



Senior Series

A partnership between Ohio State University Extension
and Ohio Aging Network professionals



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Putting MyPyramid on Your Table

Vegetable Group

MyPyramid is a guide to help people of any age plan a healthy diet. As we age, we need to plan more carefully the food that we choose in order to stay healthy. Individual calorie and nutrient needs change over time. This series of *Putting MyPyramid on Your Table* can help you choose foods that fit into a daily food plan to maintain good health.



Vegetable Group

Vary your veggies

MyPyramid.gov

Choosing Vegetables

Choose a variety of vegetables each day. Two and one-half cups are recommended per day based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Vegetables provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body, including potassium, dietary fiber, folate (folic acid), vitamin A, vitamin E, and vitamin C. People who eat vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet are more likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and some types of cancer.

Vary Your Veggies

- Eat more dark-green veggies like broccoli, spinach, and other dark leafy greens.

- Eat more orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes.
- Eat more dry beans and peas like pinto beans, kidney beans, and lentils.

Buying Vegetables

Vegetables are easy to buy and are usually inexpensive.

- **Fresh.** Buy fresh vegetables in season. They are lower in cost. Buy only the amount that you can use within 2 to 3 days. Wash vegetables in cold water before using.
- **Frozen.** Choose plain vegetables rather than those frozen with sauces in order to control fat and calories. Look for individually quick frozen (IQF) packages. When purchasing IQF it allows you to use a small amount of the vegetables at a time and keep the rest frozen for later use.
- **Canned.** Using canned vegetables as an addition to soups and casseroles is a good idea especially when the fresh varieties are not in season. Look for “no salt added” labeling if you are trying to cut back on your sodium consumption. Do not purchase dented or bulging cans.
- **Dried.** When purchasing dried beans, look for bright colors and

bags that are not torn. These are a high-fiber, low-fat addition to many main dishes.

Adding Flavor

Plain vegetables without added sauces are low in fat and salt.

Vegetables have their own special flavors. If the flavor is too plain, try using artificial butter flavoring instead of real butter. Real butter has a lot more fat than butter sprinkles. Other good toppings include non-fat or low-fat sour cream, low-fat yogurt, and low-fat cottage cheese. Special herbs and spices can be purchased at the grocery store and used to flavor vegetables.

Consume a variety of nutrient dense foods and beverages within and among the basic food groups while choosing foods that limit the intake of saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, salt, and alcohol.

Vegetables are an important part of MyPyramid. Look for other *Putting MyPyramid on Your Table* fact sheets.

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