

Keeping Fruit In Your Diet¹

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Those of us who love fruit find it hard to imagine that so many Americans eat far less fruit than is recommended for good health. But national surveys show it to be true. Somehow they manage to resist the wonderful textures, aromas, and flavors of melons, berries, apples, bananas, mangoes, and all the other fruits available in this country!

When offering your children something sweet, consider fruit instead of candy or cookies. Fruits provide vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals, which promote good health and help reduce risk for heart disease, cancer, and other chronic diseases. Fruits that are rich in potassium, like bananas, cantaloupe, honeydew, plantains, and prunes and other dried fruit, help reduce risk of high blood pressure.

MyPyramid, USDA's food guidance system, recommends that we eat a variety of fruits each day. Real fruit juices are good to drink in moderation, but most of our daily fruit intake should be as whole fruit. Canned and dried fruits provide needed nutrients and can be handy and economical. When choosing canned fruits, select those canned in juice rather than syrup.

To increase fruit in your family's diet, add berries or cut-up fruit to the morning cereal, serve a piece of fresh fruit or a few pieces of dried fruit as a morning or afternoon snack, and add fruit slices or berries to a garden salad. Let your imagination (and some good recipes) help you get the fruit your family needs for a healthy diet.

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/253.mp3

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References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2006). *Fruit and vegetable consumption data and statistics*. Retrieved August 3, 2007, from <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/5ADaySurveillance/displayV.asp>.

USDA. (2005). *Chapter 5: Food groups to encourage*. Retrieved August 3, 2007, from <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/chapter5.htm>.