Enjoy Fruit & VEG

This leaflet tells you more about fruit and vegetables – why they are good for you, and how to enjoy eating more of them.

Eat more fruit and vegetables Fresh, Frozen or Canned
What is a healthy diet?

The key to a healthy diet is to eat a variety of foods. *The Balance of Good Health* shows the type of food and the proportions required to achieve a well balanced diet. For most people, a healthy diet means eating more fruit and vegetables – fresh, frozen and canned.

Fruit and vegetables contain some fibre and lots of vitamins and minerals which help to keep you healthy. Try to eat at least five portions each day, including some vegetables, some fruit and some salad.

Think you don’t like fruit and veg?

Think again! Fruit and veg taste great and there are so many different varieties – from the exotic to the everyday, there are bound to be some you’ll enjoy!

Vegetables don’t have to be pale, tasteless and mushy either. Try cooking them in a little water until just tender. You could also steam, microwave or stir fry them in a little oil.

What about cost?

Fruit and veg don’t have to be expensive – your local market can be a good place to hunt for bargains. Fruit makes a convenient snack all year round and need cost no more than a chocolate bar.

If you are worried about fresh veg going off, buy small amounts and store them in a cool, dark, dry place.

Look inside to find a selection of tasty...
Are frozen and canned veg good for you?

You might be surprised to know that frozen vegetables are just as good for you as fresh — and they can be quick, convenient and economical too. They don’t go mouldy or need chopping or scrubbing.

Canned vegetables also make a good storecupboard standby — handy and good value. Why not try canned tomatoes and sweetcorn?

Can veg make a substantial meal?

In winter, when you want something hot and filling, try adding root vegetables like parsnips to stews or soups — or try our sweetcorn chowder recipe inside. And don’t forget the old favourite — potatoes, baked or boiled.

Fruit and vegetables are low in calories and can fill you up — handy if you want to watch your weight. Why not have a filling breakfast by adding chopped apples, oranges or bananas to your breakfast cereal?

What about puddings?

Fruit makes a tasty pudding and, in summer, fresh strawberries or peaches make a nice juicy treat. Canned fruit in its own juice is a good alternative to instant packet puddings and it can work out cheaper than fresh fruit.

Traditional hot puddings can still be healthy — try apple crumble made with wholemeal flour, or baked apples stuffed with sultanas — or how about our recipe for baked blackberry and apple pears?
"One son hates broccoli, the other won’t touch spinach – what can I do?"

Some people spend ages nagging their families to improve their eating habits, and still feel like they’re getting nowhere. But you don’t have to become a health fanatic, chewing on mounds of rabbit food, to get the benefits of eating more fruit and vegetables. Try making a few small changes – there are so many varieties of fruit and vegetables to choose from, you’re sure to find some you’ll enjoy.

Further information
The Health Education Authority produces a range of leaflets and resources on healthier eating, including *Enjoy healthy eating*. For copies of any health education leaflets, contact your local health promotion unit (in the phone book under your local health authority).

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Pasta with lemon sauce and vegetables

Method
1. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet. Drain well and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, bring another saucepan of water to the boil. Place the peas, sweetcorn and baby corn in a steamer basket over the boiling water and steam for 3-4 minutes or until tender. Drain and set aside.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the pasta, sweetcorn and baby corn. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. In a small bowl, mix together the lemon juice, olive oil and fresh basil. Pour over the pasta mixture and toss to coat.
5. Serve immediately, garnished with fresh basil leaves if desired.

Grilled marinated mackerel with plum sauce

Method
1. Mix together the plum sauce, garlic, honey and soy sauce in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. Season the mackerel with salt and pepper. Grill over medium-high heat for 5-7 minutes per side, or until cooked through.
3. Serve the mackerel with the plum sauce drizzled over the top.

Sweetcorn chowder

Method
1. Heat the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add the diced sweetcorn and sauté for 2-3 minutes until tender.
3. Add the chopped onions, celery and carrots and sauté for another 5 minutes.
4. Add the fish stock and bring to a boil.
5. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 10-15 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.
6. Using an immersion blender, blend the chowder until smooth.
7. Add the sliced sausages and cook for another 5-10 minutes until heated through.
8. Serve hot, garnished with freshly chopped parsley.

Honey chicken drummers with waldorf-style salad

Method
1. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F) and line a baking tray with parchment paper.
2. Season the chicken drumsticks with salt and pepper.
3. In a bowl, mix together the ingredients for the waldorf-style salad:
   - 2 apples, cored and chopped
   - 1/2 cup raisins
   - 1/4 cup walnuts, chopped
   - 1/4 cup pecans, chopped
   - 1/4 cup celery, finely chopped
   - 1/4 cup walnuts, chopped
   - 1/4 cup raisins
   - 1/4 cup celery, finely chopped
   - 1/2 cup mayonnaise
   - 1/4 cup honey
   - 1/4 cup lemon juice
   - 1/4 cup olive oil
   - 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
4. Fill a large oven-proof dish with the waldorf-style salad.
5. Place the seasoned chicken drumsticks on top of the salad.
6. Drizzle with the honey and lemon juice mixture.
7. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through and the salad is heated through.
8. Serve hot, garnished with freshly chopped parsley.

Blackberry and apple pear

Method
1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F).
2. Scrub the apples and pears, and slice them into wedges.
3. Place the blackberries and apples in a mixing bowl, and add the orange juice.
4. Toss the fruit mixture gently to coat.
5. Divide the fruit mixture among the oven-proof dishes.
6. In a small bowl, mix together the ingredients for the maple syrup glaze:
   - 2 tablespoons maple syrup
   - 1/4 cup orange juice
6. Pour the glaze over the fruit mixture.
7. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the fruit is soft and the glaze is bubbly.
8. Serve warm, garnished with fresh mint leaves if desired.

Fruity rice dessert

Method
1. In a large pot, bring 2 cups of water and 1 cup of long-grain rice to a boil.
2. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and let simmer for 15-20 minutes, or until the rice is tender and the water is absorbed.
3. In a small bowl, mix together the ingredients for the fruit topping:
   - 1/2 cup chopped strawberries
   - 1/4 cup chopped blueberries
   - 1/4 cup chopped raspberries
   - 1/4 cup chopped blackberries
   - 2 tablespoons honey
   - 1 tablespoon lemon juice
   - 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
4. Stir the fruit topping into the rice mixture.
5. Cover and let sit for 10-15 minutes, or until the fruit is soft and the mixture is heated through.
6. Serve warm, garnished with fresh mint leaves if desired.