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## (con't) FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

vegetables offer somewhat different combinations of nutrients; thus, consuming a variety of each is important for a well-balanced diet. Vegetables from each of the five subgroups: dark green, orange, legumes, starchy, and other should be offered every week. Americans need to specifically increase their intake of dark green and orange vegetables.

The DGAs recommend the consumption of whole fruits and vegetables rather than juices to ensure adequate fiber intake.

### **What are Dark Green and Orange Fruits and Vegetables?**

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The DGAs say to vary your fruits and veggies. Most children and adults need to eat more dark green and orange fruits and vegetables.

Dark green vegetables include broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce, and other dark leafy greens.

Orange fruits and vegetables include oranges, peaches, apricots, squash, carrots, sweet potatoes, and pumpkins.

Vegetables in the “other” subgroup include: tomatoes, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, onions, peppers, green beans, cauliflower, mushrooms and summer squash.

### **Using Commodities to Meet These Standards**

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A variety of fruits and vegetables are available through the Food Distribution Program. The program offers fruits and vegetables in many forms, including fresh, frozen, canned, and dried.

### **Menu Tips**

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- Buy fresh fruits in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor.
- Add fruits to desserts such as a fruit cobbler or a fruit salad.
- Choose a variety of fruits with contrasting colors and shapes to catch students' attention.
- Cut up fruits, especially apples and oranges, to make them easier to eat.

### **Recipe Ideas**

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- Add color to sandwiches by layering a variety of sliced vegetables.
- Make a colorful salad by adding a variety of fruits, vegetables, and legumes. Use romaine or spinach for a more nutritious salad.
- Add a variety of fruits and vegetables to stir fry, pasta, or soup.
- Add grated, shredded, or chopped vegetables to lasagna, meatloaf, meat, poultry, pasta, rice and other grain dishes.
- For breakfast, top pancakes, French toast, or waffles with berries, apples, peaches, or pears, or add crisp vegetables to an omelet.
- For older students, get creative with pizza by adding a variety of vegetables, including broccoli, carrots, zucchini, spinach, peppers, tomatoes, and other vegetables.
- Bake with fruits and vegetables: use pureed fruit such as apple sauce, prunes, bananas, or peaches in place of half of the fat in recipes for breads, muffins, pancakes, and other baked goods.