

# **Are you getting enough?**

**The barriers to getting your  
5-a-day and how to help your  
patients get there**

## Hello there.

At innocent, we know we're not perfect but we want to do our bit to make the world a healthier and happier place.

Despite the majority of us admitting we know we should be eating at least 5 portions of fruit and veg a day, only 1 in 10 of us are actually managing to hit the government's 5-a-day target on a daily basis.<sup>1</sup>

So we thought we'd do some research to find out why there is such a difference between what people know and what they do and to figure out how we can help make healthy eating that little bit easier for everyone.

Our main findings were that people need encouragement, easy options and to be shown that eating fruit and veg needn't be a chore.

This report shows our research findings and gives you helpful advice on how to help your patients fit more fruit and veg into their diet easily.

Hopefully you'll find it useful.

Happy reading.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr Shilpee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Shilpee (BSc, MMedSci, PhD)

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# Foreword

## The innocent studies

Helping people eat more healthily is one of our founding principles at innocent. Our basic plan is to help people on their way to getting their 5 portions of fruit and veg. We knew that there were barriers to this and therefore we wanted to know more. So we talked to leading experts and carried out a survey on over 1,200 people, including consumers and healthcare professionals in the UK, to get a better understanding.

Our survey was carried out by Opinion Health, an independent healthcare research company. We conducted polls with 1,048 consumers, 115 nurses and 100 nutritionists and dietitians to get a better understanding of what all these people think, believe and do when it comes to getting their 5-a-day. The surveys were conducted in November 2009 and, unless stated otherwise, all data presented in this report is from the Opinion Health studies.

## Executive summary

When it comes to eating our 5 portions of fruit and veg, there is a distinct difference between what we know and what we do.

Undoubtedly the knowledge is already there as over 96% of us admit to knowing that we should be eating 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day.<sup>1</sup>

This understanding is largely due to the Department of Health's hugely successful awareness campaigns. Between 2001-2002 and 2007-2008, over £12 million was spent on promoting the 5-A-DAY campaign and in terms of raising awareness, this money appears to have been well spent.<sup>2</sup>

However, these awareness campaigns don't seem to be translating into action as 89% of people claim that despite knowing about the 5-a-day message, they're not actually achieving 5 portions of fruit and veg a day.

So what is going on? Why is there such a disconnect between what people know and what they do?

According to the research, the main barriers to achieving the 5-a-day target are a lack of convenience, confusion around the target, cost and other psychological barriers.

We've teamed up with 7 experts from the healthcare professional world to form the 'innocent panel' and with their help, have created a new way of looking at this problem known as 'reality eating'. This new model allows healthcare professionals such as nurses, dietitians and nutritionists to base their advice on easy practical steps that can make a real difference rather than relying on overly strict doctrines. By encouraging people to eat healthy foods in a way that fits into their hectic day-to-day lives, reality eating makes it that little bit easier to be healthier.

This new approach to healthy eating brings the 5-a-day debate back to basics and provides you with practical solutions for your patients and yourself.

# So what's the problem?

## The 5-a-day campaign

The Department of Health's 5-a-day campaign was launched in 2003 as an initiative to encourage people to include more fruit and veg in their diet.<sup>3</sup>

Our research has shown that not only have the vast majority of people listened and understood the 5-a-day message, but that they are also aware of what they should be doing to support their health through diet.

Similarly, we found that healthcare professionals are giving out advice to help their patients get their 5-a-day regularly and they think that 5 portions of fruit and veg a day is a realistic target.

## Why should people get their 5-a-day?

Research suggests that consuming plenty of fruit and veg can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and strokes.<sup>4</sup>

The risk of certain types of cancer is linked to diet and, research suggests, these are highly preventable through better diet, drinking and exercise habits.<sup>5</sup>

For example, the risk of colorectal (bowel) cancer may be reduced by a diet rich in fibre or fresh fruit and veg.<sup>6</sup>

Also, adults who are not classified as obese consume more fruit and veg than those who are.<sup>7</sup>

