

Taste Testing



Implementing a taste test at your school can be a great way to introduce new and nutritious foods to students. The following set of documents will explain what a taste test is, why they are helpful and provide step by step instructions. There are also easy recipes geared towards adopting healthy eating habits. Lastly, to best choose your taste test item, you will find a document that lists what produce is seasonally available in New York State.

These resources were compiled from:

Vermont FEED: Food Education Every Day (<http://www.vtfeed.org/>)

Ohio Action for Healthy Kids (<http://www.ohioactionforhealthykids.org/>)

Pride of New York (http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/AP/PrideOfNY/pride_index.html)

You can visit their websites for more information.



Getting Started

Why do a Taste Test?

It's true that children are predictable eaters—they're predictable in their unpredictability! Their taste preferences change and mature over time, and as many school cooks know, an item on the lunch tray that is devoured one month, might be completely ignored the next. Children can be picky eaters, and we can't count on them to like everything we offer. In fact, a child may have to try a new food up to ten times before he or she accepts it. Most children will want to try a bite of something before they commit to an entire serving. First-time taste testing is a great way to introduce children to new foods in a fun, pressure-free format.

Taste testing is also an invaluable tool for a food service program looking to make healthy changes to its menus at minimum cost. No one, especially food service personnel who are concerned about budgets, lunch sales, and wasted food, wants to see students throw good food away. By familiarizing children with new foods, taste tests can help ensure that an item is marketable before it's offered on the menu. Best of all, students experience new flavors with their peers, have a hand in preparing the food (ideally), and

What is a Taste Test?

A taste test is a small sample of food offered either in the classroom, or in the cafeteria at lunchtime, introducing its flavor, texture and smell. The item might be a dollop of fresh salsa with a handful of corn chips, a small 2-oz. serving of roasted root vegetables, or a mini whole wheat carrot-maple muffin. After the sample has been offered, children (and adults) vote on whether they tried it, liked it, and would be willing to try it again.

both the school and students can proudly say, "We are a school that tries new foods!"



Students at Rumney School in Middlesex gather together to try a sample of roasted root vegetables. Students who see their peers enjoying the food are more likely to try it themselves. (photo courtesy of Rumney Memorial School)

6 Steps to Implementing a Taste Test Program in Your School

1 Know your goals. Before doing a taste test, establish a few goals that are easy to communicate. Are you implementing a taste test program to expand children's food choices? Encouraging more healthy snack or lunch choices brought from home? Do you want to broaden the school lunch or breakfast menu? Do you want to introduce local foods?



An interested parent at Rumney school invited teachers, a local farmer and the school's food service manager to attend a local Farm to School workshop in 2007. These folks became regular supporters of the school-wide taste testing program that exists today. A diverse team will help ensure that your program has the support it needs to take off and remain sustainable. *(photo courtesy of Rumney Memorial School)*

2 Develop a food committee. Meet with the food service director or head cook to discuss possibilities, and then with the school principal to discuss your goals and make a plan. Find parents and teachers who are supportive of the idea of a taste testing program. Your best allies are the people who

work with the students every day. Most teachers will support a program, but be careful about adding to their workloads. If your focus is on local food, find an area farmer who can supply produce to your school and who would be willing to speak to a class or possibly come for part of a taste test. Meet with food service personnel to communicate your ideas and to discuss ways to use local foods in the school menu. Think about the VT FEED "3 C's" model: representatives from each of the C's should be part of your team. Your committee, together with food service personnel, can decide how often taste tests should occur, what format (in the cafeteria or classrooms), what foods to try, and how to fund the foods being tested (PTO's make great partners). They can also help analyze taste test results.

3 Start small and think through the details. With the committee, decide what food you first want to feature. Where will you get it? (Perhaps your school wants to build a relationship with a nearby farm where you know you can get local potatoes.) What recipe will you try? (roasted potatoes, maybe?) How much will the ingredients cost? (Will the farmer donate potatoes just for tasting? Is the school food service willing to spend extra money?) Does the kitchen have the staff and equipment to prepare the food? How will the food be ordered? Who will prepare it? If



the students like the new food, is the recipe repeatable on the lunch or breakfast line? Be sure to meet and talk through all these questions with the school food service director and cooking staff. *For ideas on what foods and recipes have been used in taste tests, see “A School Year of Seasonal Recipes,” Appendix A, p.29, VT FEED Guide for Using Local Foods in Schools, or the resources in Appendix J, p.45.*

4 Be respectful of food service personnel and teachers. Food service personnel have a tough job, take pride in what they cook, and are busy. Teachers and other school personnel have a lot of time demands, too. Everyone has the same goal—to feed our children the freshest healthiest food possible, but we may have different ideas on how to get there.

5 Offer hands-on experiences. Children learn best when they are actively involved and using their hands. Children who help prepare food for a taste test are more likely to try it, and like it than children who have not been involved. If at all possible, include monthly hands-on lessons in the classroom or cafeteria so students have the chance to participate in making the food. *See sample VT FEED curriculum units on the website for ideas on how to integrate taste testing foods into curriculum.*

6 Just do it! Meet with teachers and food service staff to find a date that works for a taste test. Invite parents to help, either in your weekly newsletter or through a special invitation. If you are considering a classroom taste test program, find a time each week or month that fits well into the class schedule. (Snack time is usually a good time.) Encourage teachers and staff to be a part of the taste tests, integrate the information into their curriculum (if possible), and help model healthy eating behaviors. If you plan to conduct cafeteria taste tests during lunch-time, encourage staff members to be involved in the testing, or sample along with the students. By getting the whole school involved, you are more likely to have a successful program. Once you have had one or two successful taste tests, invite your local political figures and the local paper to see for themselves that your school is making some school food changes. *See “Taste Test Do’s and Don’ts,” Appendix G, p.42 and VT FEED Guide for Using Local Food in Schools for a press release example.*

High school students reflect back on taste tests...

“I really enjoyed the taste test we did! It was an interactive, simple way to decide between two different versions of salad we made. I’m sure that if kids could choose their own meals and snacks by having a taste test there wouldn’t be any problems with encouraging them to eat school meals.” — Schuyler Cowan, 11th grade

“The activity was engaging because it was hands-on and we were able to make our own choices throughout the process of making the salad.”

