

FOOD VARIETIES GALORE!

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There is an old saying that variety is the spice of life. This statement is also true when menu planning for young children. By offering a variety of food options, it helps children to get the nutrients needed for healthy growth and development. It also allows them to experience new textures, which can help toddlers strengthen their chewing skills. The greater variety of foods children are offered, the more likely they are to try and to like new foods.

Although adding variety may seem easier said than done, this resource was designed to help with that process. Composed of over 10 categories of menu items, this series of handouts identifies varieties of each item that can easily be incorporated in most menus. Useful information, such as descriptions, defining characteristics, and common uses/preparations, are included for many of the items. There are also fun and interesting facts that can be used for nutrition education or to peak the children's interest.






Not sure where to begin? Start small, remember to be patient, and keep trying. It has been shown that children will need to try a new food 6–15 times before they try or acquire a taste for it.¹ Best of luck and enjoy exploring these *Food Varieties Galore!*

Please refer to the updated meal standards at www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks for the USDA Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) for specific meal pattern requirements by age.






¹ De Cosmi, V., Scaglioni, S., & Agostoni, C. (2017). Early Taste Experiences and Later Food Choices. *Nutrients*, 9(2), 107. doi:10.3390/nu9020107

APPLES

Consuming a variety of fruit is considered part of a healthy eating style. USDA's *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Best Practices* (n.d.) suggests "mak(ing) at least one of the two required meal pattern components of a snack a vegetable or fruit."² Apples are a popular choice to help meet that recommendation. They are high in fiber, vitamin C, and potassium, yet contain no fat, sodium, or cholesterol. Although it differs by region of the United States, there are varieties of apples available year-round. Here are a few popular varieties to consider.




Varieties		Defining Characteristics	Common Uses/ Preparations				Interesting Facts
			Baked	Salads	Sauce	Snack	
	Ambrosia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet, honey flavor • Very thin skin 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known as the "irresistable apple"
	Braeburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bold, sweet, tangy flavor with a hint of cinnamon • Super crisp texture • Skin color varies from greenish gold with red sections to nearly solid red 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovered in New Zealand in 1952
	Fuji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crunchy texture • Super sweet flavor with slight spiciness • Skin color varies from yellow-green with red highlights to very red 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flavor improves in storage • Identified in Japan in the late 1930s/ early 1940s and released to the market in 1962

² U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). *Best practices*. https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf

Varieties		Defining Characteristics	Common Uses/ Preparations				Interesting Facts
			Baked	Salads	Sauce	Snack	
	Gala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tastes and smells sweet • Thin skin • Skin color isn't uniform; pink-orange stripes over yellow background 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovered in New Zealand in 1934 and introduced to the market in 1965
	Golden Delicious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet, mellow flavor • Thin, tender, yellow skin • Firm, white flesh • Bruises easily 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered a great all-purpose apple • Flavor can vary depending on where they are grown • Discovered in West Virginia in the late 1800s and introduced to the market in 1914
	Granny Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tart flavor • Firm, juicy, and crunchy flesh • Light green skin 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovered in 1868 in Australia • Believed to be descended from French crab apples
	Honeycrisp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet flavor with a subtle tartness • Crisp, juicy flesh • Bright red skin speckled with pale green 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed in the 1960s at the University of Minnesota and introduced to the market in the 1990s • Bred to tolerate cold weather harvesting • Flavor varies depending on maturity of apple
	Red Delicious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mildly sweet flavor • Crunchy flesh • Bright red skin 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally marketed as a Hawkeye apple • Skin becomes darker red as it matures



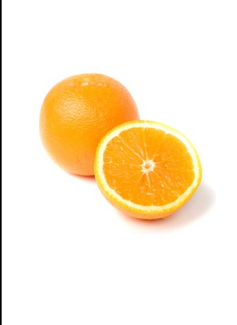
CHEESES






Dairy consumption is especially important for bone health during childhood and adolescence when bone mass is being built. To help children get the recommended daily amounts of dairy, which varies by age, cheese is a great option. The Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin (2020) note that by some estimates there are more than 1,800 different types of cheese in the world, many of which include fat-free and low-fat (1%) varieties that are vital to maintaining healthy eating patterns. Here are a few of the more common varieties to consider.






