April 2014

Mealtime Memo for Child Care

Vegetable Subgroups, continued P.02

Fruit of the Month P.03

Nutrition Fun Fact P.03

Nutrition Tip P.03

References P.04

Vegetable Subgroups

A healthy diet should be full of colorful fruits and vegetables. MyPlate suggests that half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables. There are a variety of vegetables to choose from that can make a plate bright and colorful. A serving consists of 1 cup of raw vegetables or ½ cup cooked vegetables. They are divided into five subgroups based on their nutrient content. The subgroups include dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, starchy vegetables, beans and peas, and other vegetables.

The dark leafy vegetables of the dark green subgroup are low in calories and have vitamins A and C. They also provide fiber and minerals such as potassium, magnesium, and calcium. The red and orange vegetables are good sources of nutrients like vitamin A, potassium, and fiber. Starchy vegetables are higher in calories. They also have nutrients such as fiber and are a source of carbohydrates, but should be eaten in smaller amounts than the other vegetable subgroups. Choose dark green and red/orange vegetables more often than starchy vegetables.

Vegetable Subgroups continued on page 2

Vegetable Subgroups continued from page 1

Vegetable Subgroups

In the Child and Adult Care Food Program, beans and peas can count as either a vegetable or a Meat Alternate. Dry or mature beans and peas have protein, fiber, folate and many minerals. The vegetables in the "other" group have a variety of nutrients. The table below provides some examples of each subgroup.

Dark Green Vegetables	Red & Orange Vegetables	Starchy Vegetables	Beans & Peas	Other Vegetables
Bok Choy Broccoli Collard Greens Dark Leafy Lettuce Kale Mustard Greens Romaine Lettuce Spinach Turnip Greens Water Cress	Acorn Squash Butternut Squash Carrots Hubbard Squash Pumpkin Red Peppers Sweet Potatoes Tomatoes Tomato Juice	Cassava Corn Fresh Cowpeas Field Peas Black-eyed Peas Green Bananas Green Peas Green Lima Beans Plantains Potatoes Water Chestnuts	Black Beans Black-Eyed Peas (dry) Chickpeas Kidney Beans Lentils Navy Beans Pinto Beans Soy Beans Split Peas White Beans	Asparagus Brussels Sprouts Cabbage Celery Cucumbers Eggplants Green Beans Green Peppers Iceberg Lettuce Okra Turnips Zucchini

*For more information on subgroups, visit: http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables.html or http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/lesson3handouts.pdf

Variety is the Spice of Life

Vegetables can be found in many different forms including fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% juice. They provide essential vitamins and minerals that the body cannot make, which help keep you healthy. Many vegetables are high in fiber. Fiber helps you feel full longer and assists food in moving through the digestive system. Vegetables are naturally low in fat, calories, and cholesterol. They also may help reduce the risk of developing cancer, stroke and diseases such as heart disease.

Like all fresh produce items, vegetables are perishable, meaning they will spoil quicker than other food items. They should be used within a few days of buying. Some vegetables can be refrigerated, while others can be stored on the counter.

Cooking with Vegetable Subgroups

When preparing vegetables, it is important to cook foods in the healthiest and most appealing way. Overcooked vegetables not only lose some of their nutrients but also become mushy and will be less likely accepted by young children. Vegetables such as green beans, carrots, or broccoli can be steamed for a tender vegetable dish. Root vegetables such as sweet potatoes, carrots, beets, and turnips are good for roasting. Other cooking methods include grilling, broiling, sautéing, and baking. Herbs and spices are a great way to add flavor to vegetable dishes without added calories from fat and extra salt.

Children are most likely to try new vegetables when they are served with other well-liked foods. Remember that a diet with a variety of vegetables is the key to being healthy! Encouraging children to try new vegetables from all the subgroups can help them develop healthy eating habits at an early age.

Fruit of the Month
Apricots

Apricots are sweet fruit with a hint of tartness. The fruit is comparable to a plum. Originally from China, most apricots are grown in California. Apricots are an excellent source of vitamin A and C, containing at least 20% Daily Value of both the vitamins. They are also a good source of potassium and fiber, having 10-19% of the Daily Value of these nutrients. Apricots are at their peak when they are evenly colored and are plump, but firm to the touch. They can be stored at room temperature until ripened and then refrigerated for extended shelf life. Apricots can be enjoyed fresh, frozen, dried, or canned.

Nutrition Tip

Childhood obesity rates have skyrocketed in past years and children tend to drink high amounts of sugary beverages that are linked to high obesity rates. It is important to provide the right drink to help children grow strong and healthy. Limit sweetened drinks and serve water to keep kids properly hydrated. Low-fat or fat-free milk is a healthy drink option to serve to growing children. 100% fruit juice with no added sugar or sweeteners is a healthy drink option when fruit is not available, but servings should be limited. Act as a role model for the children and encourage them to be healthy, so that they will develop healthy eating habits.

Nutrition Fact

The tropical fat, coconut oil has exploded on the markets in recent months. Did you know that coconut oil is high in saturated fat? Saturated fats are usually solid at room temperature and found in animals, animal products, and tropical oils. This is important to know because saturated fats are linked to chronic diseases, such as heart disease. One tablespoon of coconut oil contains about 12 grams of saturated fat. Using this fat can add extra, unwanted calories to your diet. As there are many health claims and benefits on the market for coconut oil, it is important to remember that not only is it a fat, it is a saturated fat. A better cooking fat would be a heart healthy option such as olive oil, which is usually liquid at room temperature.

References

Califapriocot.com. (2012). *General information.* Retrieved from http://www.califapricot.com/

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). *Saturated fat.* Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/basics/fat/saturatedfat.html

Fruits & Veggies More Matters. (2014). *Apricots.* Retrieved from: http://www.fruitsandveggiesmo-rematters.org/south-african-baby-pineapple-nutrition-selection-storage

United States Department of Agriculture. (2013). *What foods are in the vegetable group?* Retrieved from http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables.html

National Food Service Management Institute. (2013). *Serving a variety of vegetables on a budget.* Retrieved from: http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20130412031844.pdf

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2012). *Water and 100% juice: NRC health and safety tips.* Retrieved from: http://nrckids.org/default/assets/File/JuiceTipSheet.pdf

New Mexico State University. (2012). *MyPlate – the vegetable group: vary your veggies.* Retrieved from: http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_e/E139.pdf

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the National Food Service Management Institute at The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government. The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/TitleVI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights; Room, 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

© 2014, National Food Service Management Institute, The University of Mississippi

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold.

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by The University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images.