

# Elements of Nutrition

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## Mini Talk: 5-A-Day, Fruits & Vegetables

The 5-A-Day initiative encourages us to try to eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy eating pattern may help protect us against many chronic diseases.

Five or more may sound like a lot, but one serving can be a medium piece of fruit, a few pieces of dried fruit, a half-cup of chopped, cooked or raw vegetables or fruit, or a six-ounce glass of citrus juice. (They can be fresh, frozen, canned or dried.) Try steaming, baking or microwaving vegetables instead of frying.

### Activity: Healthy Nutrition

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1. Show participants what a healthy 5-A-Day plate looks like. Ask participants what it looks like - a lot or not very much? Discuss problems people might have in eating 5 fruits and vegetables a day: cost, access to fresh produce, waste, difficulties cooking, etc. Have the group brainstorm possible solutions from their own experiences.
2. Discuss ways to incorporate more fruits and vegetables every day – on breakfast cereals or salads, for a snack, or a dessert.
3. Review the Week’s Tips and Tasks for healthy eating. Demonstrate how to keep track of the fruits and vegetables they eat.

### Tips and Tasks

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At least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables is the goal for a healthy diet.

Eating vegetables and fruit can help prevent strokes, heart disease, diabetes, and intestinal problems.

Try to add 1 more serving each day until the goal is reached.

What is a serving of fruit?

- 1 medium apple, banana, orange, pear
- ½ cup chopped, cooked, canned fruit
- ¾ cup (6 oz) 100% fruit juice
- ¼ cup dried fruit (raisins, prunes)

What is a serving of vegetables?

- 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables
- ½ cup other cooked or raw vegetables
- ¾ cup (6 oz) vegetable juice

For more activities like this, see “Steps to Healthy Aging” by the National Policy & Resource Center on Nutrition & Aging/Florida International University.



## Nutrition Facts and Tips

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Colorful fruits and vegetables promote health!

**Vitamin A** is found in orange and deep yellow fruits and vegetables – mangoes, cantaloupe and yams.

**Vitamin C** comes from a rainbow of colorful fruits and vegetables – citrus, strawberries, and green peppers.

**Calcium**, a mineral food that is needed for healthy bones and teeth, also regulates the heart and nervous system.

For adults, the daily calcium needs are 1200 mg or 3 or more servings of calcium-rich foods, which include:

- Yogurt (plain, nonfat or low fat)  
1 cup = 435 mg
- Sardines (canned, with bones)  
4 ounces = 430 mg
- Fortified orange juice

## Serving Sizes

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- Deck of playing cards = a 3 oz serving of meat, poultry or fish.
- Baseball = 1 cup of milk, yogurt or chopped fresh greens.
- Small fist (or computer mouse) = ½ cup of cut fruit, vegetables or pasta.

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- Tennis ball = about the size of a medium-size piece of fruit.
- Golf ball = about 2 tablespoons of peanut butter.
- Your thumb = about 1 oz of cheese
- Your thumb tip = 1 teaspoon of margarine