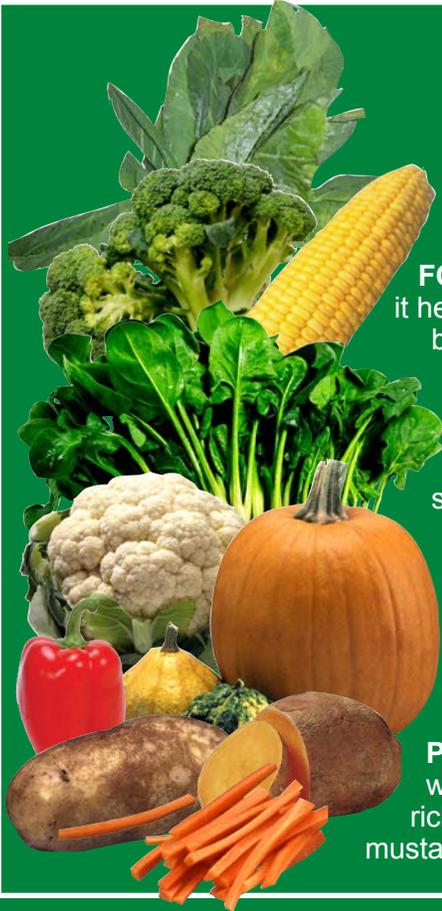


# FAMILY FOOD SOLUTIONS

## The **VEGETABLE** Group: Enjoy Eating Your Colors

**Vegetables** are very important for promoting good health. Eating plenty of vegetables helps us stay healthy and fight infections. Vegetables, along with other healthy food choices and physical activity, can help lower our risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers.

### WHAT'S IN VEGETABLES?



**FIBER:** Helps prevent constipation and can help reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers. Fiber-rich vegetables are artichokes, celery, green beans, corn, cauliflower, beets, cabbage, summer squash, spinach, broccoli, peppers, zucchini, and cole slaw.

**FOLATE:** Important for everyone, but especially for pregnant women—it helps prevent birth defects. Folate-rich vegetables include asparagus, blackeyed peas, and spinach.

**VITAMIN A:** Keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps protect against infections. Vitamin A-rich vegetables are carrots, sweet potatoes, greens (turnip, mustard, and collard), spinach, pumpkins, winter squash, and red peppers.

**VITAMIN C:** Keeps teeth and gums healthy, helps heal cuts and wounds, helps the body absorb iron, and helps protect against infections. Vegetables with vitamin C include red and green peppers, sweet potatoes, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale, and potatoes.

**POTASSIUM:** Helps muscles contract and helps with fluid balance, which is important to keep blood pressure at a healthy level. Potassium-rich vegetables are sweet potatoes, white potatoes, greens (turnip, mustard, collard, and beet), tomato paste/puree, and carrot juice.

### EAT A RAINBOW OF HEALTH

Vary the color of vegetables you eat, and you'll get a lot of different nutrients. Vegetables contain different nutrients based on their color, so try choosing a rainbow.

- **RED** - red peppers, radishes, tomatoes, rhubarb
- **YELLOW AND ORANGE** - sweet potatoes, carrots, squash, pumpkins, corn, yellow and orange peppers
- **GREEN** - spinach, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, artichokes, asparagus, celery, cucumbers, okra, green beans, greens (turnip, mustard, and collard)
- **PURPLE/BLUE** - purple cabbage, eggplant
- **WHITE** - cauliflower, garlic, mushrooms, onions, turnips, parsnips, potatoes

### HOW MUCH DO I NEED A DAY?

2 to 3 years of age: **1 cup**  
4 to 8 years of age: **1½ cups**

**Females**  
9 to 13 years of age and 51 years  
and over: **2 cups**  
14 to 50 years of age: **2½ cups\***  
51+ years of age: **2 cups\***

**Males**  
9 to 13 years of age and 51 years  
and over: **2½ cups\***  
14 to 50 years of age: **3 cups\***  
51+ years of age: **2½ cups\***

# HOW TO ADD VEGETABLES TO MYPLATE

- Make a game of trying new vegetables.
- Buy fresh, frozen, and low-sodium canned vegetables.
- Add chopped fresh or frozen vegetables to pizza, casseroles, lasagna, meatloaf, stews, soups, and sauces.
- Vegetables taste great over pasta and rice.
- Cut up vegetables (red, green, or yellow bell peppers, or broccoli) and add them to an egg omelet for breakfast.
- Add shredded carrots and zucchini to the batter for cakes, quick breads, and muffins.
- Have a salad with dinner every night—go light on the dressing.
- Keep a bowl of cut-up vegetables in a see-through container in the refrigerator where kids can reach for quick snacks.
- Serve one or two vegetables with supper, and try having a vegetable supper night every once in a while.



## HEALTHY VEGETABLE GROUP SNACK IDEAS

- Dip raw vegetables (baby carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, bell peppers) in vegetable dip or low-fat ranch dressing.
- Salsa makes a great vegetable snack when used as a dip for cut-up vegetables and crackers.
- Try raw vegetables that have been slightly steamed and cooled

## DINNER SOLUTION: SPAGHETTI SQUASH

**1 spaghetti squash (about 1½ pound)**  
**1 Tbsp olive oil**  
**3 Tbsp Parmesan cheese**  
**¼ tsp dried oregano**  
**2 tsp dried basil**

**1 cup cherry tomatoes, thinly sliced**  
**½ cup baby bella mushrooms, sliced**  
**½ cup green peppers, diced**  
**salt and pepper (to taste, optional)**  
**\*May add lean protein such as ground turkey or chicken, if desired.**



### Directions

Place the two squash halves, cut side down, in glass baking dish. Add about ¼ cup water and cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on high 12 minutes or until soft when pressed. Let stand covered for 3 minutes. In a large bowl, whisk oil, basil, oregano, and 2 tablespoons Parmesan. Stir in tomatoes, mushrooms, and peppers, and season lightly with salt and pepper to taste. Scrape squash out with a fork, add strands to tomato mixture, and toss until combined. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese.

**Nutrients Per Serving** (without meat): Calories 86, Protein 3 g, Dietary Fiber 2 g, Total Fat 5 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Carbohydrates 9 g, Sodium 77 mg

MyPlate: [http://www.choosemyplate.gov/foodgroups/grains\\_why.html](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/foodgroups/grains_why.html) | Recipe from [whatscooking.fns.usda.gov](http://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov)

**\*Serving size information:** Recommended servings for each food group and the percent daily values listed on nutrition facts labels are based on a 2,000-calorie reference diet. They serve as guides to help determine daily intake. You may need fewer or more calories and servings of a nutrient, depending on your body size and activity level. For personalized information, visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov). You will enter information such as your age, sex, and level of activity to determine your calorie and serving needs.



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