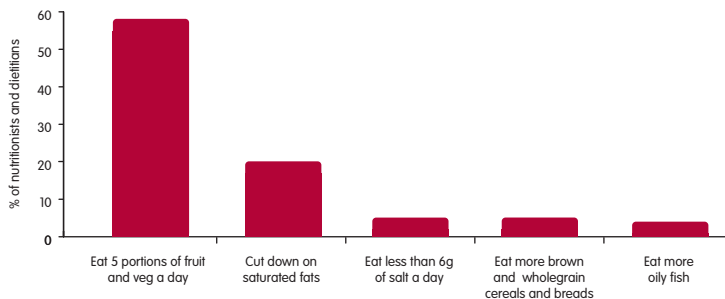
## Good news

The good news is that most people know that they should be consuming 5 portions of fruit and veg on a daily basis. In addition to this, our research found that:

- 92% of nutritionists and 76% of dietitians give out 5-a-day advice on a regular basis
- 80% of nurses give out 5-a-day advice to their patients on a regular basis
- 80% of dietitians and 86% of nutritionists believe that the 5-a-day target is realistic and easily achievable

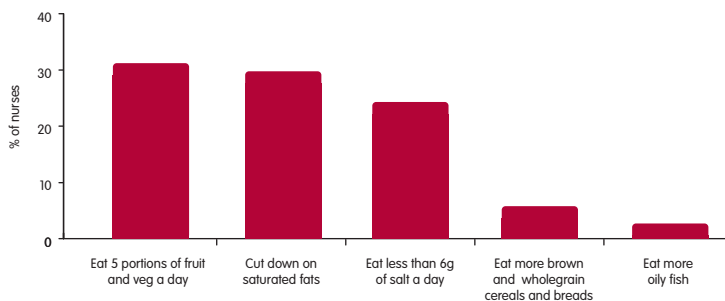
Double the number of nutritionists and dietitians think that increasing fruit and veg consumption is more important than cutting down on saturated fat.

## Advice on healthy eating that nutritionists and dietitians think is the most important



Nurses think that the most important advice they can provide their patients with is encouraging them to get their 5 portions of fruit and veg, followed by cutting down on saturated fats.

### Advice on healthy eating that nurses think is the most important



Most people seem to know what they need to do which is always a good start.

### The reality

However, despite a great awareness and the best of intentions, we're still not hitting these targets. And that includes the very people giving the advice:

- 47% of dietitians and nutritionists, and 82% of nurses admitted they fail to reach their 5-a-day target every day
- Only 18% of nutritionists think that the majority of their patients achieve their 5-a-day target most of the time
- Only 3% of nurses believe patients achieve their 5-a-day target most of the time
- Only 11% of consumers claim to be getting their 5-a-day
- Only 26% of consumers eat fruit every day

So what's stopping us hitting that magic number 5?



# What are the barriers to getting your 5-a-day?

Having spoken to both consumers and healthcare professionals (HCPs) in our research, we found that everyone faces the same sort of barriers when it comes to achieving the 5-a-day target.

We've broken these barriers down into 4 main groups:

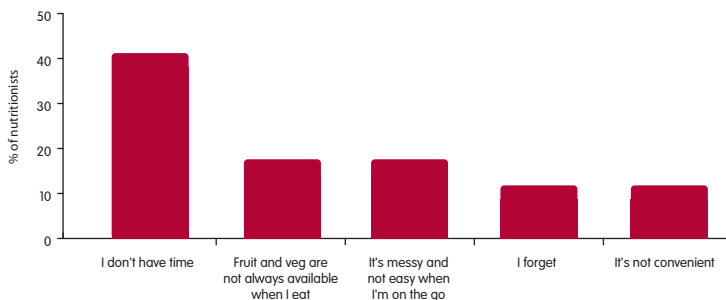
Convenience, Confusion, Psychological barriers, Perceived cost

## Convenience

Most people, including HCPs, tend to miss their 5-a-day target because they forget, don't have time or don't have fruit and veg readily available at mealtimes.

