

## **Why 5 A DAY**

The 5 A DAY message highlights the health benefits of getting five 80g portions of fruit and vegetables every day. That's five portions of fruit and vegetables in total, not five portions of each.

### **Five reasons to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables**

- Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins and minerals, including folate, vitamin C and potassium.
- They're an excellent source of dietary fibre, which helps maintain a healthy gut and prevent constipation and other digestion problems. A diet high in fibre can also reduce your risk of bowel cancer.
- They can help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers.
- Fruit and vegetables contribute to a healthy and balanced diet.
- Fruit and vegetables taste delicious and there's so much variety to choose from.

### **What counts towards 5 A DAY?**

#### ❖ Fruits and vegetables

- Fruit and vegetables cooked in dishes such as soups, stews or pasta dishes.
- Beans and pulses. These only count as one portion a day, no matter how many you eat. That's because although they are a good source of fibre, they contain fewer nutrients than other fruits and vegetables.
- Frozen fruit and vegetables.
- Tinned or canned fruit and vegetables. Buy the ones tinned in natural juice or water with no added sugar or salt.
- Dried fruit, such as currants, dates, sultanas and figs.
- Fruit and vegetables in convenience foods, such as ready meals and shop-bought pasta sauces, soups and puddings. Some ready-made foods are high in salt, sugar and fat, so only have them occasionally or in small amounts. You can find the salt, sugar and fat content of ready-made foods on the label.

### **Drinks and 5 A DAY**

- One glass (150ml) of unsweetened 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Juice counts as a maximum of one portion a day, even if you have more than one glass. This is mainly because juice contains less fibre than whole fruits and vegetables. Crushing fruit into

juice also releases the sugars contained in the fruit, which can cause damage to teeth.

- A smoothie containing all of the edible pulped fruit and/or vegetable may count as more than one portion but this depends on how it's made.

### **Do potatoes count towards 5 A DAY?**

No. Potatoes are a starchy food and a great source of energy, fibre, B vitamins and potassium.

When eaten as part of a meal, potatoes are generally used in place of other sources of starch, such as bread, pasta or rice. Because of this, they don't count towards your 5 A DAY.

Other vegetables that don't count towards your 5 A DAY are yams, cassava and plantain. They are also usually eaten as starchy foods.

Sweet potatoes, parsnips, swedes and turnips do count towards your 5 A DAY, because they are usually eaten in addition to the starchy food part of the meal.

Potatoes play an important role in your diet, particularly if they aren't cooked with salt or fat, even if they don't count towards your 5 A DAY. They're also a good source of fibre, so leave the skins on where possible to keep in more of the fibre and vitamins. For example, if you're having boiled potatoes or a jacket potato, make sure you eat the skin too.