



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Eat Your Fruits and Vegetables

State-Specific Trends in Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Among Adults — United States, 2000–2009

Recorded: September 7, 2010; posted: September 9, 2010

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

One of the simplest ways to be well is to eat well. A diet high in fruits and vegetables can help you maintain a healthy weight, as well as reduce the risk for many of the leading causes of death.

Dr. Jennifer Foltz is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables. Welcome to the show, Jennifer.

[Dr. Foltz] Thank you, Bob. It's great to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jennifer, are Americans eating enough fruits and vegetables?

[Dr. Foltz] Although some people eat enough fruits and vegetables, we found that in every state, not enough people are eating fruit and vegetables. Only about one in three adults meet the recommendations for fruit intake and about one in four get the recommended vegetables.

[Dr. Gaynes] So what health problems are associated with not eating enough fruits and vegetables?

[Dr. Foltz] First of all, a diet high in fruits and vegetables is important for maintaining a healthy weight because they are high in fiber and in water. It also reduces the risk of leading causes of death, such as heart disease, some cancers, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease, and diabetes.

[Dr. Gaynes] Should a person eliminate all sweets and high-fat foods from their diet?

[Dr. Foltz] Well, a balanced diet is key. According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, most people need to decrease their intakes of saturated fat and trans fat, as well as added sugars. Therefore, people should consume a variety of foods from the basic food groups. In fact, fats are part of a healthy diet and play important roles in the body. Fat provides energy and is a carrier of important nutrients. Most fat should come from sources of good fat, such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jennifer, what are some strategies for improving people's diets and overall health?

[Dr. Foltz] Well Bob, replacing high fat foods and sugary foods with things like fruits and vegetables is helpful in maintaining weight and in prevention of chronic disease. Also, my favorite simple message to remember what to do for good health is 5-2-1-0. Eat five fruits and vegetables a day, limit your TV time to less than two hours, have one hour of physical activity, and eliminate sugar-sweetened beverages.

[Dr. Gaynes] So how can parents get their children to eat more fruits and vegetables?

[Dr. Foltz] Well Bob, as a pediatrician, I like to provide my parents and their children with a list of healthy snacks. Some things that kids really enjoy are sliced carrots or sliced apples that are fresh and put out on the counter. Also, one story – a child at school got introduced to foods in the color of the rainbow and then went home and asked his parents for radishes. Another strategy is to increase your child's interest in fruits and vegetables through gardening together or preparing the food together.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about creating a healthy diet?

[Dr. Foltz] I'd like to invite listeners to go to www.cdc.gov/nutrition.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks Jennifer. I've been talking today with CDC's Jennifer Foltz about the importance of a diet high in fruits and vegetables.

A healthy diet includes two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables each day. Eating right doesn't mean giving up pizza and burgers; striking a balance is the key. Cut back on foods that are high in fat, calories, or added sugars and replace them with fresh fruits and vegetables.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.