

Manager's Corner

Dark Green Vegetables in School Meals

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PURPOSE

Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Professional Standards

GENERAL NUTRITION – 1300

Employee will be able to understand the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, USDA's food guidance system concepts and general nutrition principles.

1310 – Relate the Dietary Guidelines and USDA's food guidance system (such as MyPlate) concepts to the goals of school nutrition programs.

1320 – Understand general nutrition concepts that relate to school meals, such as whole grains, sodium, etc.

Introduction

Manager's Corner: Dark Green Vegetables in School Meals is designed for managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. This resource is series one of a continuous set of training resources designed to give managers an easy-to-use lesson plan for training staff in various topics. *Manager's Corner: Dark Green Vegetables in School Meals* provides a method for empowering managers to train their staff. This lesson plan contains the following:

- learning objective,
- statement explaining the importance of the topic,
- list of materials,
- instructions on how to present the information,
- questions to ask staff, and
- an activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the staff.

Lesson Overview—Questions

Objective: Identify food sources, nutrients, health benefits, and menu suggestions for dark green vegetables.

Why it is important: It is important to identify food sources, nutrient considerations, health benefits, and menu suggestions in order to understand the necessity of the dark green vegetable subgroup requirement.

Materials:

- **Dark Green Vegetables in School Meals Food Sources, Health Benefits, and Nutrients** mini-poster (located at www.theicn.org)
- **Materials included in this document:**
 - **Menu Item Suggestion Activity**
 - **Menu Item Suggestion Activity Answer Key**

Instruction:

Ask the staff to answer the questions included in this training. Facilitate the activity.

Questions for the Staff:

- **What food sources are considered to be dark green vegetables?**
Answer: Food sources for dark green vegetables include Swiss chard, spinach, mustard greens, turnip greens, collards, broccoli, romaine lettuce, dark green leafy lettuce, and kale.
- **What nutrients do dark green vegetables contain?**
Answer: When compared with the other vegetable subgroups, dark green vegetables provide a significant amount of vitamin K. Dark green vegetables contain vitamins A, C, and E as well as B vitamins like folate. Dark green vegetables also contain a large quantity of carotenoids-antioxidants. Other nutrients such as iron, fiber, magnesium, calcium, and potassium are also present in dark green vegetables.

- **What are the health benefits of consuming dark green vegetables?**

Answer: Health benefits for individuals consuming dark green vegetables:

- Contains cancer reducing agents
- Supports heart health
- Supports bone health
- Supports digestive health
- Contributes to weight management

Activity Instructions:

- Ask staff to complete the **Menu Item Suggestion Activity** using the above information and the **Dark Green Vegetables in School Meals Food Sources, Health Benefits, and Nutrients** mini-poster. At the conclusion of the activity, review the **Menu Item Suggestion Activity Answer Key**.

Menu Item Suggestion Activity

Instructions: Now that you know the major food sources, nutrients, and health benefits for dark green vegetables, make menu item suggestions for one week of lunch service. What dark green vegetable recipes have you seen on TV, social media, cookbooks, or other sources? What about the recipe that caught your attention? Write your answers and have an open dialogue with your manager and other staff.

ANSWER:

Menu Item Suggestion Activity Answer Key

Instructions: Now that you know the major food sources, nutrients, and health benefits for dark green vegetables, make menu item suggestions for one week of lunch service. What dark green vegetable recipes have you seen on TV, social media, USDA recipes or other sources? What about the recipe that caught your attention? Write your answers and have an open dialogue with your manager and other staff.

ANSWER: Some menu items suggestions may include:

- Steamed broccoli
- Feta and spinach flatbread pizza
- Crisp romaine lettuce salad
- White chicken chili with kale
- Seasoned turnip greens

Note: To locate USDA recipes, visit the website at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-standardized-recipe>

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