— Mae Kemsley, 10th grade

Using individual trays or small paper cups—like for the roasted root vegetables below—makes a taste test more aesthetically pleasing and encourages children to try a food that otherwise might go untouched on a school lunch tray. (photo courtesy of Ferrisburgh Central School)



Sample Timeline for Coordinating a School-wide Taste Test

2-3 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE TASTE TEST:

- At the food committee meeting with food service personnel, decide what food will be tested. Make sure foods chosen fit into the school food program and align with your committee goals. (*See VT FEED Guide for Using Local Food in Schools, and Appendices A & J, p.29 & 45 for recipe ideas.*)
- Find a class(es) that is willing to prepare the food in the kitchen or classroom the morning of the taste test and that will help serve and survey.
- Find parents/volunteers who will help serve and clean up.
- Prepare an announcement of the taste test for the school newsletter or school-wide email
- Research and share nutritional information about the food, and have the recipe ready to send home to students' families. (*See "Sample Letter to Families," Appendix E, p.39.*)
- If purchasing from a farmer, contact him/her to be sure product will be available when you need it.

ONE WEEK PRIOR:

- Check with food service and classrooms involved to make sure everyone is prepared.
- Make sure necessary food items have been purchased or are being delivered on the date needed.
- Prepare a taste testing survey. (*See Appendix C, p.34 for examples.*)
- Advertise the taste test: school newsletter, school website, all-staff email, invite the local paper!

DAY OF:

- Announce the taste test during announcements, classroom meetings, and with signs in the lobby.
- Help food service set up for hosting students in the kitchen.
- Have the food service explain about food safety when preparing foods. Make time for everyone to wash their hands and put on hairnets or hats.
- If preparing in the kitchen, small groups of 4–5 students work best. If preparing in the cafeteria or classroom, divide the preparation tasks into small groups.
- Remind children to respect the workspace and workers.
- Rotate groups from classroom to kitchen, if necessary.
- Set up taste testing table before lunch periods begin.
- Take pictures and notes to report in your newsletter.

DAY AFTER:

- Send a letter home to parents describing the taste test, the food their child tasted, and the recipe to try at home. (*See "Sample Letter to Families," Appendix E, p.39.*)
- Have a classroom tally the results of the taste test and post them on a bulletin board or in the school newsletter.



Taste Tests in the Cafeteria

The objectives of a cafeteria taste test are to involve students, teachers, parents, community members and food service in introducing new foods to students and to build the relationship between food service personnel and the rest of the school community. As students become familiar with taste tests, they will be more open to trying new foods. Regular taste tests can become an exciting school-wide event.

Choose foods to taste test that:

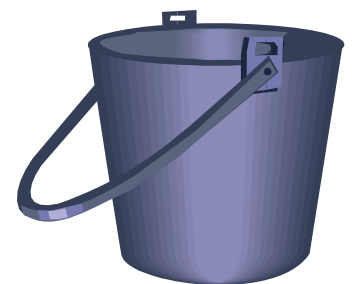
- ☒ increase consumption of whole grains, fruits and vegetables
- ☒ can be featured on the menu as a regular breakfast or lunch item
- ☒ will meet school food program requirements for nutrition, presentation, and cost.

Tips for Successful Cafeteria Taste Tests

- Always start with the food service personnel to plan a taste test. They can decide with you what foods to try.
- Partner with the PTO or a local business to help raise money for the food and for a taste test coordinator to work a few hours a month.
- Start with regular monthly taste tests of simple, affordable food (so it's easy to repeat if students like it).
- Find parents or community volunteers who can coordinate the classrooms with cafeteria activities. Food service personnel are unlikely to have the time to do this, although they can participate in some parts.
- Use local produce when possible and invite your local farmer or processor to join your taste test.
- If possible, work with teachers and food service personnel to have a small group of students help prepare the food. Remember, "If they make it, they will eat it."
- Offer small servings in a positive, non-coersive atmosphere.
- Advertise taste tests in the school newsletter or in letters home to families.
- Announce the results to the whole school after the taste test has finished and what the next steps are for that new food.
- Openly appreciate efforts made, and celebrate successes and lessons learned.

Taste Test Reminders!

- ☒ Wash hands well!
- ☒ Teach proper equipment use & care
- ☒ Dont forget to clean up!



Composting Rots!

Encourage children who can't finish their samples to compost the rest.



Taste Tests in the Classroom

Some teachers and food service directors have successfully introduced new foods in the classroom in short, informal sessions. Working with food service is ideal so that classroom-tested food can then be featured on the school menus. The classroom also offers an opportunity to integrate taste tests into the curriculum. Begin by talking with the teacher to find out

the best way to make the taste test an educational opportunity. The key is to keep it simple: roasted slices of delicata squash, different types of lettuce, or a sampling of locally grown apples can be part of a dynamic taste testing lesson. If students are involved in preparing the food to be tested, they will be more likely to eat it. Adding “fun food facts” can also familiarize students with a new food and help them accept it. (See “Fun Seasonal Food Facts,” Appendix B, p.33; “Sample Nutrition Lesson,” Appendix F, p.40; the VT FEED Curriculum Units, www.vtfeed.org)



Ben Gleason from Gleason Grains, whose whole wheat flour is used in the school food program, is invited to speak in a Ferrisburgh Central School classroom. Connecting Community to Classrooms is a VT FEED fundamental. (photo courtesy of Ferrisburgh Central School)

Tips for Successful Classroom Taste Tests

- When using local foods, show where it is grown on a state or county map. (Compare it to bananas grown in South America!)
- Tie the taste test to other subjects, like math. For example, show students a parsnip, have them estimate its weight, then have them weigh it. Ask younger children to guess the color of a vegetable after it is peeled.
- Invite food service staff to a classroom taste test to introduce a new food and make more school-wide connections.
- Try foods that are (or could be) served in the school food program.
- Invite a farmer to bring his or her local food and discuss how it is grown or made.
- To help keep down costs, ask parents to provide some of the foods, or ask parents and community volunteers to help organize taste testing.
- Be sure to communicate regularly with parents about what their children are trying—they won't believe it!
- To increase the consumption of vegetables, invite classes to experiment with recipes and create names for new dressings and dips, for example.
- Keep the school food service aware and involved in your classroom taste tests—they might be able to provide some of the raw ingredients and feature the foods in their breakfasts or lunches.



Mechanisms for Purchasing Food Locally

More and more schools in Vermont are purchasing local foods from local farmers. They do this through a variety of methods that may affect how you get foods for your taste tests. For a complete description of these, see the *VT FEED Guide for Using Local Food in Schools*.

Wholesale Distributors

When purchasing from a distributor, request local food products whenever possible and the names of the farms from which they purchase. They may not be able to respond quickly, but keep asking.

