

# Eat Your Veggies!

You probably have noticed the leaves turning color at this time of the year. Let nature's colors be a cue to add more color to your plate, especially dark green and orange/gold vegetables. Many people do not eat enough of the "autumn-colored" fruits and vegetables.

## Why Eat Vegetables?

Vegetables provide nutrition your body needs for repairs and to fight illness. Vegetables are a great source of potassium, fiber, vitamin A and vitamin C.

### Potassium

We need potassium to help us maintain a healthy blood pressure. We can get potassium from sweet potatoes, white potatoes, tomatoes, spinach, and various types of beans and lentils.

### Fiber

Fiber helps us reduce blood cholesterol levels, so it might lower our risk of heart disease. Fiber helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis (a common digestive problem). Fiber also helps us feel "full" so we might eat less and maintain a healthy weight. Eat the peeling on vegetables to get more fiber.

### Vitamin A

Dark green, orange and gold vegetables are natural sources of "beta-carotene." Deep-orange winter squash, carrots and pumpkin are especially high in this natural compound. Our body converts beta-carotene into vitamin A. Vitamin A helps keep our skin and eyes healthy, and it also protects against infections.

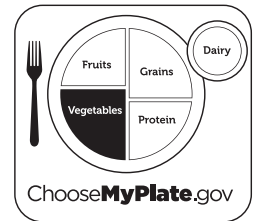
### Vitamin C

Many vegetables, including broccoli, cabbage and bell peppers, are good sources of vitamin C. This nutrient helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy. It also helps our body absorb iron from foods.



Make at least one-fourth of your plate colorful vegetables!

Set a goal:  
I will try to eat more of these vegetables:




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This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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I would like to start using more spices and herbs than salt when I cook. Can you help?

Using spices and herbs adds flavor without adding extra fat, calories and sodium to your food. Spices, such as cinnamon, cloves and ginger, also can enhance the natural sweetness of fruits.



- If you are new to using spices, start by buying small containers and be sure you have a few recipes that use them.
- Read the ingredient list on the spice container because some spices contain salt. Garlic powder and onion powder, for example, usually do not contain added sodium, while garlic salt and onion salt do. Lemon pepper may contain salt/sodium, while plain pepper does not.
- Store your spices in a cool, dark place away from your sink or dishwasher. The heat and moisture can promote flavor loss.
- Mark your spice containers with the date of purchase. Usually, ground spices stay flavorful for one to two years, while whole spices (such as cloves) remain flavorful for three to four years. Do the “sniff test:” Crumble the spice and sniff. If it has little flavor, you may need to replace your spices or use more in your recipes.
- Try new combinations of foods and spices. Add a small amount of one of the spices on the list to liven up your veggies.
  - Carrots: cinnamon, cloves, dill, rosemary
  - Green beans: dill, curry powder, oregano
  - Winter squash: cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg
  - Tomatoes: basil, oregano, parsley, pepper
- Try growing fresh herbs in pots on an indoor windowsill. Check out “Harvesting Herbs for Healthy Eating” at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/plantsci/hortcrop/h1267.pdf](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/plantsci/hortcrop/h1267.pdf). This publication includes information about how to grow, preserve and use fresh herbs.

## FoodWi\$e Tip of the Month

Rinse, cut and refrigerate some veggies for quick snacks. Keep them in small containers or bags in the front of the fridge. This way, they'll be less likely to sit in the back of the fridge and turn to mush while you reach for the cookies and ice cream.



Leigh Gunkel, Griggs/Steele/Traill counties

# Mashed Sweet Potatoes

- 4 sweet potatoes (medium-sized)
- ¾ tsp. thyme (dried)
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper



Wash and peel the sweet potatoes. Cut them into slices that are ¾ inch thick.

Put them in a saucepan with

enough water to cover the potatoes.

Bring the water to a boil on medium heat.

Cook the potatoes for 20 to 25 minutes until they are soft.

Drain the water. Put the potatoes in a medium bowl.

Use a fork or potato masher to mash the potatoes.

Mix in the thyme, salt and pepper.

*Makes four servings.*

*Each serving has 110 calories, 0 grams (g) of fat, 226 g of carbohydrate, 4 g of fiber, 220 milligrams of sodium and 370 percent of the daily value for vitamin A (as beta-carotene).*

*Recipe source: Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network.*

## Menu Idea

Meatloaf  
Mashed Sweet Potatoes  
Steamed broccoli  
Apple crisp  
Low-fat or fat-free milk

## Joke

What did Mama Spice say to Baby Spice?

I always have “thyme” for you!

Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist

### Ramsey County Family Nutrition Program

Please call for more information on nutrition, food purchasing or food safety.



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