

## Avoid The Winter Slump

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(NAPSA)—The good news is that eating lots of fruits and vegetables can help prevent many of the nation's most deadly and debilitating diseases. The bad news is that less than 75 percent of Americans eat the minimum five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.



Elizabeth Pivonka

Children miss the 5 A Day mark by more than one-and-a-half servings a day. We have the proverbial “silver bullet” and don’t take full advantage of it. Simply adding a fruit snack and a small salad every day to the diets of children would put them over the 5 A Day goal.

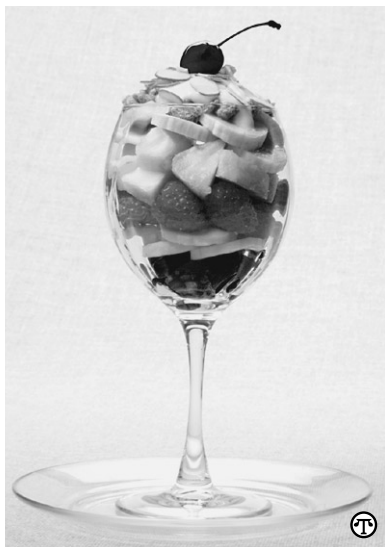
According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Americans eat the most fruit in the summer. But even at our best we eat only 54 percent of the recommended servings of fruit. During the winter, fruit consumption slips to a record low 44 percent of the recommended servings, and 15 to 18 year olds are among the lowest. Boys eat just 29 percent and girls 34 percent of the fruit recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid during the winter months.

This winter slump probably has its roots in a time when supplies of summer fruit ended with the U.S. growing season. In our growing global marketplace, countries like Chile—whose seasons are opposite ours—help provide us with a year-round supply of fruits and vegetables unmatched by any nation in the world.

Chilean dark, sweet cherries are in U.S. markets from November until the end of January, and Chile’s blueberries and red raspberries are available late in November until the end of May.

Raspberries, blueberries and cherries contain powerful antioxidant phytonutrients that studies suggest may prevent coronary artery disease and certain cancers. Antioxidants help prevent disease by mopping up the cell-damaging free radicals that the body produces as it converts food into energy.

Sweet cherries, blueberries and raspberries are also good sources of fiber and vitamin C. A one-cup serving of raspberries has about one third of the recommended daily intake of fiber.



**This delicious parfait can be enjoyed all year long, thanks to fruit from Chile.**

But most importantly, the wonderful taste of fresh sweet cherries and berries from Chile are a sure way to beat the winter slump and hit the 5 A Day for Better Health goal. Try this Cherry Berry Parfait. It’s so good even a fussy teenager will come back for seconds.

### Cherry Berry Parfait Makes 4 servings

- 1 cup fresh sweet Chilean cherries**
- 1 cup chopped fresh or canned pineapple**
- 1 cup fresh Chilean raspberries or blueberries**
- 1 cup low-fat vanilla or lemon yogurt**
- 1 medium banana, sliced**
- 1/3 cup chopped dates**
- 1/4 cup sliced, toasted almonds**

**Set aside 4 whole Chilean cherries. Remove the pits and slice the remaining cherries in half. In stemmed glasses, layer the cherries, pineapple, raspberries, yogurt, banana and dates. Sprinkle the almonds on top and garnish with a whole sweet cherry.**

Nutrients per serving: Calories 208; Protein 5g; Fat 4g; Calories from Fat 18 percent; Carbohydrate 41g; Cholesterol 4mg; Fiber 4g; Sodium 39mg.

For more information on fresh fruit from Chile and the 5 A Day for Better Health program, go to: [www.cffa.org](http://www.cffa.org), [www.5aday.com](http://www.5aday.com) and [www.aboutproduce.com](http://www.aboutproduce.com).

**Note to Editors:** Thirty-ninth in a series of monthly 5-A-Day columns. **Chilean cherries are in U.S. markets from November until the end of January; Chilean blueberries and red raspberries, from November until the end of May.**