

## MyPyramid — Vegetable Group

Karen Schledewitz, Extension Assistant  
Linda Boeckner, Extension Nutrition Specialist

MyPyramid – the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guide system – is an interactive, online guide that provides individuals with recommended food amounts based on their sex, age and activity level. This personalized guide may be found at [www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov). For healthful diets, stay within your calorie limit while getting needed nutrients from each of the basic food groups. Learn to balance food intake and physical activity to maintain a healthy weight.



This fact sheet provides a look at the **Vegetable Group** from MyPyramid. Any vegetable or vegetable juice is part of this food group. For those needing a 2,000 calorie diet, MyPyramid recommends 2 1/2 cups of vegetables each day. More or less cups of vegetables may be eaten depending on individual recommended daily calorie needs.

Go to [www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov) to find the calorie level and vegetable amount that is right for you. Learn about eating a variety of vegetables from each of the five vegetable subgroups. Color your plate with vegetables to get the best food value. The table below provides information about the different kinds of vegetables and the recommended weekly amounts of each group to fit into a 2,000 calorie diet.

<i>Vegetable Subgroup</i>	<i>Vegetables in Subgroup</i>	<i>Recommended Weekly Amount from Subgroup for a 2,000 Calorie Diet</i>
<b>Dark Green Vegetables</b>	bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, dark green leafy lettuce, kale, mustard greens, romaine lettuce, spinach, turnip greens, watercress	3 cups per week
<b>Orange Vegetables</b>	acorn squash, butternut squash, carrots, hubbard squash, pumpkin, sweet potatoes	2 cups per week
<b>Dry Peas and Beans (Legumes)</b>	black beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, soy beans, split peas, tofu, white beans	3 cups per week
<b>Starchy Vegetables</b>	corn, green peas, green lima beans, potatoes	3 cups per week
<b>Other Vegetables</b>	artichokes, asparagus, bean sprouts, beets, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, green or red peppers, iceberg lettuce, mushrooms, okra, onions, parsnips, tomatoes, tomato or vegetable juice, turnips, wax beans, zucchini	6 1/2 cups per week

## Fitting Vegetables into Your Daily Plan

MyPyramid's vegetable group includes any raw, cooked, fresh, frozen, canned or dried vegetable. One cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or two cups of raw leafy green vegetables count as one cup from this group. For the most healthful diet, eat dark green and orange vegetables and dry beans (legumes). This colorful variety of vegetables will help provide the full range of vitamins, fiber and minerals.

Vegetables are popular with people who watch their weight because they are low in calories and fat. However, some ways vegetables are prepared may add extra fat. For example, fried or buttered vegetables have many more calories and fat than plain vegetables. Cheese, cream sauces and salad dressing also add extra fat. Keep calories low by eating fresh or steamed vegetables and leaving off the fat.

### Why include vegetables?

Vegetables bring color, texture and flavor to our meals. More importantly, they provide potassium, dietary fiber, folate, vitamins A and C, and many phytochemicals. Some of the health benefits gained by eating a diet rich in a variety of vegetables include:

- reduced risk for stroke, coronary heart disease and other cardiovascular diseases
- reduced risk of type 2 diabetes
- protection from certain types of cancer
- reduced risk of developing kidney stones
- increased protection from bone loss
- help with weight management

## How to include more vegetables

Try these tips for including more vegetables in your daily diet.

- Include chopped vegetables in pasta sauce, lasagna or on top of pizza.
- Grill vegetable kabobs or vegetables in foil as part of a barbecue meal.
- Shred carrots or zucchini into meatloaf, casseroles, quick breads and muffins.
- Try a main dish salad or stir-fry with vegetables.
- Try a low-fat or fat-free dressing as a dip with raw broccoli, green peppers, celery, carrots or cauliflower.
- Load up stews and soups with extra vegetables.
- Keep ready-to-eat vegetables in your refrigerator.
- Pack vegetables in snack packs to take with you when you travel.
- Add a vegetable salad or side dish to your lunches and evening meals.
- Add vegetables to breakfast burritos or breakfast omelettes.

### References

United States Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*. 6th edition, Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005.

## Index: Foods and Nutrition

### Buying

Issued November 2005

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.