



Behaviours and attitudes towards fruit intake in WA, 2015

Background

The Nutrition Monitoring Survey Series has been conducted in Western Australia (WA) since 1995 to investigate knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of West Australians relating to food, nutrition and the Australian Dietary Guidelines. The surveys include assessments of dietary change as well as barriers and promoters of dietary change. The most recent survey was conducted in 2015.

The state-wide telephone survey included 1207 participants. One third (33%) of respondents were male and two thirds (67%) were female. Ages ranged from 18 to 64 years, with almost half (45%) residing in the Perth metropolitan area.

Data were weighted for sample design and probability of selection in 2015. Post survey adjustments were made to compensate for under or over representation of gender, age or areas of residence using the 2014 Estimated Resident Population for WA people aged 18 to 64 years.

Recommended intake of fruit

The Australian Dietary Guidelines¹ recommend that Australians should enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from the five food groups every day, including fruit.

One serve of fruit is any of the following:²

- 1 medium apple, banana, orange or pear
- 2 small apricots or plums
- 1 cup of diced or canned fruit
- 30 grams of dried fruit

Key results

Consumption of fruit on the day prior to the survey

- Nearly two thirds of WA adults (62%) reported consuming two or more pieces of fruit on the day prior to the survey (64% of females and 60% of males).
- One fifth (17%) of WA adults consumed less than one piece of fruit on the day prior.
- Those classified as obese were more likely than those classified healthy weight to consume less than one piece of fruit on the day prior to the survey (28% compared with 12%).
- Among those who consumed fruit on the day prior to the survey, the mean intake was 2.3 pieces (or serves).
- Those aged 55 to 64 years were more likely than those aged 18 to 34 years to have consumed more than two pieces of fruit on the day prior (39% compared with 23%).

¹ Australian Government. Eat for Health. Australian Dietary Guidelines. Providing the scientific evidence for healthier Australian diets. National Health and Medical Research Council, Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2013

² Australian Government. Eat for Health. Educator Guide. National Health and Medical Research Council, Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2013.

Current attempts to increase fruit intake

- Approximately half of WA adults (54%) thought that they already eat enough fruit.
- About one third were either thinking about (18%) or trying (17%) to eat more fruit.
- Of those who said they already eat enough fruit, most ate two (38%) or more than two (44%) serves on the day prior to the survey.
- Of those who said they were thinking about eating more fruit, 41% ate one serve and 33% ate less than one serve on the day prior to the survey.
- Of those who said they were trying to eat more fruit, 27% ate one serve and 16% ate less than one serve on the day prior to the survey.

Attempts to increase fruit consumption over the last year

- About half of WA adults (54%) said they had not tried to change the amount of fruit they consume in the last 12 months.
- Less than half (42%) of WA adults had tried to increase the amount of fruit they consume.
- Those aged 18 to 34 years (56%) were more likely to say they attempted to increase their fruit intake in the past 12 months than those aged 45 to 54 years (35%) and those aged 55 to 64 years (24%).
- Approximately one third of WA adults (32%) said they consume more fruit now than 12 months ago, while the majority (62%) said they consume the same amount.
- Those aged 18 to 34 years were more likely than those aged 55 to 64 years to say they consume more fruit now than 12 months ago (42% compared with 19%).

Knowledge of health problems caused by not eating enough fruit and vegetables

- The most frequently named health problems associated with not eating enough fruit or vegetables were: vitamin/mineral and other deficiencies (36%); constipation or other bowel problems (17%); digestive problems (16%); poor immunity (16%) and heart disease (15%).
- Nine per cent of WA adults said they didn't know what health problems were associated with not eating enough fruit or vegetables.

Knowledge of the recommended daily fruit intake

- Regardless of consumption, most WA adults identified two serves (63%) or more than two serves (26%) as the recommended amount of fruit per day.
- Females were more likely than males to say two serves of fruit was the recommended daily amount (70% compared with 56%).
- Those aged 18 to 34 years (68%) and 35 to 44 years (69%) were more likely than those aged 55 to 64 years (48%) to nominate two serves per day as the recommended intake.
- Conversely, those aged 55 to 64 years (38%) were more likely than those aged 18 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years (both 21%) to nominate more than two serves per day as the recommended intake.

Prepared by the Chronic Disease Prevention Directorate, Public and Aboriginal Health Division

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