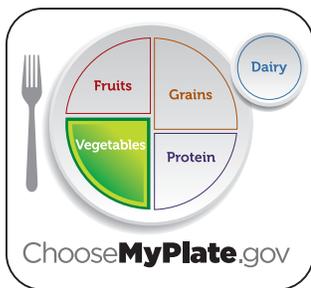


Vegetables Lesson

Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert



NUTRITION Children will learn about the MyPlate Vegetables group and learn about “eating a rainbow” of fruits and vegetables.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY “Reggie Veggie Says” Game

SNACK Veggie Creatures OR Veggie Taste Test

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Children will be able to do the following

1. Name some foods in the vegetables group.
2. Identify a major nutrient in vegetables (vitamin A or C).
3. Name some types of physical activity that are good for us.

LESSON ORDER

The lesson should be taught in this order

1. Introduce MyPlate Vegetables group
2. Read a children’s story book
3. Talk about MyPlate Vegetables group and nutrition
4. Play a physically active game
5. Make and enjoy a healthy snack

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert book
- MyPlate chart, poster or plate
- Eat a Rainbow of Vegetables Poster
From kit– laminated
- Rainbow Color Posters (red, orange, yellow, green and purple)
From kit– laminated
- Ingredients for Veggie Creatures
OR Veggie Taste Test
- “Reggie Veggie Says” statements
Written in this lesson
- “Reggie Veggie” laminated poster
From kit
- Plastic eyeball
From kit

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

Not to be taught as part of the lesson—this is for instructor only so he/she has background knowledge

Vegetables Group: Color Your Plate with Great-Tasting Veggies

USDA’s MyPlate encourages making half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated. 100% vegetable juice is also in the vegetables group.

According to the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs), vegetables are categorized into subgroups: 1) dark-green vegetables, 2) red and orange vegetables, 3) beans and peas, 4) starchy vegetables, and 5) other vegetables. It is important to get a variety of vegetables from all subgroups. They all have different amounts of vitamins and minerals. Because they are especially high in nutrients, try eating more dark-green, red, and orange vegetables. In fact, variety is so important that the 2015-2020 DGAs includes weekly targets for amounts to eat from each vegetable subgroup in addition to overall recommendations for daily vegetable intake.

People who eat vegetables as part of a healthy daily diet may have a reduced risk of a variety of chronic diseases. Vegetables are an important part of healthy eating because they provide many nutrients, including potassium, fiber, folate, and vitamins A, E and C.

On average children preschool – 1st grade (3-7 years old) should be eating 1 ½ - 2 cups of vegetables each day.* This recommendation is for total amount of vegetables consumed in a day (from all vegetable sub-groups).

**MyPlate serving recommendations are based on age, estimated number of calories required, and daily physical activity level. Individual needs and recommendations vary. For specific guidelines go to www.choosemyplate.gov*

What counts as 1 cup in the Vegetable foods group?

For the most part, determining what counts toward daily requirements of vegetables is more straight forward than other food groups (i.e., grains and proteins); however, there is an exception for raw, leafy green vegetables.

1 cup of vegetables = 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables (i.e., cooked carrots, raw baby carrots, cooked spinach); 1 cup of vegetable juice, 1 medium potato or sweet potato; 2 cups of leafy, green vegetables (i.e., raw spinach or Romaine lettuce). If you don’t have measuring cup nearby, you can estimate the following portion sizes by picturing these items:

1 cup = about the size of a baseball **1/2 cup** = about the size of a standard light bulb

References

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2018, January). Choosemyplate.gov. All about the vegetables group. Retrieved from <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/vegetables>
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2016, January). Choosemyplate.gov. Vegetables: Nutrients and health benefits. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/vegetables-nutrients-health>
3. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2015). Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 eighth edition. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>
4. WebMD. (2013, January). The WebMD portion size plate. Retrieved from <http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthtool-portion-size-plate>

TEACHING THE LESSON

Begin explaining you will read a book together, talk about MyPlate, play a fun physically active game and enjoy a healthy snack.

Sample Instructor Narrative

Instructor text is in blue

Today we are going to learn about the Vegetables group. The Vegetables group is part of MyPlate. (Show My Plate chart, poster or plate). Can you see where the Vegetable group is on MyPlate? We are going to learn about some yummy and different vegetables as well as fruits in this fun book “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z” by Lois Ehlert. (Show the book.) As we read the book, see if you can think about what the story has to do with the MyPlate Vegetables group.

