The Buzz

May 2025

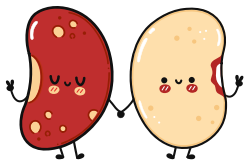
THE IMPORTANCE OF VEGETABLES IN MEAL PROGRAMS

Vegetables are an essential part of meals provided through various programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Understanding how to accurately credit vegetables is vital for compliance and helps ensure the delivery of balanced and nutritious meals.

Creditable Vegetables

To qualify as part of a reimbursable meal or snack, vegetables must adhere to the following criteria:

- They can be fresh, frozen, canned, dried (like lentils or beans), or 100% full-strength juice.
- The minimum creditable serving is **⅛ cup**, except for infants.
- Most vegetables are credited based on the volume served.



Special Rules

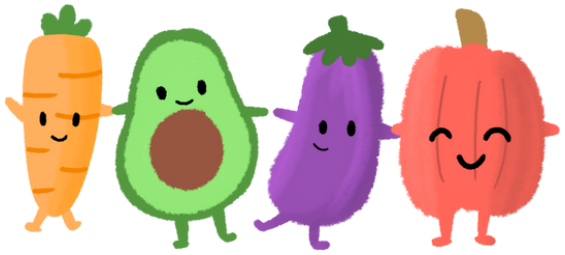
- For NSLP and CACFP, raw leafy greens are credited at half the volume served (e.g., **½ cup** of romaine equals **¼ cup** of vegetables).
- Cooked greens (e.g., sautéed spinach) are credited as served.
- Tomato paste or puree is credited based on whole food equivalency.
- **Beans, peas, and lentils can count as either a vegetable or a meat alternate, but not both in the same meal.**

Juice and Smoothies

- No more than **½** of the weekly vegetable requirement can be fulfilled by juice.
- In the CACFP/Preschool, juice may only be served once per day.
- Vegetable smoothies are credited as juice and count toward juice limits.

Examples by Subgroup

- **Dark Green:** Kale, spinach, romaine
- **Red/Orange:** Carrots, tomatoes, sweet potatoes
- **Beans/Peas/Lentils:** Chickpeas, black beans, lentils
- **Starchy:** Corn, green peas, white potatoes
- **Other:** Cabbage, cucumbers, mushrooms



What Doesn't Count

Items such as pickle relish, ketchup, home-canned or freeze-dried vegetables (unless rehydrated), and chips do not qualify toward the vegetable component.

CLICK HERE for the Link

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THE BEE ZONE

Asian Chicken Wraps

- 1 cup shredded lettuce
- 1 cup shredded cabbage
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 2 cooked boneless chicken breasts, cubed (12 oz.)
- 2 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup Asian toasted sesame dressing
- 4 - 100% whole wheat flour tortillas, small

1. Mix the mayonnaise and dressing together in a large bowl until well blended.
2. Stir in chicken, lettuce, cabbage, and carrots. Spread the mixture evenly on four tortillas.
3. Roll, cut in half, and serve.

Total Time: 5 minutes
Serving Size: 1/2 wrap
Servings: 8

CLICK HERE for the Recipes

CRAFT CORNER: MOTHER'S DAY

1. Create two handprints and one footprint by applying paint to your child's hand or foot, stamping them onto paper, and allowing the paper to dry. For perfect handprints, place your hands over theirs to prevent finger wiggling.
2. Choose a flower pot or vase template, print it out, and carefully cut it out.
3. Each template can be customized with your child's personal message or can come pre-written.
4. Cut out the two handprints and one footprint.
5. Draw six leaves on green paper and cut them out.
6. Cut out three yellow hearts. A heart hole puncher works well for this, but you can also draw hearts and cut them out if you don't have one.
7. Use tape to attach the straws to each handprint and footprint.
8. Tape two leaves to each straw.
9. Glue a heart to the top of each straw to form the center of the flowers.
10. Gather the straws together and tape them to your background paper.
11. If you're using a vase, ensure the flowers are close enough to resemble them emerging from the top rather than protruding from the side.
12. Apply glue to the tape and attach the vase or flower pot. These flowers will be a lovely keepsake for Mom to cherish forever.

- White craft paper
- Green craft paper
- Yellow craft paper
- Background paper
- Green Paper Straws
- Glue
- Tape
- Craft paint
- Pencil

CLICK HERE for the LINK