

## Get YOUR 5-A-Day – NO EXCUSES!

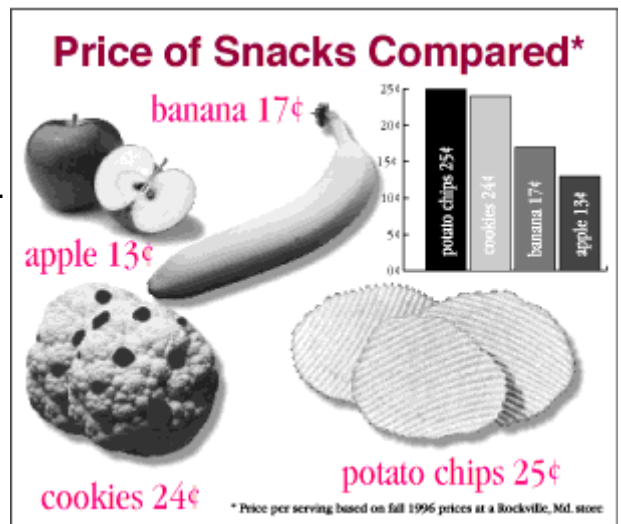
### 1. Perceived Problem: Fruits and vegetables cost too much.

#### Possible Solutions:

It may help to realize, according to dietitians, that fruits and vegetables are actually good buys, if you consider that they are nutrient-dense, containing many of the vitamins and minerals we need more of--for example, vitamins A and C. But the foods we often buy in place of them--cookies and chips, for example--usually offer more of the nutrients--fat and sodium, for example--that most of us should eat less of.

And there are ways to reduce the costs of fruits and vegetables even further:

- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season. Not only will they be cheaper but they also will be at their flavor and nutritional peaks
- Clip coupons for money off on your favorite canned and frozen fruits and vegetables and juices.
- Watch local grocery advertisements for reduced prices on your favorite fruits and vegetables.
- If you're not partial to a particular brand, compare prices of different brands of canned and frozen fruits and vegetables and juices and buy the cheapest.



### 2. Perceived Problem: Fruits and vegetables take too long to prepare.

#### Possible Solutions:

- Take advantage of grocery store salad bars, which offer ready-to-eat raw vegetables and fruits and prepared salads made with fruits and vegetables.
- Keep on hand canned and frozen fruit, canned and bottled juices, and dried fruits. Just open and use.
- Stock up on frozen vegetables for easy cooking in the microwave oven.
- Prepare fruits and vegetables ahead of time; for example, wash and, if feasible, cut up fresh produce and store it in the refrigerator for handy, immediate use.

### **3. Perceived Problem: Fresh fruits and vegetables spoil too quickly.**

#### **Possible Solutions:**

- If you shop once a week or less often, buy both fresh and processed--that is, canned or frozen--fruits and vegetables, and juices. Use the fresh first; save the processed items for use later.
- Buy both ripe and not-so-ripe fresh fruits and vegetables--for example, yellow and green bananas--so that the not-so-ripe items will last a few days longer and be ready for eating after you've finished the ripe ones.
- Keep fruits and vegetables where you can see them often--on the top shelf of the refrigerator, or, for fruits that don't need refrigeration (such as bananas and apples), on the table or counter or another easy-to-spot-place. The more often you see the fruits and vegetables, the more likely you may be to eat them.

### **4. Perceived Problem: Fruits and vegetables contain harmful pesticides.**

#### **Possible Solutions:**

It is a fact that pesticides are used in the production of most fruits and vegetables sold in this country. They help protect crops from insects, diseases, weeds, and mold, thus helping to increase crop yield. "They allow for production of a plentiful and affordable food supply," said John Jones, Ph.D., in FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition.

FDA's position is that the U.S. fruit and vegetable supply does not contain excessive pesticide residues and that the benefits of eating fresh produce far exceeds any risk from residues, Jones said.

However, if you're still concerned, here are some steps you can take to reduce your risk further:

- Wash fruits and vegetables with water and scrub with a dish brush when appropriate: for example, before eating apples, cucumbers, potatoes, or other produce in which the outer skin or peeling is consumed.
- Throw away the outer leaves of leafy vegetables, such as lettuce and cabbage.
- Peel and cook when appropriate, although some nutrients and fiber may be lost when produce is peeled.

#### **Questions about this topic?**

Contact Julie Banda at the Center for Health Promotion and Wellness  
[banj@med.mit.edu](mailto:banj@med.mit.edu) 617/253-1318