Direct Purchasing

Some schools purchase bulk food products at wholesale prices directly from farmers. Food service staff call farmers directly, or a farmer may contact the food service director. Here are some direct purchasing options:

CSA PROGRAM (COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE)

CSA subscribers receive regular shares of a farm's harvest after paying in early spring a farmer's up-front for yearly operating costs. Some schools "buy-down" from the CSA share list of produce the farm provides. As a subscriber, a school may also be a part of the harvesting on the farm, which is an opportunity for hands-on education.

CONTRACT GROWING

In some school districts, farmers and the school food service director plan together each winter to identify foods the food program can use for the coming school year. Contract growing can save your program money because if farmers can secure a market for their products ahead of time, you could negotiate a better cost per pound.



Getting Local Food Delivered

Delivery arrangements are often a unique collaboration between farms and schools. Some options to consider:

- Farmers may choose to work with a school district that utilizes a central food service facility in order to deliver to one site rather than to multiple schools.
- Growers may add destinations to an established delivery route. For example, a farmer may be able to deliver to schools on the same day she goes to the farmer's market or delivers to restaurants.
- If several farms are delivering to a school district, they can collaborate by bringing their products to one farm and have that farmer do the deliveries for all of them.



Ferrisburgh Central School students' work in the school gardens that provide produce for the lunch program (photo courtesy of Ferrisburgh Central School)

MARKETING COOPERATIVE

Some farmers work together to share in the distribution, marketing, processing, selling or billing of their products. Buying from a cooperative of farms makes it easier for farmers to get their products to your food program and easier for you to call just one number.

DISTRICT PURCHASING COOPERATIVE

School districts that hire or find a part-time local purchasing coordinator (such as a motivated parent with business experience) are able to find significant savings by arranging for sale prices on behalf of their school.

Donated and School-Grown Food

GROW A ROW FOR SCHOOL

Students plant a particular crop at a farm they visit in the spring. The following fall, the class harvests the crop and brings it to the school to be stored or processed and frozen for later use.

GROW A ROW AT HOME

Some innovative food service programs agree to receive produce donations from local families during the fall. Family food donations to schools were the foundation of school lunches prior to the start of the USDA program.

SCHOOL PRODUCTION GARDENS

School gardens are a good way of providing vegetables and herbs for school kitchens, classroom taste tests and ongoing nutrition education. Some schools are growing larger quantities of selected vegetables for storage or processing, so that produce can be served throughout the school year. Be sure to practice safe harvesting and handling procedures.

A School Year of Seasonal Recipes

Corn Pie

SEPTEMBER

INGREDIENTS

3 large eggs
 ½ small onion
 1 Tb. flour
 1 Tb. sugar
 ½ tsp. salt
 1 ⅓ cup milk
 3 Tb. melted butter, slightly cooled
 2 cups fresh corn kernels (cut from
 2-3 cobs and lightly steamed) or
 frozen and thawed corn
 1 deep dish pie crust (*use a purchased
 crust or see recipe below.*)

FEATURED VEGETABLE:

• Corn •

Combine first five ingredients in food processor. Blend until onion is finely chopped (or finely chop onion by hand and stir all together in a large bowl). Add milk and cooled melted butter and process or stir until well blended. Transfer to a large bowl if using food processor. Mix in corn. Pour mixture into uncooked pie crust shell. Bake at 375° until filling is slightly puffed and top is golden, about 50 minutes. Cool slightly before serving.



Serves 8

Easy Pie Crust

1 ½ cups flour
 1 ½ tsp. sugar
 ½ cup canola oil
 2 Tb. milk

Mix flour and sugar directly in pie pan. Make a well in the center. Mix oil and milk and pour into well. Mix together with a fork until mostly blended, then use hands to press crust around and up edges of the pan. Fill and bake as directed in recipe.

Recipe provided by Rumney Memorial and Calais Elementary Schools

Apple-Cheese Quesadilla

OCTOBER

INGREDIENTS

12 apples, cored and thinly sliced
 50 ounces grated Vermont Cheddar
 25 whole wheat tortillas

FEATURED FRUIT: • Apple •

Place 2 oz. of cheese and apple slices (about ½ an apple per tortilla) on one half of a tortilla. Fold over and spray lightly with oil. Bake at 350° for 10-15 minutes. Cut tortillas in half before serving.
 Serves 50



Recipe provided by Rumney Memorial School

Butternut Biscuits

NOVEMBER

WET INGREDIENTS

2 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup milk
 1 cup canola oil
 4 cups cooked, mashed butternut squash (Bake squashes cut side down on oiled and watered sheets at 400° for 45 minutes, or until soft)

DRY INGREDIENTS

4 cups whole wheat flour
 4 cups flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baking powder
 2 tsp. baking soda
 2 tsp. salt
 2 tsp. cinnamon

FEATURED VEGETABLE:• **Butternut Squash** •

Mix dry ingredients into wet, being careful not to over mix. Use a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ice cream scoop to make drop biscuits onto parchment lined sheet pans. Lightly flatten the balls of dough. Bake at 400° in a regular oven, or 350° in a convection oven. Check after 5 minutes, bake until golden brown.

Makes 48 biscuits. For 150, make recipe 3 times

Recipe provided by Rumney Memorial School

**Roasted Root Vegetables**

DECEMBER

INGREDIENTS

15 lbs. potatoes
 2 lbs. parsnips
 5 lbs. carrots
 5 lbs. beets
 5 lbs. winter squash
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup canola oil, or enough to coat veggies
 kosher salt and pepper to taste

FEATURED VEGETABLES:• **Root Vegetables** •

Dice vegetables using a commercial food processor or by hand. Toss with oil, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Spread onto 5 sheet pans lined with parchment paper and sprayed with oil. Roast at 350° until crispy, 30-40 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. *Serves 150 3-oz cups*

Recipe provided by Rumney Memorial School

**Apple Oatmeal Muffins**

JANUARY

DRY INGREDIENTS

4 cups oats
 4 cups whole wheat flour
 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baking powder
 2 tsp. cinnamon
 2 tsp. salt

WET INGREDIENTS

1 cup plain lowfat yogurt
 2 cups milk
 1 cup oil
 1 cup applesauce
 1 tsp. vanilla
 4 eggs
 4 apples, cored, chopped (small pieces)

FEATURED GRAINS:• **Oats & Whole Wheat Flour** •

Beat wet ingredients together, add chopped apples. Combine dry ingredients in a separate bowl and add to wet ingredients being careful not to over mix. Spoon batter into greased muffin tins and sprinkle with brown sugar, if desired. Bake at 400° for about 20 minutes (15 minutes if using mini-muffin tins). In a convection oven, bake at 350° for 5 minutes, then rotate pans and cook 2-3 minutes more.

