

## 5 A DAY and your family



**Do you cook and shop for a family household, including a fussy eater or two?**

It's easier than you might think to ensure everyone gets five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

There are many ways to introduce more fruit and vegetables into your family's diet. The wider the variety of fruit and vegetables you eat the better.

Dietitian Azmina Govindji gives a few simple tips and ideas to get you started.

## Fruit and veg throughout the day

There are plenty of 5 A DAY opportunities throughout your family's day.

"Not all those opportunities are immediately obvious," says Azmina. "A cooked breakfast, for example, can give you several portions if you have grilled mushrooms, baked beans, grilled tomatoes and a glass of unsweetened 100% fruit juice."

Azmina highlights some other 5 A DAY opportunities:

- **Breakfast** – if you have cereal or porridge for breakfast, add some fruit, such as sliced bananas, strawberries or sultanas.
- **Morning break at school** – all children aged between four and six at Local Education Authority-maintained schools are entitled to [one free piece of fruit or vegetable a day](#), which is usually given out at break time. If your child is older, you could send them to school with a piece of fruit to eat at break time. The School Food Regulations ensure that fruit

or vegetables are provided at all school food outlets, including breakfast clubs, tuck shops and vending machines.

- **Lunchtime at school** – a school lunch provides your child with a portion of fruit and a portion of vegetables. If you give your child a [packed lunch](#), there are many ways you can add fruit and vegetables. Dried fruit counts towards their 5 A DAY, so why not try a handful of sultanas or a few dried apricots? Put salad in their sandwiches, or give them carrot or celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, satsumas or seedless grapes. A lot of swapping goes on at lunch, so talk to other parents to see if you can all give your children at least one portion.
- **On the way home from school** – at home time, kids are often very hungry. Take this opportunity to give them a fruit or vegetable snack. This could be a small handful of dried fruit, a banana, a pear, clementines or carrot sticks. When they're really hungry, this can be a good time to get them to try foods they might otherwise refuse.
- **Dinner time** – get into the habit of having two different vegetables on the dinner table. You don't have to insist that the children eat them, but if you always do, they may end up trying them. Vegetables in dishes such as stews and casseroles also count. Avoid adding extra [fat](#), [salt](#) and [sugar](#), and use lean cuts of meat.

## Plan 5 A DAY snacks

When it comes to snacks, it pays to plan ahead. "Think about times when snacking happens in your family," says Azmina. "Then think what you can do to replace your usual snack with fruit or vegetables."

Making fruit and veg easy to get to is often helpful. When they're peckish, children will often reach for whatever is closest to hand.

Keep a fruit bowl in the living room. Encourage your children to snack from the bowl rather than hunting for snacks in the kitchen.

Keep fruit washed and ready to eat in the fridge. They'll be more tempting when you fancy an instant snack.

Similarly, keep snack-ready vegetables in the fridge, too. Wash and cut up carrots or celery.

Family days out are prime snacking time. Save money by taking small bags of dried fruit, bananas or carrot, celery or pepper sticks with you instead of buying expensive snacks once you're out.

## Get children involved in 5 A DAY

Getting your child involved in choosing and preparing fruit and vegetables can encourage them to eat more.

"Familiarise young children with the colours and shapes of fruits and vegetables as early as possible," says Azmina.

"Each weekly shop, let them choose a fruit or vegetable they'd like to try. Supervise your [child in the kitchen](#) while they help you prepare it."

Present your children with as wide a variety of fruit and vegetables as possible and make eating them a normal part of family life.

"If your children aren't keen, canned vegetables, such as sweetcorn, lentils and peas, can be a good place to start," says Azmina. Choose canned vegetables in water with no added sugar, and canned fruit in natural fruit juice, rather than syrup.

Disguising vegetables, by grating carrots into bolognese sauce, for example, can also work, but don't rely solely on this.

"Try not to reinforce the idea that vegetables are unpleasant and always need to be hidden in foods. Instead, have fun together by trying lots of different fruit and veg and finding what your children like."

## More 5 A DAY support

If you have a question that isn't answered in our [5 A DAY FAQs](#), please email the 5 A DAY team at Public Health England: [phe.enquiries@phe.gov.uk](mailto:phe.enquiries@phe.gov.uk).