

## State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2013, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA



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### Background

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which lays the groundwork for the nation's nutrition-related programs and policies, recommends that we consume 1–4 cups of vegetables and 1–2.5 cups of fruits each day, depending on individual caloric requirements. These national health recommendations have been put forth largely because fruits and vegetables tend to be rich in essential vitamins, select minerals, and dietary fiber. In addition, these plant foods provide myriad phytochemicals (e.g., the non-vitamin A carotenoids such as lycopene) that, although not considered to be in the category of the traditional essential nutrients, are likely to impart important health benefits. Indeed, numerous studies report an inverse link between fruit and/or vegetable consumption and risk for a variety of chronic conditions such as certain forms of cancer and cardiovascular disease.

As such, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity has a vested interest in monitoring fruit and vegetable consumption in the United States. This type of monitoring is especially useful in terms of assessing how close the United States population is to meeting current fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations. In addition, this information can be used to target possible windows of opportunity in this regard.

In response, the CDC recently released its *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2013*. This report, the first of its kind published since 2009, provides state- and nationwide information on fruit and vegetable consumption, related policies, and associated environmental supports. It also provides "stories from the field" that describe success stories related to increasing availability of fresh produce around the country.

### Fruit and Vegetable "Indicators"

The report includes 8 behavioral and 13 policy and environment indicators all related to fruit and vegetable consumption of adolescents and adults. Note that updates to the Behavioral

Risk Factor Surveillance System in 2011 make it difficult to compare estimates of fruit and vegetable intake reported in this publication with earlier estimates. Instead, the CDC recommends that the most current data published in this report be used as baseline statistics for fruit and vegetable data collected in subsequent years. Some highlights of these indicators, which clearly illustrate very low fruit and vegetable consumption throughout the United States, are provided here.

### Highlights

The following statistics represent some of the highlights among the indicators of fruit and vegetable consumption and environment provided in the report.

- Overall, in the United States 37.7% and 22.6% of adults and 36.0% and 37.7% of adolescents report consuming fruits and vegetables, respectively, less than 1 time daily.
- Median daily intakes of fruits and vegetables are 1.1 and 1.6 times per day, respectively, for adults and 1.0 and 1.3 times per day, respectively, for teens.
- Median intake of fruits by adults ranges from 0.9 (in Mississippi and Oklahoma) to 1.3 (in California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, New Hampshire, and Vermont) times per day.
- Reported vegetable consumption by adults ranges from 1.4 (in Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Dakota) to 1.9 (in Oregon) times per day.
- There are ~2.5 farmers markets per 100,000 residents in the United States, with the highest relative number (15) in Vermont; Texas has the fewest (0.7).
- Twenty-one percent of farmers markets accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) benefits, whereas 25.8% accept Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupons.
- Only 10 states have child care regulations that align with national standards for fruit consumption; even fewer (4) have policies that align with vegetable consumption standards.
- Florida has the highest percentage (42.9%) of cropland acreage harvested for fruits and vegetables.

### Potential Actions

In an accompanying *National Action Guide*, the CDC has provided potential actions that state leaders, public health professionals, coalitions, and community-based organizations can take to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables. Some of these suggestions include the following:

- Work with groups trying to bring new retail outlets to underserved neighborhoods.

- Increase the number of farms and farmers markets that accept nutrition assistance program benefits.
- Support farm-to-school and preschool activities and provide opportunities for agriculture, nutrition, and gardening education.
- Help organize a food hub (defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a “business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional

demand”) or facilitate communication between established food hubs and potential buyers.

#### **For More Information**

Free copies of this report are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/State-Indicator-Report-Fruits-Vegetables-2013.pdf>. An accompanying National Action Guide is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/national-action-guide-2013.pdf>. The CDC’s Guide to Strategies to Increase the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/resources/recommendations.html>.