

# VARY YOUR VEG



## The Challenge

Have a variety of vegetables this week.

### Why are vegetables important?

Vegetables provide a range of different vitamins and minerals needed for health. They also provide fibre, which is important for the digestive system and can help reduce the risk of developing heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer in adulthood.

### What counts?

There are some examples of 5 A DAY portions below but we don't have to limit our portion sizes of vegetables and having smaller amounts of lots of different kinds (e.g. in a soup or stew) is great too! Remember that fresh, frozen, canned, dried and juiced types all count.

### 5 A DAY portions

- Three heaped tablespoons of cooked vegetables like broccoli, peas, cabbage or carrots.
- A dessert bowl of salad.
- Three heaped tablespoons of beans, chickpeas or lentils can count as one of your 5 A DAY (but only once each day).

### How can we include vegetables in our diet?

- Add extra vegetables to dishes, such as spaghetti bolognese, curry or cottage pie. Vegetables can be a great way to add bulk to meals and increase the amount of fibre they contain.

- Just like fruit, vegetables make a great snack. Try carrot, pepper or celery sticks.
- Vegetable juice or smoothies (up to a maximum of 150ml a day) can be served as a drink alongside meals.

### 5 A DAY vegetables

We should include a wide variety of different coloured vegetables in our diet as different coloured vegetables provide different amounts and types of vitamins and minerals.

Adding extra vegetables doesn't have to be too expensive or time consuming. Try frozen vegetables, which are usually already chopped, for a quick addition to meals. Peas are a favourite, but broad beans, green beans, spinach, edamame beans or mixed vegetables are good options. Canned vegetables also count – canned tomatoes are great as a base for sauces or curries, and canned sweetcorn, chickpeas or kidney beans can be added to stews, soups or salads. Look out for lower cost vegetables at supermarkets or local markets or go for ready prepared vegetables to save time.

It's easy to get stuck in the habit of eating the same vegetables, but this challenge is all about eating a wider variety. Data suggests that around 50% of vegetable intake comes from just four kinds (fresh and canned tomatoes, carrots, onions and peas). Eating a wider variety of vegetables can provide a wider range of nutrients, as well as the opportunity to try new food and recipes.

# #readyveggiego