



Join the Five-A-Day  
**Fruit and Vegetable Challenge!**  
**Participant Guide**





## How the program works

### Are you up for the challenge?

The Five-A-Day Fruit and Vegetable Challenge is a four-week competition designed to encourage you to eat the daily recommended amount of fruits and vegetables—five to nine servings.

This challenge runs from:

### Why are fruits and vegetables so important?

Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in calories and provide essential nutrients and dietary fiber. They may also play a role in preventing certain chronic diseases. Those who eat more generous amounts, as part of a healthy diet, tend to have reduced risk of chronic diseases, when compared to people who eat only small amounts of fruits and vegetables. These diseases and conditions include stroke, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, and possibly cardiovascular disease and hypertension.

### Step 1:

#### Choose your team and sign up

Sign up for a team of three to five individuals. Once you have your team in place, choose a team captain, set your weekly serving goal, and create a fun team name. Then, the team captain submits the information to the program coordinator.

If you choose to participate as an individual rather than on a team, contact the program coordinator to sign up, and report your personal score to one of them each Monday.

### Step 2:

#### Track your daily fruit and veggie intake

Record your daily servings on your Personal Fruit and Vegetable Tracker. You earn one point for each serving, up to nine points per individual per day.

### Step 3:

#### Report your weekly points

If you're part of a team, report your weekly points to your team captain each Monday. Team captains and individual participants will submit weekly points to the program coordinator each Monday.

### Team captain duties

Each team's captain is responsible for:

- Emailing team members once a week to provide encouragement and collect weekly totals.
- Report the team's weekly points total to the program coordinator.

### Questions?

Please contact the program coordinator if you have any questions about the Five-A-Day Challenge.







## Fruit and vegetable facts

### What's a fruit?

A fruit consists of the fleshy pulp that surrounds the seed of a plant. That would make a zucchini and a tomato a fruit, just like an apple or a watermelon.

For this challenge, however, fruit refers to the sweeter produce. This includes tree fruits (apples, peaches, cherries, and oranges); fruits that grow on vines (cantaloupes and watermelons); plus those that grow on bushes (blueberries) and low, creeping plants (strawberries).

### What is a vegetable?

A lot of foods that we call vegetables are technically fruits (as explained in "What's a fruit?" above). Examples include zucchini, tomatoes, and winter squash. We usually prepare these as "savories" rather than "sweets."

Other vegetables truly are the plant's "vegetation." Lettuce, cabbage, and spinach fit in this category.

Some of the vegetables we eat are flower buds (broccoli, artichoke) and some are a plant's seed pod, complete with seed (green beans). In the Five-A-Day Challenge, beans also count as a vegetable.

We classify some roots (carrots, radishes, potatoes) and other things that grow underground as vegetables, too.

### Are the following foods considered a vegetable for this challenge?

One goal of the Five-A-Day Challenge is to become more familiar with the fruit and vegetable groups. Therefore, some borderline foods will not count toward your daily servings.

**Beans:** Yes. Beans (canned or dried) are categorized as vegetables in the dietary recommendations of several government and health organizations.

**Hummus:** No. Hummus does not count as a vegetable when scoring for Five-A-Day. However, hummus is a delicious way to add variety to your healthy diet.

**Mushrooms:** Yes. Under the My Plate method, the USDA now categorizes mushrooms as a vegetable, even though they're technically a fungi.

**Nuts:** No. According to the USDA My Plate method, nuts are in the protein-rich group, not with the fruits and vegetables.

**Potatoes:** Yes. However, potato chips are a salty snack food, and French fries are fried, so neither counts toward your daily servings for this challenge.

**Tofu:** No. Tofu is made from soy milk, and unlike fruits, vegetables, and whole beans, it's low in fiber. This is an important distinction since dietary fiber is one of the most important nutritional benefits gained from eating fruits and vegetables.

### What is a healthy rainbow?

Fruits and vegetables come in a variety of colors with various vitamins and minerals. To get a healthy variety, just think color! An assortment of colors ensures a wide range of valuable nutrients.

### Where can I find more information?

You can find more information at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov).





# Your personal fruit and vegetable tracker

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team name: \_\_\_\_\_

WEEK	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TOTAL DAILY SERVINGS	TOTAL
1									
2									
3									
4									

## How to earn points

**1 serving = 1 point:** Up to nine serving points can be earned each day. No more than three serving points can be earned for any single fruit or vegetable on a given day.

**Fruit/Veggie of the Week = 1.5 points:** The fruit/veggie of the week will be announced via e-mail. Points are awarded for up to three servings each day.

**Farmers' Market = 2 points:** Visit a local farmers' market and earn two points! Points are awarded for one visit per week. No purchase necessary.

## Serving examples

- One medium whole fruit, such as an apple, banana, or orange
- 1/2 cup cut-up fruit, such as a fruit salad
- 1/4 cup dried fruit, such as raisins, prunes, apricots, or dates
- 3/4 cup or 6 ounces of 100% fruit or vegetable juice, such as grapefruit or tomato (maximum of one point per day)
- 1/2 cup raw or cooked vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, or zucchini
- 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables, such as romaine or green leaf lettuce