Varieties		Appearance	Texture	Flavor	Common Uses/Serving Ideas						Interesting Facts
					Grated...	Melted...	On its own...	Paired with...	Shredded...	Sliced...	
	Cheddar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies from ivory to deep yellow Dense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dry and crumbly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creamy and sharp Tangy and nutty 	Over pastas & casseroles	In cheese sauces	As a snack			In sandwiches or hamburgers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Originated in the village of Cheddar in southwest England Recorded in existence since the 12th century
	Colby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Golden yellow to orange Sometimes marbled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smooth and slightly elastic Contains tiny holes (called eyes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mild Creamy 			As a snack	Apple slices		In sandwiches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed in 1874 near Colby, Wisconsin Has a higher moisture content than Cheddar
	Colby Jack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marbled white and orange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smooth and semi-soft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies from creamy and mild to lightly sweet to sharp and tangy 		On nachos	As a snack	Apple or pear slices	On tacos	In sandwiches or hamburgers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A blend of two mellow cheeses: Colby and Monterey Jack

CITRUS FRUIT

Eating lots of fruits and vegetables daily is a goal that is encouraged by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The family of tangy fruits known as citrus offers a tasty and familiar choice. Citrus fruits are the perfect combination of sweet and sour and generally have juicy segments surrounded by a zesty rind. Although different citrus fruits have varying nutrient content, most are high in vitamin C and fiber and aid in absorption of other nutrients. Although availability will vary throughout the year based on the region in the United States, consider some of these varieties.





Types		Defining Characteristics	Uses	Interesting Facts
Oranges				
	Blood orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark red flesh • Raspberry-flavored • Somewhat bitter/sour • Tougher skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sliced or segmented in salads • Juiced in vinaigrette salad dressing • Sliced or juiced in baked goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as ruby oranges • Only citrus with this color flesh
	Navel orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round shape with dimpled, bright orange skin • Indentation on one end that resembles a human navel • Thicker skin but easy to peel • Sweet, juicy flavor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sliced or segmented as a snack • Sliced or segmented in salads • Zested in baked goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seedless in nature and grown by grafting, so all navel orange trees are genetically identical clones of original tree discovered in Brazil in 1820
	Valencia orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round shape with dimpled, bright orange skin • Thin to medium skin that peels easily • Sweet, juicy flavor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sliced or segmented as a snack • Sliced or segmented in salads • Zested in baked goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to ripen after harvest • The longer it ripens, the sweeter it tastes

Types		Defining Characteristics	Uses	Interesting Facts
Mandarins				
	Clementine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smallest type of mandarin • Glossy, smooth skin • Super sweet • Seedless • Red-orange • Peels easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segmented as a snack • Segmented in salads • Juiced in vinaigrette salad dressing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross between a mandarin orange and a sweet orange • At least 15 known varieties
	Tangerine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright, orange • Slightly tougher, bumpy skin • Juicy • Less sweet, more tart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segmented as a snack • Segmented in salads • Juiced in vinaigrette salad dressing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross between a mandarin and a pomelo • Second most produced citrus fruit in the world
	Tangelo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely juicy • Mildly sweet • Vary in size from small orange to grapefruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segmented as a snack • Segmented in salads • Juiced in vinaigrette salad dressing or marinades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross between a tangerine and a pomelo or grapefruit
Limes				
	Key lime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth green skin • Yellow-green flesh • Juicy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juiced or zested in marinades, dressings/ vinaigrettes, or sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grown commercially in the Florida Keys until the 1920's when groves were damaged by a hurricane
	Persian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light to dark green textured skin • Pale green flesh • Tart • Usually seedless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juiced or zested in marinades, dressings/ vinaigrettes, or sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as Tahiti limes • Cross between a key lime and a lemon




