



# Family Nutrition In Action

June 2003, Vol 8, No 6



This newsletter is supported with funding from the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, USDA's Food Stamp Program, Florida Department of Children and Families, and University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, in collaboration with state, county, and local agencies. The Food Stamp Program gives nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-800-342-9274 (toll-free).



## June celebrations include Fresh Fruits & Vegetables Month and National Dairy Month

Vegetables! Fruits! It seems that everyone is talking about them. However, we know that most people are not eating enough vegetables and fruits. What about you? Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables? The National 5-A-DAY Program and the Food Guide Pyramid recommend that we eat 5-9 fruits and vegetables everyday. The American Institute for Cancer Research recommends 5-10 servings each day. You get the picture, don't you? Everyone needs to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Teen boys and most men should have nine servings.

It really is important to eat a wide variety of vegetables and fruits. These foods contain vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals. Phytochemicals help strengthen the body's immune system. Fruits and vegetables may help protect you from heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer. They also help promote healthy bowel function.



**Different fruits and vegetables are rich in different nutrients. So you need to eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.**

Here are some examples of excellent sources of vitamin A (carotenoids), vitamin C, folate and potassium.

### Sources of vitamin A (carotenoids)

- Orange vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin
- Dark-green leafy vegetables such as spinach, collards, and turnip greens
- Orange fruits like mango, cantaloupe, and apricots
- Tomatoes

### Sources of vitamin C

- Citrus fruits and juices, kiwi fruit, strawberries, and cantaloupe
- Broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, and potatoes
- Leafy greens such as romaine lettuce, turnip greens, and spinach

### Sources of folate

- Cooked dry beans and peas, and peanuts
- Oranges and orange juice

- Dark-green leafy vegetables like spinach and mustard greens, and romaine lettuce
- Green peas

### **Sources of potassium**

- Baked white or sweet potato, cooked greens (such as spinach), winter (orange colored) squash
- Bananas, plantains, dried fruits such as apricots and prunes, and orange juice
- Cooked dry beans (such as baked beans) and lentils

**Variety is key for getting all the important nutrients that fruits and vegetables provide. Choose a colorful variety.**

Fruits and vegetables are available fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and juices. You can get vitamins, minerals, and fiber from all forms except most juices do not provide fiber.

There are many different fruits and vegetables, and they come in many colors. A colorful variety will help you get the different phytochemicals and nutrients that work together. Eat dark-green leafy vegetables and orange fruits and vegetables often. Also, eat cooked dried peas and beans often.

Eat at least two servings of fruits and three servings of vegetables every day.

### **How much is a serving?**

#### **Vegetable Group**

- 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables
- ½ cup of other vegetables—cooked or raw
- ¾ cup of vegetable juice

#### **Fruit Group**

- 1 medium apple, banana, orange, pear
- ½ cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit
- ¾ cup of fruit juice

### **Some Important Tips about Milk and Milk products**

- Milk is one of the best sources of calcium in our diets. It is also an excellent source of vitamin D, riboflavin, and phosphorus. Milk is a good source of potassium, vitamin A, vitamin B12, niacin and protein.
- Children, teens, and adults of all ages need calcium for developing and keeping strong bones. Vitamin D is needed to help your body absorb the calcium. Milk provides calcium and vitamin D.
- Supplements should not be considered as substitutes for foods that are rich in calcium. Calcium rich foods can be important sources of other nutrients as well. For example, milk provides calcium and vitamin D that is used to help the body absorb the calcium. A balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D is one of the key steps in preventing osteoporosis.
- “Sell-by” dates and “use-by” dates are used on food products. The “use-by date” lets consumers know how long the product will keep at top eating quality. The “sell-by” date means how long the product can be kept for sale at the store. Milk cartons have “sell-by dates” on them. These products stay fresh for 2-3 days past the sell-by dates.

- Keep milk and milk products cold is another tip for keeping milk and milk products safe to eat.
  - Put these products in your shopping cart just before you check out.
  - Take them home right away and store them at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
  - Use a cooler to keep them cold on the way home during hot weather or if the ride home is a long distance.
- Are you lactose intolerant? There are many dairy products available that have less lactose or they are lactose free. Do you avoid milk products for other reasons? If so, eat other foods that are good sources of calcium, and be sure to get enough vitamin D.

**The Food Guide Pyramid Recommends 2 or 3 daily servings from the Milk, Yogurt and Cheese Group.**

- The number of servings is based on your age. How old are you and the members of your family? Young children ages 2-8 need two servings daily. Adults who are under the age of 50 also need two servings daily. Older children (ages 9-18) and adults over

the age of 50 need 3 servings daily. The recommended number of servings from the milk group is the same during pregnancy and lactation as it is for women who are not pregnant.

**How much is a serving from the Milk, Yogurt and Cheese Group (Milk Group)? Note: Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy products almost always!**

- 1 cup of milk or yogurt
- 1 ½ ounces of natural cheese (such as cheddar)
- 2 ounces of processed cheese (such as American)

Try these quick and easy ideas. Choose fresh fruits for dessert. Fresh fruits in season are usually the best buys. Thoroughly wash the fruit under cool running water.

- Chill whole fresh fruit for at least a couple of hours before the meal. Serve and enjoy!
- Cut up one or more varieties of your favorite fruit. If you use bananas, pears, or apples, remember to pour some orange juice or other citrus juice on the fruit to keep it from turning brown. Chill. When ready to serve, top with a serving of yogurt. For added variety, add a dash of cinnamon and/or a few chopped nuts.



The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity \_ Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin.