

### Isn't it expensive to buy fresh fruit & vegetables?

It is true that fruit and vegetables can be costly and if you are retired or on a low income you may find it difficult to afford them. Here are some tips:

- If you can, shop at larger supermarkets, local street markets or farmers markets; local 'corner shops' tend to charge more
- Buy fruit and vegetables that are in season – they tend to be cheaper
- Buy in bulk – it is more cost effective – and share with a friend/neighbour
- Stock up on basic ingredients eg, lentils, tinned tomatoes and frozen vegetables and make meals instead of buying expensive ready-meals
- Check with your local council to see if there are any food schemes in your area that provide access to cheaper fruit and vegetables
- Grow your own! Renting an allotment can be done at minimal cost

### Tips on cooking and preparing fruit and vegetables

- If you have a choice, use fresh fruit and vegetables rather than tinned or frozen vegetables
- Avoid adding sugar to fruit and salt to vegetables when you cook or serve them
- Lightly steaming or baking vegetables are the cooking methods that lose the smallest amount of vitamins and minerals
- If you boil vegetables, use as little water as possible to preserve the goodness in them
- Experiment with other ways of cooking vegetables, such as roasting, grilling and stir frying them

# Eat more fruit and vegetables



For more information and help with managing high blood pressure become a member of the Blood Pressure Association (BPA). For more details call the membership team on 020 8772 4983, or write to us at:

Blood Pressure Association, 60 Cranmer Terrace, London SW17 0QS  
[www.bpassoc.org.uk](http://www.bpassoc.org.uk)

© Blood Pressure Association 2005  
Charity No.1058944



*A guide to lowering your blood pressure by eating more fruit and vegetables*



## Why should I eat more fruit and vegetables?

There are so many good reasons! The vitamins, minerals and fibre that fruit and vegetables provide can help to **lower your risk of serious health problems** like heart disease, stroke and some cancers. Eating more fruit and vegetables can also lower your blood pressure (due to their high potassium content), help to increase your energy levels, improve your bowel function and enable your body to deal with stress.

Fruit and vegetables are important for everyone – not just adults but children too. Our likes and dislikes of different foods are formed in the first few years of life, so it's important to give children lots of fruit and vegetables to try. It will help them develop a taste for them, meaning they will be more likely to eat fruit and vegetables as teenagers and adults.

## How many portions of fruit & vegetables should I be eating?

- For children aged 2 to 5, gradually add fruit and vegetables to their diet
- UK guidelines for adults & children aged 5+ are to eat at least '5 a day'
- Ideally though we should all be aiming for **7-9 portions per day**

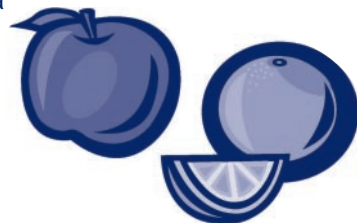
## What's a portion?

A portion is 80g of fresh, frozen, raw or canned fruit or vegetables (not including any peel, skin or parts that you don't eat). Here are some examples:

- 1 medium fruit eg, apple, banana
- 2 small fruits eg, plums, satsumas
- A handful of grapes
- 3 tablespoons of vegetables or pulses (eg, chickpeas, lentils, beans)
- 1 medium onion
- 1/2 large fruit eg, avocado, mango
- 1 heaped tablespoon dried fruit
- 1 dessert bowl of mixed salad
- 1 glass (150ml) fruit or vegetable juice
- 150mls pure fruit smoothie

Potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, cassava and plantain are types of vegetable but they do not count towards '5 a day'. Instead they are classed as 'starchy foods' which should still be included as part of a healthy diet.

Pulses, fruit and vegetable juice count towards '5 a day' but you can only include 1 portion of juice and 1 portion of pulses per day, no matter how much you drink or eat.



The Government is encouraging supermarkets and food manufacturers to use this logo to help you see which foods count as fruit and vegetable portions, and how much you need to eat to get one portion. One square coloured in means one portion, two means two portions etc.

## How can I eat 7-9 portions every day?

It's not as difficult as you may think! Include fruit or vegetables at most mealtimes and as snacks; here are some ideas:

### **Breakfast:** (2 portions)

- Add some fresh fruit, eg, apple or berries, to a breakfast cereal or yoghurt
- Glass of fruit or vegetable juice (no-added salt)

### **Mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks:** (2 portions)

- Handful of dried fruit, eg, raisins, apricots
- Raw vegetables, eg, carrots & celery, with reduced-fat dip, eg, houmous

### **Lunch:** (2 portions)

- Add fresh salad to a sandwich
- 1 medium sized fruit

### **Evening meal:** (2-3 portions)

- Add vegetables, eg, peas, tomatoes, sweet corn, carrots, onions, to casseroles, stews, curries or ready meals
- For dessert try fresh or baked fruit with yoghurt or low-fat ice-cream

### **Other tips:**

- Vary the fruit and vegetables you eat – each type has different health benefits and it will stop you from getting bored too
- Stir-fry's are great for getting lots of vegetables into one meal, as are freshly made soups, eg, vegetable or lentil soup
- Make fruit smoothies with lots of fresh fruit and low-fat milk or yoghurt
- Try to avoid buying fruit and vegetable dishes with added sauces as these are often high in fat, salt and sugar