

VEGETABLES



New Requirements

School Food Authorities shall provide a variety of vegetables throughout the week. Dark green, red/orange vegetables and legumes are each required once a week.

What are Dark Green and Orange Vegetables?

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans say to vary your veggies. Most children and adults need to eat more dark-green and red/orange vegetables.

Dark-green vegetables include: broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce, and other dark greens.

Red/Orange vegetables include: squash, carrots, sweet potatoes, red peppers, tomatoes, and pumpkins.

These vegetables contain higher amounts of Vitamin A than other vegetables.

Vegetables in the “other” sub-group include: cabbage, celery, cucumbers, onions, peppers, green beans, cauliflower, mushrooms and summer squash.

Most children and adults need to eat more dark-green and red/orange vegetables.

Foundations

Fresh, frozen, canned, or dried vegetables are the major sources of many vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin A and C, folic acid, and potassium. They also contain antioxidants, fiber and other phytonutrients similar to fruits. Dark-green leafy vegetables, such as spinach or broccoli, and dark orange vegetables, such as carrots or yams, have the highest levels of these nutrients.

School Food Authorities should increase the availability and variety of vegetables at all meals. One of the key recommendations in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) is to choose a variety of vegetables each day.

Vegetables offer different combinations of nutrients. Consuming a variety of vegetables is important for a well-balanced diet. Vegetables from each of the subgroups: dark green, red/orange, and legumes, must be offered every week. The DGAs recommend the consumption of whole vegetables rather than juices to ensure adequate fiber intake. Fiber is good for digestion, elimination and a healthy digestive system.



Using USDA Foods

A variety of vegetables including frozen and canned are offered through the USDA Foods Program in Alaska.

Menu Tips

- Buy fresh vegetables in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor.
- Choose a variety of vegetables with contrasting colors and shapes to catch students' attention.
- Cut up vegetables to make them easier to eat.
- Make a colorful salad by adding a variety of vegetables.
- Offer a seasoning shaker to add fun and flavor to vegetables instead of less healthy condiments. Dill, Italian seasoning, chili powder or cinnamon add flavor without fat, salt or sugar.
- Find recipes that contain vegetables as a main ingredient to increase vitamins and fiber in your menu.



Alaska Options

Alaska Grown vegetable options include carrots, potatoes, cabbage, lettuce, squash, zucchini, peas, beets, rutabaga, kohlrabi, and tomatoes.

Fresh, frozen, canned, or dried vegetables are the major sources of many vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin A and C, folic acid, and potassium.