



# Fact Sheet

## Jazz Up Your Menu With Fruits for Healthier School Meals

### KEY ISSUES:

- People who eat a variety of fruits as part of a healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.
- The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend that we eat two cups of fruit every day (based on a 2,000 calorie meal plan).
- Remember, fruits:
  - provide nutrients that we need for good health, such as potassium, fiber, vitamin C, and folate.
  - are naturally low in fat, sodium, and calories.
  - have no cholesterol.
- Offer a variety of fruits every week.
- Contact local farmers to start a farm-to-school program to obtain high quality fresh produce. To get started, go to: [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance).



We eat with our eyes—then our mouths. If it looks good, we'll taste it. If it tastes good, we'll eat it. Because fruits are colorful and delicious, they have built-in kid appeal. And because they are available in so many forms—fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or juice—they give you a quick and easy way to boost the nutrition of your school meals and snacks.

Easy ways to follow the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

### Recipe for Success

#### Boost the nutritional value

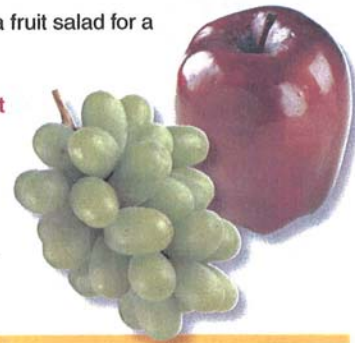
- **Go easy on juice.** Offer most fruit whole or cut up to get more dietary fiber.
- **Vary fruit choices.** Offer fruits with more potassium often, such as bananas, prunes, dried peaches and apricots, cantaloupe, and honeydew melon.
- **Select fruit canned in 100 percent fruit juice or water,** rather than syrup.
- **Cut the fat with fruit!** Try applesauce as a fat-free substitute for some of the oil when baking cookies and cakes.

#### Add fruit to meals and snacks

- **Buy fresh fruits in season** when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor; seasonal fruits like tangerines, bananas, or grapes are great on a salad bar.
- **Add crushed** pineapple, mandarin oranges, fresh apples, or grapes to your favorite salad mix or coleslaw.
- **Offer baked** apples, fruit cobbler, or a fruit salad for a dessert treat!

#### Make fruit look good and easy to eat

- **Choose a variety** of fruits with contrasting colors and shapes to catch kids' attention.
- **Cut up fruits,** especially apples and oranges, to make them kid-friendly and easy to eat.





## USDA Commodity Food Program

You can stretch your food budget and insure high quality by ordering a wide variety of fruits through USDA's Commodity Food Program and the Department of Defense. Check out the list of available fruits at [http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/foods\\_available.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/foods_available.htm) and [www.dscpl.dla.mil/subs/produce/index.asp](http://www.dscpl.dla.mil/subs/produce/index.asp).

- **Serve low-fat yogurt** as a dip for fruits.
- **Try a fruit smoothie** at breakfast! Blend fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt with fresh or frozen fruit like bananas, peaches, or berries.
- **For fresh fruit salads**, mix apples, bananas, or pears with acidic fruits like oranges, pineapple, or lemon juice to keep them from turning brown.
- **Serve individual containers** of fruits like peaches or applesauce as part of a grab-and-go lunch or snack.

### Messages for Students

- Cut-up fruit makes a great snack. Or, try whole fresh berries or grapes.
- Dried fruits also make a tasty portable snack. Try dried apricots, apples, pineapple, bananas, cherries, figs, dates, cranberries, blueberries, prunes (dried plums), and raisins (dried grapes).
- When you're craving something sweet, think fruit. It tastes delicious—with no added sugar.



### Did You Know?

- It's best to wash all fruits (including melons and oranges) before cutting, preparing, or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub fruits briskly with your hands or a brush to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry after washing.
- Remember to keep fruits separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood while receiving, storing, or preparing.

### For more information:

[MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov)

[teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv\\_galore.html](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html)

[healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Recipes/recipefinder.php](http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Recipes/recipefinder.php)

[www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/index.html](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/index.html)



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