adults did not eat recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables<sup>1</sup>
- In 2005, 79.9% of 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students did not eat recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables<sup>2</sup>
- In 2005, 83.8% of 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students drank less than 3 glasses of milk per day<sup>2</sup>

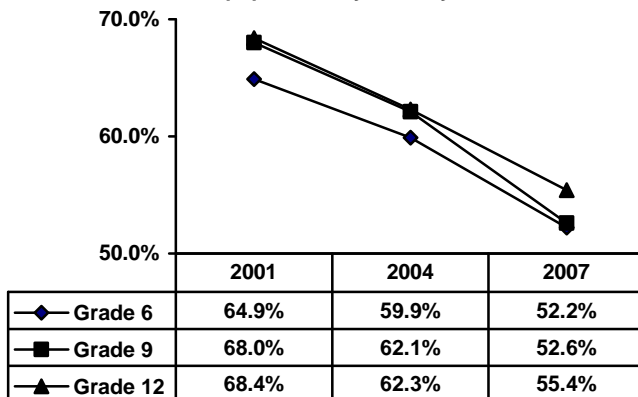
### Minnesota:

- In 2005, 75.5% of Minnesota adults did not eat recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables<sup>3</sup>
- From 2001 to 2007, consumption of milk daily steadily decreases among Minnesota 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students, both male and female<sup>4</sup>

Minnesota Student Survey: Five or more servings of fruits and vegetables yesterday



Minnesota Student Survey: One or more drinks of pop or soda yesterday



## Tips for better eating habits:

While awareness among consumers to consume more fruits and vegetables has increased over the last two decades, research has shown that behaviors are inconsistent with meeting daily recommendations. Some ways to improve nutrient intake include<sup>5</sup>:

- Try fresh or dried fruit as a snack
- Try eating at least 2 vegetables with dinner
- Add vegetables to sandwiches, pastas, and soups
- Drink a fruit smoothie made with whole fruit, ice and low-fat yogurt
- Order salads, vegetable soups, or stir-fried vegetables with dining out
- Look for canned, dried or frozen fruits and vegetables without added sugars or syrups, salt, butter, or cream sauces as alternatives to fresh fruits and vegetables

## For more information:

### Nutrition:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/nutrition/>

### Overweight and Obesity Prevention:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/obesity/>

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> Fruit and vegetable consumption data and statistics by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2 Nov 2006). Retrieved 16 Nov 2007 from <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/5ADaySurveillance/>
- <sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006.
- <sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006.
- <sup>4</sup> Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), *Minnesota Student Survey*, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2007.
- <sup>5</sup> Fruits and veggies – more matters by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved 16 Nov 2007 from <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/tips/>