Types	Defining Characteristics	Uses	Interesting Facts
Grapefruit			
	White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thin, smooth yellow skin • Yellow flesh • Sweet-tart flavor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halved and sectioned as a snack • Sliced and infused in water • Sliced in half and baked <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicknamed the “forbidden fruit”
	Ruby Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red, white, or pink-colored flesh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halved and sectioned as a snack • Sliced and infused in water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross between a sweet orange and pomelo • Designated as the official fruit of Texas in 1993
Lemon			
	Meyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep yellow skin • Thin, smooth skin • Sweet, less acidic flavor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sliced in salads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross between a lemon and an orange
	Eureka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick, yellow skin • Tart, acidic flavor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sliced and infused in water • Juiced or zested in marinades and dressings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross between a sour orange and a citron • <i>Lemon</i> is derived from an Asian word for “sour fruit”
Other			
	Kumquat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiny and oblong-shaped • Sweet rind and sour flesh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diced or juiced in marinades and sauces • Sliced in salads (fruit and green) • Sliced in sandwiches • Baked into muffins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entirely edible (rind and flesh) • Name means “golden orange”

WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains contain all parts of the grain kernel, which includes the bran, germ, and endosperm. These foods are filled with a variety of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients that help children (and adults) stay healthy. USDA's *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Best Practices* suggests providing at least two servings of whole grain-rich grains per day.³ Here are several types of whole grains to consider.




Type		Defining Characteristics	Common Uses/ Preparations	Interesting Facts
	Amaranth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tiny, light tan beads• Nutty, earthy flavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substitute for couscous or orzo pastas• Baked goods• Substitute for rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gluten-free• Popped like popcorn in South America
	Barley	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chewy• Mild and nutty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added to soups and stews• Pilafs• Hot breakfast cereal• Added to casseroles and salads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considered a fiber powerhouse• Estimated 3.5 million acres planted in the United States each year
	Brown Rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nutty• Chewy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added to soups• Pilafs• Cooked with meats and vegetables• Added to salads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gluten-free• Considered one of the most easily digested grains
	Bulgur Wheat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nutty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added to soups• Pilafs• Binder for meatballs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Popular ingredient in Middle Eastern cuisine• Can be white or red• Grains have been partially cracked

³U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). *Child and adult care food program: Best practices*. https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf








Type		Defining Characteristics	Common Uses/ Preparations	Interesting Facts
	Oatmeal (instant, old fashioned, quick, rolled, & steel-cut)	• Mild and nutty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot or cold breakfast cereal • Binder for meatloaf and burgers • Crunchy topping for sweet and savory dishes 	• Rich in fiber, protein, and many vitamins and minerals
	Quinoa	• Sweet and nutty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed with beans or nuts for side dishes • Add to salads and stir-fries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent source of magnesium • Toasting it before boiling enhances the flavor
	Whole Wheat: bread, flour, pasta, tortillas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet and nutty • Mild • Chewy 	• Varied based on item	• Grown to some extent on every continent except Antarctica

LEAN PROTEINS

Meat, poultry, fish, whole eggs, nuts, and seeds are all part of the protein foods group. It is important to offer a variety of protein foods to ensure children (and adults) receive the optimal nutrient intake and health benefits of the foods they consume. USDA's *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Best Practices* suggests serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes and varying the choices.⁴ Consider choosing from this variety of options.




Type	Varieties	Common Uses/ Preparations	Interesting Facts
Beef, Pork, and Poultry			
	Beef <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labeled as lean or extra lean <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lean ground beef (must be at least 92% lean/8% fat) ◦ Top loin and top sirloin ◦ Round steaks and roasts (eye of, top and bottom round, and round tip) ◦ Chuck shoulder and arm roasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked • Broiled • Roasted • Stir-fried 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef is considered red meat. • A piece of meat about the size of a deck of cards is about three ounce-equivalents of protein. • Loin and round usually have least fat.
	Pork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pork loin • Tenderloin • Center loin • Ham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked • Broiled • Roasted • Stir-fried 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loin usually has the least fat.
	Poultry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skinless chicken breasts or take the skin off before cooking • Lean ground chicken • Skinless turkey cutlets • Lean ground turkey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked • Broiled • Roasted • Stir-fried 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin-on or bone-in tend to be less expensive. Remove the skin and all visible fat before cooking.





⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). *Child and adult care food program: Best practices*. https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf

Type	Varieties	Common Uses/ Preparations	Interesting Facts
Fish and Seafood			
	Salmon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steaks • Filets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked • Broiled • Grilled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides omega-3 fatty acids which are good for brain health
	Tuna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steaks • Chunked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked • Steamed • Grilled • Salad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent source of B vitamins, minerals, protein, and omega-3 fatty acids
	White fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlantic Cod • Pacific Cod • Alaskan Pollock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked • Poached • Steamed • Grilled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the leanest protein options • Most popular fish to make fish and chips
	Shrimp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White shrimp • Brown shrimp • Rock shrimp • Tiger shrimp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grilled • Baked • Sautéed • Stir-fried <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals
Other			
	Nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almonds • Hazelnuts • Pecans • Pistachios • Walnuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On their own as snacks • In salads, stir-fries, breads, or yogurt • Blended in a smoothie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants • Walnuts are high in omega-3 fatty acids • Keep nuts in the fridge to keep them from going bad (rancid).
	Seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chia • Flaxseed • Pumpkin (papas) • Sunflower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a salad • Coating for fish • Baking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer health benefits similar to nuts • Sunflower butter – common substitute for peanut butter
	Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard white eggs • Standard brown eggs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw and/or cooked sweet and savory dishes • Boiled, baked, or scrambled on its own as a snack or meal • Raw ingredient in baked goods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single large egg has more than 6 grams of protein. • More than half of an egg's protein is in the egg white.

LEAFY VEGETABLES




To help children get the recommended daily amounts of vegetables (which varies by age, gender, and level of physical activity), leafy vegetables are an easy option to offer. Because of their nutrient content, many varieties are considered dark-green vegetables, which is one of the five vegetable subgroups. In addition to adding color, crunch, and flavor to meals and snacks, leafy vegetables provides children (and adults) with dietary fiber and important nutrients like vitamins A and C. Here are a few of the more common varieties.

Varieties		Defining Characteristics	Common Uses/Preparations						Interesting Facts
			Base for salads	In sandwiches/wraps	In soups	Lettuce cups/wraps	Topping	Other	
	Arugula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant green leaves • Peppery flavor 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as “rocket”
	Butterhead lettuce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose head • Delicate green leaves • Buttery texture • Sweet, mild flavor 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes Bibb and Boston varieties
	Cabbage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight head • Light green to white leaves • Crunchy texture 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shredded as slaw • Steamed • Stuffed • Fermented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid cooking with aluminum – may cause a chemical reaction that discolors the vegetable and changes the flavor

Varieties		Defining Characteristics	Common Uses/Preparations						Interesting Facts
			Base for salads	In sandwiches/wraps	In soups	Lettuce cups/wraps	Topping	Other	
	Kale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Color varies (pale to deep green) • Large ruffled leaves with a long stem • Flavor varies from spicy to sweet to bitter 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw • Baked • Braised • Sautéed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as leaf cabbage • More tender during cooler months
	Loose leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, loosely packed leaves joined at a stem • Green leaves or shaded to red around the edge • Medium crispness • Mild, delicate flavor 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also called cutting or bunching lettuce
	Romaine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long, deep green leaves • Crisp texture • Strong flavor, sometimes bitter 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also called cos • Tear instead of cutting leaves, which destroys vitamin C
	Spinach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep green color leaves 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw • Baked • Braised • Sautéed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains 91% water





ONION VARIETIES







Onions, shallots, scallions, leeks, and chives are all part of the Allium plant family and are considered a root vegetable. They have an edible bulb that grows below the soil. Onions have many layers with thin, papery skin on the outside. They are recorded as being a food source for thousands of years and have medicinal qualities such as reducing inflammation in the body. Including onions in children's diets helps them to get the recommended daily amounts of vegetables (which varies by age, gender, and level of physical activity).

Type	Defining Characteristics	Common Uses/Preparations							Interesting Facts
		Grilled/ Roasted	Pickled	Salads	Sandwiches	Sauces	Soups/Stews	Other	
	Green	• Tall green shoots with small white bulb	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Garnish• Add color and crunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entire plant is used• Also known as scallions and spring onions
	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peppery and spicy but mild flavor• Deep purple color	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add color and crunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pairs well with strong-flavored leafy greens like arugula
	Shallots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small• Brown skin with purplish flesh• Combination of onion and garlic flavors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minced in salad dressings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recorded use since the 12th century

LEGUMES

Legumes are part of the protein foods group and are nutrient-rich sources of complex carbohydrates and contain dietary fiber. It is important to offer a variety of protein foods to ensure children (and adults) receive the optimal nutrient intake and health benefits of the foods they consume. USDA's *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Best Practices* suggests serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes and varying the choices of the proteins.⁵ Legumes are a great way to add more variety. Consider including some of these options.

