

# Creating Health & Nutrition Fact Sheets

## Tip

Buy fresh vegetables in season.

They cost less and are at peak flavor.

**M**ost vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. None have cholesterol. Eating a diet rich in vegetables as part of an overall healthful diet may reduce the risk of stroke and coronary artery diseases; diabetes; certain cancers (such as mouth, stomach, and colorectal cancer); weight gain by lowering overall calorie intake; and low bone mass, as vegetables contain many nutrients important to bone health, particularly the vitamin K found in green leafy vegetables.

In addition, potassium-rich vegetables may reduce the risk of devel-

oping kidney stones and may help decrease bone loss.

Higher potassium vegetables include sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products (paste, sauce, and juice), beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, winter squash, spinach, lentils, kidney beans, and split peas.

Having adequate folate in your diet helps in heart health. Vegetables high in folate include beans, spinach, asparagus, broccoli, romaine lettuce, and tomato juice.

## What Counts as a Vegetable?

Any vegetable or 100 percent vegetable juice counts as a member of the vegetable group.

## Vegetables: The Cornerstone of a Healthy Diet



Vegetables count toward your daily intake in raw, frozen, canned, cooked, or dried/dehydrated form. Try them chopped, sliced, or mashed.

Vegetables are organized into five subgroups based on their nutrient content:

- dark green (e.g., broccoli and spinach)
- orange (e.g., carrots and squashes)
- starchy (e.g., potatoes)
- beans and peas
- "other" (e.g., green beans, beets)

It is important to select a variety of choices from each subgroup.

## Tips Affecting Different Age Groups

### How Many Vegetables Should I Eat Each Day?

The amount of vegetables you need to eat depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. In general, adults need 2½ to 3 cups of vegetables each day. School-age children need 1½ cups, and teens need 2½ to 3½ cups.

### What Counts as a Cup?

In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens, can be considered 1 cup from the vegetable group.

## Tips for Increasing Vegetable Intake

Stock up on frozen vegetables for quick and easy microwave steaming. Keep a bowl of cut-up vegetables in a see-through container in the refrigerator. Carrot and celery sticks are traditional. Try broccoli, cucumber slices, or red or green pepper strips.

Buy vegetables that are easy to prepare. Pick up prewashed bags of salad greens and add

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