

Cafeteria Connection

Connecting you to your child's school lunchroom



Vegetable Subgroups:

WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY DO THEY MATTER

As you know, vegetables are **power-packed sources of essential nutrients vital for good health**. What you might not know are the vegetable requirements we must adhere to when creating school lunches.

MEET THE FANTASTIC FIVE

Our school lunch menu is planned to include vegetables from each of five distinct subgroups each week:

- 1. Dark Green Vegetables:** Think spinach, kale, and broccoli. These deep greens are rich in iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C, promoting strong bones and a robust immune system.
- 2. Red/Orange Vegetables:** Carrots, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and bell peppers fall into this category. Packed with beta-carotene, these veggies support healthy vision and skin.
- 3. Beans and Peas:** The legume family, including chickpeas and lentils, adds a protein punch to meals. These fiber-rich wonders contribute to sustained energy levels and digestive health.
- 4. Starchy Vegetables:** Potatoes, corn, and peas are familiar favorites from this subgroup. While they are higher in carbohydrates, they offer valuable nutrients like potassium and fiber.
- 5. Other Vegetables:** This catch-all category includes a diverse group of vegetables: cauliflower, zucchini, mushrooms, and other unique veggies that bring a variety of flavors and nutrients to the table.

MEETING USDA STANDARDS

Our school lunch program aligns with USDA requirements, ensuring that each subgroup is represented in our weekly menus. This not only meets nutritional standards but also introduces our students to a variety of flavors and textures through each subgroup offered, all to reach the goal of good nutrition.

YOUR ROLE IN ENCOURAGING VEGGIE EXPLORATION

Parents, encourage your kids to explore the vibrant world of vegetables, both at school and at home. Try including a variety of vegetables at snacks and meals served at home. By fostering a positive attitude toward diverse veggies, we collectively contribute to the health and development of our students.