

Shall We Eat Fruit 'Before' or 'After' a Meal?

Some believe that having fruits 'before' a meal will improve absorption of its vitamins and minerals; there is however, no strong evidence to suggest that eating fruits on an empty stomach will lead to better absorption. In fact, nutrient absorption does not differ significantly whether the fruit is eaten 'before' or 'after' a meal.

Eating fruit at a time best suit your dietary habits or routine is beneficial. When you have fruit between meals, it will serve as a healthy snack instead of the less healthy one, such as crisps. When you have fruit just before or after a meal, vitamin C in fruit can improve iron absorption.

Adequate daily fruit intake can reduce the chance of developing chronic diseases, such as, cardiovascular diseases and colon cancer. Daily intake of at least **two servings** of fruit is recommended, where 1 serving of fruit is equivalent to:

- ✧ 1 piece of medium-sized fruit (e.g. apple, orange)
- ✧ 2 pieces of small-sized fruit (e.g. kiwifruit, plum)
- ✧ ½ bowl of fruit cuts (e.g. star fruit, papaya, grapes, strawberries)
- ✧ ½ piece of large-sized fruit (e.g. banana)
- ✧ 1 tablespoon of dried fruits without added sugar (e.g. raisin)

(Remark: 1 cup = 240 ml; 1 bowl = 250-300ml)

To know more about ...

- ✧ healthy eating, please visit 'Health Zone' website at <http://www.cheu.gov.hk>
- ✧ health benefits of fruits, please visit "Two Plus Three Every Day" webpage at the Central Health Education Unit Website http://www.cheu.gov.hk/eng/info/2plus3_14.htm
- ✧ 'Health@work.hk Project', please visit <http://www.healthatwork.gov.hk>