Makes 48 mini-muffins. For 144, make recipe 3 times.

Recipe provided by Rumney Memorial School



Balsamic Glazed Beets**FEBRUARY****INGREDIENTS**

20 lbs. beets, scrubbed and trimmed, leaving about 1-inch of stems attached
 1 cup balsamic vinegar
 ½ cup plus 2 Tb. maple syrup or honey
 ½ cup plus 2 Tb. olive oil
 ¼ cup minced fresh thyme or other herb

FEATURED VEGETABLE: • Beets •

In a large pot (or divide between 2 large pots) cover beets with salted water by 1 inch. Simmer, covered, 35-45 minutes, or until tender, and drain in colander. Cool until they can be handled, then slip off skins and stems. Cut beets lengthwise into wedges. Beets may be prepared up to this point 2 days ahead and chilled, covered. Bring beets to room temperature before proceeding. In a large skillet stir together vinegar, syrup or honey, and oil. Add beets. Cook beet mixture with salt and pepper to taste over moderate heat, stirring, until heated through and coated well. Sprinkle with herbs and toss gently.



Serves 150 sample sizes

Recipe provided by Calais Elementary School

Potato Fritata**MARCH****INGREDIENTS**

20 lbs. local potatoes, thinly sliced
 6 dozen local eggs
 5 lbs. local onions, chopped
 ¼ cup oil
 salt and pepper to taste
 8-10 cups grated mild cheddar or mozzarella cheese

FEATURED VEGETABLE: • Potatoes •

Bake thin layers of potatoes on 4 full-sized sheet pans, sprayed and lined with parchment paper. Bake at 450° (400° for a convection oven) until fully cooked and golden brown (20-25 minutes). Sauté all of the onions in oil until soft, 5-10 minutes. Mix 18 eggs and ¼ cup milk together in a bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste. Take ¼ of the cooked potatoes, ¼ of the sautéed onions, and place them onto a half sheet pan sprayed and lined with parchment paper. Pour the egg mixture onto the potato/onions and cook at 350° for 5-9 minutes until egg is nearly cooked through. Sprinkle 2 cups of grated cheese on egg and bake again for 2-3 minutes. One half sheet pan makes 40 servings. Repeat with remaining eggs and potato/onion 3 more times to make a total of 160 pieces.



Serves 160 pieces of fritata

Recipe provided by Rumney Memorial School

Carrot & Raisin Sunshine Salad

APRIL

INGREDIENTS

10 lbs. local carrots (5 to 6) grated
 5 cups raisins
 80 oz. (2 ½, 32-oz. containers)
 lowfat vanilla yogurt
 10 diced local apples

FEATURED VEGETABLE:**• Carrots •**

Mix all ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Toss again before serving.

Serves 100 sample sizes

Recipe provided by Calais Elementary School

**Parsnip & Potato Chips**

MAY

INGREDIENTS

15 lbs. parsnips, peeled and thinly sliced
 10 lbs. potatoes, thinly sliced
 1 cup or more, canola oil
 kosher salt to taste

FEATURED VEGETABLES:**• Parsnips & Potatoes •**

Toss parsnips and potatoes in separate bowls with oil and salt until lightly coated. Place a thin layer of parsnips onto sprayed and parchment paper lined sheet pans. Do the same with potatoes. Do not mix together until they are fully cooked. (Parsnips take a bit longer to crisp.) Cook at 400°, checking every 10 minutes until fully cooked and crispy. Combine together and serve in small paper cups.

Serves 150 sample sizes

Recipe provided by Rumney Memorial School

**Rumney Garden Wraps**

JUNE

INGREDIENTS

75 whole wheat tortillas, 8-inch round
 4 lbs. mesclun greens
 3 lbs. spinach
 3 beets, grated
 3 lbs. carrots, grated
 2 bunches salad turnips, grated
 Salad dressing (*see below*)

Maple-Balsamic Vinaigrette

1 cup balsamic vinegar
 1 cup maple syrup
 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
 4 cups olive oil

FEATURED VEGETABLES:**• Lettuce & Spinach •**

Toss your salad ingredients and set aside. Next, mix the first three vinaigrette ingredients. As you stir, slowly add the olive oil in a thin stream, stirring constantly. Pour a bit of the dressing onto your salad (this recipe makes a few days worth of dressing). Wrap the salad in a whole wheat tortilla. Slice tortilla in half at an angle. Enjoy!

Serves 150

Recipe provided by Rumney Memorial School



Cafeteria Taste Test Survey

Featured Food: _____ Date of Test: _____

Tried it	Liked it	Didn't Like it	Want it for Lunch	Grade

Classroom Taste Test Summary Sheet

Teachers, please complete below for item(s) shown

Teacher/Grade: _____ Date: _____

Did the students help prepare the snack? Y or N (circle one)

of students present: _____

.....

ITEM #1 _____

1. How many students tried the snack? _____
2. How many students liked the snack? _____
3. How many students would eat it again? _____

ITEM #2 _____





































1. How many students tried the snack? _____
2. How many students liked the snack? _____
3. How many students would eat it again? _____

ITEM #3 _____

1. How many students tried the snack? _____
2. How many students liked the snack? _____
3. How many students would eat it again? _____

Individual Voting Ballots for Taste Tests Parties

Cut out and give one ballot to each child

TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   	TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   	TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   
TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   	TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   	TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   
TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   	TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   	TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   
TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   	TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   	TASTE TEST Product _____ Date _____ (circle one): Like! Sort of... Don't Like   

adapted from Kathy Alexander, Ferrisburgh Central School, Ferrisburgh, VT, 2009

Nutrition Lesson #6

Butternut Squash Soup

This nutrition lesson is given to parent volunteers at Calais Elementary School who make the recipe at home and then bring it into their child's classroom for a taste test.

FOR THE VOLUNTEER BEFORE THE TASTE TEST:

About the Recipe:

Our recipe for this month will be one that students may remember trying in the cafeteria last year. The hardest part of the recipe is preparing the squash; after that it is pretty simple. You will need a blender or food processor. If your class has vegetarians, use the vegetable broth. You can also try it with soy milk and no butter if you want to make it dairy-free.

