

School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme



What's it all about?

The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme is a national government programme entitling all children aged four to six in infant, primary and special Local Education Authority maintained schools to a free piece of fruit or vegetable each school day. Your child's school has chosen to take part in the scheme.

Because your child's class is eligible to benefit from the scheme, your child will be given a free piece of fruit or vegetable at school each day. They may be given an apple, pear, banana, satsuma, carrot, some cherry tomatoes or other fruit or vegetable – it depends what's in season.

Research shows that the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme is very popular with schools and parents, with 96 per cent of eligible schools choosing to take part.

Why eat more?

Every child deserves the best start in life. Research shows that good health in childhood is an important building block for health in later life. Eating fruit and vegetables can help protect your child's health in several ways:

- Fruit and vegetables provide many vitamins and minerals that are important for your child's growth and development.
- They can help protect against heart disease and some forms of cancer later in life.
- Eating fruit and vegetables reduces the symptoms of asthma in childhood – especially in children who have a history of breathing problems.

Eating 5 A DAY

The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme is part of the national 5 A DAY programme. Fruit and vegetables are key to a healthier lifestyle for all of us and experts recommend that everyone eats at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. On average, children in England eat only two portions a day. Many children eat fewer than that. A national survey found that one in five children didn't eat any fruit at all in a week.



Just Eat More
(fruit & veg)



How much is a portion?



1 portion



2 portions

A 'portion' is a typical serving or helping of fruit or vegetables, for example, an apple, a banana, three heaped tablespoonfuls of frozen peas or canned sweetcorn, or a glass of fruit juice. The portion size may be smaller for young children, but they can still aim for at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables each day.

Look out for the 5 A DAY portion indicator on food packets. This shows how many portions of fruit and vegetables a typical serving of the food contains. Each filled-in square of the portion indicator represents one portion.



What counts?

- Fresh, frozen, canned, dried or cooked fruit and vegetables count. *Potatoes don't count as they play a different part in our diet.*
- Fruit and vegetable dishes count. *Tomato ketchup and jam don't count.*
- Beans and pulses – for example, baked beans, kidney beans or lentils – count, but only once a day.
- Fruit juice counts, but no matter how much is drunk in a day, it only counts as one portion. *Fruit squashes, sweetened and fizzy fruit drinks don't count.*



How you can help

Encourage your child to choose vegetables and fruit at school lunches. National standards for school lunches mean that vegetables and fruit are on offer every day.

If your child takes a packed lunch to school, put in a piece of fruit or vegetable, such as a carrot, or some dried fruit or 100 per cent pure fruit juice. Note that dried fruits and fruit juices should only be consumed at mealtimes to reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Encourage your child to use other opportunities to eat fruit and vegetables at school too, for example, if there is a tuckshop or breakfast club.

Ask your child about the fruit and vegetables they have eaten at school. Explain that eating fruit and vegetables will help them grow and stay healthy.

Encourage your child to eat fruit and vegetables at home as well as at school.



Further copies of this leaflet are available free of charge from the Department of Health. Write to: PO Box 777, London SE1 5XH. Tel: 0800 555 777, fax: 01623 724 524, email: doh@prolog.uk.com

For the latest information on the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme or if you would like this leaflet in another language visit www.dh.gov.uk/healthtopics



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