Tips for Reading to a Group of Children:

- Read the book ahead of time so you are familiar with it.
- Sit in a chair or on the floor in the center. Ask children to sit around you in a semi-circle. Ask kids to “sit on their pockets.”
- Hold book up high and slowly show it around the entire circle so all kids can see.
- Speak loudly with a clear voice – articulating voices for characters, etc., when it applies.

Tips for Increasing Engagement While Reading the Book

- Since the book is so large you may want to consider only reading the first 10 letters or so. Explain that the other letters also have yummy fruits and vegetables but you won’t be reading about them today.
- If kids are losing interest you can quickly go through some of the letters. For example - say some-thing like “the next letters in the alphabet are Q,R,S,T” - flip through those pages quickly and then go back to spending more time on the rest of the pages.
- As you read some of the letters encourage kids to pick a vegetable on the page and pretend to eat it.

AFTER READING THE BOOK

Sample teacher narrative

Hold up the MyPlate poster or plate again. Remember how we looked at MyPlate before? It helps us to know how to eat in a healthy way. It reminds us to eat food from each of the food groups each day. Foods are divided up into five different food groups: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Protein and Dairy.

Which group are we talking about today? (Allow children to say vegetables.) That’s right! Do you remember all the different colors of fruits and vegetables in the book? Did you know that you should try to “eat the rainbow” when eating fruits and vegetables? (Show poster of rainbow.) What do you think that means? Vegetables come in all different colors- and the different colors help us stay healthy in different ways- that’s why it is important we eat all the colors. Let’s see if we can come up with some vegetables that are different colors. The top row of the rainbow is red—see? (Show poster of rainbow again.) Show poster of red tomato. Tomatoes are red and they are a vegetable. What other vegetables are red? (A list of red vegetables is on the back of the poster to help you lead the discussion.) Continue on through the colors of rainbows showing the different color cards.

Many vegetables, especially the orange and dark leafy green vegetables we just named, are high in vitamin A. Can you guess which part of the body vitamin A is especially good for? (Show the plastic eye to the group.) Everyone point at your eyes. Now point to the skin on your arms. That’s right! Vitamin A helps you to see well and keeps your skin healthy.

Would you like to play a fun game now? Everyone stand up and face the front of the room. We are going to play “Reggie Veggie Says”!

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: REGGIE VEGGIE SAYS...

Show the laminated poster of “Reggie Veggie Says” (from kit) and explain the game. This game is played like Simon Says with a twist- each motion is related to food. Instructor starts by asking everyone to stand up and face forward. Explain that you will be playing “Reggie Veggie Says”. Just like Simon Says- if the instructor doesn’t say “Reggie Veggie Says” before an activity- anyone who does the activity gets a point against them. Optional: Once someone has three points they are out. (For younger children—3-4 years old— play the game without keeping track of points.)

Reggie Veggie Says...

1. Reggie Veggie Says: Spin like salad!

Move body back and forth like a salad getting the water spun out – similar to twist.

Note to instructor: If you create new reggie veggie motions and want to share them please e:mail darlene.christensen@usu.edu.

2. Twist the top off a bottle of pop

Move hand like twisting off top.

Oops - did you move? Reggie Veggie didn't say so. Do you know why? Because pop isn't healthy for you and is a "sometimes food" Sometimes foods are ok to enjoy but not every day.

3. Reggie Veggie Says: Pick some carrots... 5 times!

Bend down to floor and pull up, then stand back up. Count off together!

4. Rip open some potato chips

Put hands together like ripping open bag.

Oops - did you move? Reggie Veggie didn't say so. Do you know why? Potato chips have a lot of calories and not much nutrition.

5. Reggie Veggie Says: Peel the cucumber...5 times

Hold left hand as if holding a cucumber and “peel” away toward the front.

6. Reggie Veggie Says: Jump up and pick the corn...10 times.

Jump up and reach upward and pretend to pick the corn. Count off together!

7. Reggie Veggie Says: Reach up high to pick the apples off the tree...5 times.

Reach upward and pretend to pick the apples. Count off together.

8. Reach for the TV remote

Reach hand over like picking up a TV remote.