Recipe:

- 2 lbs. Butternut Squash, halved, peeled and seeded; cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup diced onion
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 3 cans chicken (or vegetable) broth (13 ¾-ounces each)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 1/3–1/2 cup light cream or milk

Place squash in saucepan along with carrots, onions, and broth then add in the salt. Simmer 40 minutes uncovered. Puree soup in a blender or food processor along with 2 tablespoons butter. Pour a little hot puree into the 1/3–1/2 cup cream so not to curdle the cream; add to soup. This will make more than enough for one class. You could easily halve the recipe if you don't want leftovers (but it's so good, I bet you will)!

You can make it the night before and reheat it in the morning. If you have a thermos, that is probably the best way to transport it to school. Then just pour the soup straight into the sample cups.

WHAT TO TELL STUDENTS AT THE TASTE TEST:

There are three vegetables in this soup:

1. **Butternut squash** – This is the star of our recipe. Hold up a butternut squash and see if the students can identify it. This type of squash is called “winter squash,” not because it

grows in the winter, but because it has a tough skin which allows us to store it through the winter time. This is different from a “summer squash,” like zucchini, which does not keep. Ask students if they can name any other winter squashes (pumpkin, buttercup, butternut, delicata, spaghetti). You can ask if anyone knows what the squash looks like on the inside. If you cut it open, you would see the orange flesh and the seeds in the middle. Most winter squash are orange inside; and in general, orange foods are good sources of vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for good vision, bone and skin health. Winter squash tastes creamy and mild, and often sweet. The school cook gets local winter squash that has been cooked and pureed and then frozen. This makes it much easier to use it whenever she wants to make this soup.

2. **Carrots** – Another orange vegetable in this soup is the carrot. Carrots are also good sources of vitamin A.
3. **Onions** – There are some onions in this soup, but you won’t notice them because they have been blended together with the other ingredients to a smooth puree. Onions are a popular food in almost all parts of the world. Both onions and carrots are available to our cafeteria from Vermont farms.

HOW TO CONDUCT THE TASTE TEST:

Pass out samples of the soup. Go over the remaining ingredients (broth, milk/cream, butter, salt) so that kids can focus on the flavors they taste. Have them close their eyes while try it. Conduct a survey. Did they taste it? Did they like it? Would they eat it again? Point out when this soup will be served in the cafeteria at school.

Taste Test Do's and Don'ts

TASTE TESTS DO'S	TASTE TEST DON'TS
Involve as many teachers, food service employees, parents, and other interested, school community linked adults as possible.	Expect things to happen too quickly. <i>(Substantive change takes time, dedication, set backs, disappointment and hard work.)</i>
Empower your food service workers to take over roles. More than merely "lunch ladies," food service workers have valuable insights into the eating habits and preferences of the students they serve daily.	Immediately ask kids what they want. <i>(You likely know the answer: pizza, french fries, ice cream, soda, and candy are likely to be their ideas for improving school lunch.)</i>
Provide students with choices from pre-selected, preferably locally grown or produced food items. Having options is good, but keep it within a reasonable scope based on availability and cost.	Introduce strange, exotic, or hard-to-get foods. <i>(Kids will try lots of things but their palates are not necessarily ready for "adult" foods. Also, cafeterias are unlikely to offer exotic foods that are hard to find and/or pay for.)</i>
Involve students in the preparation, serving, sampling, and tabulation of results from classroom or cafeteria-based taste tests.	Expect kids to love the food you're offering if they didn't have a hand in the preparation or were not involved in the taste test process.
Strengthen connections between teachers, administrators, and food service personnel by attempting to include them in normal school functions such as faculty meetings, awards or celebration ceremonies, lunch-related events and other in-class goings on.	Think changes can be made without the help and support of the food service personnel and food service director. <i>(Everyone should be focused on the same goal: serving students nutritious food, and it takes a variety of adult roles to see this come to fruition.)</i>
Think sustainability — testing food items you can serve with some regularity is better than offering exotic foods that will never find their way to lunch trays.	Be discouraged if food isn't accepted right away. <i>(Word of mouth, peer pressure, and repeated exposure will help build interest.)</i>

adapted from Dan Treinis, teacher, Burlington School Food Project

Safety Tips for Cooking with Children & Youth

Safety is the #1 priority when cooking with children. Adults should supervise all food preparation and cooking activities.

- 1 Be sure to wash your hands with soap and water before touching food.**
Teach proper hygiene and respect in the kitchen. Gloves can be used if the products will be served raw. If the products will be cooked, gloves are not required.
- 2 Start with a clean cooking area.**
Clean all counter tops and surfaces before preparing food on them.
- 3 Be careful with knives (and other tools like graters).**
Teach children the proper ways to hold them, wash them, carry them and store them. Instill the importance and responsibility that comes with safe knife and equipment handling. Most children take this responsibility very seriously.
- 4 Tie back long hair and pull up long sleeves before washing hands.**
Try to eliminate as many possible hygiene or safety interferences prior to cooking.
- 5 Do only one job at a time and avoid multiple distractions.**
It's easy for children to get excited and sidetracked with too many tasks and environmental distractions. Try to provide a calm and focused environment so that the students can engage in the task at hand.
- 6 Work in small groups.**
Cooking with children is most successful when they can work in groups of no more than 5-6 (with at least 1 adult per group). Younger groups benefit from even smaller groups. Cooking in the classroom is a great way to involve parent volunteers and increase the number of adults in the classroom for cooking activities.
- 7 Encourage teamwork!**
Cooking together is a great way to build relationships and learn to work together. Try dividing the recipe and cooking jobs up so that everyone can participate equally. Encourage students to work together when measuring, mixing and monitoring food preparation.
- 8 Play it safe!**
When it comes to buying, preparing, cooking and storing food - check expiration dates, wash your produce well, cook (cooked food) thoroughly and store foods properly so they don't spoil.
- 9 Clean up!**
Include cleaning up and composting as part of the activity time.
- 10 Have FUN!**
Cooking with children is enjoyable and rewarding. Teach a child to cook and you feed him/her for a lifetime!

Taste Test Ideas

Whole Grains

Feature whole grain foods and foods made with whole grains. Many grain-based foods are made with refined grains rather than whole grains. For more information on the differences between whole grain foods and refined grain foods, see "What Is a Whole Grain?" and "Examples of Whole Grains and Refined Grains".

