



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Men scoring low in fruit and vegetable consumption; NCI and ADPH urge men to have 9 servings a day

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Men have dropped the ball in the fruit and vegetable game. To get them back on the scoreboard, the Alabama Department of Public Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and its principal agency for cancer research and training, the National Cancer Institute, are urging men to "shoot for 9"—9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, that is.

According to a recent national survey conducted for the NCI, only 3 percent of men know they should eat nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day. In a new campaign, HHS and NCI aim to increase men's awareness of the recommendation to eat nine a day to help reduce the risk of several diseases including many cancers, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

Heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, cancer and diabetes account for approximately three-quarters of all deaths in the United States, and men develop chronic disease earlier in life and have higher death rates from them than do women.

"Clearly, 'shoot for 9' is a message that men need to hear," said Lorelei DiSogra, Ed.D., R.D., director of the NCI program. "Of all the nutrition information out there for men, 9 a day is one of the simplest and most important."

Heidi Hataway, assistant director of the health department's Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit, added, "Too many men in this country die from heart attacks, strokes or some form of cancer. Eating fruits and vegetables helps keep everyone energized."

The Importance for Men

On average, men eat only one-third (3.1 servings) of their recommended nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day, according to a 2002 survey. HHS and NCI are making a concerted effort to reach men to let them know they need more fruits and vegetables than do women and children.

"Men get heart disease and other major diseases earlier in life than women and don't live as long," said DiSogra. "If we really want to close the gender gap and help men live longer, healthier lives, we need to let them know about the recommendation to eat 9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day."

	Vegetables	Fruits	Total
Children aged 2 to 6	3	2	5
Children over age 6, teenage girls, and most women	4	3	7
Teenage boys and most men	5	4	9

Fruit and Vegetable Teamwork

Fruits and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals and fiber. They are also packed with hundreds of disease-fighting phytochemicals, natural substances that work as a team to protect good health. Only fruits and vegetables, not pills or supplements can provide all of these nutrients together.

NCI advises eating a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables — red, yellow-orange, white, green and blue-purple — to get as many of these phytochemicals as possible. Eating more fruits and vegetables also can help men feel full on fewer calories because most are naturally high in fiber and water, and low in fat and calories.

"Keep it simple," DiSogra said. "Drink 100-percent juice with breakfast, keep fruit around for a snack, and make sure dinner includes two vegetables. The key is to do things that you enjoy and that fit into your routine — and to do them every day."

For more information please call the NCI's Cancer Information Service toll-free Monday through Friday, 9 a.m-4:30 p.m. at 1-800-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). The number for callers with TTY equipment is 1-800-332-8615. For more nutrition information, log on to the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site at www.adph.org/nutrition.

5/28/03