



# BLEND Food Group Focus

## Fruits

“Focus on Fruit”

### Importance of Fruits

Eating fruit provides health benefits – people who eat fruit as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Fruits provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body. Fruits are important sources of many nutrients, including **potassium**, **dietary fiber**, **vitamin C**, and **folate** (folic acid).

- Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure.
- Dietary fiber from fruit helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease. Fiber is important for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and diverticulitis. Fiber-containing foods such as fruits help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. *Whole or cut-up fruits are sources of dietary fiber; fruit juices contain little or no fiber.*
- Vitamin C is important for growth and repair of all body tissues, helps heal cuts and wounds, and keeps teeth and gums healthy.
- Folate (folic acid) helps the body form red blood cells.

### What Foods Are In the Fruit Group?

Eating fruits in a variety of colors – red, green, yellow, blue, purple, and orange – provides the broadest range of nutrients. Many of the bright colors in fruits (and vegetables) come from phytochemicals, which are compounds in plant that may protect us from disease. Eating a variety of different colored fruits and vegetables will help ensure you get a variety of different phytochemicals.

The Fruit Group includes any fruit or 100% fruit juice. Fruits may be fresh, frozen, canned or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or puréed. When selecting canned fruits, select fruit canned in 100% fruit juice or water rather than syrup. Most fruits are naturally low in fat, sodium, and calories. None have cholesterol.

Fruits			
Apple	Fruit Cocktail	Nectarine	Prune*
Apricot*	Grapefruit	Orange*	Raisin*
Avocado	Grape	Peach	Raspberry
Banana*	Honeydew*	Pear	Tangerine
Blackberry	Kiwi fruit*	Papaya	Strawberry
Blueberry	Lemon	Pineapple	Star fruit
Cantaloupe*	Lime	Plum	Watermelon
Cherry	Mango	Pomegranate	100% Fruit Juice

\* Fruits that offer an excellent source of potassium

### “Go Easy on Juice”

100% fruit juice is rich in vitamins, minerals, and other great nutrients. However, the sugar content in 100% fruit juice makes it high in calories, so intake should be limited. The sugar content is a natural sugar and not an added sugar.

To ensure kids aren't drinking too much juice and getting more calories than they need, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following limits:

- Up to 6 months – No fruit juice
- 6 to 12 months – ½ cup (4 oz)
- 1 to 6 years – ½ to ¾ cups (4 to 6 oz)
- 7 to 18 years – 1 to 1 ½ cups (8 to 12 oz)

Don't substitute juice for fruit in your children's diet—kids should be encouraged to eat whole fruits.



### Health Benefits of Fruits

Eating a diet rich in fruits (and vegetables) as part of an overall healthy diet may...

- Reduce the risk for stroke and perhaps other cardiovascular diseases.
- Reduce the risk for type II diabetes.
- **May rP** protect against certain cancers, such as mouth, stomach and colon-rectum cancer.
- Reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.
- **May rP** reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and may help to decrease bone loss.

## USDA MyPyramid Recommendations for Fruit

The total amount of fruit you need to eat each day depends on you-your age, gender, and level of physical activity. Recommended daily amounts are shown in the chart below.

Age		Daily Recommendation*
		Total Daily
Children	2 to 3 years	1 cup
	4 to 8 years	1 - 1 ½ cups
Girls	9 to 13 years	1 ½ cups
	14 to 18 years	1 ½ cups
Boys	9 to 13 years	1 ½ cups
	14 to 18 years	2 cups
Women	19 to 30 years	2 cups
	31 to 50 years	1 ½ cups
	51+ years	1 ½ cups
Men	19 to 30 years	2 cups
	31 to 50 years	2 cups
	51+ years	2 cups

\*Amounts are for those who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity beyond normal daily activities. Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) for more information.

### What Counts As a Cup of Fruit?

In general, 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or ½ cup of dried fruit can be considered as 1 cup from the fruit group. The following specific amounts count as 1 cup of fruit towards you-your daily recommended intake:

- 1 large orange (3 1/16" diameter) = 1 cup
- 1 small wedge watermelon (1" thick) = 1 cup
- ½ cup dried fruit (raisins, prunes) = 1 cup
- 1 large banana (8" - 9" long) = 1 cup
- 1 small apple (2 ½" diameter) = 1 cup
- 32 seedless grapes = 1 cup
- 8 large strawberries = 1 cup
- 1 cup 100% fruit juice = 1 cup

### Safety First!

- Wash fruits before preparing or eating them. Under clean running water – rub fruit briskly with your hands to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry after washing.
- Keep fruits separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood while shipping, preparing, or storing.

### Tips to Help You Eat More Fruits!

- Keep a bowl of whole fruit on the table or, counter, or in the refrigerator so it's readily available.
- Buy fresh fruits in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor.
- Select easy-to-eat fresh fruits such as apples, bananas, oranges, plums, peaches, and grapes.
- Top cereal with fresh or dried fruit.
- Serve fresh fruit for dessert.
- Buy bags of frozen fruits to make smoothies, muffins and desserts.
- Stock up on dried fruits for a quick snack, such as raisins, cranberries, and apricots.
- Buy single-serving fruit cups and fruit juices.
- Try frozen 100% fruit juice bars for a refreshing treat.

To learn more about the **Fruit Group** and other food groups, visit the USDA's MyPyramid web site at: [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).

To learn more about Children's Health Topics and Nutrition, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics web site at: <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/nutrition.cfm>