Examples of Whole Grains taste test ideas:

- brown rice with chicken-and-veggie stir-fry
- whole wheat waffles served with low-fat yogurt and berries
- whole grain sandwich with low-fat melted cheese
- graham crackers with peanut butter
- whole grain pasta served with olive oil and Parmesan cheese
- low-fat popcorn seasoned with Parmesan cheese
- pizza made with whole grain crust and low-fat cheese
- low-fat oatmeal cookies
- whole grain crackers with low-fat cheese
- brown rice cake
- whole wheat macaroni and low-fat cheese
- whole grain rolls with turkey
- low-fat cheese soup in whole wheat bread bowl
- whole wheat bread bowl with chicken-noodle soup
- low-fat cheese quesadilla on whole wheat or corn tortilla
- whole grain, low-sugar granola or granola bars
- brown rice pilaf
- whole wheat pita bread filled with fresh salad greens and turkey or cheese
- whole grain cereals (either as a dry snack or with low-fat or fat-free milk)
- oatmeal with fruit toppings (such as raisins, banana slices or apple compote)



Seeing Whole Grains

Students may not be familiar with the look and feel of whole grains in their natural form. In addition to distributing flyers and hanging posters that show the parts of a whole grain, you might consider doing the following:

- Display samples of whole grains in their natural form (such as popcorn, oatmeal, barley, bulgur and wheat).
- Display the "Great Grain Caper" Poster— and challenge students to find as many whole grains as they can.
- Play "Match the Grain Game." Give students descriptions of several whole grains and then ask them to identify the grains in separate, clear containers.



Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Many kids think they don't like fruits and vegetables, but often that's because they haven't been exposed to a variety of produce. Help students make better food choices by adding fruits and vegetables to their daily diets, offering as many different fruits and vegetables as you can. Whenever possible, feature fresh, local produce. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables also offer nutritious options.

Serve raw fruit with low-fat yogurt dip flavored with fruit juice or fruit pieces.

- strawberries
- blueberries
- raspberries
- blackberries
- grapes
- kiwi
- mango
- papaya
- citrus fruit
- cantaloupe
- honey dew melon
- pineapple
- cherries
- star fruit
- pear
- plum
- apricot
- peach
- nectarine
- cranberry
- watermelon

Serve veggies with low-fat yogurt dip flavored with herbs.

- asparagus
- beets
- jicama
- bell peppers of all colors
- carrots
- grape tomatoes
- cucumbers
- broccoli
- cauliflower
- green onions
- okra
- celery
- fresh green beans
- snow peas
- avocado
- artichoke
- summer squash
- zucchini
- eggplant
- mushrooms
- radishes
- sweet potatoes
- sugar snap peas

Other fruits and vegetables to taste:

- baked potato bar with low-fat cheese and veggie toppings
- fruit smoothies made with low-fat or fat-free yogurt or milk
- tropical fruit salad
- spinach salad with whole grain croutons
- fruit and yogurt parfait with low-fat, low-sugar granola
- low-sugar cranberry sauce
- pineapple juice
- tomato juice



Fruit and Vegetable Education Bar

Think about adding a Fruit and Vegetable Education Bar to the cafeteria during the taste test.



Include information about the fruits and vegetables featured, such as small education cards for each fruit and vegetable and include the following information: the name of the fruit/vegetables, where it is grown, how to eat it, what nutrients it contains, how to store it, where to buy it, and how much it costs. Copy the education cards on brightly colored paper. Make enough cards so that each participant can take one for each fruit and vegetable that's offered. You might also develop an evaluation form that students can use to rate the fruits they taste.

Milk & Milk Products

Feature low-fat and fat-free white milk, flavored milks and other dairy products, including yogurt and cheese as part of your taste test event. Whatever milk products you serve, make sure it's low-fat or fat-free and ice-cold for great taste! Some taste test ideas include:

Examples of Milk and Milk Product taste test ideas:

- String cheese
- Cheese with whole grain crackers
- Cheese or yogurt-based dip with veggies
- Cheese on pizza roll-up with whole grain tortilla
- Cheesy popcorn made with low-fat cheese
- Yogurt and berries on whole wheat waffles
- Milk with whole grain cereal
- Cottage cheese with fresh fruit
- Cheese soup in bread bowl
- Cheese on whole wheat pizza
- Cheese with baked potato
- Flavored, drinkable yogurt
- Macaroni and cheese
- Cheese quesadilla
- Melted cheese on broccoli
- Yogurt parfait with granola and fruit
- Lactose-free white or chocolate milk
- Yogurt smoothie made with fruit, low-fat milk and 100% fruit juice
- Ice-cold flavored fat-free and low-fat milk (make your own flavored milk by offering a variety of liquid or powdered flavor options that students can add to milk)



Milk Mustache Photos

This popular event, which can be held as a stand-alone event or as a fun companion event to milk/milk products taste tests, is a great way to encourage kids to drink more milk. Kids will want to have their photos taken — but the event will be even more fun if the principal, school nurse, teachers, parents and others pose for photos too! Once the photos have all been taken, print and post them around school and in the cafeteria. Also, post digital photos on the school's website. A fun extension is to have participants write captions for their photos by asking them to write a sentence or two about why they drink milk.



To ensure that participants have great milk mustaches, try one of the following:

- Place about 3 tablespoons of whipped cream in a small disposable cup. Participants can dip their top lip into the cup or use clean hands to apply their own unique milk mustache. Make sure you use a clean cup and fresh whipped cream for each participant.
- In a blender, mix 3 parts vanilla ice cream with 1 part milk. The resulting drink should be slightly thick so that it will stay on the participant's upper lip. Pour the mixture into small cups. Just before the photo is taken, the participant should hold the cup up to her mouth and tip it back while keeping her head still. Make sure she keeps her mouth closed as she "drinks on her mustache."

Implementing Taste Testing in Your School

Action for Healthy Kids

Action for Healthy Kids® is the nation's leading nonprofit and largest volunteer organization fighting childhood obesity and undernourishment. The organization assists schools in becoming healthier places so our kids can learn to eat right, become active every day and are more ready to learn.

Action for Healthy Kids, and the National Dairy Council, Fuel Up to Play 60, offer programs and resources that encourage children to eat healthy, be active, and make lasting changes toward improved health habits. Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge and Fuel Up to Play 60 are fun, interactive programs that get kids involved and help change behavior.



Game On!

Game On is the Ultimate Wellness Challenge urging America's elementary schools, their staff, students, and families to incorporate healthy food choices and physical activity into their daily lives and school environment.

The Making Better Food Choices challenges feature taste testing activities to help promote healthy eating in schools. for conducting successful taste testing events can also be found at this resource's website:

http://www.a4hk.org/gotuwc/uploads/tools/MBFC_Overview.pdf



Tips

Fuel Up to Play 60



Fuel Up to Play 60 is an in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by National Dairy Council (NDC) and NFL, in collaboration with the USDA, to combat childhood obesity. One of Fuel Up to Play 60's "Plays" challenges schools to conduct taste testing events with current menu items as well as new menu items. The "Play" explains how to choose which food items to test, how to make students aware of the event, and how to conduct a

successful test tasting event. This specific "Play" is targeted to elementary and secondary grade levels.