Type		Defining Characteristics	Common Uses/ Preparations	Interesting Facts
	Black beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matte black skin • Sweet tasting • Soft texture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salads • Salsas • Mashed into veggie burger patties • Soups • Dips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as turtle beans • Excellent source of fiber, folate, iron, and magnesium
	Black-eyed peas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream-colored skin with a black “eye” in the center of the inner curve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salads • Casseroles • Fritters • Stews • Side dish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as cowpeas • Symbol of good luck in the New Year • Commonly combined and/or served with rice
	Kidney beans (dark red, light red, and white)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep red; light red, almost pink; or white glossy skin • Firm texture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chili • Salads • Sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High in fiber and folate
	Edamame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green skin • Soft texture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snacks • Salads • Casseroles • Rice dishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as immature (or fresh green) soybeans • Excellent source of calcium, iron, and potassium












Type		Defining Characteristics	Common Uses/ Preparations	Interesting Facts
	Garbanzo beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tan skin • Buttery, nutty flavor • Creamy texture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casseroles • Hummus • Soups • Salads • Snack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as chickpeas • One of the most common legumes in the world
	Great Northern bean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thin, white skin • Delicate flavor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chili • Soups • Dips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular in France because of cassoulet (a white bean casserole) • Excellent source of fiber and folate
	Lentils (brown, green, red/yellow, & specialty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild, nutty, peppery flavor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soups • Stews • Salads • Side dishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One serving provides nearly half as much protein as a serving of pork
	Lima beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream or light green skin • Firm texture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stews • Side dishes • Hummus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as butter beans • Commonly combined with sweet corn to make succotash
	Navy beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White skin • Delicate flavor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chili • Soups • Stews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as Boston or Yankee beans • Commonly used to make baked beans
	Pinto beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mottled beige and brown skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stews • Chili • Vegetarian burgers • Bean burritos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also known as speckled beans • Most common variety of bean found in refried beans • Most widely consumed bean in the US



VEGETABLES








Vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet. The recommended daily amount of vegetables varies by age, gender, and level of physical activity but is important to ensure children (and adults) receive the optimal nutrients from their meals and snacks and maintain healthy eating patterns. In addition to adding color, crunch, and flavor to meals and snacks, vegetables provide dietary fiber, minerals, and vitamins, like A and C. Here are a few of the more common varieties. Although cooking can change the nutritional value, both cooked and raw, fresh vegetables are nutritious. Availability will vary by region of the United States; however, vegetables are available year-round. Check out the *Seasonal Produce Guide* from the USDA SNAP-Ed Connection to find out what is currently available near you.












[illegible]




Type		Common Uses/Preparations								
		Baked	Dips	Grilled	Raw	Roasted	Salads	Soups	Steamed	Stir-Fried
	Brussels Sprouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Carrots	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Celery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Cauliflower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Cucumbers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Edamame	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Eggplants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Green Beans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Jicama	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Kohlrabi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Okra	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

FRUITS

As part of the USDA updated snack and meal patterns, fruits are included to help young children establish healthy eating habits as early as possible. In addition to adding color and flavor to meals and snacks, fruits provide essential vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. To help children get the recommended daily amounts of fruit (which varies by age, sex, and level of physical activity), consider offering some of these options. Availability will vary by region of the United States; however, fruit is available year-round. Check out the *Seasonal Produce Guide* from the USDA SNAP-Ed Connection to find out what is currently available near you.

Type		Common Uses/Preparations							
		Baked	Dips	Grilled	Raw	Roasted	Salads	Stir-Fried	Topping
	Apricots	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Avocados	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bananas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Blackberries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Blueberries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Cantaloupe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cherries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Type		Common Uses/Preparations							
		Baked	Dips	Grilled	Raw	Roasted	Salads	Stir-Fried	Topping
	Cranberries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Grapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Honeydew Melon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Kiwifruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Mangoes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nectarines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Peaches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Pears	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Pineapples	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Plums	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Raspberries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Type		Common Uses/Preparations							
		Baked	Dips	Grilled	Raw	Roasted	Salads	Stir-Fried	Topping
	Rhubarb	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strawberries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Watermelon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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