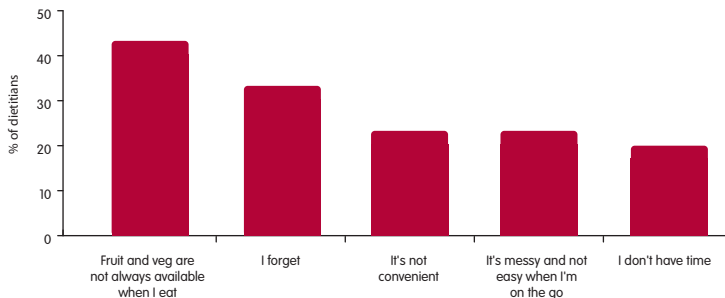
- Over a third of nurses and 42% of nutritionists said they simply didn't have the time

## Reasons for nutritionists not achieving their 5 portions of fruit and veg a day



- One third of dietitians said they simply forget to eat fruit and veg

### Reasons for dietitians not achieving their 5 portions of fruit and veg a day



- And 22% of consumers think that eating fruit and veg is not convenient

Our research found that practicality, time and external influences were also issues for consumers. Over a quarter of consumers we spoke to said that work and day-to-day living often got in the way of achieving their 5-a-day target, with over 35% agreeing that fruit and veg are not always readily available.

As a result of busy lifestyles, people are eating out more and when they do eat in, they tend to opt for more convenience foods. This lack of control over what goes into our meals can lead to us consuming less nutritious meals.

### Confusion

In our research, just under a third of consumers thought that the nutritional advice supplied to the public was difficult to follow, claiming that the information:

- Was often too confusing
- Contained too many conflicting messages
- Was full of manufacturers making false claims in a bid to drive sales

Leading psychologist, Gladeana McMahon, argues that people have so much to remember these days as to what they should and shouldn't be doing, that it all becomes overwhelming. For example, she notes that "We are told to drink 8 glasses of water a day, avoid refined sugar, watch our alcohol units, avoid too much salt... eat 5 portions of fruit and veg a day and so on. You could argue it is a full-time occupation just remembering what you have to do and when, and then on top of it all don't forget your 10,000 paces a day."

## Psychological barriers

Old habits die hard and habits formed in childhood are especially hard to break. According to the leading charity Anxiety UK, children who are reluctant to try new foods can come to fear them to the extent that the food triggers a disgust response. This is very common with fruit and veg when they consist of an unusual texture.

There is also the belief that healthy eating messages are targeted at younger age groups who paradoxically feel they don't need to worry about healthy eating until they are older.

So when it comes to asking adults to change their attitude to fruit and veg, it's not enough to just present the facts.

According to nutritionist Fiona Hunter, people's initial experiences when trying new and different fruit and veg can be disappointing, which can often lead them to believe they actually dislike that particular fruit or vegetable. She suggests that this is "quite common in the UK because the fruit isn't always as fresh and tasty as when you're abroad". In order to change this, Hunter argues that "people need to be re-educated to believe that fruit and veg can be tasty, particularly when brought in to supplement or add flavour to a balanced meal, such as cereal and a smoothie for breakfast".

Dr Chris Steele of *This Morning* fame agrees that this is in fact a "rather dangerous situation". Dr Steele sees lots of patients "who take health advice for granted because they don't think it applies to them. Only when they are diagnosed with an illness do they start to worry about their eating habits." He argues that this is "a case in point for prevention being better than cure".

### Perceived cost

In addition to lack of convenience, confusion and psychological barriers, food choices are also affected by what people can afford, particularly for people in lower income brackets. All too often though, the high cost of fruit and veg is used as an excuse for not hitting the 5-a-day target. Almost half of the consumers in our research agreed they would consume more fruit and veg if it was more affordable.

Azmina Govindji, consultant nutritionist and registered dietitian, notes that “Most of my clients are very aware that they need to eat more fruit and veg for good health. Many will even regularly buy fresh fruit and veg so they feel they’re doing something for their family. However eating it is another matter. Often they start the day with good intentions but boredom, a stressful day at work, and a lack of time soon kick in, and it all goes out the window! I advise them to plan ahead, to create a shopping list that includes foods they enjoy, and to find interesting snacks and quick meal ideas that fit in with their lifestyle and yet offer good nutrition.”

# Reality eating: how to help your patients get their 5-a-day in an easy, practical way

The good news is that people are aware of the benefits of healthy eating and are buying more fruit and veg as a result.

So all that needs to happen now is to make eating that fruit and veg seem really easy.

We put our heads together with our healthcare professional friends to come up with some tips and advice that take real people with real lives into account.

Hopefully both you and your patients will find these ideas easy to follow and more importantly, easy to do.

First things first, a quick recap on what a portion is.

