



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A Monthly Training Newsletter for New Food Choices 2009

August – Newsletter #6



Hello WIC Staff!

This month the Food for Thought Newsletter will focus on fresh fruits and vegetables.

All the new food changes are exciting, but the addition of fresh fruits and vegetables to the WIC program is possibly beyond exciting, it is AWESOME! This change is one that we have all imagined for years. It is the opportunity to not only “talk” about the health benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables, but to actually provide checks for fruits & vegetables every month! We know that WIC clients care about good foods for themselves and their families and that they already buy a variety of healthy fruits and vegetables.



WOW! Clients will be using WIC checks to buy even more broccoli, lettuce, peaches, tomatoes, kohlrabi, zucchini, kale, squash, apples, cucumbers, kiwis, artichokes...and the choices throughout the produce section go on and on. The rainbow of foods being added to the WIC food package can't be “beet”! This newsletter will “squash” any myths about what clients can and cannot purchase, “dig” into information about using the WIC Fruit and Vegetable check, and “mushroom” your knowledge about fruits and vegetables.

BUYING FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES WITH WIC CHECKS

“Lettuce” start with the question: **“What is allowed with the WIC Fruit & Vegetable check?”**

WIC clients can buy any variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, except potatoes. Yams and sweet potatoes are allowed.

Clients **can buy** the following types of produce:

- Fresh only
- Whole
- Cut
- Bulk
- Packages and bags
- Any brand
- Organic and non-organic

Clients **cannot buy** the following types of produce:

- Potatoes, except yams and sweet potatoes
- Canned or frozen
- Party trays
- Salad bar items
- Dried fruits and vegetables
- Herbs, edible flowers, or blossoms
- Any items with added foods, sauces, flavors, herbs, or spices

Why no potatoes?

Potatoes are not federally allowed as a WIC food. Potatoes are not allowed in any color: white, purple, red, Yukon Gold, etc. Only sweet potatoes and yams are allowed.

This supports the recommendation from the Institute of Medicine to “increase the intake of non-starchy vegetables for WIC clients.”

⇒ Are you wondering why only fresh fruits and vegetables are allowed? See page 4.

Parents are one of the greatest influences on their children’s eating habits.

According to researchers at Washington University in St. Louis, parents who provide fruits for snacks and serve vegetables at dinner can shape preschooler’s eating patterns for his or her lifetime.

WHY EAT FRUITS & VEGETABLES?



There is a *bounty* of reasons to eat fruits and vegetables. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans calls for all Americans to eat more nutrient rich foods. Fruits and vegetables are a great source of important nutrients low in calories and high in fiber. Eating five to nine servings a day may reduce the risk of some diseases, while providing color, texture, and adding variety to meals and snacks.

In its review of the WIC food package, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) placed an emphasis on providing fruits and vegetables and identified whole fruits in place of fruit juice to promote adequate fiber. The following table is a list of common fruit and vegetable sources for target nutrients in the WIC food package.

NUTRIENT	COMMON FRUIT & VEGETABLE SOURCES
Calcium	Excellent source: calcium fortified juice Good sources: kale, spinach, edamame (green soybeans), turnip greens
Fiber	Excellent sources: apples, blackberries, pears, spinach, raspberries Good sources: artichoke, blueberries, Brussels sprouts, kiwifruit, oranges, sweet potatoes
Folate	Excellent sources: asparagus, spinach, strawberries Good sources: beets, blackberries, cantaloupe, cauliflower, kale, leaf lettuce, romaine lettuce, papaya
Vitamin A	Excellent sources: apricots, broccoli, Chinese cabbage, cantaloupe, carrots, collard greens, kale, red peppers, spinach, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, winter squash Good sources: asparagus, celery, tomato
Vitamin C	Excellent sources: red and green peppers, Brussels sprouts, cantaloupe, cauliflower, kale, kiwifruit, orange, pineapple, mangoes, strawberries, sweet potato, tomato Good sources: blueberries, carrots, celery, cherries, cucumbers, mango, pears

Percent Daily Values (%DV) are for adults or children aged 4 or older, and are based on a 2,000 calorie reference diet. Daily values may be higher or lower based on individual needs.

To be listed as an “Excellent Source” a fruit or vegetable must provide 20% of the Daily Value per reference amount.

To be listed as a “Good source” a fruit or vegetable must provide 10% - 19% of the Daily Value per reference amount.

Nutrient information listed in above table comes from these two sources: www.fruitandveggiesmatter.org & www.fruitandveggiesmorematters.org fruit and vegetable databases.

HOW MANY FRUITS & VEGETABLES DO YOU NEED?