Visit <http://school.fueluptoplay60.com/playbook/play.php?id=15810700> to find the taste testing "Play".

Appendix B: Food Safety Tips

Keep Hot Food Hot & Cold Food Cold.

Some food safety principles remain constant for all kitchens:

- “Keep hot food hot and cold food cold”,
- Keep foods out of the “Danger Zone.”

Focus on the “Danger Zone”

Understanding the “Danger Zone” is critical because bacteria can multiply rapidly in any perishable food that is left in the “Danger Zone” (between 40 and 140 °F) for more than 2 hours.

- Cold food should not rise above 40 °F
- Hot food that fall below 140 °F

Avoid the “Danger Zone” by keeping hot food hot and cold food cold!

Remember the 2-Hour Rule:

Perishable food should never be left in the “Danger Zone” for more than 2 hours. This includes both hot food and cold food. If it's been more than 2 hours (or 1 hour in temperatures above 90 °F) — discard the food.

Preparation Tips for Produce

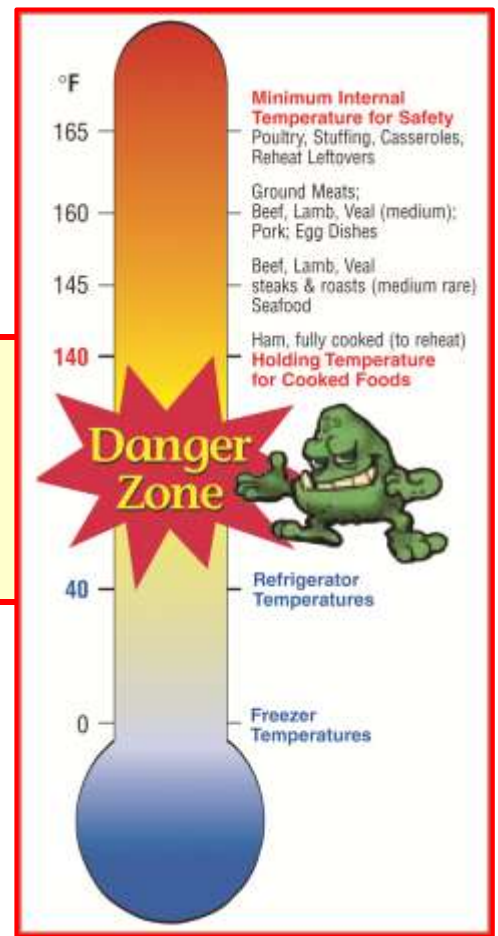
Fresh fruits and veggies are nutritional mainstays. Here's how to make sure they're safe:

- Before eating or preparing, wash fresh produce under cold running tap water to remove any lingering dirt. This also reduces bacteria that may be present. Firm produce (like apples or potatoes) can be scrubbed with a brush.
- Don't wash fruits and vegetables with detergent or soap. These products are not approved for use on food. You could ingest residues from soap or detergent absorbed by the produce.
- Remove and throw away bruised or damaged portions of fruits and vegetables when preparing to cook them or before eating them raw.

Keep Everything Clean.

It's a fact that bacteria can easily spread by hands, utensils, cutting boards, and juices.

- Always wash hands before and after handling food
- Soap and water are essential to cleanliness, so if you are going somewhere that will not have running water, bring water with you or have disposable wipes on hand.



Cross-Contamination

Cross-contamination is the transfer of harmful bacteria to a food from other foods, cutting boards, utensils, surfaces, or hands. It is prevented by keeping food separated and by keeping hands, utensils, and food handling surfaces clean.



Source: USDA Kitchen Companion

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Kitchen_Companion.pdf

Whole Grains: *Make at least half of your grains whole grains*

Why Whole Grains?

People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases (such as heart disease), can help with weight management, and can alleviate constipation. Grains provide many nutrients that are vital for the health and maintenance of our bodies.

Grains are divided into 2 subgroups: Whole Grains and Refined Grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel (the bran, germ, and endosperm), while refined grains have had the bran and germ removed during a milling process that can give the grains a finer texture and improve shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. Most refined grains are *enriched* (meaning certain B vitamins – thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid – and iron are added back), but fiber is not added back to enriched grains.

Commonly eaten whole grains:

- Whole wheat breakfast cereals
- Brown rice
- Whole wheat pasta
- Oatmeal
- Popcorn
- Whole wheat bread
- Whole wheat tortillas
- Wild Rice
- Quinoa



According to the new meal patterns of the National School Lunch Program, students in Grades K-8 will be offered at least 8 – 10 cups of grains weekly, and students in Grades 9-12 will be offered at least 10 – 12 cups of grains weekly.

Berry Bread Pudding

Makes 4 ½-cup servings

Ingredients:

1½ cups unsweetened, frozen berries, thawed (blueberries, raspberries, or sliced strawberries)
 ½ tsp sugar (optional)
 5 slices whole wheat bread, crusts removed
 Vanilla yogurt (optional)



Directions:

- Combine the thawed berries and sugar (sugar is optional).
- Layer a spoonful of berries on the bottom of a small 2 cup deep dish. Cover the berries and the bottom of the dish with a layer of bread. Continue layering berries and bread until the dish is full, finishing with a layer of bread.
- Cover the dish with plastic wrap and place a plate or bowl over the top of the berry dish that fits just inside of it. Place a heavy object on top to press down on the fruit and bread layers.
- Refrigerate overnight. Check the dish to be sure juice does not run over the top. You may need to replace the heavy object with a lighter one to prevent spills.
- Serve with a dollop of vanilla yogurt or a sprinkle of powdered sugar.

Dairy: Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.

Why Dairy?

The dairy group is made up of all fluid milk products and many foods made from milk. Most Dairy Group choices should be fat-free or low-fat. Consuming dairy products provides nutrients that are vital for health and maintenance of your body, such as calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein. The intake of dairy products is linked to improved bone health (it is especially important during childhood and adolescence, when bone mass is being built), may reduce the risk of osteoporosis, and is associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and with lower blood pressure in adults.

Research suggests chocolate milk is a popular choice in schools and if not an option, kids will drink less milk and get fewer essential nutrients. Through flavor reformulation, Ohio's school milk suppliers are leading the way to reduce added sugars and calories, while maintaining the same great taste kids love.

