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media release

Thrifty ways to get an extra serve into your day

Did you know that only nine per cent of adults and 39 per cent of children in the Northern Sydney Central Coast region are eating enough vegetables? Fruit intake is better, with 60 per cent of adults and 72 per cent of children eating the recommended two serves daily.

Lisa Eldridge, a dietitian with Northern Sydney Central Coast Health, says while there's no single "miracle" food to prevent or cure cancer, scientists know fruit and vegetables offer some protection against cancer and other diseases.

"People who eat less fruits and vegetables have higher rates of cancer than those who don't," she says. "In fact, people who consume substantial and varied amounts reduce their risk of cancer by more than 20 per cent.

The 'Go for 2 & 5' campaign - a joint initiative of NSW Health and Cancer Institute NSW - is encouraging people to eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables a day. This year's campaign will look at '*Thrifty Ways to Go for 2 and 5*' and offers smart tips for families on a budget.

"This is very timely as families are struggling with rising costs and interest rates. Eating five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit every day need not blow the budget."

According to Lisa, the key is smart shopping, preparation and storage.

"It's smart to shop for seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables as they are usually less expensive and better quality."

Lisa suggests storing in-season produce for future use such as:

- Freezing cherries, berries and other fruits for a great frozen snack
- Freezing ripe peeled and chopped bananas to add to your next batch of muffins or to a banana smoothie to make it light and fluffy
- Roasting extra vegetables such as sweet potato, zucchini, pumpkin and capsicum to eat as a snack or as additions to salads and sandwiches

Different fruit and vegetables require different storage to keep them as fresh as possible. For example, once fruit is ripe, it is generally best kept in the fridge, unwashed; bananas and tomatoes are tastier if stored at a moderate room temperature; and onions, potatoes and garlic are best stored in a cool, dark, dry and well-ventilated place.

Northern Sydney Central Coast Health is committed to reducing the number of overweight and obese people across the Area, which includes promoting healthy eating.

For more information, recipes and tips on thrifty ways to get an extra serve into your day, visit www.livelifewell.nsw.gov.au.

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