

Nutrition News

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What's in the vegetable group?

Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as a member of the vegetable group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked, fresh, frozen, canned or dried. They may be whole, cut up or mashed.

Vegetables are organized into 5 subgroups based on their nutrient content: Dark Green, Orange, Dry Beans and Peas, Starchy, and Other.

The amount of vegetables you need to eat depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity.

This month's issue of **Nutrition News** takes you inside the Vegetable Group of the USDA's MyPyramid.

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Recommended Daily Servings*

	Age	Amount
Children	2-3	1 cup
	4-8	1 ½ cups
Girls	9-13	2 cups
	14-18	2 ½ cups
Women	19-50	2 ½ cups
	51+	2 cups
Boys	9-13	2 ½ cups
	14-18	3 cups
Men	19-50	3 cups
	51+	2 ½ cups

*See page 2 for what counts as a cup

Did you know.....

..that the inside of a growing **cucumber** on a hot summer day is 20 degrees cooler than the outside air temperature? This fact gave rise to the expression "cool as a cucumber".

..that **onions** were used by the Egyptians to replace eyes removed from mummies?



What counts as a cup of vegetables?

1 cup of broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, peas, etc.
= 1 cup of vegetables

2 cups of raw leafy greens: spinach, romaine lettuce, escarole etc.
= 1 cup of vegetables

1 cup of tomato or mixed vegetable juice
= 1 cup of vegetables

10 medium fries = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables

Vegetable tips for children...

-Set a good example for children by eating vegetables with meals and as snacks.

-Let children decide on the dinner vegetables or what goes into salads.

-Allow children to pick a new vegetable to try while shopping.

-Use cut up vegetables as part of afternoon snacks.(try with dip)

-Children often prefer their vegetables served separately rather than mixed.

-Depending on their age, children can help shop, clean, peel, or cut up vegetables.

Tips to help you eat vegetables...

- Buy fresh vegetables in season. They cost less and are likely to be at their peak flavor.
- Stock up on frozen vegetables for quick and easy cooking in the microwave.
- Include a green salad with your meal every night. Add color by adding baby carrots, grape tomatoes, shredded red cabbage, or spinach leaves.
- Shred zucchini or carrots into meatloaf, casseroles, quick breads, and muffins.
- Include chopped vegetables in pasta sauce or lasagna.
- Grill vegetable kabobs as part of a barbecue meal. Try tomatoes, mushrooms, green peppers, and red onions.
- Include cooked dry beans or peas in flavorful mixed dishes such as chili or minestrone soup.
- Keep washed, ready-to-eat cut up vegetables in a see through container in the refrigerator for easy access.

Why it's important to vary your veggies & mix up your choices.

Different vegetables contain different nutrients. Each vegetable has a unique complement of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals that the body uses to maintain good health. The color of the vegetable plays a role in the nutrients it contains. Therefore, it is very important to eat a variety of colorful vegetables.

Vegetables are divided into 5 subgroups based on their nutrient content (see page 3 for a list of commonly eaten vegetables in each subgroup). Vegetable choices should be selected from among these subgroups. It is not necessary to eat vegetables from each subgroup daily. However, over a week, try to consume from all of the groups as a way to reach your daily intake recommendation. You can find a list of specific recommended weekly amounts at www.MyPyramid.gov.

Vegetable Spotlight: Cabbage

Cabbage has been cultivated for centuries and dates back to Greece in 600 B.C.E. It was primarily used to treat stomach problems and headache and was considered to have anti-inflammatory properties.

Cabbage is grown in early spring and again in fall. Varieties include red, green, savoy, or crumpled leaf cabbage. Red cabbage has higher levels of vitamin C while savoy cabbage has more vitamin A, calcium, iron, and potassium. Cabbage is a good source of fiber.

Uses: Coleslaw, sauerkraut, sautéed or stir fried with other vegetables.

Storage Tips: Don't wash prior to storage. It can be stored in the refrigerator with or without a plastic bag.



Eating vegetables provides health benefits. People who eat more fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Vegetables provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body. Most vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. None have cholesterol.

Some commonly eaten vegetables in the 5 vegetable subgroups.....

Dark green

bok choy
broccoli
collard greens
dark green leafy lettuce
kale
mesclun
mustard greens
romaine lettuce
spinach
turnip greens
watercress

Orange

acorn squash
butternut squash
carrots
hubbard squash
pumpkin
sweet potatoes

Dry Beans and Peas

black beans
black eyed peas
garbanzo beans(chickpeas)
kidney beans
lentils
lima beans(mature)
navy beans
pinto beans
soy beans
split peas
tofu(bean curd made from soybeans)
white beans

Starchy

corn
green peas
lima beans(green)
potatoes

Other

artichokes
asparagus
bean sprouts
beets
brussel sprouts
cabbage
cauliflower
celery
cucumbers
eggplant
green beans
green or red peppers
iceberg lettuce
mushrooms
okra
onions
parsnips
tomatoes
tomato juice
wax beans
zucchini

FROM THE RECIPE BOX... Crisp Cucumber Salad (serves 4)

1 Tbsp sugar
1/8 tsp salt
2 Tbsp vinegar
1 medium cucumber, not peeled, sliced lengthwise, seeded, and thinly sliced
1 shallot, thinly sliced, or 2 tbsp thinly sliced onion
1/4 cup red sweet bell pepper strips
5 cilantro leaves, chopped (add more as desired)

- Wash hands and work area.
- In small saucepan, combine sugar, salt, and vinegar. Heat and stir until sugar has dissolved, but do not boil.
- Set saucepan in cold water to cool mixture.
- Wash vegetables and slice. Combine vegetables and cilantro in a serving bowl.
- Pour cooled mixture over cucumber mixture and stir gently.
- Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours. Serve cold.

Vegetable Word Find

Green vegetables are rich in a variety of nutrients, such as fiber, vitamin C, vitamin K, vitamin A, folate and lutein. See if you can find these "good for you greens".

broccoli

cucumbers

collard greens

lettuce

brussel sprouts

cabbage

green beans

spinach

green peppers

endive

peas

kale



Food Safety Tip!

Always wash vegetables thoroughly before preparing or eating them. Even if you are going to peel and cut produce, washing helps keep dirt and surface microorganisms away from the part you will eat. Keep vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry and seafood while shopping, preparing, or storing.

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References

USDA's MyPyramid, Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, (HHS) Department of Health & Human Services, (USDA) United States Department of Agriculture. Wikipedia, World Book Online Reference Center, Arthur's Vegetable Clipart(image), FDA Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Nutrition Action Health Letter