



## 5 A Day and School-Age Children

# 5 A Day Facts

### What is the 5 A Day Program?

The 5 A Day for Better Health Program is a nationwide nutrition education campaign to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables to an average of 5 to 9 servings a day. The 5 A Day Program was launched in 1991 and is a public-private partnership of the National Cancer Institute, the Produce for Better Health Foundation (a non-profit consumer education foundation representing the fruit and vegetable industry), USDA, CDC, the American Cancer Society and other national health organizations.

### Why is 5 A Day important?¹

- Eating 5 or more fruits and vegetables daily is one of the most important choices an individual can make to maintain health.
- Research shows that eating 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day plays an important role in preventing heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, stroke and birth defects.
- Healthier diets (including 5 A Day) could prevent at least \$71 billion per year in medical costs, lost productivity and lost lives.
- Fruits and vegetables can also increase energy and assist in weight loss.
- As a bonus, fruits and vegetables are tasty, convenient, easy and quick to prepare.

### Are students eating their 5 A Day?

- Fewer than 15% of elementary students eat the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day.<sup>2</sup>
- Average fruit and vegetable intake among 6 to 12 year olds is only 2.4 servings a day.<sup>3</sup>
- Over half of all elementary students eat no fruit on any given day and three out of 10 students eat less than one serving of vegetables a day.<sup>2</sup>
- One-quarter of all vegetables eaten by elementary students are French fries, a high-fat, low nutrient vegetable option.<sup>2</sup>

### How does North Carolina measure up?

- 78% of NC adults do not eat 5 A Day. Older adults (65 +) do better, but still do not eat enough.<sup>4</sup>
- NC ranked 34 out of 50 states for 5 A Day (50 = worst).<sup>4</sup>
- Only 17.8% of NC high school students ate five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day during the seven days prior to a survey.<sup>5</sup>
- This data on older students and adults indicates that we need to help younger children develop good eating habits, like eating more fruits and vegetables.

<sup>1</sup>NC 5 A Day Toolkit

<sup>2</sup>1998 USDA data

<sup>3</sup>Dole's Fruit and Vegetable Update, 1999

<sup>4</sup>2000 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System - State Center for Health Statistics

<sup>5</sup>2001 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System