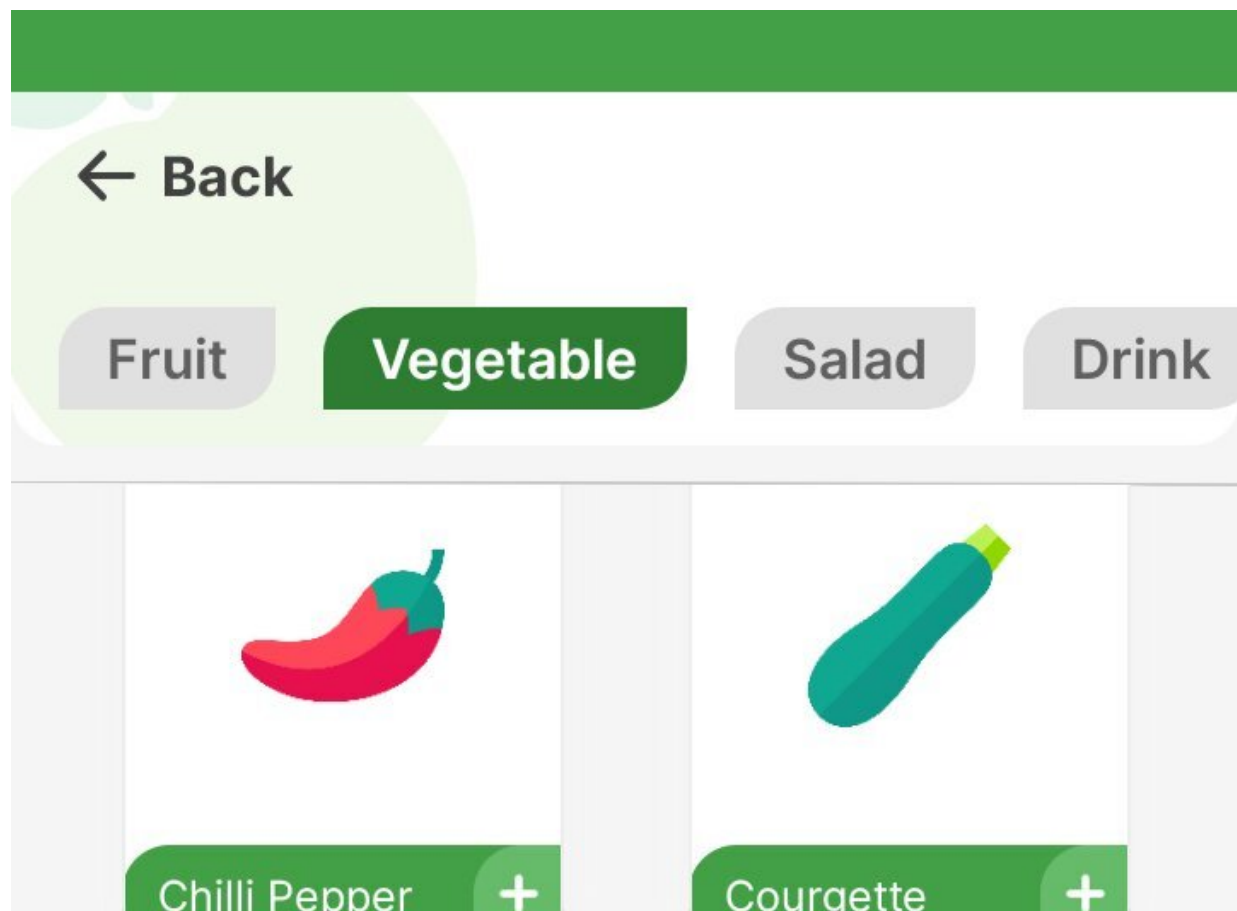


New app to help people eat five portions of fruit and veg a day

December 28 2022



Users select food or drink from an extensive choice of icons. Credit: Bournemouth University

A new app has been developed to help people reach the recommended

target of eating five portions of fruits and vegetables a day.

It tells users whether they are eating the right portion sizes, as well as the right foods, to meet the recommended guidelines from Health Authorities in the UK.