Most people need to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables they eat each day to get the recommended amount. Since every body is different, there is a handy calculator to determine the right amount for your age, gender, and level of physical activity at:

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/benefits>. Once you have determined the right amount for you, check out the recipes for delicious and simple ways to enjoy fruits and vegetables throughout your day.



LAUGHTER IS GOOD FOR YOU TOO!

What is small and red and whispers? A hoarse radish

Why do potatoes make good detectives?

Because they keep their eyes peeled

What do you call a stolen yam? A hot potato

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE TRIVIA

Test your skills at the “College *Fruit & Vegetable* Bowl”.

1. I am one of the oldest vegetables, having been around since about 8000 BC. I am *cool* and am a favorite in your green salad. I was a favorite of President Ulysses Grant and the Roman Emperor Tiberius. Who am I?
2. I am a leafy green plant that has been cultivated for over 2,000 years. I am thought to be the ancestor to all of today’s cabbage varieties. I am rich in vitamins A & C, as well as calcium and fiber. Who am I?
3. I am tall and crunchy. I am of Mediterranean origin and was first grown in the U.S. in Michigan in 1874. Many people like to snack on me because I am low in calories. Who am I?
4. Carrots weren’t always orange. What color were they originally?
Choose one: [White] [Purple] [Red] [Yellow]
5. When cutting onions, what chemical is released that makes your eyes water?
6. The ancient Romans ate pizza, but which of the following fruits did they think made a good topping?
Choose one: [Pears] [Tomatoes].....[Pumpkin] [Onions]
7. Which fruit is the “fattiest” fruit?
8. Johnny Appleseed is an American folk hero who went about the Midwest planting apple seeds that eventually grew into orchards. What was Johnny’s real name?
Choose one: [Johnny Applewhite] [None, he’s fictional] [Johnny Appleseed] [John Chapman]
9. Toward the end of their career as a quartet, the Beatles founded Apple Records. What color is the Apple Records logo?
10. Is a pumpkin a fruit or vegetable? How about a tomato – fruit or vegetable?

Bonus Challenge: Name 3 movies with the name of a *fruit* in the title?

Answers on page 6!

QUICK IDEAS FOR GETTING KIDS TO EAT MORE FRUITS & VEGETABLES



We are often asked by caregivers, “How can I get my child to eat vegetables?” And sometimes, this question includes fruits. A great way to begin this conversation is to ask the caregiver what they have already tried when introducing fruits and vegetables to their children. Many times caregivers have already found some great ways to encourage the whole family to eat more fruits and vegetables; they just need a little support to keep up the good work. For caregivers who would like additional tips, here are some suggestions:

- Children learn by example. When children see adults eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, they will want to try them too.
- Offer fun and interesting foods like artichokes. Peeling off the leaves to eat is fun!
- Serve fruits and vegetables with every meal. The more children see them offered the more likely they will want to try them. It sometimes takes several tries before children are ready to taste something new.
- Hold a “Tasting Party.” Cut up several types of fruits and vegetables and serve some fun dips and start tasting.
- Add fruits and vegetables to foods that children like. Top pizza with mushrooms and green and red peppers. Add sliced bananas, peaches, or a favorite berry to hot or cold cereal.
- Pack a rainbow picnic together – children can add the *rainbow* of colorful fruits and vegetables.
- For additional tips on eating a variety of fruits and vegetables every day visit www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov. Search for great ideas for breakfast, lunch & dinner, & snacks.
- Offer cut up vegetables as “appetizers” while you finish up meal preparations.
- Read more about learning to enjoy vegetables in this newsletter – see page 5!

A FRESH CHOICE FOR WASHINGTON WIC CLIENTS



The federal guidelines allowed our state WIC program to add fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables to the WIC food package. After careful consideration, Washington decided to allow only fresh fruits and vegetables.

The reason why we do not allow canned or frozen fruits and vegetables is because clients would have to select the correct product (e.g. no added sugar, syrups, salts, flavors, etc.) and the correct container size. We were concerned there would be too much confusion for clients and cashiers to know which products were WIC approved and which were not. For example, over 100 types of applesauce can be found on grocery store shelves, many containing additional sugar.

So Washington WIC decided to go with fresh fruits and vegetables as the best choice.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE NUTRITIONAL ALL-STARS

These foods are particularly high in vitamins, nutrients and minerals. They are good sources of antioxidants (compounds the body needs to prevent cell damage) and phytochemicals (chemical compounds that are being studied for possible health benefits).

