



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## ADPH encourages Alabamians to eat more fruits, vegetables

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eating fruits and vegetables is essential to good health. The nutrients they provide contribute to healthy organs in the body and help prevent cardiovascular problems, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. In fact, the National 5 A Day Campaign finds that only about 10 percent of Americans eat the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables daily.

In Alabama, 20 percent of adults and only 14.7 percent of students report eating five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, according to the 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, many Americans do not eat recommended amounts.

Reasons for lack of fruit and vegetable consumption include poor access to fresh produce and negative perceptions of taste and palatability. One fundamental reason is that many people are simply not aware of how many they should eat and what constitutes a serving.

The Alabama Department of Public Health is working to raise awareness of the need and now is the perfect opportunity, because September is National 5 A Day Month. Across the state, a variety of activities are planned that will focus on the theme ***Fruits and Veggies Count: Do You Know What You Need?***

The WIC program will promote fruits and vegetables in every clinic in Alabama using posters, stickers, bookmarks and coloring sheets. The Nutrition and Physical Activity Division will be emphasizing the importance of consuming fruits and vegetables with programs in a Montgomery elementary school as well as at a senior center in Macon County.

Many diseases and conditions have been linked to directly to poor diet and physical inactivity. Heart disease, cancer and stroke are the first, second and third leading causes of death in Alabama respectively.

"Including a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables in your meals every day may help lower the burden of these diseases," said Molly Pettyjohn, a registered dietitian with the Alabama Department of Public Health. "Try adding extra veggies to soups, sandwiches and pasta. Or fruit to salads, cereal or meat dishes,"

National 5 A Day Month is the perfect time for the whole family to take the steps necessary to improve their health by incorporating more fruits and vegetables into a healthy eating plan. For

more information, visit [www.adph.org/nutrition](http://www.adph.org/nutrition) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at [www.5aday.gov](http://www.5aday.gov).

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