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Civil Service

# Active Wellbeing

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## How to get your 5 a day



If you're struggling to eat the recommended portions of fruit and veg, then we've got some practical tips that might help you get close. The easy part is, it really doesn't matter how you consume your fruit and veg. Fresh, frozen, dried, cooked, canned or juiced. It's all just as good for you. The down side is, potatoes aren't on the list.

### So what is a portion and how much should you be eating?

80g is one portion, so 200g across a range of different fruit or veg would be a great start. Ideally what you're looking for is a varied mix of foods to get the broadest range of vitamins, minerals and fibres. So to truly get the best diet try a range of different colours, every day



## Breakfast

**Most people start their day with breakfast, so where better to begin our list. This one's easy. All you have to do is find the time to actually have a breakfast.**

- Add a serving or two of fruit with your breakfast cereal, porridge or low fat yoghurt. You could try raisins, dried apricots, sliced banana, blueberries, strawberries or raspberries. The dried stuff lasts for months, so there's no need to worry about wasting food.
- Pick a cereal with fruit already in it. There's loads of options these days. Most are pretty good for you and don't taste of cardboard any more.
- If cooked breakfasts are your thing, add grilled mushrooms, tomatoes or baked beans to your plate.
- And for extra credit add a glass of unsweetened 100% fruit juice, vegetable juice or smoothie to your meal.
- Blend a large jug of fruit into a smoothie and serve yourself about 150ml a day for one portion. It should last several days and saves on time and washing up. Also, it acts as a reminder in your fridge.



## Lunch

**This can be the tricky one. Eating away from home or on the go can make it harder to eat the good stuff. But fortunately nature has been kind and most of the good fruits come in their own handy wrapping.**

- If you make your own sandwiches add lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber or grated carrots to them. If you buy them ready made, look for 'something and salad' sandwiches.
- Whenever you've got time, in the morning or night before, prepare sticks of cucumber, peppers or carrot with a low fat dip or spread.
- Food is not always about the taste, sometimes it's texture too. Try replacing your bag of crisps with fruit and nut mix or dried banana chips.
- Or just add a piece of fruit or veg to your favourite meals.
- You can add beans, lentils and pulses to stews, soups, bakes and salads.
- Roasted veg and seeds can be added to your salad for a bit of extra bite.
- Omelettes are a great way to boost your veg count. Add onion, tomatoes, peppers, mushrooms, sweetcorn, spinach or sweet potato. (not necessarily all together)
- Vegetable soup – try adding a variety of vegetables to a low salt stock and once cooked either leave chunky or blend to a smooth texture. To help you eat soup on the go try using a flask. It should keep it warm until lunchtime.
- Jacket potato – sweet potatoes particularly are a good source of the antioxidant beta-carotene. Cut in half and roast in the oven with a little oil or cut into wedges and bake in the oven for 20-25 mins. Whilst the potato may not count towards your 5 a day, baked beans certainly would.





## Dinner

**As most peoples' largest meal, dinner is often the easiest way to show your creative side. Don't forget to mix things up and alternate your menu to keep things interesting.**

- A handful of veg is roughly about 80g so a couple of handfuls of different types would be a great accompaniment.
- Add extra veg to your main meal, it's easy to add fresh, frozen or canned. Try a new recipe each week.
- A bag of mixed frozen veg will keep in the freezer for about a year and a great varied source of all the good stuff.
- Beans and lentils count towards your 5 a day and are good sources of carbohydrate and protein.
- Add vegetables to rice. You can put frozen vegetables into the saucepan of rice halfway through the cooking time. Or add vegetables to couscous.
- Try making tomato or vegetable based sauces as these are usually lower in fat than creamy sauces. Use tinned tomatoes and tomato passata instead of ready-made sauces.
- Skewer chunks of onion, pepper, carrot, broccoli or corn on the cob and roast in the oven or even on a BBQ.







## Snacks

**Snacking is often seen as people's Achilles heel. But actually, eating little and often can be better for you than 3 large meals. So it's not when you eat or even how much, but what you eat.**

- Swap sugary snacks such as biscuits for a piece of fruit, which will in turn give you extra energy. The packaging is fully bio-degradable, so as well as improving your health you're also saving on waste.
- Dried fruit, raisins, sultanas, prunes or apricots make a great alternative to crisps or sweets.
- Vegetable crisps – make your own from beetroot, sweet potato and parsnip. Slice the vegetables thinly, spray a little oil over a baking sheet and arrange the vegetable slices, ensuring they don't overlap and place in the oven at 180 degrees C for 20 mins or until dry.
- Mashed avocado or banana are tasty on a slice of toast. Bananas are a great source of energy and nutrients and avocados are rich in monounsaturated fats, which help maintain healthy cholesterol levels.

### If that didn't help, console yourself with two simple facts

**A**

The NHS recommend even just 2 portions or 200g of fruit and vegetables a day can substantially cut the risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer.

**B**

Count yourself lucky you don't live in Australia. They're encouraged to eat 7 portions.

This has not been created by a medical professional, licensed nutritionist or registered dietician. The information contained in this document should not be taken as medical advice.