

The TRUTH about your 5-A-DAY

We're told to eat five portions of fruit and veg daily. But why, and what constitutes a portion? Here's what you need to know...

We might be aware that we need to eat regular portions of fruit and veg?

was first launched, an official logo was designed for use on fresh, frozen and canned fruit and veg that contained no added fat, sugar or salt. But this has been widely abused by the food industry with some companies creating their own versions of the logo.

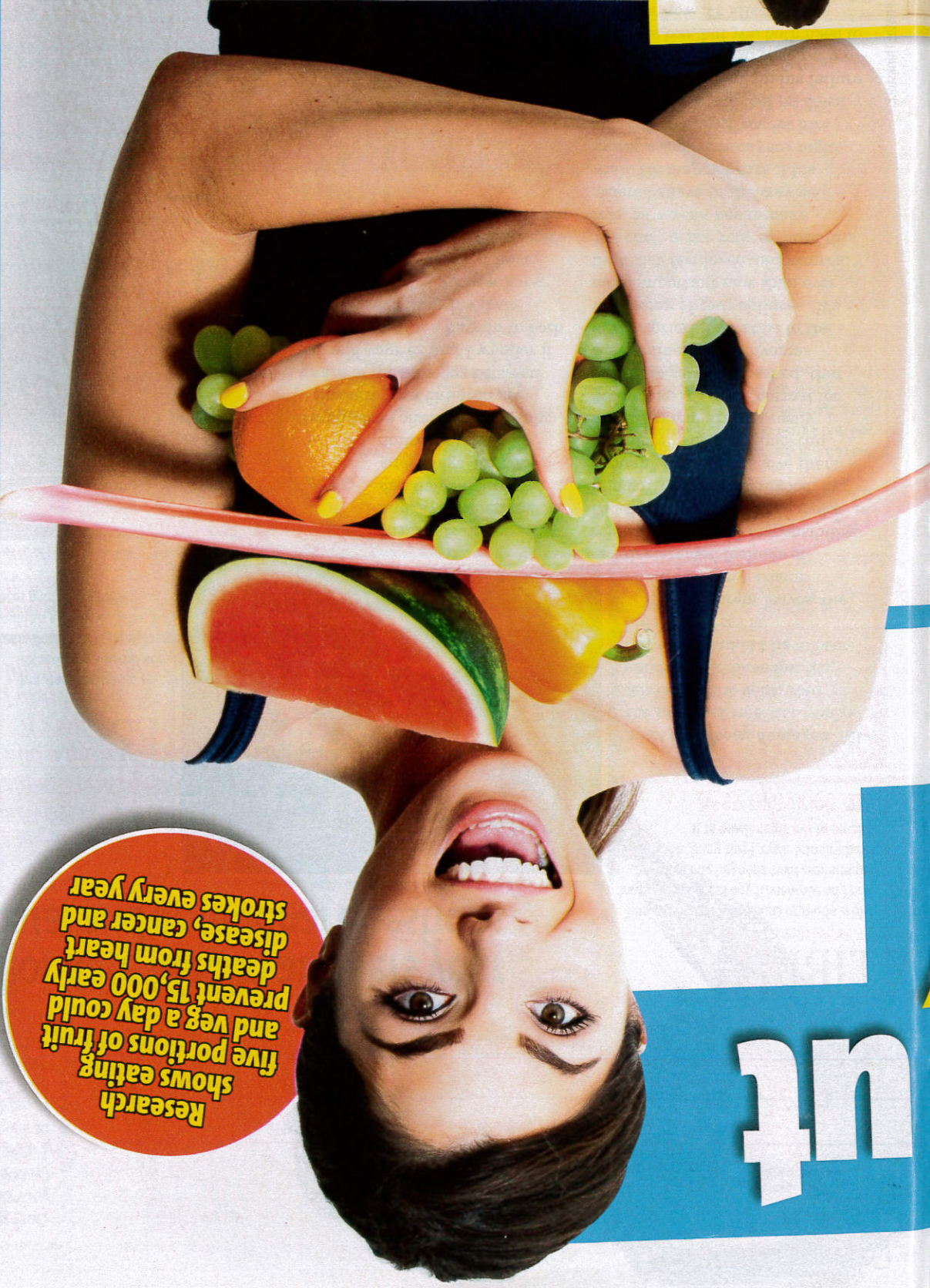
For example, the 'one of your five a day' message can be seen on a brand of sausage, beans and chips ready meal because the tomato and bean content add up to the required amount. It's not *wrong* but may give the impression that the meal is healthier than it is.

It was based on World Health Organisation guidelines, 'Laila explains. But compared with other countries, five portions a day is low. The figure was kept low to keep it within the reach of most people. Studies show a healthier guide would be seven daily portions for women and nine for men.'

DO YOU GET ENOUGH? So the word from nutritionists is to eat as wide a variety of fresh fruit and veg as you can, but use the five-a-day rule as a guide. But beware misleading food labels as these can promote certain foods as contributing to your five a day, when in fact they're not very healthy. This is because when the campaign



The original five-a-day logo



Research shows eating five portions of fruit and veg a day could prevent 15,000 early deaths from heart disease, cancer and strokes every year

SO WHAT DOES COUNT TOWARDS YOUR 5-A-DAY?

- ▶ **Fresh fruit and vegetables.**
- ▶ **Frozen fruit and vegetables.**
- ▶ **Tinned or canned fruit and vegetables (tinned in natural juice or water, with no added sugar or salt).**
- ▶ **Dried fruit, such as currants, dates, sultanas and figs.**
- ▶ **Vegetables cooked in freshly made dishes such as soups, stews and pasta dishes.**
- ▶ **Beans and pulses. These only count as one portion a day, no matter how many you eat, because they contain fewer nutrients than other fruits and vegetables.**



▶ **Fruit and veg in convenience foods, such as ready meals and shop-bought pasta sauces, soups and puddings. But the benefits tend to be outweighed by the salt, sugar and fat content, so check the label.**

EASY WAYS TO GET MORE

- ▶ Start the day with a glass of fresh, unsweetened fruit juice.
- ▶ Chop fruit on to your cereal.
- ▶ Make your own fruit and/or vegetable smoothie.
- ▶ Eat dried fruits such as apricots, raisins, prunes or figs as snacks.
- ▶ Snack on raw veg such as carrot, celery and cucumber.
- ▶ Dip them in salsa and you'll pack an even greater antioxidant and five-a-day punch.
- ▶ Add some salad to every sandwich you eat.
- ▶ Have two types of side veg with your dinner.
- ▶ Add canned mixed beans, lentils, chickpeas or kidney beans to soups, stews and casseroles.



FRUIT Aim for at least the following amount each day, eg:

- 1 medium apple, banana or peach, large slice of fresh
- ½ an avocado or grapefruit
- 80g of fresh, frozen or tinned fruit in natural juice
- Research shows eating five portions of fruit and veg a day could prevent 15,000 early deaths from heart disease, cancer and strokes every year

VEGETABLES Aim for at least the following amount each day, eg:

- 1 (150ml) glass of fruit juice
- 80g servings a day, eg: ½ a pepper
- 1 cereal bowl of lettuce, medium tomato or large heaped tablespoons of sticks of celery or heap of sweetcorn, mixed peas or carrots
- 5 fresh asparagus spears or cherry tomatoes or sliced beetroot
- 8 cauliflower florets or Brussels sprouts
- 3 heaped tablespoons of beans and pulses (cooked chickpeas, lentils, kidney beans etc)
- NB Only sweet potatoes count towards your five a day but all other potatoes have a high content. A large sweet potato can fit into the palm of the hand.