



Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Among New Hampshire Youth, 2013

Fruits, Vegetables, Obesity, and Chronic Disease

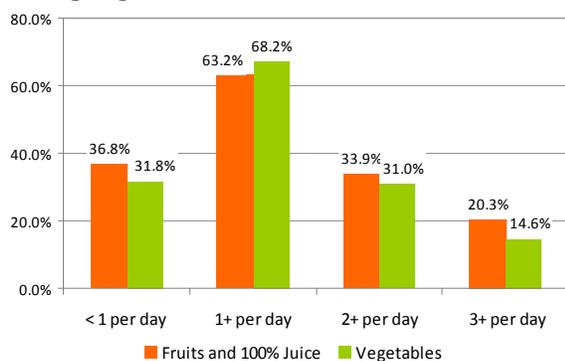
Fruits and vegetables are an important source of vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. With their high fiber and water content, fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories, making them key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. In 2011, more than one in four New Hampshire teens reported that they were obese (12.1%) or overweight (14.1%).

Research shows that inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption is a risk factor for overweight and obesity, both of which are associated with an increased risk for chronic diseases and conditions such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, high blood pressure, stroke, liver and gallbladder disease. Healthful diets rich in fruits and vegetables can help reduce the risk for chronic diseases such as stroke, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, and perhaps heart disease and high blood pressure.

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in New Hampshire

Fruit and vegetable consumption among New Hampshire teens is periodically measured through the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRFSS).

Consumption of fruits and vegetables reported among high school students, NH YRBSS, 2011



In 2011, a considerable percentage of New Hampshire teens reported consuming fruits (36.8%) and vegetables (31.8%) less than once a day. The New Hampshire averages for daily fruit and vegetable consumption were 1.0 and 1.3 times a day, respectively, matching the national averages exactly. Clearly, current consumption falls far below the recommendation to make fruits and vegetables half of the food eaten at every meal and snack.

Recommendations and Objectives

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*, (DGA2010) outlines nutrition recommendations for all age groups 2 years of age and older with an emphasis on caloric balance to achieve and sustain a healthy weight. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) translates the guidelines into practical advice for consumers at www.choosemyplate.gov. For fruits and vegetables, the key message is they should fill half the plate at every meal and snack.

Population-Based Approaches

Communities can minimize health, economic, and educational disparities by adopting population-based approaches to improve nutrition outcomes. Child care programs and schools can take action through policies and systems that create a social environment that supports healthy choices for all. A similar philosophy is reflected in the HP2020 Nutrition and Weight Status (NWS) Objectives as follows:

Healthy People 2020 Objectives for Eating More Fruits and Vegetables

- NWS-14: Increase the contribution of **fruits** to the diets of the population aged 2 years and older.
- NWS-15: Increase the variety and contribution of **vegetables** to the diets of the population aged 2 years and older.
- NWS-15.1: Increase the contribution of **total vegetables** to the diets of the population aged 2 years and older.

Healthy People 2020 Objectives for Policies and Systems to Support Eating More Fruits and Vegetables

- NWS-1: Increase the number of States with nutrition standards for foods and beverages provided to preschool-aged children in **child care**.
- NWS-2: Increase the proportion of **schools** that offer nutritious foods and beverages outside of school meals.
- NWS-2.2: Increase the proportion of **school** districts that require schools to make fruits or vegetables available whenever other foods is offered or sold.

Child Care and School Policies

Increasingly, child care programs are adopting policies that support eating more fruits and vegetables. Hopefully, as children experience eating more fruits and vegetables, they will develop food preferences that impact their eating choices in high school and beyond.

In a similar vein, during the 2012-2013 school year, 139 public schools in the State participated in the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) which provides produce snacks during the school day. The FFVP is highly successful in introducing schoolchildren to a variety of produce they might not otherwise have the opportunity to try.

The *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* required USDA to develop science-based nutrition standards for all foods *sold* on school campuses during the school day. The proposed rule, *Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools*, released in February 2013, outlines the minimum nutrition guidelines for competitive foods and beverages sold on school campuses during the school day. States and local education agencies are free to adopt nutrition standards for all competitive foods in schools.

In December 2011, the New Hampshire State Board of Education adopted changes to the New Hampshire Administrative Rules for Education, Minimum Standards for Public School Approval, including Ed 306.02, Ed 306.04, and Ed 306.11 regarding food and nutrition services. These School Rules require all New Hampshire public

schools to select and follow a standard for all competitive foods served during the school day. A toolkit, *School Foods: A Guide to Implementing the New Hampshire Administrative Rules for Education Regarding Food and Nutrition*, provides implementation guidance.

According to the *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2013*⁴ (SIRFV2013), nearly half (44.7%) of New Hampshire middle schools and high schools offered fruits and vegetables at celebrations.

To learn more about state and local policies that support the consumption of more fruits and vegetables, see the SIRFV2013.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2013. Available from: www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/State-Indicator-Report-Fruits-Vegetables-2013.pdf . Accessed on 05/30/2013.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. Available from: www.healthypeople.gov/2020/default.aspx. Accessed on 05/30/2013.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010. Available from: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2010.asp>. Accessed on 05/30/2013.

Notes

- The **DGA2010** encourage eating nutrient-dense foods and beverages including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans, peas, nuts and seeds.
- The **DGA2010 fruit and vegetable intake recommendations** are based on caloric need, which are a function of age, gender, and physical activity. Recommendations for 14-18 year olds range from 1½ to 2½ cups of fruit and 2½ to 4 cups of vegetables to be consumed daily.
- USDA defines **competitive foods** as “foods offered at school, other than meals served through USDA’s school lunch, school breakfast, and after-school snack programs.” Competitive foods include foods offered via vending machines, school stores, snack bars, celebrations, and fundraisers.