



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Healthy lunch boosts productivity, research finds

Warding off a mid-afternoon slump at work could be as easy as eating a healthy lunch, according to the results of a recent 5+ A Day survey.

The survey on consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in the workplace found 72 percent of workers felt more productive in the afternoon after eating a healthy lunch rather than something high in fat or sugar.

Almost half (46 percent) of workers reported eating fruit at work at least once a day.

And when it comes to taking homemade lunch to work, 85 percent of those surveyed include fruit and vegetables.

It seems fruit has a feel-good factor for workers, with 69 percent of respondents reporting they would feel positively towards their employer if fresh fruit was available to them. Yet, the majority of those surveyed (65 percent) said their employers did not provide fruit or make it available to them at work.

In addition, 64 percent of those surveyed said they would take part in a healthy eating challenge if it was organised by their employer.

Anna Sloan, dietitian at Nutrition Connection says eating fruit daily provides immunity-boosting vitamins and is a nutrient dense source of energy.

“Fruit and vegetables have powerful antioxidants that supplements can’t mimic,” she says. “Fruit as a snack doesn’t give the same energy slump that snacks like chocolate or lollies do. In fact, bananas release a compound that gives the same good feelings in the brain that chocolate does, and apples are a more effective wake up food than coffee.”

Anna says other fruit is just as good for providing a sweet, healthy treat to make you more productive with better levels of energy.

The results are from a survey of 368 people nationwide, conducted by Nielsen in November. It forms part of 5+ A Day’s ongoing research into the eating habits of New Zealanders when it comes to fruit and vegetables.

Healthy workplace lunch tips

For optimal health we should strive to eat five or more servings of fresh fruit and vegetables every day. As a guide, a serving is about a handful. A great tasting healthy lunch doesn’t have to be expensive if you plan ahead and buy seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables. Here are some tips:

Snack ideas

- Freeze a bunch of grapes and place in your lunchbox in the morning, not only does it bring out the sweetness but it also keeps other food fresh.
- Fruit – whole fruit, or try berries and sliced summer fruit mixed through yoghurt.
- Vegetables – sliced carrots, cucumber, celery and capsicum with a low-fat dip. Try homemade salsa (tomato, red onion, avocado, coriander and lime juice) or natural yoghurt mixed with lemon juice, cucumber and a little crushed garlic.
- Crackers with avocado, tomato salsa and light cottage cheese.

Summer lunches

- Tomato, basil and feta bruschetta. Pack the bread and topping in separate containers and build at work for maximum freshness.
- Fruit salad – use any fruit in season. Lemon juice squeezed over chopped fruit will prevent it turning brown and will give it a nice tang.
- Green salads – mix salad greens with seasonal vegetables such as asparagus, tomatoes and cucumber. Dress with a little balsamic vinegar and olive oil.
- Coleslaw – shred cabbage, carrot, a little red onion and add parsley. Mix through a dressing made with plain yoghurt, lemon juice, mustard and a little olive oil.

Sandwich fillings

- Spread avocado on your sandwich instead of butter or mayo and make your sandwich instantly healthier.
- Take vegetables in a container and put your sandwich together at work to prevent it getting soggy.
- Pack wholegrain pita, naan, bagels or wraps with all your favourite shredded vegetables mixed together with a diced boiled egg.
- Roast vegetables the night before to make tasty sandwiches. Roasted mushrooms, red capsicum and eggplant are great in sandwiches or wraps.

- Load up sandwiches or wraps with some or all of the following: grated carrot, capsicum, sliced cucumber, mushroom, tomato and spinach, avocado, lettuce or beetroot.

ENDS

For practical tools and tips on how to improve wellbeing and productivity in your workplace, visit the Workplace Wellness Hub on www.5aday.co.nz. Follow @5adaynz on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest for fresh inspiration, recipes and prizes.

About the 5+ A Day Charitable Trust

The 5+ A Day Charitable Trust was formed in 2007 for the benefit of all Kiwis, specifically children. The Trust is committed to increasing the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables for better health. Work is focused on inspiration through education.

Prepared on behalf of 5+ A Day by Bloom PR. For more information, interviews or images please contact Shelley Ashdown on shelley@bloompr.co.nz or 021 912 221.