

# facts about: fruits and vegetables for better health

## New Mexico's Prevention Research Center Fact Series

We have known for a long time that balanced nutrition is essential for a healthy life. Specifically, research shows that eating fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes and some forms of cancer, and ease the effects of aging. Therefore, programs that support New Mexicans eating more fruits and vegetables can contribute to improved health outcomes, including reducing overweight and obesity.

Source: Hyson D. The Health Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables: A Scientific Overview for Health Professionals. Produce for Better Health Foundation. <http://www.5aday.com/html/research/consumptionstats.php#coming>. 2004.

### research shows

- People whose diets are rich in fruits and vegetables have the lowest levels of obesity.

Source: Lin B-H, Morrison Mentzer R. Higher Fruit Consumption Linked with Lower Body Mass Index. *USDA, Economic Research Service*. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FoodReview/DEC2002/frvol25i3d.pdf>. 2004.

- Fruits and vegetables are full of beneficial vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and other nutrients. They are also high in fiber, and contain few calories.
- Replacing some higher-calorie foods with fruits and vegetables has been shown to help people eat fewer calories, and thus control body weight.
- Foods like fruits and vegetables that are high in fiber can be consumed in satisfying portions and continue to make one feel full long after a meal. This may help reduce how much people eat over the course of the day.

Source: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity. Can Eating Fruits and Vegetables Help People of Manage Their Weight? *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. [http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/rtp\\_practitioner\\_10\\_07.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/rtp_practitioner_10_07.pdf). 2004.

Rolls, BJ, Eilo-Martin JA, Tohill BC. What can intervention studies tell us about the relationship between fruit and vegetable consumption and weight management? *Nutr Rev*. Jan 2004;62(1):1-17.

### recommendations

**The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans** recommend that everyone eat a total of 2½ to 6½ cups of fruits and vegetables daily depending on activity level, age and body size. On average 1 serving = ½ cup.

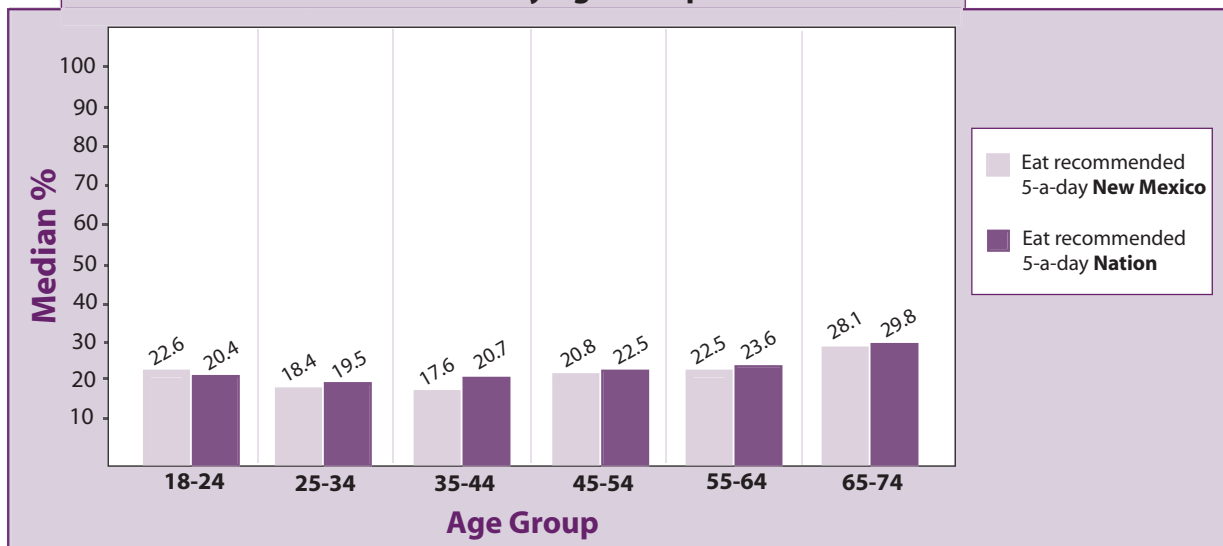
Go to the MyPyramid website [[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)] to get personalized dietary guidance.

Eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables while staying within your individual energy needs. For example, the average adult needs 2,000 calories a day and should consume at least 2 cups (4 servings) of fruit and 2½ cups (5 servings) of vegetables per day.

Choose a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables each day. They can be either fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services and The United States Department of Agriculture, *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office; 2005.

### Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables in New Mexico & the Nation by Age Group



# fruits and vegetables for better health



## What Works in New Mexico

### *Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Project—*

During the 2002-2003 school year the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program provided free fruits and vegetables to children in the Zuni Public School District in New Mexico and 100 schools across 4 other states. Schools provided the fruits and vegetables through kiosks and classrooms.

- Many parents reported that their children came home less hungry, and that they were asking for fruits and vegetables at home.
- One school principal said *“we are privileged [to have the program], ....[I've] never seen anything like this. Diabetic or not, this is a good program....”*
- The Federal government is now permanently funding the FFVP through the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act; and for the 2004-2005 school year 3 new schools and 2 more American Indian tribal organizations were added to the program.

Source: Buzby JC, Guthrie JF, Kantor LS. *Evaluation of the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program: Report to Congress: Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program, Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture*; May 2003.

“For optimum health, scientists say eat a rainbow of colors. Your plate should look like a box of crayolas.”

- Janice M. Horowitz, *TIME*, January 12, 2002.

## Red or Green? (or yellow or purple or blue or white)

Check out these colorful fruits and vegetables, and some of the associated health benefits of eating them:

-  **Red and green** chile are sources of the powerful antioxidants vitamins A, C, and E.
-  **Blue and purple** fruits and vegetables support memory function and have anti-aging benefits.
-  **Green** fruits and vegetables help maintain your vision, and build strong bones and teeth.
-  **White** fruits and vegetables help support heart health and maintain healthy levels of cholesterol.
-  **Yellow and Orange** fruits and vegetables support a healthy immune system, heart and vision health, and lower your risk for some cancers.
-  **Red** fruits and vegetables support heart health, memory function, and healthy urinary tract function.

Source: National 5-A-Day Partnership. *Eat Your Colors! Produce for Better Health Foundation*. May 4, 2005. <http://www.5aday.org/index.php>, 2005

**Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables is a delicious and easy way to get a wide range of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals your body needs to stay healthy.**

This fact series is being provided to you by **New Mexico's Prevention Research Center<sup>†</sup>**. Our goal is to translate research into improved national, state, and local public health policies and practices.

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For a full list of sources cited in this Fact Sheet, and for more information about this topic, see <http://hsc.unm.edu/chpdp> or contact: Linda J. Peñaloza, Ph.D. at [L.Penalzoza@salud.unm.edu](mailto:L.Penalzoza@salud.unm.edu).



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