



ChallengeME MONTHLY MINUTE

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Monthly topic: **5-A-Day**

Are you getting at least five portions of fruits and/or vegetables each day?

Fruit and vegetables are part of a balanced diet and can help us stay healthy. But how much do you really need?

Each day you should strive for five portions, combined, of fruits and/or vegetables. Each portion should consist of either 80 grams of fresh, canned, or frozen fruit and vegetables or 30 grams of dried fruit. You can also count 150mL of fruit juice, vegetable juice, or a smoothie, or 80 grams of beans and pulses, however, these portions should only be used *once* per day.

Five Reasons to Eat Five Portions of Fruit and Vegetables

1. Fruits and vegetables are a good source of vitamins and minerals, including folate, vitamin C, and potassium.
2. They're an excellent source of dietary fiber, which helps maintain a healthy gut and prevent constipation and other digestion problems. A diet high in fiber can also reduce your risk of bowel cancer.
3. They can help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.
4. Fruit and vegetables contribute to a healthy and balanced diet.
5. Fruit and vegetables taste delicious and there's so much variety to choose from.



Fruits and Veggies On A Budget

- Buy fruit and vegetables loose rather than pre-packaged.
- Fruits and vegetables are usually cheaper if they're in season.
- Fruit and vegetables are often cheaper at your local farmers' market. You can find your nearest one in this directory of farmers' markets. You can check what's in season at www.thespruceeats.com
- Replace your morning or afternoon snack with a piece of fruit.
- Use vegetables that are close to expiration in stews, soups, and casseroles instead of throwing them out. Not going to eat it right away? Freeze it and eat it another time.
- Look for supermarket deals on fruit and vegetables, such as buy one get one free offers.
- Look for good deals on frozen and dried fruit and vegetables, such as frozen peas and dried pulses and beans. They are often cheaper than fresh varieties.
- Swap ready-made meals for homemade alternatives. Vegetables in dishes such as stews, bakes, casseroles and curries count towards your 5-A-DAY, and cooking these dishes yourself is often cheaper than buying them ready-made.
- Stock up on canned fruit and vegetables. They count towards your 5-A-DAY and won't go bad, so you can buy them in bulk.
- Buy canned fruit and vegetables, in water or fruit juice, without added salt or sugar. Supermarket own-brand varieties are usually the cheapest.
- Cook in bulk and freeze portions to eat another time.

Fajita Fiesta with 5-A-Day

For the fajitas:

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 4 skinless chicken breasts (diced)
- 1 red, 1 green and 1 yellow pepper (chopped)
- Handful of mushrooms (chopped)
- 1 packet of fajita spice mix
- 8 soft flour tortillas

To serve:

- Lettuce • Tomatoes • Cucumber
- Tomato salsa (optional)

Directions:

Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the onion and chicken. Fry for three minutes or until the chicken is cooked through. Add peppers and mushrooms, stir. Cook until the vegetables have softened. Stir in the fajita spice mix. Continue to fry on a low heat. Meanwhile, prepare a mixed salad of tomatoes, cucumber and lettuce leaves. Warm the tortillas in a preheated oven for 3 minutes or in the microwave for 1 minute. Serve the fajitas with the salad and optional tomato salsa.

This Month

- 16-18:** Machias Wild Blueberry Festival
Great Falls Balloon Festival, Lewiston
- 17th:** Mt. Washington Bicycle Hill Climb
- 17-24:** Union Fair
- 23-25:** American Folk Festival, Bangor
- 25th:** Iron Man 70.3, Old Orchard
- 25-2:** Windsor Fair

Apple picking season begins this month!
Also in season: blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, and watermelons.

Not sure where to go to find fresh, locally grown, healthy food?

Visit www.maine farmers markets.org and click on "Find a Farmer's Market".

Coming Up September: Behavior Change

Comments, questions, ideas, or submissions?
Please email: kara.a.aguilar@maine.gov