

Older people are not getting their five-a-day

April 29 2009

Research from the Changing Ageing Partnership (CAP) reveals that older people are not eating enough fruit and vegetables.

Dr Katherine Appleton from the School of Psychology at Queen's University Belfast conducted the research on behalf of CAP. Dr Appleton said: "Fruit and vegetables are vital for psychological as well as [physical health](#). We found that fruit and vegetable consumption became lower with increasing [age](#) and that intake was particularly low in males and people living in more deprived areas.

"Older people in Northern Ireland are eating on average four portions of fruit and vegetables per day. This is higher than levels in the rest of the UK, but remains below current government recommendations.

"A huge 22 per cent of respondents were not aware of the current government guidelines on eating five portions of fruit and vegetables per day. In fact, some respondents who were eating only two portions per day thought they were eating enough.

"Older people should eat more fruit and vegetables. They are more likely to do this if they are aware of the five-a-day recommendations and associated health benefits. We recommend that more should be done to raise older people's awareness of these issues and increase their exposure to products and dishes that contain fruit and vegetables.

"We plan to build on this research by developing and testing approaches to increase older people's knowledge of and liking for fruit and

vegetables."

To aid greater consumption of [fruit](#) and [vegetables](#), the research recommends improving awareness of the [health benefits](#), and increasing awareness of adequate levels of consumption and the range of products or dishes. The research also recommends that specific strategies may be used to improve older people's motivation and willingness to change eating behaviours.

Source: Queen's University, Belfast

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