



Just the Facts!

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 *2010 Dietary Guidelines* for Americans recommend that children eat 1-2 cups of fruit every day (depending on age, gender, and activity levels).
- At lunch, students in grades K-8 must be offered $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit and grades 9-12 must be offered at least 1 cup daily. Beginning in school year 2014-2015, the meal pattern also requires schools to offer at least 1 cup of fruit every day at breakfast for all grade levels.
- 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/F2S/
- 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.

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.

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, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, and dried plums, peaches, and apricots.
- **Select fruit canned in 100 percent** fruit juice or water.
- **Trim the fat content with fruit.** Try applesauce as a fat-free substitute for some of the oil, butter, or margarine when making grain-based desserts such as cookies.

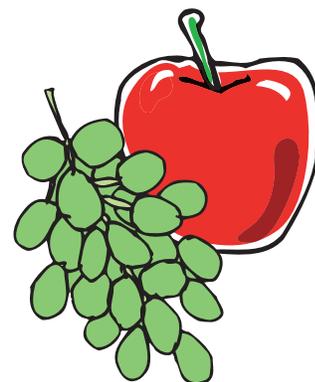
Add fruit to meals and snacks!

- **Buy fresh fruits in season** when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor; seasonal fruits like strawberries, blueberries, or grapes are great on a salad bar.
- **Add crushed** pineapple, mandarin oranges, fresh apples 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.
- **Slice fruits**, especially apples and oranges, to make them kid-friendly and easy to eat.

Easy ways to follow the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*



USDA Foods Program

You can stretch your food budget and ensure high quality by ordering a wide variety of fruits through the USDA Foods Program and the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. To learn more information about the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, go to www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/dod/. To check the list of fruits available through the USDA Foods Program, go to the USDA Foods Toolkit at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/healthy/Professional.htm> to review the Foods Available List for Schools

- **Serve fat-free or low-fat** yogurt as a dip for fruits.
- **Try a fruit smoothie** at breakfast! Blend 100% fruit juice 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, bananas, cherries, figs, dates, cranberries, blueberries, plums (prunes), and raisins
- **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, bananas, and oranges) before cutting, preparing, or eating them. Under clean, cold, running water, rub fruits briskly with your hands or a vegetable brush to remove dirt and surface micro-organisms. Pat dry with a paper towel after washing.
- **Remember to keep fruits separate** from raw meat, poultry, and seafood while receiving, storing, or preparing.

For More Information:

Team Nutrition (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>)
USDA Choose MyPlate (www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)
MyPlate (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/myplate.html>)
MyPlate for Kids: Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables Poster (http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/myplate_halfplateposter.html)
Kid-Friendly Veggies and Fruits (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet11KidFriendlyVeggiesAndFruits.pdf>)
Fruits and Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More (http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html)
Best Practices: Handling Fresh Produce in Schools (<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20100826093915.pdf>)
Let's Eat for the Health of It (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/letseat.html>)
Fruits & Veggies: More Matters (www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)
Fuel Up to Play 60 (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/futp60.htm>)
Changing the Scene – Improving the School Nutrition Environment (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/changing.html>)
USDA Recipes for Schools (http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/usda_recipes.html)
USDA Recipe Finder (<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Recipes/recipefinder.php>)