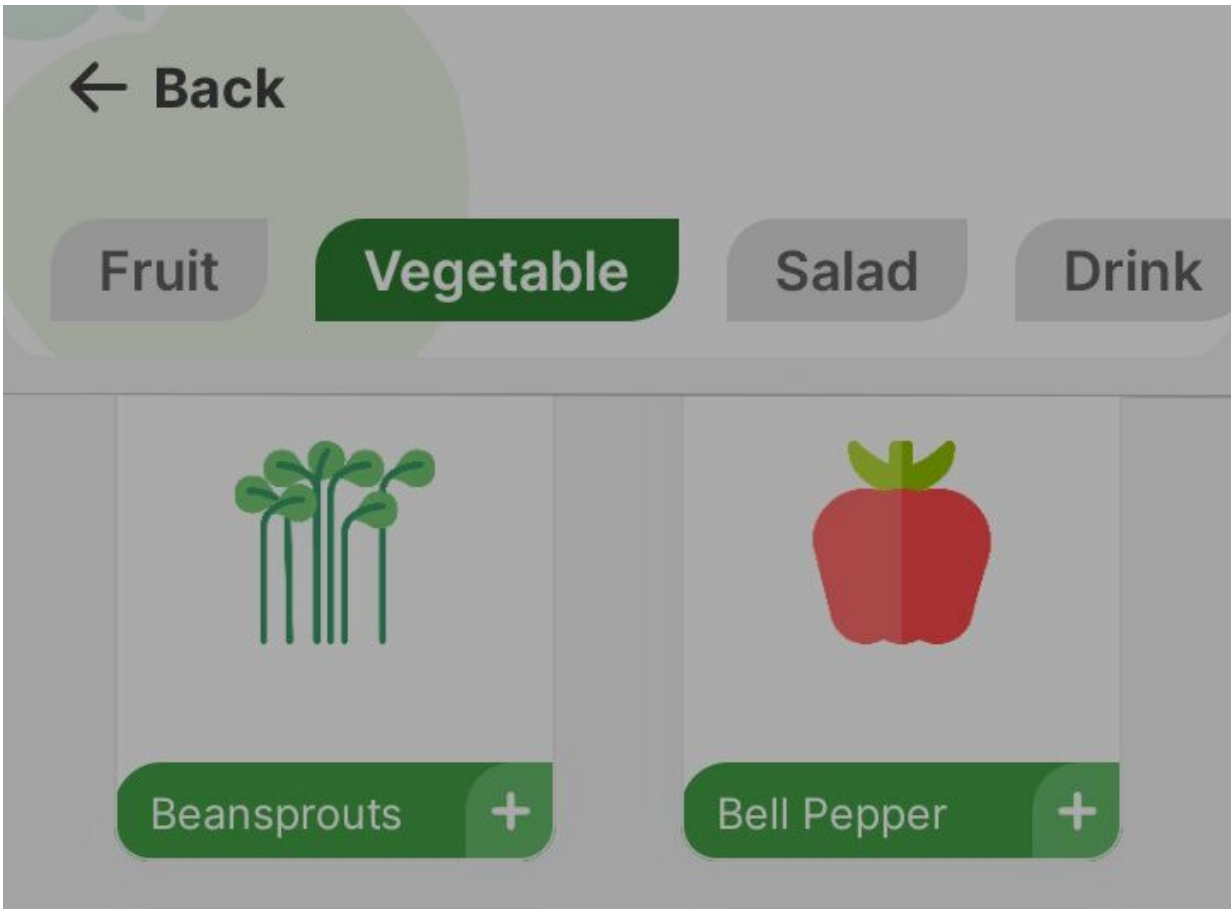
[Previous studies](#) from Bournemouth University found that while most adults in the UK are aware of the five-a-day message, their understanding of how to get to it is low.

"Almost everyone knows they should eat five a day," said Katherine Appleton, professor of psychology at Bournemouth University, who led the studies and the development of the new app. "But when we looked a little further, it was clear that a lot of people did not know what counts toward the target, they did not know what a [portion size](#) is, and many did not realize that they needed to eat five different things.