A portion is about 80g of fruit or veg. This is roughly equal to:

- An apple, orange, banana, or similarly sized fruit
- Two plums, nectarines or similarly sized fruit
- A handful of grapes or berries
- A slice of melon, pineapple or large fruit
- One tablespoon of raisins or other dried fruit
- Two serving spoons of cooked veg e.g., broccoli or carrots
- Two serving spoons of beans and pulses (only one portion per day)
- A 150ml glass of fresh fruit juice

Gladeana McMahon points out that “no one likes to be dictated to”. She believes that it’s all about “making little changes that work FOR YOU [that] will most certainly benefit you in the long term”.

Depending on your existing eating and health habits, she notes that “you may only need to change one or two things or it could be too many”. By taking one thing at a time, McMahon argues that “it doesn’t seem so bad and you feel in control of that change”.

So here are our reality tips to get you and your patients on your way to 5-a-day:

#### At work

- Keep a bag of raisins or dried fruit, like cranberries and dates, in your bag, briefcase or desk drawer for a quick and easy snack
- Drink a smoothie to fill the gap. A 250ml innocent smoothie will give you two portions of fruit in one go
- Try to buy vegetarian sandwiches and wraps for lunch. They are usually low in calories and can give you two servings of veg in just one sandwich

“We all agree that eating whole fruit and veg is the ideal but we also know that this can be difficult. Make it simpler by substituting with practical alternatives like smoothies or soups. Every little contribution helps.”

Fiona Hunter, registered nutritionist

#### At home

- Make a fruit bowl part of your kitchen. Apples, pears, bananas, oranges and cherry tomatoes don't need to be kept in the fridge – keep them in your fruit bowl so they're always handy
- Keep your freezer well stocked with frozen veg like peas, edamame beans and spinach. Try throwing a handful into meat-based recipes like spaghetti bolognese or to bulk up a soup
- Keep your cupboards well stocked with canned fruit and veg, like tomatoes, pineapples and pulses to jazz up salads, pizzas and puds

### As snacks for kids

- For younger kids, let them play with their fruit and veg so they get used to the textures
- Find foods that your kids already like such as smoothies, pizza, muffins or yoghurt and be creative with your recipes by adding more fruit or vegetables
- Freeze seedless grapes to substitute for ice lollies or make your own. Make jelly or lollies with fruit juice or smoothies

“By buying foods that offer fruit or veg in a convenient and tasty way, we’re more likely to be able to reach our 5 portions a day. It’s about making practical choices when all too often the pace of life takes over.”

**Azmina Govindji, consultant nutritionist and registered dietitian**

### Healthy additions

Why not treat fruit and veg as healthy additions to everything you make?

- When you make a sandwich, add lettuce and a couple of thick slices of tomato
- Add extra veg or some canned beans or lentils to your soup and stew recipes
- If you use canned soups and stews, add extra frozen veg when you heat them
- Serve raw vegetables with yoghurt-based dip or tomato salsa rather than crisps

“I completely understand why people feel confused. There are a lot of mixed messages about what we can and can’t eat and drink. In reality, the message is simple: be practical and sensible and build an eating regime that fits in with your lifestyle.”

**Alison Shepherd, registered nurse and nutritionist**

## Did you know?

Some foods count for more of your 5-a-day than you thought:

- According to the Department of Health, fruit smoothies may count as a maximum of 2 of your 5-a-day where they contain both 100% fruit juice or vegetable juice and all of the edible pulped fruit and/or vegetable. One portion is defined as at least 80g of fruit and/or veg and 150ml of juice
- Fruit and veg don't have to be eaten on their own to count. You can also include any veg found in soups, stews, sandwiches and other dishes
- Considering that 72% of us find winter the most challenging time to get our fruit and veg, there's a simple solution here. A few raisins in your curry, some apricots in your stew – it's all about mixing and matching
- And if you're in a hurry, an innocent veg pot is a quick and healthy way to tick off 3 of your 5 portions. All our veg pots contain 3 portions of veg in every pot. They're low in fat, high in fibre and take only a matter of minutes to heat up. Handy as you like

# Smoothies as a simple solution

We know there isn't a quick fix, one-size-fits-all solution, but since we only make stuff that tastes good and does you good, we like to think that our smoothies and veg pots are helping people out when they need it.

