

NUTRITION NEWS

For Parents and Teachers of Elementary School Children

ALL ABOUT VEGETABLES

Vegetables are an important part of our diet at any age, but especially for children. People who eat more fruits and vegetables show a reduced risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, as well as certain cancers.

In this spring newsletter, we'll be giving you information on why vegetables are important, how to encourage choosy eaters, where to buy vegetables, and how to encourage kids to help grow their own vegetables.

Vegetable Varieties

Based on their nutrients, vegetables are organized into 5 subgroups: dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other vegetables.

- Dark green vegetables include broccoli, dark leafy greens (kale, arugula, romaine), and herbs such as basil and cilantro. These contain antioxidants that help protect cells.
- Red and orange vegetables like bell peppers, carrots, sweet potatoes, and squash contain nutrients that help maintain eye health.
- Beans, peas, and lentils are also considered vegetables. Some popular beans are white, kidney, black, soy, and garbanzo beans. Red and green lentils, as well as split peas, are popular options as well. These contain large amounts of fiber, a nutrient that most Americans (93%, to be exact!) do not get enough of.
- Starchy vegetables include potatoes, corn, and peas. These can be good sources of important vitamins such as C and B.
- Other vegetables are all those that do not fit in one of the categories above. Vegetables such as cauliflower, zucchini, mushrooms, and onions are some examples.



<https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/vegetables>

How to Encourage Choosy Eaters



- **Keep trying!**
 - Children's taste buds are always changing and it may take up to 15 times before they are ready to try something new.
 - Encourage new ways to try vegetables such as cutting them into fun shapes, roasting them, adding veggies to other dishes, or maybe with a dip.
 - Aim to see at least three different colors on your plate each meal.
- **Plan and shop together.**
 - Children are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables when they help choose what will be served.
 - Encourage your children to help you pick out a new vegetable every grocery trip so the whole family can try it together.
- **Get the whole family involved in preparing meals.**
 - Be a good role model and eat healthy foods; children are more likely to try new or healthy foods if they see you eating them too.
 - Involving children in prepping and cooking encourages them to eat what they helped prepare. Try to have them tear lettuce next time.

EBT/CalFresh at Farmers' Markets

Did you know that many Placer and Nevada County Farmers' Markets accept EBT card payments? These fun, community events offer amazing food and a relaxing time out for families.

Why Go to Farmers' Markets?

- Markets have **fresher, tastier produce** than the grocery store.
- You can find **great deals** on ripe, in-season produce.
- **It's fun and educational!** Markets are a great way for kids to **get exposed to new foods** and encourage their interest. It allows kids to see where their food comes from and meet farmers.



Find a Farmers' Market Near You

The link below can help you find a farmers' market location near you. It also provides detailed information on each market location, if they accept, EBT, WIC, or Market Match.

[Want to find more EBT/CalFresh Farmers' Markets? Click to open the Farmers' Market Finder map.](#)

Start a Vegetable Garden

Another way to increase the vegetables your family eats is by planting a vegetable garden in your backyard or an herb garden by a windowsill.

- Gardening is a strong educational tool for children. They learn about where their food comes from and can participate in every step: selecting the seeds, planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting.
- Gardening is a great family activity and helps encourage kids to try new fruits and vegetables. Gardening is also a great way to get physically active.
- If space is an issue, many plants grow very well in containers. For helpful tips on container gardening see the **Container Garden Guide**.
- The **Placer County Vegetable Planting Guide** is a great resource to help know what to plant and when.



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