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PaperTitle **Know versus do: focus on vegetables and fruit**

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ABSTRACT

Recent research by the 5-a-Day for Better Health TRUST showed that adult South Africa women spontaneously name fruit and vegetables as being the key contributor to a healthy diet and diet in turn as being a key factor for healthy living. This belief is clearly supported by the science that has had to expand our nutrient vocabulary to include a range of phytonutrients with often unprouncable names such as xeaxanthin and quercitin. At the same time there is an increase in science's understanding of the numerous roles played by veges and fruit in not only maintaining optimal health but also in disease prevention – who would have thought that pulmonary and bone health as well as aging and cognition would be linked to veges and fruit? Yet the science indicates that it is indeed plausible. It is not surprising then that marketing terms like 'superfruit' and 'powerveg' have been attributed to a range of new fruit and vegetable products on the market and grab the attention of the media and consumer alike. But does knowledge translate into action? Research from the Medical Research Council shows that, on average, South Africans only consume about half (205g/day) of the recommended 5-a-Day servings (400g/day). It is clear that there is a need for an in-depth understanding of how one actually gets people to include more vegetables and fruit. Behaviour modification has become a science in its own right and is being increasingly explored by public health nutrition scientists as we try to encourage healthier eating habits. How does one change the economic and cultural climate to replace unhealthy eating habits so as to ensure that of choice consumers include more vegetables and fruit? Indeed one way might be to offer vegetables and fruit in new and novel formats (especially to kids) and so it is not surprising that fruits have become one of the key trends of the food industry and fit neatly with three of the other trends – 'crucial kids', 'healthy snacking' and 'all natural'. The challenge for the health professionals and the food industry alike is to turn the low consumption figures around by ensuring that vegetable and fruit options are easily available, tasty and yet affordable to all and still fit the profile of healthy.