



# Introduction

## Why promote fruit and veg?

There is overwhelming evidence of the health benefits of eating fruit and vegetables, particularly in reducing the risks of heart disease, and some cancers. Recent research has shown that children who eat the most fruit are 38% less likely to develop cancer in adulthood than those with the lowest intake (Maynard et al, Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, Feb 2003).

The World Health Organisation recommends that we eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day to be healthy now and in the future. In the UK, on average people eat two or three portions with children eating less than adults. Schools can play a key role in encouraging children to eat more.

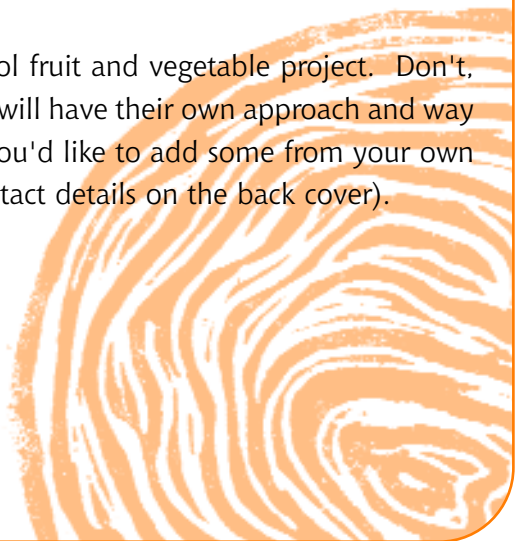
## Who is this publication for?

Any individual or organisation that plans to support local schools in promoting fruit and vegetables may find this booklet helpful. It outlines how an area-wide, primary school fruit and vegetable project may be implemented.

The suggestions are based on the experiences of the Grab 5! team at Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming. This publication should help whether your area is implementing the Grab 5! programme or whether it is promoting fruit and vegetables to primary school children as part of another project, such as a community five-a-day initiative, the National School Fruit Scheme or the National Healthy Schools Standard.

Don't forget the other materials that are available from Sustain, all of which can be downloaded free from the Grab 5! website, [www.grab5.com](http://www.grab5.com). These include a key stage 2 curriculum pack, an action pack, a model food policy, the evaluation report and the Grab 5! logo and graphics.

We recommend nine steps for implementing a primary school fruit and vegetable project. Don't, however, feel restricted by these suggestions. Every local area will have their own approach and way of working. If you find that some of our tips don't work or you'd like to add some from your own experience, we'd be delighted to hear from you (see our contact details on the back cover).



**Grab 5**



Right to the core



## What is Grab 5!?

Grab 5! is a programme for primary schools wanting to encourage their children to eat more fruit and vegetables. Schools involved in Grab 5! carry out a wide range of practical activities including fruit and vegetable tasting sessions, setting up fruit tuck shops, breakfast clubs, growing clubs, cooking clubs, visits to farms and many more (see the list on pages 21-22). However, vital to the success of any such project is the approach the school adopts and the process they go through. The Grab 5! approach and process is characterised by:

- **Ownership.** Schools decide for themselves what activities would best meet their needs and how they will be implemented and sustained.
- **Participation.** All relevant people are involved in the process of consultation, auditing, action planning, implementation and monitoring. This includes head teachers, teaching staff, kitchen supervisors, children, parents, governors and outside agencies,
- **Consistency.** Activities carried out in schools are not seen in isolation but are part of an holistic approach to improving food and nutrition in the school. Schools work towards adopting a food policy, which helps to bring about permanent positive change and ensure messages about healthy eating are consistent through out the school day.

Grab 5! was tested in primary schools in Lambeth, Leeds and Plymouth between June 2000 and July 2001. The evaluation of the pilot project was carried out by the British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group. The evaluation showed that the project was successful. Outcomes included:

- A significant increase in consumption of fruit and vegetables, from 1.7 portions per child per day at the beginning of the project to 2.2 portion at the end of the project, a percentage increase of approximately 30%.
- A reduction in the consumption in high fat snacks.
- A significant increase in knowledge about fruit and vegetables.
- A significant increase in preferences for healthy food choices.

School staff indicated that the success of the Grab 5! process was enhanced by its flexibility, so it could fit in with school plans of work and the National Curriculum.

***'Grab 5! paved the way for the school fruit scheme'***

**Plymouth steering group member**





# Introduction

The Grab 5! team has identified five key elements of support as essential for implementing Grab 5! in an area. Any organisation or individual wanting to promote fruit and vegetables in primary schools should consider how these elements can be provided. They are:

- **A coordinator.** A coordinator is vital for keeping motivation going amongst all the participants, organising and running training days, visiting and phoning schools to discuss plans, liaising with local partners, providing practical support to schools (e.g. talks in assemblies, tasting sessions), co-ordinating borough/city-wide initiatives, and much more.  
**Cost:** Salary. The post could be full-time or part-time, a new post or be incorporated into an existing post, such as a Healthy Schools coordinator or health promotion advisor.
- **Training days for school staff and caterers.** These introduce participants to the programme of activities that could be included in a school fruit and vegetable promotion project, whether Grab 5!, a government initiative, or an entirely independent initiative. Training provides motivation, advice and essential information.  
**Cost:** Supply cover at approximately £150 per teacher (optional), venue hire, food and refreshments.
- **Grab 5! packs.** After undertaking a survey of healthy eating materials available to schools, the Grab 5! team decided none of it was entirely suitable for the Grab 5! project, so we produced our own pack. It includes an **action pack** that defines the whole school approach, gives practical suggestions on how to implement activities such as fruit tuck shops and growing schemes, and gives contact details of useful organisations; a **curriculum pack** that provides ideas for classroom activities related to food and nutrition linked to the key stage 2 curriculum; a **model food policy** that provides a framework for schools wanting to adopt a food policy; a **CD Rom** that demonstrates a range of Grab 5! activities; and a **summary of the evaluation report**.  
**Cost:** £40 per pack. One pack required per school (also available free on the website)
- **A local support network/steering group.** It's important not to try to take on this task alone. You can find helpful local partners from, for example, the health authority, the education authority, the Healthy Schools scheme, local community groups and the school catering service. See page 6 for a more comprehensive list.  
**Cost:** Should not be a cost
- **Time.** Don't underestimate how long the process will take, but good preparation pays dividends in the end. See below for the timetable that Grab 5! followed during the pilot phase.





## Timetable followed during the Grab 5! pilot phase

Local Education Authority and Primary Care Trust commitment obtained	Dec 2000
▼	
Steering group set up	From Jan 2001
▼	
First contact made with schools	Jan 2001
▼	
Briefing visits to schools by area coordinator	Feb 2001
▼	
Participating schools finalised	Feb / March 2001
▼	
Training days for participating schools	May / June 2001
▼	
School action groups established	May / June 2001
▼	
School action plans prepared	May / June 2001
▼	
Area coordinator agreed school plans	June 2001
▼	
Activities in schools began	Sept / Oct 2001
▼	
Training for school cooks	Sept / Nov 2001
▼	
School review meetings	Termly
▼	
Steering group meetings	Termly
▼	
Practical support with activities	Continuous

