



FACT SHEET PROCESSED FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

General information

A good proportion of fruit and vegetables should be eaten fresh. Fresh fruit and vegetables are a good source of fibre.

- Processed fruit and vegetables are acceptable alternatives. They come in many forms, including:
 - pre-prepared fresh
 - canned
 - frozen
 - dried
 - juiced.
- There are several reasons why fruit and vegetables are processed. They:
 - are convenient
 - are available all year round
 - have a longer shelf life.

Pre-prepared fresh fruit and vegetables

- Common varieties include chopped fruit and chopped vegetable salads.
- These are convenient, but may have a shorter storage life. They may also be more expensive than whole fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Some include added ingredients, such as sauces and other flavourings. Check the information on the pack, as these sauces or flavourings may be high in fat, sugar or salt.

Frozen or canned fruit and vegetables

- Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables can also be a good choice.

Select your frozen or canned fruit and vegetables carefully – some products have added sugar, fat or salt.

- Frozen and canned fruit and vegetables have other benefits. They are:
 - available all year round
 - generally processed and packaged within hours of being picked, ensuring that most vitamins are retained
 - easy to store and always on hand
 - easy to prepare
 - not limited by seasonal availability.
- Canning and freezing also help protect food from organisms that cause food to go bad (spoilage).
- Common frozen vegetables include carrots, peas, beans, corn and vegetable mixes.
- Store your frozen fruit and vegetables properly. They need to be kept at -18 degrees Celsius for no more than six months. Frozen food should be bought last, taken home immediately and placed straight in the freezer.
- Microwave cooking and steaming is better than boiling your vegetables in a large amount of water. With microwave cooking and steaming, the food keeps more of its nutritional value.
- Common canned fruits include pineapple, peaches, apricots, pears and mixed fruits. Choose varieties with no added sugar, or those canned in natural juice.
- Common canned vegetables include tomatoes, corn, baked beans, beetroot and baby carrots. Choose varieties with no added salt or fat.
- Canned fruit and vegetables are sterilised by heating during the canning process, and can be kept on the shelf for two to four years.
- Fruits and vegetables packaged in glass jars, plastic tubs and flexible pouches are generally as good as canned, as they undergo the same kind of processing. Check the label on the packet for the use-by date and information on how they should be stored.

Dried fruit

- Common dried fruits include sultanas, currants, apricots and prunes.
- Dried fruit is good for you and adds variety to a healthy diet, however, you should not eat more than one serve of dried fruit a day.

- Eating too much dried fruit can lead to tooth decay, as it is often high in sugar.
- Dried fruit has a longer storage life than fresh fruit, but won't last forever. Check the packet for a use-by date and information on storage.

Fruit and vegetable juices

- Half a cup of juice is equal to one serve of fruit.
- Choose fresh fruit and vegetables more often than juice because they are higher in fibre.
- Choose 100 per cent fruit juice rather than fruit drinks or fruit juices with added sugar.

For further information about reading food labels go to <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodmatters/foodlabelling>