1. **Sweet potatoes** are considered one of the best vegetables you can eat. They are loaded with antioxidants, vitamin C, potassium and fiber. Bake sweet potatoes and top with unsweetened applesauce or crushed pineapple for added sweetness and extra moisture.
2. **Blueberries**, blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries are 4 of the top 20 food sources of antioxidants, with blueberries having the highest amount of all. Berries are small in size but they are full of fiber, folic acid, and vitamin C. You may be surprised to learn that a serving of strawberries has even more vitamin C than an orange.
3. **Broccoli** is better known as “little trees” in the “under-5” crowd. It is filled with potent cancer fighting components and Vitamin C. One medium spear has three times more fiber than a slice of wheat bran bread. Broccoli is one of the richest sources of vitamin A in the produce section. Broccoli is great raw with dips, or steamed and sprinkled with lemon juice.
4. **Tomatoes** are currently one of the most popular vegetables eaten by Americans. There are thousands of tomato varieties. Tomatoes are one of the best sources of lycopene, an antioxidant. Slice tomatoes and add to sandwiches and salads, or just drizzle with olive oil and eat.
5. **Pumpkins** are packed with beta carotene and are low in calories. In fact, a cup of cooked pumpkin has only 50 calories and nearly three grams of fiber. While all pumpkins are edible, the smaller varieties are the best (and most manageable) for cooking. Try eating pumpkin steamed, just like any other winter squash.
6. **Spinach**, calorie for calorie, provides more nutrients than any other food. Spinach has a list of nutrients that include: vitamin K, vitamin A, manganese, folate, magnesium, iron, vitamin C, vitamin B2, calcium, potassium, and vitamin B6. Spinach is great for salads or for added nutrition when making pasta add a handful of washed spinach and let it cook right along with the pasta.
7. **Kale**, a leafy green, stands out in the crowd. It is packed with vitamins A, C, and K, folate, potassium, magnesium, iron, lutein, and phytochemicals. Not familiar with kale? Try **Caldo Verde** (a Portuguese soup). Peel and finely chop 2 pounds of potatoes. Boil for 2 minutes. Add one bunch of chopped kale (about 6-8 cups). Cook for 2 minutes. Season with a little salt and a splash of olive oil and you are ready to eat!



YOU CAN LEARN TO ENJOY VEGETABLES by Ellyn Satter

In our culture, vegetables are considered challenging. Although it isn't true, most of us have learned that children will eat vegetables only under pressure. The nutrients in vegetables are no more or less important than those in any other food group. However, nutritionists consider vegetables and fruits to be "marker foods" that give a snapshot of the overall quality of the diet and selectively promote them. The result? More pressure! It all adds up to generations of grown-ups who feel obligated to eat their broccoli before they can have dessert. Worse, many have been so traumatized by broccoli that they won't allow it at the table! It doesn't have to be that way.


Vegetables can be challenging: They have a variety of textures and flavors, some of them strong, sharp, or biting. You or your child may be a supertaster, which means you are sensitive to strong flavors. However, even supertasters learn to enjoy strong-flavored vegetables, provided they have time and repeated, unpressured opportunities to learn.

Keep these strategies in mind about learning to like vegetables:

- Plan to eat them because you enjoy them, not because you feel obligated.
- Tone down strong flavors with salt, fat, sauces, bread crumbs, herbs and spices.
- Sneak up on a new vegetable: Look at it, prepare it, watch others eat it, put it in your mouth and take it out again. Don't swallow until you are ready.
- Take your time, and be persistent. Most children and grownups learn to like new food after they have done the sneaking-up bit 15 or 20 times—or more!

Copyright © 2009 by Ellyn Satter. Published at www.EllynSatter.com. For more preparing vegetables in appealing ways and helping your child and yourself learn to enjoy them (and for research backing up this advice), see Ellyn Satter's Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family: How to Eat, How to Raise Good Eaters, How to Cook, Kelcy Press, 2008. Also see www.EllynSatter.com/shopping to purchase books and to review other resources.

STRETCHING PRODUCE GROCERY DOLLARS

1. **Buy produce that is in season** – Fortunately, one of the best ways to cut grocery costs is also healthy and tasty! Buying in season – means you are buying produce when it is plentiful and therefore often lower priced! We are able to buy tomatoes all year long, but in summer there are more varieties to choose from, they taste so much better, and they are more affordable.
2. **Plant a garden** – Nothing says summer like a homegrown zucchini! Planting a garden of any size or in any container can be a good way to save money and experience the joys (and health benefits) of fresh picked produce. Children love this activity too! 
3. **Store produce correctly** – Ben Franklin said: "Waste not, want not." If you want to avoid wasting produce and keep items full of flavor and nutrients, it helps to know how to store them. Store leafy greens in a plastic bag along with a moist paper towel. Keep mushrooms and peppers in a brown bag in the crisper drawer and keep tomatoes at room temperature. Cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts keep well in plastic bags up to 5 days. Cabbage, unwashed and uncut will last up to 10 days wrapped in plastic. For more tips on storing produce visit: www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm114299.
4. **Plan meals ahead** - When planning meals use the more tender items first and the harder items later in the week. Don't overbuy perishable items that need to be eaten in 3-5 days. Monitor the vegetable crisper and the fruit bowl daily. According to a study by the University of Arizona, the average American household throws out a quarter of their fruit and vegetables.