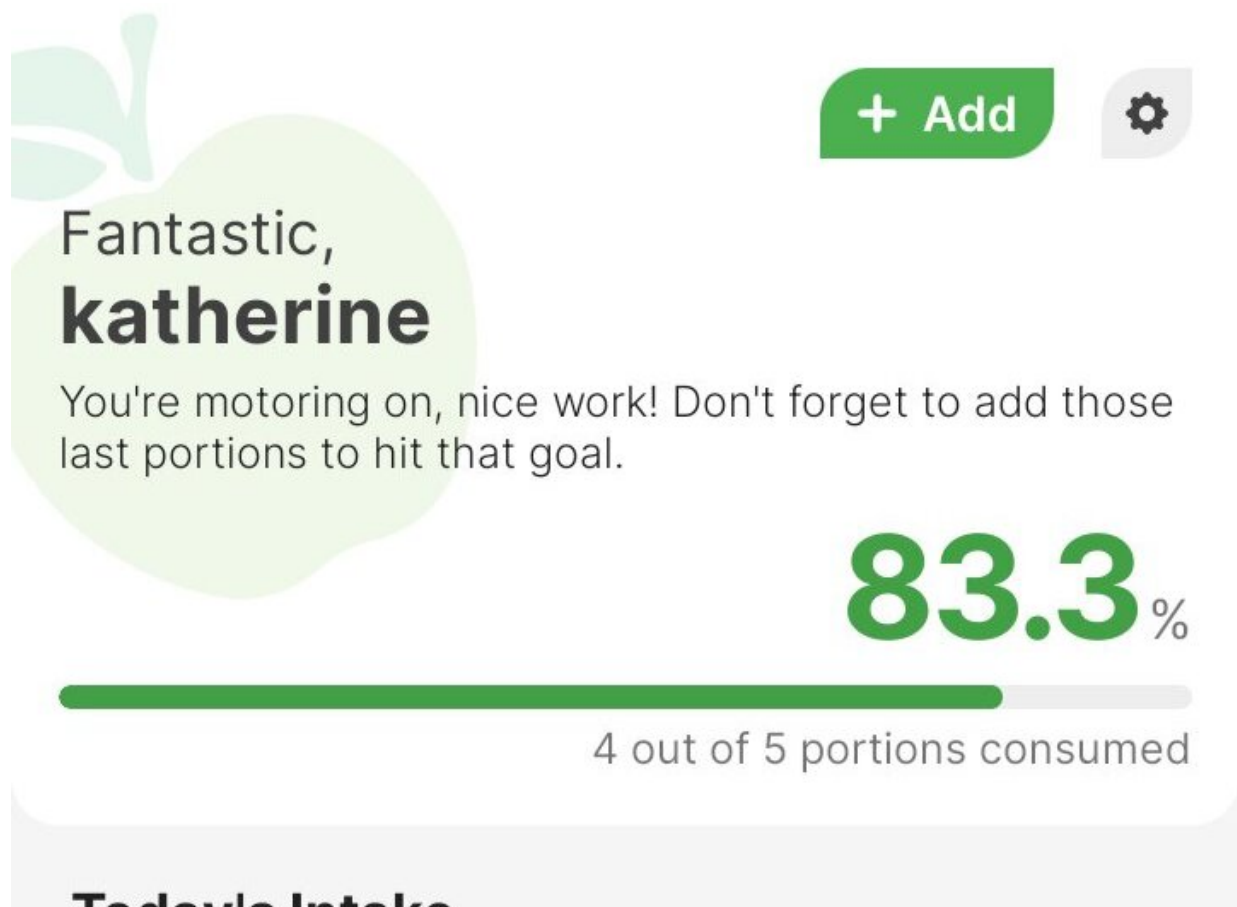
"Our studies also showed that lower knowledge was associated with lower consumption of fruits and vegetables," she added.

Figures from Public Health England have shown that only a third of adults and 12% of 11- to 18-year-olds eat the recommended amount.

The free SMART-5-A-DAY app has been created specifically to help people understand portion sizes and see how the amounts of fruits and vegetables that they eat contribute toward their daily target. Users select the [fruit](#) or vegetable they have just eaten and will then be asked to enter how much of it they ate. The app will then tell them whether that amount made up a full or partial portion and how much more would be needed to take it up to a full portion. It also keeps a running total of their progress towards the five a day target.



Users enter the amount of each fruit and vegetable they have consumed. Credit: Bournemouth University



The app tells the user whether they have consumed a full or partial portion, what is needed to make up a full portion, and keeps a running tally of their progress to 5 a day. Credit: Bournemouth University

"What is unique about this app is that, as well as tracking daily fruit and [vegetable](#) intake, it teaches people about portion size, so they get to the point where they know what they need to eat themselves. We think this will be an effective tool to improve people's diets for the long term, rather than simply for the short period that they use the app," said Professor Appleton.

[A study](#) of an earlier prototype version found that it had some benefits to

users' eating habits and their understanding of what is needed to reach the daily recommended intake.

The version released today incorporates several updates from feedback after the prototype trial, which the researchers hope will lead to bigger changes in eating behaviors among its users.

SMART 5-A-DAY will be in the Google Play Store for Android phones starting on December 29.

Provided by Bournemouth University

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