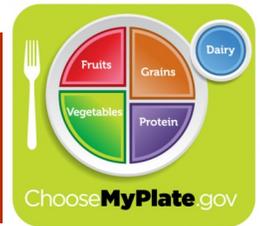


# Vitamin A & School Meals



Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin found mainly in orange and dark green vegetables, milk, margarine, and egg yolk. It has many important functions in the body, such as acting as an anti-infection vitamin, maintaining healthy eyes, skin, and mucus membranes, promoting growth, as well as preventing night blindness. Vegetable sources of vitamin A, called carotenoids, act as antioxidants. Antioxidants assist in slowing down or preventing cell damage, and thus may reduce the risk for heart disease and certain cancers.

## Nutrient Targets for Lunch Grade Groupings ( 1/3 RDA's)

**K-3 = 1,000 IU**  
**K-6 = 1,120 IU**  
**4-12= 1,426 IU**  
**7-12= 1,500 IU**

Fat-soluble vitamins are more stable to normal cooking and handling than are water-soluble vitamins. However, cooking in water will cause some of the vitamin A content to leech out into the cooking liquid. This is why it is important, once good sources of vitamin A are planned in the menu, to follow good cooking practices that preserve the nutrients in the foods.

## Tips to Minimize Volume Loss

1. Cut up fresh fruits and vegetables as close to meal service time as possible
2. Serve fruits and vegetables raw
3. Steam vegetables or cook in as little liquid as possible
4. Cook vegetables until "just tender"
5. Batch cook when possible

**Fruit and Vegetable Sources of Vitamin A**

Food Source	Serving Size	Vitamin A amount in IU
Sweet Potato, frozen, cubed, cooked	1/2 cup	18,366
Carrots, frozen, sliced, cooked, drained	1/2 cup	12,357
Spinach, frozen, chopped, cooked	1/2 cup	11,458
Carrots, raw, strips/slices	1/2 cup	10,255
Pumpkin, canned	1/4 cup	9,532
Cantaloupe, raw, cubes	1/2 cup	2,706
Peppers, sweet, red, raw, chopped	1/2 cup	2,333
Lettuce, romaine, raw, shredded	1/2 cup	2,047
Peas, frozen, cooked, drained	1/2 cup	1,680
Apricots, canned, light syrup, w/skin & liquid	1/2 cup	1,672
Spinach, raw	1/2 cup	1,407
Lettuce, green leaf, raw, shredded	1/2 cup	1,333
Tangerines (Mandarin Oranges) canned, L syr	1/2 cup	1,058
Broccoli, frozen, chopped, cooked	1/2 cup	930

Source: USDA Database Release CN 15 through NutriKids Version 12.5

This fact sheet was adapted from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction fact sheet: "Vitamin A and School Meals." MyPlate is the new food icon from USDA.

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