

Executive Summary

- An audit of fresh, prepared and processed fruit and vegetable products was undertaken. Information was collected on pack sizes, portions, and statements in relation to 5 A Day. The number of fruit and vegetable portions were calculated using tablespoons (15ml), handfuls and bowls (300ml).
- A portion of most cooked vegetables was found to be 3 rounded tbsp and 4 rounded tbsp for cabbage-type products.
- Statements such as “half a can” were appropriate for canned vegetables, which were frequently sold in a standard 300g size (half a can, drained was equivalent to 80g). Canned baked beans were usually sold in 200g and 400g can sizes.
- It was established that 40g dried pulses was equivalent to 80g fresh weight.
- Tomato puree was found to be key ingredient in determining the number of vegetable portions. Double concentrate tomato puree was four times the original concentration of tomato and the presence of puree in a product therefore weighted the number of vegetable portions that might be claimed. As a result, ready meals based on vegetables and tomato puree were estimated to provide 1-3 vegetables portions depending on tomato puree content.
- Tomato-based cooking and pasta sauces each supplied around 1 vegetable portion, depending on the recommended number of servings per pack.
- Pickles provided vegetable portions but most would not be consumed in large enough quantities to contribute significantly.
- Soups varied in vegetable content but most canned and fresh soups supplied about 1 vegetable portion. Tomato soups supplied more than 1 portion. Dried soups supplied less than 1 vegetable portion.
- Salads were supplied in a variety of pack sizes. A full 300ml bowl of mixed leaves was found to equate to 80g.
- A portion of most small sized fruits equated to 3 rounded tbsp; some fruit portions were described per number of fruit. Fruit can sizes varied widely and it was concluded that “half a can” would be a confusing description for canned fruit.
- Dried fruit presented some difficulties, with a range of dried and “ready to eat” product available. Moisture contents varied by variety and product. In very general terms, around 15-20g of dried fruit and 25-30g of “ready to eat” dried product was equivalent to 80g fresh.
- Fruit-based desserts like pies and crumbles contributed fruit portions but most supplied ½ portion or less.
- Juices counted as 1 portion but juice drinks did not contain enough juice to contribute. Smoothies varied in composition but most supplied around 1-2 fruit portions per serving.
- Salt and sugar were frequently added to fruit and vegetable products. Fruit in juice products were widely available but no added- salt and -sugar versions of vegetables were much more difficult to find. On average, canned vegetables contained around 0.3g sodium per 100g.