

# Fruit and vegetables for young children

## Why eat fruit and vegetables?

Fruit and vegetables are full of vitamins and minerals for good health. They have no artificial colours or flavours.

Eating a variety of fruit and vegetables everyday can help prevent:

- > overweight and obesity
- > constipation.

The earlier in life this habit starts the more benefits there will be later!

## How much is enough for children?

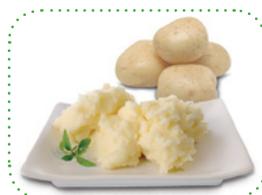
- > adults should eat 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables every day
- > young children are smaller so do not need as much as adults
- > by the time your child goes to Kindergarten they need around 1-2 serves of fruit and 2-4 serves of vegetables every day.

## How much do Australian children eat?

61% of Australian children aged 4-8 years eat the suggested amount of fruit while only 3% eat the suggested amount of vegetables. This means that one third of kids don't eat enough fruit and almost all kids don't eat enough vegetables!

Try to include some fruit and vegetables every day from when your baby starts solids so that by the time your child goes to Kindergarten they enjoy a wide range of fruits and vegetables.

- > most babies are ready to eat fruit and vegetables by around six months old
  - Good first vegetables are cooked and pureed potato, carrot and pumpkin
  - Good first fruits are mashed banana, rockmelon and pureed apple



- > each week try to offer a wider variety of fruits and vegetables. By the time your child is about nine months they can have a variety of bite sized pieces of soft fruit and cooked vegetables.

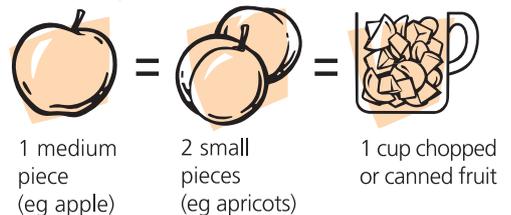
- Hard, raw fruit and vegetables should not be given to children under five as they may cause choking. Young children can still have these foods if they are prepared properly eg cooked, grated, finely chopped. Remember to always watch children when they eat.



## What is a serve?

One serve of **FRUIT** is 150 grams of fresh fruit or:

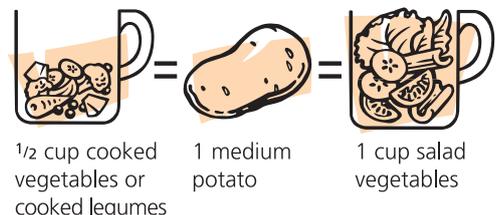
- > 1 medium-sized piece (eg apple)
- > 2 smaller pieces (eg apricots)
- > 1 cup canned or chopped fruit
- > ½ cup (125mL) 100% fruit juice
- > 1½ tablespoon dried fruit (eg. Sultanas or 4 dried apricot halves)



**Take care: chop, grate or cook hard fruit.**

One serve of **VEGETABLES** is 75 grams or:

- > ½ cup cooked vegetables or cooked legumes
- > 1 medium potato
- > 1 cup salad vegetables



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## Tips to include more

Try to include many different types and colours of fruits and vegetables to get a wide range of vitamins and minerals!

### Fruit

- > choose fruit instead of snacks high in fat or sugar such as potato crisps and lollies
- > add fruit like grated apple or tinned peaches to breakfast cereal or yoghurt
- > blend soft fruit (eg bananas, strawberries) with milk, yoghurt and ice for a fruit smoothie
- > put fruit into muffins (eg blueberries, tinned apple or grated pear)
- > try fruit kebabs (soft cubes of fruit on bamboo skewers - watch children with skewers)



### Vegetables

- > mash or grate vegetables into pancakes, soups or dips (eg potato pancakes)
- > grate vegetables (eg carrot, zucchini) into minced meat for spaghetti Bolognese or burgers
- > make a mini pizza with vegetables like tomato, brocolli and capsicum on top



- > serve soft veggie sticks like capsicum and cucumber with a yummy dip - mashed avocados make great dip!



**Remember tinned, frozen and dried fruits and vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh!**

## What about juice?

It is better for your child to eat fruit and vegetables rather than drink fruit juice. Limit juice to half a cup a day (125ml). Too much can lead to tooth decay and overweight. Avoid fruit drinks as they have added sugars. Water is the best drink for children.

## For more information

Children, Youth and Women's Health Service  
[www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/az/other/nutrition/index.html](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/az/other/nutrition/index.html)  
[www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com)

For more tips on how to get 2&5 into your day,  
visit [www.gofor2and5.com.au](http://www.gofor2and5.com.au)

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