

Nutrition News

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What's in the fruit group?

Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut up or pureed.

The amount of fruit you need to eat depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity.

This month's issue of **Nutrition News** takes you inside the Fruit Group of the USDA's MyPyramid.

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Recommended Daily Servings*

	Age	Amount
Children	2-3	1 cup
	4-8	1 to 1 ½ cups
Girls	9-13	1 ½ cups
	14-18	1 ½ cups
Women	19-30	2 cups
	31+	1 ½ cups
Boys	9-13	1 ½ cups
	14-18	2 cups
Men	19-50	2 cups
	51+	2 cups

*See page 2 for what counts as a cup

Did you know.....

...that lemons contain more sugar than strawberries?

...20 to 25 percent of an apple's volume is air - much more than in most fruits? The cells in apple tissue fit imperfectly together. Air sits in the spaces between the cells, not only making apples buoyant, but making a just-picked apple "crack" as you take that first bite.



Focus on Fruits

What counts as a cup of fruit?

1 cup of sliced or diced apples, bananas, peaches, etc.
= 1 cup of fruit

1 cup of 100% fruit juice (apple, orange, grape, etc.)
= 1 cup of fruit

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit (raisins, prunes, apricots, etc.)
= $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit

1 small wedge of watermelon (1 inch thick)
= 1 cup of fruit

16 seedless grapes
= $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit

1 large plum
= $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit

1 large peach, orange, or banana
= 1 cup of fruit

1 juice box (4 ounces)
= $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit



Tips to help you eat fruit ...

- Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the table, counter, or in the refrigerator.
- Add fruit like peaches or pineapple to kabobs as part of a barbecue meal.
- Buy fresh fruits in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor
- Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or juice, not syrup) as well as fresh, so that you always have a supply on hand.
- Top your cereal with bananas, peaches, or strawberries. Add blueberries to pancakes.
- Pack a clementine, banana, apple or grapes to eat with your lunch.
- For dessert have baked apples, pears, or a fruit salad.
- Many fruits taste great with a dip. Try low-fat yogurt or pudding for fruits like strawberries or melons.
- Make a fruit smoothie by blending fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt with fresh or frozen fruit.
- As a snack, spread peanut butter or sunflower seed butter (great alternative for many with peanut allergies) on apple slices or top frozen yogurt with berries or slices of kiwi fruit.

Berries, Berries, Berries!!!

Berries are one of nature's fast foods and they come in lots of colors. Red: raspberries, strawberries, cranberries, and red grapes; Black or Dark Purple: blackberries, mulberries, dark grapes; Blue: blueberries; Green: green grapes. Berries are some of the most nutritious fruits available. In addition to having a lot of vitamin C, folic acid and dietary fiber, they have other "plant chemicals" that are very important for our health. The pigment that gives the dark blue, red, and purple colors to some berries slows down, or prevents, damage to the body's cells. This pigment may help to: reduce the risk of certain types of cancer; maintain a healthy heart; maintain brain function as we age; lower the risk of common kinds of blindness. Add berries to muffins, pancakes, fruit smoothies, fruit salads, low fat yogurt, cottage cheese, or mixed green salads. Whole or sliced, fresh or frozen, berries provide a low-calorie, high fiber boost to your day.

Fruit Spotlight: Pomegranate

The pomegranate is native from Iran to the Himalayas in Northern India. It was cultivated over the whole Mediterranean region in ancient times. The pomegranate has appeared in myths, legends, art and history for centuries.

The shrub like tree was introduced into California by Spanish settlers in 1769. In the U.S. it is grown for its fruits mainly in the drier parts of California and Arizona. The pomegranate is in season from September through January.

Pomegranates contain glistening red arils that are delicious and heavy with juice. Inside each aril is a tiny edible seed that provides valuable fiber. The white membrane that surrounds the arils is bitter and not recommended for eating.

High in vitamin C and potassium, pomegranates are low in calories and high in antioxidants. One medium pomegranate weighs about 9 oz and yields about 5 oz of fruit (3/4 of a cup) and 4 oz of juice (1/2 cup).

Uses: The arils (fruit sacs) can be scooped and eaten from the pomegranate after cutting the skin and breaking into sections. They can also be added to a variety of recipes. Sprinkle over salads; add to fruit desserts; use in marinades. The juice can be used in a number of ways: as a fresh juice, to make jellies, sorbets or cold or hot sauces, as well as to flavor cakes, baked apples, etc.

Storage: Pomegranates are shipped ripe and ready to eat. They can be held at room temperature for a reasonable amount of time. The whole fruit or seeds can be stored longer in the refrigerator. Seeds can also be frozen for later use.

Whole or cut-up fruits are sources of dietary fiber; fruit juices contain little or no fiber.



Eating fruit provides health benefits. People who eat more fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Fruits provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body. Most fruits are naturally low in fat and calories. None have cholesterol.

FROM THE RECIPE BOX... Very Berry Smoothie (serves 4)

2 cups unsweetened frozen strawberries
2 cups frozen blueberries
2 cups low fat vanilla yogurt
3 cups 100% orange juice

Blend all ingredients well in a blender and serve.
If using fresh berries add some ice before blending.

Variations: try frozen raspberries, mixed berries, mangos, bananas, peaches, pineapple juice, orange-tangerine juice and other 100% juice blends

Fruit Word Find

Fruits are important sources of many nutrients, including potassium, vitamin C, dietary fiber, and folate (folic acid). See if you can find these "fabulous fruits".

apples
mangoes
pears
apricots
pineapple

blueberries
kiwi
clementines
avocado
grapes

cherries
cantaloupe
papaya
banana
pomegranate

limes
nectarines
prunes
oranges
watermelon



Food Safety Tip!

Always wash fruits thoroughly before preparing or eating them. Even if you are going to peel and cut produce, washing helps keep dirt and surface microorganisms away from the part you will eat. Don't forget to wash the outsides of melons before cutting into them. Keep fruit separate from raw meat, poultry and seafood while shopping, preparing, or storing.

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References

USDA's MyPyramid, Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, (HHS) Department of Health & Human Services, (USDA) United States Department of Agriculture. Wikipedia, World Book Online Reference Center), FDA Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition , Center for Science in the Public Interest, Nutrition Action Health Letter, Pomegranate.org (Pomegranate Council), Kansa State Research and Extension, Luscher.org/art(image), Avery.com (image)