



# ChallengeME

## MONTHLY MINUTE

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



#### Research Studies:

- Higher consumption of fruits and vegetables is associated with a lower risk of death in men and women, according to data representing nearly 2 million adults.
- Five daily servings of fruits and vegetables, eaten as two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables, may be the optimal amount and combination for a longer life.
- These findings support current U.S. dietary recommendations to eat more fruits and vegetables and the simple public health message “5-a-day.”

#### Why are vegetables and fruit so important?

- They are rich in fiber, important for healthy digestion, and to help prevent conditions like constipation and bowel cancer.
- They contain a variety of vitamins and minerals, such as folate, beta-carotene (which the body uses to make vitamin A), potassium, and vitamin C.
- They are packed with a variety of antioxidants that help stop free radicals from attacking our cells, causing damage that can lead to health problems such as heart disease, strokes, and cancer.
- They're usually low in fat and calories, but they fill us up, so they can help us control our weight.

#### Spruce up Your Fruits and Veggies!

1. Baked Beans and Lentils count! Add to a baked potato or a piece of toast.
2. Jazz up rice or couscous with frozen vegetables
3. Add fresh berries or dried fruit to your morning oatmeal or cereal
4. Make a fruit bowl- low in calories and contains fiber
5. Dried fruits (unsweetened) make great grab-and-go snacks
6. Make your own vegetable crisps from beetroot, sweet potato, and parsnip. Slice the vegetables thinly, place on a lined tray, and place in the oven at 175°C/gas mark 4 for 20 minutes or until dry. For cinnamon-spiced apple chips, sprinkle sliced apple with a teaspoon of cinnamon and a quarter teaspoon of nutmeg and bake on the lowest setting for about two hrs.
7. Sliced cucumber, tomatoes, peppers, and lettuce complement many sandwich fillings
8. Experiment with extra vegetables instead of just adding meat, onion, and peppers to your chili or fajita mix (as suggested in many standard recipes). Consider mushrooms, sweet corn, and broccoli, and don't forget to add some kidney beans, as these also count towards your 5-a-day.

#### Visit the ChallengeME Website:

Sign up for Health Coaching:

Call: TTY: 800.697.0353 | Online: [guidanceresources.com](http://guidanceresources.com)

WellStarME: [wellstar@mcd.org](mailto:wellstar@mcd.org) | 207-620-9202

Health & Wellness Navigation Team

[wellnessnavigator@mcd.org](mailto:wellnessnavigator@mcd.org) | 207-620-9209

For benefits questions, please contact Employee Health & Wellness: (207) 624-7380 or 1-800-422-4503 TTY: dial Maine Relay 711 or visit [maine.gov/mdot/challengeme](http://maine.gov/mdot/challengeme)

**ChallengeME**  
MaineDOT Healthy Workforce

**Coming up** September: Mental Health Awareness

Comments, questions, ideas, or submissions?  
Please email [Janice.Arsenault@maine.gov](mailto:Janice.Arsenault@maine.gov)