



Veggie Vibes: The 5 Vegetable Subgroups

There are a wide variety of vegetables available for us to offer to students. Because of this, vegetables are categorized into 5 subgroups based on their visual and nutritional identity.

As a USDA Child Nutrition Programs participant, we have weekly targets to offer each vegetable subgroup to our students, in age-appropriate serving sizes, and daily total vegetable offering targets, to ensure they have access to a variety of nutrients!

Please see the right-hand column to learn more about each of the five vegetable subgroups!

Dark Green Vegetables

These vegetables are categorized by their color and nutrition profile. Dark green vegetables are typically higher in nutrients like potassium & calcium to help with blood, bone and muscle health. Examples include: spinach, kale, broccoli, or collard greens.



Starchy Vegetables

This subgroup refers to vegetables that contain more carbohydrates than other vegetable subgroups. Providing us with energy we need throughout the day! Examples include: white potatoes, corn, green peas, cassava, or plantains.



Red/Orange Vegetables

This subgroup refers to red & orange colored vegetables. Because of their color, they usually have higher amounts of vitamin A and C in them to help our immune system. Examples include: tomatoes, sweet potato, pumpkin, or carrots.



Beans, Peas & Lentils

This vegetable subgroup is unique because they are high in protein, and rich in iron & fiber. Helping us stay full & satisfied! These vegetables are a great plant-based protein addition AND nutrient source! Examples include dried and canned variations, like black beans, chickpeas, or red lentils.



Other Vegetables

This subgroup refers to any vegetable that does not fall into the other 4 subgroups but still offer us valuable nutrients. Examples include: zucchini, celery, cabbage, avocado, asparagus, or mushrooms.