ANSWERS TO THE “College-Fruit & Vegetable Bowl”

1. **Cucumbers.** Cucumbers are a good source of dietary fiber and low in calories. Choose firm, well shaped cucumbers with dark green color and ones that are heavy for their size.
2. **Kale.** Kale is a highly nutritious vegetable with powerful antioxidant properties. It is a good source of dietary fiber, thiamin, folate and iron. It is a very good source of Vitamins A, C, & calcium. 1 ¼ cups has 250% of the Percent Daily Value (%DV) of vitamin A and 170% vitamin C.
3. **Celery.** Celery has “negative calories!” This is true...it takes more calories to eat a piece of celery than the celery has in it to begin with. Celery has about 6 calories per 8 inch stalk. Although you might attribute the energy expended in chewing to be the reason for negative calories, it is the energy devoted to the digestion of the green stalks that that uses all the calories. This might sound like a great plan to use calories, but eating lots of celery would make only a tiny difference, amounting to no more than a few dozen calories per day.
4. **Purple.** Carrots now come in many different colors: black, red, yellow, pink, and white. Carrots originated in the Middle East and have been eaten for thousands of years. Dutch growers begin cultivating orange carrots in the sixteenth century. Choose carrots that are firm and crisp with deep color and avoid carrots that are split. Carrots are low in calories, are an excellent source of vitamin A.
5. **Sulphur.** There are several ways to avoid eye irritation when cutting onions; some of which include: cutting onions under running water or in a basin of water, chilling the onions before cutting, and using a sharp knife to limit the cell damage and release of the ingredients that cause the irritation.
6. **Pears.** There is archeological evidence of the Romans making both sweet and savory pizza, but they had not yet come into contact with the American pumpkin or the Asian tomato. Pears are a good source of fiber. How about adding pears to your next pizza?
7. **Avocado.** About 75% of the avocado’s calories come from fat, most of which are “good” monounsaturated fats. Avocados have 60% more potassium than bananas, are rich in B vitamins, as well as vitamin E and K. California harvests about 80% of the nation’s crop. Avocados are a tasty, nutritious fruit addition to appetizers or salads.
8. **John Chapman.** From the Boston area, John Chapman (September 26, 1774-February 18, 1845) was tired of city living so he took off for the frontier. The common image of Johnny Appleseed had him spreading apple seeds randomly, everywhere he went. He actually planted nurseries, built fences around them to protect them, and left them in the care of a neighbor who sold trees on shares. Supposedly, the only surviving tree planted by Johnny Appleseed is on a farm in Nova, Ohio.
9. **Green.** Apple Records is a record label founded by The Beatles in 1968. Aside from being a well known record label, apples are grown worldwide with China and the United States as the top producers. In the U.S., more than 60% of all the apples sold commercially are grown in Washington State. One large apple has about 130 calories and is a high source of dietary fiber.
10. The question to ask when determining fruit or vegetable is: “Does it have seeds?” If the answer is yes, then technically it is a fruit. Which makes tomatoes and pumpkins a *fruit!* However, we commonly refer to pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, and peppers as vegetables, even though they have seeds. So the answer really is tomatoes and pumpkins are **both** a fruit and a vegetable.

Bonus: “James and the Giant Peach” from the Roald Dahl book of the same name; Stanley Kubrick’s “A Clockwork Orange;” “The Grapes of Wrath” from the John Steinbeck novel; “Bananas” a Woody Allen Movie; “The Apple Dumpling Gang” a 1974 Disney movie, *can you think of others?*



PROMOTING THE WIC FRUIT & VEGETABLE CHECKS

Included along with this newsletter are slides that can be used for a bulletin board display in your clinic. The slides are designed to: 1) let clients know that WIC Fruit & Vegetable checks are coming and 2) share a preview of what the new checks will look like.

The slides are created in PowerPoint to make printing and displaying easy for you.

To print the slides:

1. Open the PowerPoint file.
2. Select File from the menu bar.
3. Select Print.
4. In the bottom left corner of the Print window, under Print what: select Slides from the drop down menu.
5. Select Print.
6. Display the slides on your bulletin board.

Note: If your printer defaults to printing on both sides, be sure to select: Print on one side only.

Please contact Heidi Feston (heidi.feston@doh.wa.gov or x 3663) if you need color slides printed for your clinic or if you have questions about using the slides for your clinic.

