



For The Early Learning Centre Sector

Nutrition Fact Sheet

Why Coloured Vegetables Are Important

Summer 2024



Vegetables are essential components of a balanced diet, offering a wide range of health benefits that contribute to overall well-being. The vibrant colours of vegetables indicate the presence of various nutrients that support different aspects of health. Understanding the significance of these colourful vegetables can help in fostering healthy eating habits in young learners.

Key Messages

- The different colours of vegetables indicate the presence of various nutrients that support different functions in the body.
- Eating a variety of different coloured vegetables promotes immunity, supports growth, contributes to energy and supports digestive health.
- Tips to help young children consume a variety of different vegetables include involving children in meal preparation and incorporating vegetables into favourite dishes.

The Significance of Vegetable Colours

Vegetables come in an array of colours, with each providing different health benefits.

Some examples of this include

- **Red Vegetables** - Capsicum, tomatoes and radishes are rich in vitamins such as vitamin C. This vitamin supports a healthy immune system, helps to heal wounds and keeps skin healthy.
- **Orange and Yellow Vegetables** - Vegetables like carrots and corn are packed with vitamin A, which is essential for maintaining good vision, particularly in low light, and supports healthy skin.
- **Green Vegetables** - Spinach, broccoli and peas are loaded with nutrients such as iron and calcium. Iron helps your blood carry oxygen, whilst calcium strengthens your bones and teeth.
- **Purple Vegetables** - Eggplant and purple cabbage contain antioxidants that help protect your cells and support brain health. These antioxidants play a role in maintaining cognitive function.
- **White Vegetables** - vegetables such as cauliflower and mushrooms offer important nutrients such as B vitamins that contribute to overall health and help your body fight infections.



Benefits of Eating Coloured Vegetables

Incorporating a range of coloured vegetables into your diet offers numerous health benefits, such as

- **Boosting Immunity** - vitamins and mineral found in vegetables, such as vitamin C in capsicum, help strength the immune system, making it easier for your body to fight off illness.
- **Supporting Growth** - Nutrients like calcium and protein from vegetables are crucial for growth and development. Calcium supports bone health, while protein helps build and repair muscles.
- **Providing Energy** - Some vegetables are a source of complex carbohydrates that provide sustained energy, helping you stay active and engaged throughout the day.
- **Promoting Digestive Health** - Many vegetables are high in dietary fibre, which aids in digestion and reduces the risk of digestive issues.

Tips for Parents and Caregivers

Encouraging young children to eat a variety of vegetables can be challenging. Some strategies to make vegetables a more appealing choice include

- **Involve children in meal preparation** - Allow children to participate in washing and preparing vegetables. This hands-on involvement can make them more interested in trying new foods.
- **Lead by example** - Children are more likely to mimic eating habits of adults. Show them that you enjoy eating vegetables and they may be more inclined to follow suit.
- **Make Meals Interactive** - Create build your own' meals like taco nights or vegetable pizzas where children can choose their own vegetable toppings.
- **Incorporate Vegetables Into Favourite Dishes** - Add vegetables to dishes your child already loves, such as mixing spinach into pasta sauce or blending carrots into meatloaf. This can be a subtle way to increase their vegetable intake.

For more information, please visit:
Paint Your Plate With Colors of The Rainbow
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/phytonutrients-paint-your-plate-with-the-colors-of-the-rainbow-2019042516501>
Heart Research Institute
<https://www.hri.org.au/health/your-health/nutrition/were-told-to-eat-a-rainbow-of-fruit-and-vegetables-heres-what-each-colour-does-in-our-body>

