

The 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend eating a variety of vegetables, especially dark green, red and orange, and dry beans and peas.

Vegetables provide important nutrients, including vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, folate, and dietary fiber.

Most vegetables, when prepared without added fats or sugars, are relatively low in calories. Eating vegetables instead of higher calorie foods can help achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Offer a wide variety of colorful, appealing vegetables every day.

Consider starting a farm-to-school program to obtain fresh produce locally. To get started, go to: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/.

Serve a Wide Variety of Vegetables For Healthier School Meals



Want to add more color, crunch, and flavor to your menus? Offering a wide variety of vegetables provides a quick and easy way to make school meals pop with dazzling eye appeal and help students get the nutritional benefits they need. By eating more vegetables, students develop lifelong habits that promote good health!

Recipe for Success

Go for variety!

- ◆ Offer different veggies every day, and include servings in each of these subgroups over a week:
 1. Dark green
 2. Red and orange
 3. Dry beans and peas
 4. Starchy
 5. Other

Refer to the next page for a list of vegetables by subgroup.

Boost the nutritional value!

- ◆ Offer plenty of raw veggies to get more dietary fiber.
- ◆ Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes instead of butter or hard margarine to season vegetable dishes to lower saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and extra calories in vegetable dishes.
- ◆ Buy canned vegetables labeled “no-salt added” or choose lower sodium products.

Add more veggies to meals!

- ◆ Prepare veggies in different ways: fresh, cooked, as a side dish, or entrée. For example, make a vegetable stir-fry or chicken Caesar salad.
- ◆ Serve seasonal veggies like zucchini, squash, yams, and sweet potatoes.
- ◆ Include cooked dry beans or peas in flavorful mixed dishes. Add extra beans to casseroles or minestrone soup, or use white beans in your favorite chili recipe.
- ◆ Offer garbanzo beans or kidney beans on a salad bar.

Make vegetables more appealing!

- ◆ Have taste tests and offer samples to encourage students to try different vegetables.
- ◆ Add color to lettuce mix with carrot slices or strips, shredded red cabbage, or spinach leaves.
- ◆ Serve low-fat dressing or dip with raw veggies.

This fact sheet was adapted from the USDA fact sheet *Vary Your Vegetables for Healthier School Meals*, and the HealthierUS School Challenge Training Handout 3.2 from NFSMI. MyPlate is the new food icon from USDA.

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Dark green vegetables

Beet greens	Dark green leafy lettuce	Mesclun	Swiss chard
Bok choy	Endive	Mustard greens	Turnip greens
Broccoli	Escarole	Romaine lettuce	Watercress
Collard greens	Kale	Spinach	

Red and orange vegetables

Acorn squash	Hubbard squash	Sweet potatoes	Vegetable juice
Butternut squash	Pumpkin	Tomatoes	
Carrots	Red peppers	Tomato juice	

Dry beans and peas

Black beans	Kidney beans	Pink beans	Split peas
Black-eye peas	Lentils	Pinto beans	
Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)	Lima beans, mature	Red beans	
Great Northern beans	Navy (Pea) beans	Soybeans, mature	

Starchy vegetables

Corn	Edamame, green	Lima beans, green
Green peas	Soybeans, immature	Potatoes

Other vegetables

Artichokes	Celery	Kohlrabi	Rutabaga
Asparagus	Cucumbers	Mushrooms	Squash, white scallop
Bean sprouts	Eggplant	Okra	Squash, yellow crookneck
Beets	Green beans	Olives, green or black	Squash, zucchini
Brussels sprouts	Green or yellow peppers	Onions	Turnips, root
Cabbage (red or green)	Iceberg (head) lettuce	Parsnips	Wax beans
Cauliflower	Jicama	Radishes	

* Mature dry beans and peas are creditable in food-based menu planning as either a vegetable or meat/meat alternate component, but not as both components in the same meal. Dry refers to the bean or pea being harvested in its dry form, not to the purchased form of the bean. Many canned and frozen beans and peas are actually dry beans and peas that have been cooked and packaged.