Dark Green Vegetables

This group of vegetables includes: bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, dark green leafy lettuce, kale, mesclun, mustard greens, romaine lettuce, spinach, turnip greens, and watercress. The young plants tend to have small, tender leaves and a mild flavor, where many of the mature plants have tougher leaves and stronger flavors.

Your child may see the romaine or spinach on salad bar in school, or broccoli on the menu for lunch.

Benefits to enjoy from including these in your diet:

- High in fiber and other nutrients, these vegetables are great for persons with diabetes to help control blood sugars.
- Low in fat and full of flavor, so you can load your plate up and not worry about the added calories
- Ask your child if they had a chance to add salad or broccoli to their tray today.

Starchy Vegetables

This group of vegetables includes: Cassava, corn, fresh cowpeas, field peas, or black-eyed peas (not dry), green bananas, green peas, green lima beans, plantains, potatoes, taro, water chestnuts

Popular items that your child may see on their lunch tray at school are corn, potatoes and green peas.

Benefits to enjoy from including these in your diet:

- These vegetables are an excellent source of fiber, but are higher in calories than other vegetables, so include these in smaller portions
- They are full of nutrients that help fight infection, help fight certain forms of cancer, promote healthy bones and skin
- Try using these vegetables in a salad, such as a corn and black bean salad, or adding water chestnuts to a green salad

Red and Orange Vegetables

This group of vegetables includes: acorn squash, butternut squash, carrots, hubbard squash, pumpkin, red peppers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, tomato juice

Tomatoes and red peppers may be featured throughout the year on the school salad bar.

Benefits to enjoy from including these in your diet:

- A key nutrient in these vegetables is beta carotene. This nutrient protects the eyes, can help boost brain power and can protect the skin from harmful sun damage.
- The vitamin C in these vegetables will help cuts, scrapes and other bumps and bruises to heal quicker.
- Try making a new soup with your child using one of the squash and carrots, it will be colorful and filling!

Beans and Peas

This group of vegetables includes: black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, pinto beans, soy beans, split peas, white beans. These foods are a great way to add a variety to a gluten free diet. They are versatile, affordable, and are very healthy and flavorful.

Your child may see these in sides for lunch such as the black bean and corn salad, or the garbanzo and tomato salad.

Benefits to enjoy from including these in your diet:

- Beans and peas are some of the healthiest foods out there. They are high in protein, low in fat and high in fiber. They can help protect from a variety of illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, certain cancers, and high blood pressure.
- They also contain lots of nutrients which are all important to healthy growth and development.
- Stretch your food dollars using beans instead of meat in meals.

Other Vegetables

This group of vegetables includes: Artichokes, asparagus, avocado, bean sprouts, beets, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, green peppers, iceberg (head) lettuce, mushrooms, okra, onions, parsnips, turnips, wax beans, zucchini. These vegetables are packed with flavor and nutrients needed for a healthy life. They are of various colors and flavors.

These vegetables may show up as a Harvest of the Month (asparagus, parsnips), or on the salad bar (celery)

Benefits to enjoy from including these in your diet:

- Asparagus: is low in carbohydrates, and surprisingly high in protein. It is a great source of potassium, vitamin K, folic acid, vitamins C and A, riboflavin, thiamine, and vitamin B6. It is also a very good source of dietary fiber, niacin, phosphorus, protein, and iron. Asparagus if full of flavor and is great if grilled, bakes, broiled or sautéed.
- Brussels sprouts: have similar nutritional qualities as broccoli. They are a great source of folic acid, vitamins C and K, and also beta carotene, and are a good source of vitamin B6, fiber, thiamine, and potassium. Brussels sprouts are great bakes with garlic and lemon juice.
- Parsnips: are an excellent source of vitamin C, vitamin B, vitamin E, fiber, and many minerals. They promote healthy bones, skin and brain development.
- If trying to increase vegetable consumption, try adding a variety of extra vegetables into soups, sauces or salads.

Home and School Gardens

Growing your own variety of vegetables in the school or your home garden is a great way to learn more about the five subgroups of vegetables that are served in school meals. Some of the benefits include: teaching your child where the vegetables come from, how they are grown, introducing them to new flavors and textures, and teaching your child how to prepare meals.

Some of the vegetables that are grown in the school gardens, that you could try at home, include:

- Lettuces
- Greens such as kale, collards, and mustard greens
- Brussels sprouts
- Herbs
- Peas
- Tomatoes
- Carrots
- Radishes
- Pumpkins and other squash

Myplate.gov

MyPlate is a food guide to help people make healthier choices. MyPlate encourages everyone to fill half their plate with fruits and vegetables and choose whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy.

Practice these healthy family tips from the MyPlate food guide:

- Be a healthy role model for your child by filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal. Let your child see how much you enjoy vegetables.
- Go grocery shopping together and let your child help you pick out their favorite vegetables.
- Involve the entire family in meal preparation.
- Eat meals together as a family and focus on each other at meal time.
- Reward your child with attention, not food.

Summer Program

Featuring Oregon seasonal fruits and vegetables. Starts Monday, June 17th.

The Summer Food Service Program* provides free meals to children and teens, ages 1 to 18, at qualifying parks and community centers.

Call 1-800-SAFENET (1-800-723-3638) or visit www.summerfoodoregon.org for a site near you.

*funded by the United States Department of Agriculture