Oops - did you move? Reggie Veggie didn't say so. Do you know why? It is ok to watch tv sometimes- but it is much better to get active and play games like the one we are playing right now!

9. Reggie Veggie Says: Dig up those potatoes...5 times.

Squat and reach down like you are using a shovel to dig. Count off together!

10. Reggie Veggie Says: Move like tomato plants in the garden blowing in the wind.

Twist, turn, and sway like the wind is blowing you around.

Alternative Activity - Red Light- Green Light

Line kids up across room. Explain you will be saying names of foods. If the food is in the vegetable group the children should step forward. If it is in another food group kids should stand still.

HEALTHY SNACK

NOTE ABOUT FOOD ALLERGIES: Check with parents before any snacks are served to see if there are any food allergies. If a snack has an ingredient known to be a common allergen such as peanut butter - make sure to have an alternative such as a low fat ranch dip.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Please instruct children to wash hands prior to eating. NEA should wear disposable gloves when preparing food.

VEGGIE CREATURES

Instructions

You can get a little more creative than the plain old ants on a log.

Here are some options:

(Put on food prep gloves prior to preparing.)



Caterpillars: Cut slices of cucumber and zucchini and stand them up in veggie dip or peanut butter* inside a slice of celery. Cut up chives or break up pretzels for the antennas of the caterpillars. For eyes cut up a raisin into smaller pieces or use mini chocolate chips. *If using peanut butter ALWAYS ask about food allergies ahead of time. Sunflower butter can be a good option when there is concern about peanut/tree allergies. It is more expensive, however.

Snakes: Cut string cheese into 1 inch sections. Break toothpicks in half. Spear cheese at an angle and add cherry tomato. Continue adding at an angle until snake is as long as you want. Cut small tongue out of slice of cheese. Cut slice at bottom of first tomato. Insert cheese tongue. Insert whole cloves for eyes. **IMPORTANT** - Make sure children know they should not eat the clove eyes.

Butterfly: Place a line of peas in a row on a plate. Cut baby carrots in half. Place two on each side of peas to make wings for a butterfly. Add whole grain cereal that is round or oval shaped at the top for eyes.

Be creative! Ask kids to use the ingredients given to create their own creature. Have kids show their creature and give it a name before they eat it if there is enough time.

Choking caution: *If using toothpicks or parts of toothpicks, watch closely for choking hazard. If working with younger children try to avoid toothpicks completely.*

Alternative recipe idea

VEGGIE TASTE TEST

Serves 8

Buy a selection of vegetables that kids may not have tried before such as jicama, small sweet peppers, and sugar snap peas. Put on food prep gloves. Cut the vegetables up into bite size pieces. Show what a vegetable like jicama looks like before it is peeled and cut. You may want to bring a low fat ranch dip for kids to eat with the veggie taste test or make veggie dip (recipe to the right).

VEGGIE DIP

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups Greek plain yogurt
- 3/4 cup light mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp dried minced onion
- 2 tsp garlic salt
- 1 tsp dill weed
- 1 tsp dried parsley flakes

Instructions

Mix everything together thoroughly. Refrigerate covered for at least 1 hour so flavors mix.

WHILE ENJOYING THE SNACK REVIEW THE LESSON

Ask children:

- 1 What are some of your favorite vegetables? Were they in the book?
- 2 How do you like to eat them- raw or cooked?
- 3 Why do you think vegetables are so good for you? (Remind children vegetables have a lot of nutrients in them to help make us healthy. Ask them if they remember which vitamin is often found in vegetables. Remind them vitamin A. Ask which parts of the body does vitamin A help? (Show plastic eyeball. Point to your eyes and skin.)

OTHER BOOKS CHILDREN MIGHT ENJOY

- **The Vegetables We Eat** by Gail Gibbons
- **Blue Potatoes, Orange Tomatoes** by Rosalind Wiseman
- **The Gigantic Sweet Potato** by Diane de Las Casas
- **The ABC's of Fruits and Vegetables** by Steve Charney
- **Growing Vegetable Soup** by Lois Ehlert
- **Eating the Alphabet** by Lois Ehlert
- **Tops and Bottoms** by Janet Stevens
- **Little Pea** by Amy Krouse Rosenthal
- **Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli** by Barbara Jean Hicks
- **Vegetable Alphabet Book** by Jerry Pallotta



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REGGIE VEGGIE SAYS...