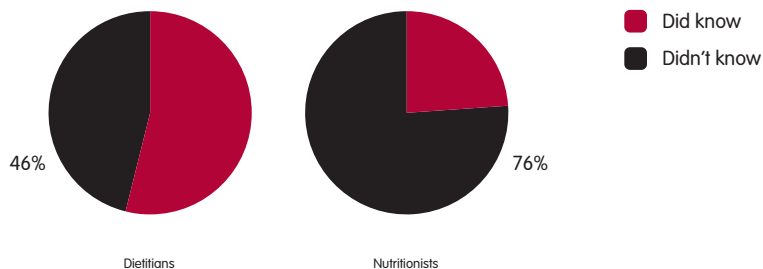
## It's official – our smoothies count as two portions of fruit

Since the Department of Health (DH) updated their guidelines on 7 April 2009, we thought we should share the news with you not only because we're proud of this fact, but also to remind you and your patients that smoothies are an easy way to help top up your fruit portions.

Following the change in official guidelines relating to smoothies and our own research, we found that:

- Only 15% of nurses are aware of the DH change in guidelines. Based on this new piece of information, 82% would recommend smoothies to their patients to help them reach their 5-a-day
- 92% of consumers had no idea that the DH had updated their guidelines to reflect that smoothies can now count as 2 portions of fruit
- 46% of dietitians and 76% of nutritionists said they didn't know that the DH had updated its guidelines to say smoothies may count as a maximum of 2 of your 5-a-day. Upon learning this new information, 84% of nutritionists said they would be inclined to recommend smoothies to their patients to help them reach their 5-a-day (depending on individual patients' needs)

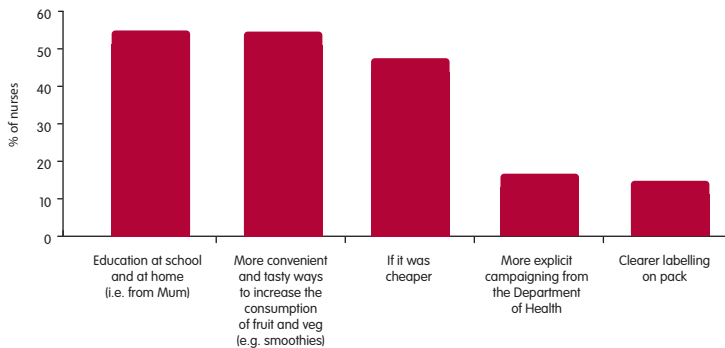
## The percentage of dietitians and nutritionists who didn't know about the DH update of guidelines



### Other interesting stuff we found out was that:

- 55% of nurses feel it would be easier to get their daily fruit and veg if it was more convenient to consume, for example, in the form of a smoothie

### What nurses think could improve fruit and vegetable consumption



- Around half of nutritionists and dietitians agreed that smoothies are an easy way to help achieve your 5-a-day
- 73% of consumers believe that smoothies are a healthy and convenient way to get their portions of fruit
- 60% of parents give their children smoothies because they're an easy way of getting their fruit portions

# Conclusion

According to our research, we are a nation of well-informed and smart consumers, who know what we should be doing to help keep ourselves fit and healthy, why we should be doing these things and all have the very best intentions when it comes to doing them.

Unfortunately, everyday life often gets in the way.

So by giving patients realistic advice that doesn't overwhelm them, hopefully with your help we can make eating fruit and veg as easy, tasty and simple as it really is.

It's worth remembering the following:

- If you don't manage 5 portions of fruit and veg in one day, don't beat yourself up. Tomorrow is another day, and another chance to eat healthily
- If you fall off the wagon and eat too many Belgian buns, give yourself a break
- Reducing risk is all about balance, not about banning supposedly bad foods and adding another layer of pressure to an already stressful life
- Make it a habit. With the incredible variety out there, eating fruit and veg can be fun
- If you can't always buy fresh fruit and veg, make sure you've got some tinned, frozen or dried varieties handy
- Smoothies are an easy, convenient and tasty way of getting 2 portions of fruit into your diet

# Thanks for reading

We hope this little booklet has been useful.

If you've got any questions, feedback, or just fancy a chat about fruit, you can give Shilpee a bell on 020 8600 4028, or drop her an email at [shilpee@innocentdrinks.co.uk](mailto:shilpee@innocentdrinks.co.uk)

Bye for now

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