Chocolate milk contains the same nine essential nutrients as white milk, including vitamin D, calcium and potassium – three nutrients that most kids don't get enough of, according to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The Nutrition Facts on food labels do not distinguish between naturally-occurring and added sugars. It's important to know that milk has 12 grams of naturally-occurring sugar called lactose. These 12 grams are included in the table.

Commonly eaten dairy items:

- Fat-free milk
- Low-fat (1%) milk
- Flavored milk
- Cheese
- Yogurt
- Pudding



According to the new meal patterns of the National School Lunch Program, students in Grades K-12 will be offered at least 5 cups of fluid milk weekly.

Apple Brown Betty Smoothie

Makes 6 2/3-cup servings

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup fat-free or low-fat milk
- 2 Tbsp plain low-fat yogurt
- 1/3 cup applesauce
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 Tbsp caramel topping
- 1 Tbsp low-fat whipped topping (optional)
- 1 tsp sugar cookie crumbs (optional)

Directions:

- Combine milk, yogurt, applesauce, cinnamon and caramel topping in a blender; blend until very smooth.
- Top with whipped topping and a few cookie crumbs, if desired.

Recipe courtesy of Jean Gottfried - Upper Sandusky, OH. FIRST PRIZE WINNER of The National "got milk?"® "Ultimate" smoothie recipe contest.



Beans and Peas (Legumes): Canned, frozen, or cooked from dry

Did you know?

Beans and Peas are part of the Meat/Meat Alternative Group because they are an excellent source of plant protein and also contain iron and zinc; similar to meats, poultry, and fish. Beans and Peas are also part of the Vegetable Group because they are excellent sources of dietary fiber, folate, and potassium; similar to other vegetables. When meal planning, Beans and Peas can be served as a Meat/Meat Alternative or a Vegetable, but the serving cannot be counted as both groups simultaneously.

Commonly eaten beans and peas include:

- Black beans
- Black-eyed peas (mature, dry)
- Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Lima beans, mature
- Navy beans
- Pinto beans
- Soy beans/edamame
- Split peas
- White beans

*Green peas, green (string) beans, and green lima beans are not included in this category but can be found in other vegetable subcategories.



According to the new meal patterns of the National School Lunch Program, students in Grades K-12 will be offered at least ½ cup beans/peas weekly.

Hearty Healthy Rice and Beans

Makes 6 1-cup servings

Ingredients:

½ lb pork ham hock or turkey ham
 1 onion
 ½ lb brown rice
 3 cups dry black beans (soak overnight)
 1 ¼ peppers (each): red, green, yellow
 1 ¼ tsp brown sugar
 ½ Tbsp cumin
 1/3 Tbsp salt
 1-2 cups water

Directions:

- Cut peppers and onions into small pieces
- Add all produce, spices and water together. Mix well.
- Pour mixture into pan and place in oven or steamer.
- Cook on medium-high for about 4 -5 hours, mixing several times and adding water if needed for moisture.

**When using ham hock, pick out all pieces before serving students.
 When using turkey ham, cut into smaller, bite size pieces.



Dark Green Vegetables: Fresh, frozen, or canned

Why Dark Green Vegetables?

Dark green vegetables are important to consume daily because they are packed with fiber, vitamins, and minerals beneficial to overall health. The vegetables in this subcategory are low in calories (10-25 calories per serving) and contain nutrients such as Vitamin A, Vitamin C, potassium, and folate.

Commonly eaten dark green vegetables:

- Arugula
- Bok choy
- Broccoli
- Chicory
- Collard greens
- Dark green leafy lettuce
- Kale
- Mustard Greens
- Spinach
- Romaine lettuce
- Turnip greens
- Watercress



According to the new meal patterns of the National School Lunch Program, students in Grades K-12 will be offered at least ½ cup dark green vegetables weekly.

Spinach Strawberry Splash Salad

Makes 6 1-cup servings

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp strawberry sugar free preserves
- ½ tsp Italian salad dressing mix
- 2¼ tsp Balsamic vinegar
- 2½ tsp water
- ¾ tsp vegetable oil
- 6 cups spinach – raw, washed, ready to eat
- ½ cup mandarin oranges – canned, light syrup
- ¾ cup sliced strawberries
- 1 Tbsp feta cheese, crumbled



Directions:

- Prepare dressing:
 - Microwave strawberry preserves until warm and slightly runny.
 - Mix preserves, salad dressing mix, balsamic vinegar, water and vegetable oil. Use a mixer or a blender for best results. Set aside.
- Prepare salad:
 - Toss spinach, mandarin oranges, and strawberries lightly
 - Just before serving, toss in the dressing and feta cheese
 - Garnish with fresh sliced oranges, if desired
 - Serve at 41° F or lower

** The dressing can be made ahead and placed in a refrigerator for up to one week. It is recommended the dressing be made at least one day in advance for maximum flavor.*

Red/Orange Vegetables: Fresh, frozen, or canned

Why Red/Orange Vegetables?

Red and orange vegetables should be included in your daily diet because they contain important nutrients such as dietary fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and potassium. Eat red/orange vegetables as a snack or simply add them into your favorite recipes!

Commonly eaten red/orange vegetables:

- Acorn squash
- Butternut squash
- Carrots
- Chili peppers (red)
- Orange peppers
- Pumpkin
- Red peppers
- Sweet potatoes/yams
- Tomatoes
- Winter squash



According to the new meal patterns of the National School Lunch Program, students in Grades K-8 will be offered at least $\frac{3}{4}$ cup red/orange vegetables weekly, and students in Grades 9-12 will be offered at least $1\frac{1}{4}$ cup red/orange vegetables weekly.

Big Time Butternut Squash & Zucchini Pasta

Makes 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ -cup servings

Ingredients:

- 8 oz whole wheat penne pasta
- 4 oz yellow onion
- 8 oz summer squash
- 8 oz winter squash
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup parmesan cheese
- dash of pepper

Directions:

- Cook pasta al dente and rinse in cold water. Season pasta with pepper and drizzle with olive oil; toss gently; set aside.
- While pasta is cooking, peel and seed one medium butternut squash. Season with pepper and olive oil.
- Cook the squash in a medium roasting pan with approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of water in at 375°F until tender (~ 30-40 minutes).
- Cut onions and zucchini into thin strips.
- Put onions and olive oil in a hot skillet on the stove top and cook for about 15 minutes.
- Add the balsamic vinegar to the onions and continue cooking.
- Add zucchini and toss with the onions. Continue cooking for 5 more minutes.
- Combine the cooked pasta, squash and the onion/zucchini mixture and toss.
- Sprinkle each portion with parmesan cheese.

